

## ASSESSING THE INTEGRATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*This study examines the effectiveness of the integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in teacher education programmes in Nigeria, identifies the factors influencing effectiveness, and proposes recommendations for improving teacher education programmes in order to promote the SDGs in Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design; the study used a stratified random sampling technique. Data from a sample of 400 teachers and teacher educators were collected through a structured questionnaire. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques. The findings reveal a need to prioritise the integration of SDGs into the teacher education curriculum. Respondents express concerns about the inadequacy of the current curriculum in preparing teachers for SDG promotion thereby emphasising the importance of aligning teacher education programmes with national and international policies on SDGs, and in the process provide more opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in community-based projects. Among the major factors identified are professional development, community engagement, and resource support. Key strategies identified for improvement includes providing professional development opportunities, incorporating specialised SDG courses, creating supportive learning environments, collaborating with communities, ensuring adequate funding and resources and echoing broader research on the pivotal role of education in sustainable development. Recommendations include integrating SDGs into the curriculum, providing professional development for teachers, fostering community collaboration, creating supportive learning environments, securing government support, and advocating for further research on the impact of SDG integration on student outcomes.*

**Key Words:** Integration, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Teacher Education Programmes, Implementation

### Introduction

The United Nations (UN) adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 as a global blueprint for reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and education, and promoting sustainable economic growth. Achieving these goals requires collective efforts from all sectors of society, including education. Teachers play a crucial role in preparing students to become responsible and active citizens who can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. Therefore, teacher education

programmes need to integrate the SDGs to equip future teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge. However, there is a dearth of research on the integration of the SDGs in teacher education programmes in Nigeria.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, aimed at addressing critical global challenges such as poverty eradication, quality education, gender equality, climate action, and sustainable economic growth.

Achieving these goals largely depends on the education sector and the role of teachers in particular, as they are responsible for preparing young people with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to address global challenges and contribute to sustainable development. Despite the importance of integrating SDGs in teacher education programmes, there is a lack of empirical research on the extent to which Nigerian teacher education programmes address the SDGs, and the factors that influence the effectiveness of integration. Therefore, this study seeks to assess the integration of the SDGs in teacher education programmes in Nigeria, examine factors that influence the effectiveness of integration, and recommend improvements for effective implementation.

Previous research on teacher education programmes in Nigeria has indicated a lack of focus on the SDGs, with one study noting that "there was no adequate structure for preparing teachers to address the SDGs" (Oche, Dantani, & Egbunu, 2019, p. 31). This lack of focus on the SDGs can be attributed to a number of factors, including limited resources, inadequate policies and guidelines, and a lack of awareness and understanding of the SDGs among stakeholders (UNESCO, 2017).

This study aims to assess the effectiveness of SDG integration in teacher education programmes in Nigeria and identify the factors influencing effectiveness and improvements for effective implementation. The findings of this study are expected to inform policymakers and stakeholders on how to effectively integrate the SDGs in teacher education programmes for the purpose of preparing teachers who can contribute to achieving the SDGs in Nigeria. To address these challenges,

this study will employ a descriptive approach to surveys of teacher education programmes with the use of questionnaire

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a framework for achieving sustainable development globally. Nigeria, as a signatory to the SDGs, has committed itself to integrating the goals into its national development plans, including education sector. Teacher education programmes are crucial in achieving the SDGs, as they equip future teachers with the knowledge and skills to impart sustainability education to learners. However, there is a lack of empirical research on the extent to which the SDGs have been integrated into teacher education programmes in Nigeria, the factors influencing effectiveness, and improvements needed for effective implementation.

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Nigeria has a large population of out-of-school children, estimated at 10.1 million, and faces challenges of quality education delivery (UIS, 2021). The integration of SDGs in teacher education programmes could provide a pathway to address these challenges by equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver quality education and promote sustainable development. However, without a clear understanding of the extent to which the SDGs have been integrated into teacher education programmes and the factors influencing effectiveness, the impact of such efforts may be limited. Therefore, this study seeks to assess the integration of SDGs in teacher education programmes in Nigeria, identify the factors influencing effectiveness, and propose improvements for effective implementation.

### Objectives of the Study

The core aim of this study is to assess the effectiveness of the integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in teacher education programmes in Nigeria, identify the factors influencing effectiveness, and propose recommendations for improving teacher education programmes in order to promote the SDGs. The objectives of the study are to:

1. investigate the extent to which teacher education programmes in Nigeria address the SDGs;
2. identify the factors that influence the promotion of the SDGs in teacher education programmes in Nigeria; and
3. suggest strategies for improving teacher education programmes in Nigeria for the purpose of promoting by the SDGs.

### Research Questions

1. To what extent do teacher education programmes in Nigeria address SDGs?
2. What are the factors that influence teacher education in promoting SDGs in Nigeria?
3. What are the suggested strategies for teacher education programmes to promote the effective integration of SDGs into teaching activities in Nigeria?

### Review of Related Literature

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a global blueprint for achieving sustainable development by 2030 was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. The SDGs are a set of 17 goals

and 169 targets that address a range of issues, including poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, renewable energy, and climate action (United Nations, 2015). The SDGs are integrated and indivisible, and they aim to balance the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (United Nations, 2015).

Education is a key enabler for the achievement of the SDGs, and teacher education programmes play a vital role in promoting sustainability education. Teacher education programmes are crucial in achieving the SDGs, as they equip future teachers with the knowledge and skills to impart sustainability education to learners. The integration of the SDGs in teacher education programmes is therefore essential in achieving the SDGs in Nigeria.

Several studies have explored the integration of SDGs in teacher education programmes globally. A study by Ozturk and Baturay (2019) found that teacher education programmes in Turkey integrated the SDGs to a moderate extent, with the highest emphasis on Goal 4 (Quality Education), followed by Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and Goal 5 (Gender Equality). Similarly, a study by Furlan et al. (2019a) on teacher education programmes in Brazil found that the SDGs were integrated to a moderate extent, with the highest emphasis on Goal 4, followed by Goal 3 and Goal 1 (No Poverty). However, studies on the integration of SDGs in teacher education programmes in Nigeria are scarce. The integration of the SDGs into teacher education programmes in Nigeria is still at the early stages. A study by Fagbemigun and Ajayi (2020) found that only a few teacher education programmes in Nigeria integrate the SDGs into their

curriculum. The study reported that out of the 28 universities surveyed in Nigeria, only three universities integrated the SDGs into their teacher education curriculum. The lack of integration of the SDGs in teacher education programmes in Nigeria is a concern, as it limits the capacity of future teachers to promote sustainable development in their teaching

Several factors have been identified in the literature that influence the effectiveness of the integration of SDGs in teacher education programmes. One of the key factors is the lack of training and professional development opportunities for teacher educators to integrate the SDGs into their teaching activities (Ozturk & Baturay, 2019; Furlan et al., 2019b). Other factors include the lack of awareness and understanding of the SDGs among teacher educators (Ozturk & Baturay, 2019; Akinola & Adegboyega, 2021), the lack of resources and support for sustainability education (Akinola & Adegboyega, 2021), and the lack of policy support and institutional commitment to the integration of SDGs in teacher education programmes (Furlan et al., 2019a; Ozturk & Baturay, 2019).

Several factors hinder the integration of the SDGs into teacher education programmes in Nigeria. According to Fagbemigun and Ajayi (2020), lack of awareness and understanding of the SDGs, lack of training for teachers on sustainability education, inadequate funding, and limited collaboration among stakeholders are some of the factors that hinder the integration of the SDGs in teacher education programmes in Nigeria. These factors impact the effectiveness of the integration of the SDGs in teacher education programmes.

Several recommendations have been made in the literature to promote the effective implementation of the integration of SDGs in teacher education programmes. These include the need for policy support and institutional commitment to sustainability education (Furlan et al., 2019a), the provision of training and professional development opportunities for teacher educators to integrate the SDGs into their teaching activities (Ozturk & Baturay, 2019; Akinola & Adegboyega, 2021), the need for increased awareness and understanding of the SDGs among teacher educators (Ozturk & Baturay, 2019; Akinola & Adegboyega, 2021), and the need for the provision of resources and support for sustainability education (Akinola & Adegboyega, 2021). To promote the SDGs in teacher education programmes in Nigeria, several recommendations have been suggested. Fagbemigun and Ajayi (2020) recommend that the SDGs should be integrated into the teacher education curriculum at all levels of education in Nigeria. They also suggest that there should be capacity building programmes for teacher educators to enhance their understanding of the SDGs and sustainability education. Additionally, there should be more funding for teacher education programmes and greater collaboration among stakeholders to promote the SDGs in teacher education.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a survey research design, which involved the collection and analysis of numerical data using statistical techniques. The population for the study consisted of all teachers and teacher educators in Nigeria who have undergone formal teacher training from recognised teacher training institutions. The study used a stratified random sampling

technique to select a sample of 400 teachers and teacher educators from different regions of Nigeria. The sample was selected based on six regions in Nigeria, which are North Central, North East, North West, South East, South South and South West. The research instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 27 items that assessed the extent and effectiveness of SDG integration in teacher education programmes in Nigeria and identified the factors influencing effectiveness and equally suggested strategies for effective implementation. The

questionnaire was designed using a 4-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Data for the study were collected through the use of a self-administered questionnaire which was administered online. The respondents were contacted through email and social media platforms, and they were asked to complete the online questionnaire. The data collection period lasted for six weeks. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques. The descriptive techniques included frequency counts and percentages.

### **Research Question One**

**To what extent do teacher education programmes in Nigeria address the SDGs?**

**Table 1: Extent to which Teacher Education Programmes in Nigeria Address the SDGs**

SN	ITEM	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	TOTAL %
1	To what extent do you agree that teacher education programmes in Nigeria incorporate the SDGs into their course content?	57 14.25	82 20.5	158 39.5	103 25.75	400 100
2	To what extent do you believe that teachers are equipped with knowledge and skills to integrate the SDGs into their teaching practice?	34 8.5	23 5.75	170 42.5	173 43.25	400 100
3	To what extent do you perceive that teacher education programmes in Nigeria prioritise the teaching of the SDGs?	14 3.5	13 3.25	200 50	173 43.25	400 100
4	To what extent do you believe that teacher education programmes in Nigeria encourage pre-service teachers to develop competencies that support the realisation of the SDGs?	34 8.5	57 14.25	157 39.25	152 38	400 100
5	To what extent do you think that teacher education programmes in Nigeria provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in community-based projects that address the SDGs?	47 11.75	68 17	169 42.25	116 29	400 100
6	To what extent do you perceive that teacher education programmes in Nigeria emphasise the role of teachers in creating a sustainable future through the SDGs?	22 5.5	37 9.25	159 39.75	182 45.5	400 100
7	To what extent do you believe that teacher education programmes in Nigeria are aligned with national and international policies aimed at achieving the SDGs?	55 13.75	67 16.75	200 50	78 19.5	400 100
8	To what extent do you perceive that the integration of the SDGs into teacher education programmes in Nigeria positively impacts teaching and learning outcomes?	67 16.75	48 12	160 40	126 31.5	400 100
9	To what extent do you think that teacher education programmes in Nigeria should prioritise the integration of the SDGs into their curriculum?	120 30	90 22.5	85 21.25	105 26.25	400 100
<b>Grand Total %</b>		<b>18.75</b>	<b>13.47</b>	<b>40.5</b>	<b>27.28</b>	<b>100</b>

The data in Table 1 provides insights into stakeholders' perceptions regarding the incorporation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

into teacher education programmes in Nigeria. Approximately 35.75% (14.25% strongly agree + 20.5% agree) believe that teacher education

programmes effectively incorporate SDGs into their course content, while a significant 65.25% (39.5% disagree + 25.75% strongly disagree) express varying levels of disagreement. A substantial 14.25% (8.5% strongly agree + 5.75% agree) believe that teachers are equipped with knowledge and skills to integrate SDGs into their teaching practice, but a significant majority of 86.75% (42.5% disagree + 43.25% strongly disagree) disagree. Also, only 6.75% (3.5% strongly agree + 3.25% agree) perceive that teacher education programmes prioritise the teaching of SDGs. In contrast, 93.25% (50% disagree + 43.25% strongly disagree) express disagreement, indicating a widespread perception of insufficient prioritisation. About 22.75% (8.5% strongly agree + 14.25% agree) believe that teacher education programmes encourage pre-service teachers to develop competencies supporting the realisation of SDGs. However, a significant 77.25% (39.25% disagree + 38% strongly disagree) express disagreement. A notable 28.75% (11.75% strongly agree + 17% agree) believe that teacher education programmes provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in community-based projects addressing SDGs. Still, 71.25% (42.25% disagree + 29% strongly disagree) disagree to varying extents.

Approximately 14.75% (5.5% strongly agree + 9.25% agree) perceive that teacher education programmes emphasise the role of teachers in creating a sustainable future through SDGs. In contrast, 85.25% (39.75% disagree + 45.5% strongly disagree) express disagreement. A moderate 30.5% (13.75% strongly agree + 16.75% agree) believe that teacher education programmes in Nigeria are aligned with

national and international policies aimed at achieving the SDGs, while 69.5% (50% disagree + 19.5% strongly disagree) express disagreement. The data indicates mixed perceptions, with 28.75% (16.75% strongly agree + 12% agree) believing that the integration of SDGs into teacher education positively impacts teaching and learning outcomes, while 71.25% (40% disagree + 31.5% strongly disagree) express disagreement. A majority of 52.5% (30% strongly agree + 22.5% agree) believe that teacher education programmes in Nigeria should prioritise the integration of SDGs into their curriculum, while 47.5% (21.25% disagree + 26.25% strongly disagree) express disagreement.

The grand total percentages indicate an overall disagreement, with 40.5% disagreeing and 27.28% strongly disagreeing, highlighting a substantial perception that teacher education programmes in Nigeria need improvement in addressing SDGs. The agreement percentages (18.75% strongly agree + 13.47% agree) underscore the existence of a significant concern among respondents regarding the current state of SDG integration. The findings suggest that there is room for improvement in how teacher education programmes in Nigeria address the SDGs. The majority of respondents believe that the current curriculum does not adequately prepare teachers to promote the SDGs, and there is a perception that teacher education programmes do not prioritise teaching the SDGs. However, there is a belief that teacher training and professional development opportunities are important in equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills to integrate the SDGs into their teaching practice.

**Research Question Two**

**What factors influence teacher education in promoting SDGs in Nigeria?**

**Table 2: Factors Influencing Teacher Education in Promoting SDGS in Nigeria**

SN	ITEM	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	TOTAL %
1	How important do you think teacher education is in promoting sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Nigeria?	170 42.5	180 45	30 7.5	20 5	400 100
2	Do you think that the current teacher education curriculum in Nigeria adequately prepares teachers to promote SDGs?	20 5.0	15 3.75	200 50	165 41.25	400 100
3	Availability of resources is the most important factor that influences teacher education in promoting SDGs in Nigeria.	167 41.75	200 50	13 3.5	20 5	400 100
4	Government policies and funding are the most important factors that influence teacher education in promoting SDGs in Nigeria.	177 44.25	190 47.5	15 3.75	18 4.5	400 100
5	Teacher training and professional development opportunities are the most important factors that influence teacher education in promoting SDGs in Nigeria.	180 45	170 42.5	20 5	30 7.5	400 100
6	Community involvement and support are the most important factors that influence teacher education in promoting SDGs in Nigeria.	150 37.5	155 38.75	45 11.25	50 12.5	400 100
7	To what extent do you think that the involvement of the local community is important in promoting SDGs through teacher education in Nigeria?	172 43	178 44.5	25 6.25	25 6.25	400 100
8	Do you think that the integration of SDGs in teacher education can lead to better student outcomes.	150 37.5	150 37.5	55 11.75	45 11.25	400 100
<b>Grand Total %</b>		<b>37.06</b>	<b>38.68</b>	<b>12.37</b>	<b>11.34</b>	<b>100</b>

**NOTE: SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), D (Disagree), SD (Strongly Disagree)**

Respondents believe that teacher education is important in promoting SDGs in Nigeria, with 42.5% strongly agreeing and 45% agreeing. The majority of respondents (91.25%) believe that the current teacher education curriculum in Nigeria does not adequately prepare teachers to promote SDGs.

Respondents believe that the availability of resources is an important factor in promoting SDGs through teacher education in Nigeria, with 50% strongly agreeing and 41.75% agreeing. Government policies and funding are also seen as important by respondents, with 47.5%

agreeing and 44.25% strongly agreeing.

Teacher training and professional development opportunities are considered important by respondents, with 45% strongly agreeing and 42.5% agreeing. Community involvement and support were viewed as important by 38.75% of respondents, while 12.5% strongly agreed. Respondents believe that local community involvement is important, with 44.5% agreeing and 43% strongly agreeing. Finally, respondents were relatively divided on the impact of SDG integration into teacher education on student outcomes, with 37.5% strongly agreeing and 37.5% agreeing that it would lead to better outcomes.

The overall finding of the study is that teacher education programmes in Nigeria can be improved to better promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Respondents believe that the current teacher education curriculum in

Nigeria does not adequately prepare teachers to promote SDGs, and they identified several ways in which teacher education programmes could be improved, such as providing professional development opportunities for teachers, offering specialised courses on SDGs, creating a supportive learning environment, collaborating with local communities and organisations, and providing funding for teacher training and professional development. Additionally, respondents believe that government policies and funding are important for promoting SDGs through teacher education. However, the study also found that there is a lack of awareness and knowledge of the SDGs among teachers in Nigeria, and there is not widespread support for the SDGs to be a mandatory part of the curriculum. Ultimately, the study highlights the need for improving teacher education programmes to promote the SDGs in Nigeria.

### **Research Question Three**

- 1. To suggest strategies for improving teacher education programmes in Nigeria to promote the SDGs?**

**Table 3: How to Improve Teacher Education Programmes to Promote the SDGs in Nigeria**

SN	ITEM	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	TOTAL %
1	Providing professional development opportunities for teachers can teacher education institutions in Nigeria better incorporate SDGs into their curriculum.	155 38.75	190 47.5	30 7.5	25 6.25	400 100
2	Offering specialised courses on SDGs can teacher education institutions in Nigeria better incorporate SDGs into their curriculum.	165 41.25	210 52.5	12 3	13 3.25	400 100
3	Creating a supportive learning environment that fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills can teacher education institutions in Nigeria better incorporate SDGs into their curriculum.	190 47.5	165 42.25	20 5	25 6.25	400 100
4	Collaborating with local communities and organisations can teacher education institutions in Nigeria better incorporate SDGs into their curriculum.	155 38.75	190 47.5	25 6.25	30 7.5	400 100
5	Funding for teacher training and professional development would be helpful for improving the promotion of SDGs in teacher education programmes in Nigeria.	200 50	180 45	10 2.5	10 2.5	400 100
6	Curriculum and teaching materials that incorporate SDGs would be helpful for improving the promotion of SDGs in teacher education programmes in Nigeria.	190 47.5	192 48	8 2	10 2.5	400 100
7	Access to technology and multimedia resources would be helpful for improving the promotion of SDGs in teacher education programmes in Nigeria.	195 48.75	180 45	10 2.5	15 3.75	400 100
8	Partnerships with local organisations and communities would be helpful for improving the promotion of SDGs in teacher education programmes in Nigeria.	180 45	200 50	10 2.5	10 2.5	400 100
9	Nigerian government can better support teacher education institutions in promoting SDGs by developing policies that prioritise SDGs in education.	200 50	155 38.75	24 6	21 5.25	400 100
10	Nigerian government can better support teacher education institutions in promoting SDGs by providing incentives for teachers to integrate SDGs into their teaching activities.	210 52.5	157 39.25	15 3.75	18 4.5	400 100
<b>Grand Total %</b>		<b>46</b>	<b>45.57</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.33</b>	<b>100</b>

NOTE: SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), D (Disagree), SD (Strongly Disagree)

The data presented in the table shows the percentage of respondents who strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) with each item related to improving teacher education programmes to promote the SDGs in Nigeria. A total of 400 respondents participated in the survey.

The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that providing professional development opportunities for teachers (SA=38.75%, A=47.5%) and offering specialised courses on SDGs (SA=41.25%, A=52.5%) can better incorporate SDGs into teacher education curricula. Similarly, creating a supportive learning environment that fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills (SA=47.5%, A=42.25%) and collaborating with local communities and organisations (SA=38.75%, A=47.5%) were also viewed as effective ways to promote SDGs in teacher education programmes.

The majority of respondents also believed that funding for teacher training and professional development (SA=50%, A=45%) and curriculum and teaching materials that incorporate SDGs (SA=47.5%, A=48%) would be helpful for improving the promotion of SDGs in teacher education programmes. Access to technology and multimedia resources (SA=48.75%, A=45%) and partnerships with local organisations and communities (SA=45%, A=50%) were also seen as beneficial.

In terms of government support, the majority of respondents believed that the Nigerian government can better support teacher education institutions in promoting SDGs by developing policies that prioritise SDGs in education (SA=50%, A=38.75%). Additionally, providing incentives for teachers to integrate SDGs into their

teaching activities (SA=52.5%, A=39.25%) was also viewed as helpful.

Overall, the data suggests that there are various strategies that can be implemented to improve teacher education programmes and promote the SDGs in Nigeria. These include providing professional development opportunities, offering specialised courses, creating a supportive learning environment, collaborating with local communities and organisations, and providing funding, curriculum and teaching materials, access to technology and multimedia resources, and government support.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study suggest that teacher education programmes in Nigeria need to prioritise the integration of the SDGs into their curriculum. The majority of respondents in the study believed that the current curriculum does not adequately prepare teachers to promote the SDGs, indicating the need for improvement. This is consistent with findings from other studies that highlight the need for training and professional development opportunities for teacher educators to integrate the SDGs into their teaching practices (Ozturk & Baturay, 2019; Furlan et al., 2019b).

The respondents in this study also emphasised the importance of aligning teacher education programmes with national and international policies aimed at achieving the SDGs. This is consistent with the recommendation in the literature for policy support and institutional commitment to sustainability education (Furlan et al., 2019a). In Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Education has launched a roadmap for the integration of the SDGs into the education sector, which includes the development of a framework for the

integration of the SDGs into teacher education programmes (Federal Ministry of Education, 2017). The findings of this study support the need for the implementation of this framework.

The study found a relatively divided opinion among respondents on the impact of SDG integration into teacher education on student outcomes. This is consistent with findings from other studies that suggest a need for more empirical evidence on the impact of SDG integration in teacher education programmes (Ozturk & Baturay, 2019). However, there is a perception among respondents that community involvement and support, as well as the availability of resources and government policies and funding, are important factors in promoting SDGs through teacher education in Nigeria. This highlights the need for collaboration between stakeholders, including government, civil society, and the private sector, in promoting sustainability education.

The findings of this study also suggest a need for more opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in community-based projects that address the SDGs. This is consistent with the recommendation in the literature for the provision of resources and support for sustainability education (Akinola & Adegboyega, 2021). Community-based projects provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to apply their knowledge and skills in addressing real-world sustainability challenges, thereby promoting active learning and enhancing their preparedness for the classroom.

The findings of this study suggest a need for teacher education programmes in Nigeria to prioritise the integration of the SDGs into their curriculum and provide more opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in community-based projects

that address the SDGs. This would require policy support and institutional commitment to sustainability education, as well as collaboration between stakeholders in promoting sustainability education. Future research could explore the impact of SDG integration in teacher education programmes on student outcomes and identify effective strategies for promoting sustainability education in Nigeria.

The findings of the study indicate that there is a significant need for improvement in teacher education programmes to better promote the SDGs. The majority of respondents believe that the current curriculum does not adequately prepare teachers to promote the SDGs, and there is a perception that teacher education programmes do not prioritise teaching the SDGs. This finding is in line with other studies that have shown a lack of focus on SDGs in teacher education programmes (Kipkemoi et al., 2021). This highlights the need for teacher education programmes to prioritise the integration of the SDGs into their curriculum and align with national and international policies aimed at achieving the SDGs (UNESCO, 2021).

However, respondents also recognise the importance of teacher training and professional development opportunities in equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills to integrate the SDGs into their teaching practice. This finding is consistent with research that has highlighted the importance of professional development for teachers to effectively implement new curricula and pedagogical approaches (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Moreover, the respondents believe that there is a need for teacher education programmes to prioritise the integration of the SDGs into their

curriculum and align with national and international policies aimed at achieving the SDGs. This finding is in line with the recommendations of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) for teacher education programmes to prioritise the integration of SDGs in their curriculum (UNESCO, 2021).

The study also found that community involvement and support, as well as the availability of resources and government policies and funding, are important factors in promoting SDGs through teacher education in Nigeria. This finding is consistent with research that has highlighted the importance of stakeholder involvement in educational reforms (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003), and the need for adequate resources and funding for educational initiatives (World Bank, 2018).

However, the study found that respondents were relatively divided on the impact of SDG integration into teacher education on student outcomes. This finding is in contrast to other studies that have shown a positive impact of SDG integration on student outcomes (Hartwell et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the study emphasises the importance of promoting the SDGs through teacher education programmes in Nigeria to achieve the sustainable development agenda.

The findings of this study suggest that there is a need for improvement in teacher education programmes in Nigeria to better promote the SDGs. The study highlights the importance of professional development opportunities for teachers, alignment with national and international policies, community involvement and support, and adequate resources and funding. These findings are relevant not only for Nigeria but for other

countries seeking to promote the SDGs through teacher education.

The findings presented in the table suggest that there are various strategies that can be implemented to improve teacher education programmes and promote the SDGs in Nigeria. These findings are consistent with previous research that has emphasised the importance of teacher education in promoting sustainable development and the SDGs (Mudzana, 2020; UNESCO, 2017).

One of the key strategies identified by respondents is providing professional development opportunities for teachers. This is consistent with research that highlights the importance of ongoing professional development for teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge (Bennett, 2017; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). Respondents also believe that offering specialised courses on SDGs can better incorporate these goals into teacher education curricula. This finding supports the idea that teacher education programmes should prioritise the teaching of SDGs, as these goals are essential for promoting sustainable development in Nigeria (UNESCO, 2017).

Creating a supportive learning environment that fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills was also viewed as an effective way to promote SDGs in teacher education programmes. This aligns with previous research that emphasises the importance of promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills in education to address complex global issues such as sustainable development (UNESCO, 2017).

Collaborating with local communities and organisations was identified as another important strategy for promoting SDGs in teacher education programmes. This finding

supports the idea that sustainable development can only be achieved through partnerships and collaboration between various stakeholders, including educational institutions, governments, civil society organisations, and local communities (Mudzana, 2020).

The findings also suggest that funding, curriculum and teaching materials, access to technology and multimedia resources, and government support are important for improving the promotion of SDGs in teacher education programmes. This highlights the need for increased investment in education and teacher training to promote sustainable development in Nigeria (UNESCO, 2017).

The findings presented in the table emphasise the importance of improving teacher education programmes to promote the SDGs in Nigeria. Strategies such as providing professional development opportunities, offering specialised courses, creating a supportive learning environment, collaborating with local communities and organisations, and providing funding, curriculum and teaching materials, access to technology and multimedia resources, and government support can help to achieve this goal. These findings are consistent with previous research that highlights the critical role of education and teacher training in promoting sustainable development and achieving the SDGs (Mudzana, 2020; UNESCO, 2017).

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, this study concludes that teacher education programmes in Nigeria need to prioritise the integration of the SDGs into their curricula to effectively promote sustainable development in the country. The study identified the need for policy support, professional

development opportunities, and collaboration with stakeholders in promoting sustainability education. Pre-service teachers should be provided with opportunities to engage in community-based projects to apply their knowledge and skills in addressing real-world sustainability challenges.

There is the need for more empirical evidence on the impact of SDG integration in teacher education programmes on student outcomes in the Nigerian context. Strategies such as creating a supportive learning environment, offering specialised courses, and collaborating with local communities and organisations can also enhance the promotion of the SDGs in teacher education programmes.

Overall, the findings of this study have significant implications for teacher education programmes in Nigeria and other countries seeking to promote sustainable development through education. Further research is needed to identify effective strategies for promoting sustainability education in the Nigerian context, with a particular focus on the impact of SDG integration in teacher education programmes on student outcomes.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study conducted in Nigeria on the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through teacher education, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Teacher education programmes in Nigeria should prioritise the integration of the SDGs into their curriculum and align with national and international policies aimed at achieving the SDGs.
2. Professional development opportunities should be provided to equip teachers with the

knowledge and skills to integrate the SDGs into their teaching practice.

3. Teacher education programmes should collaborate with local communities and organisations to promote sustainable development and the SDGs.
4. Creating a supportive learning environment that fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills can effectively promote SDGs in teacher education programmes.
5. The Nigerian government should provide funding, curriculum and teaching materials, access to technology and multimedia resources, and support for teacher education programmes to promote sustainable development and the SDGs.
6. Further research should be conducted to examine the relationship between SDG integration and student outcomes in the Nigerian context.

Implementing these recommendations can help to improve teacher education programmes in Nigeria and promote sustainable development and the SDGs in the country thereby contributing to the achievement of the sustainable development agenda.

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