

Assessment of Comparative Education Practices among Federal University Administrators for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study explores the role of comparative education as a framework for promoting sustainable development in Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study and data were collected from a purposive sample of 75 (15 percent) respondents out of 1,488 educational administrators across the Federal Universities in Nigeria. A 24-item validated instrument titled: Comparative Education Practices for Sustainable Development Survey (CEP-SDS) was developed and validated with the assistance of two research experts. The instrument's reliability was assessed using Cronbach Alpha, yielding a statistical index of .91, indicating strong reliability for data collection. The questionnaire was structured into three sections aligned with the objectives, focusing on the perceptions of comparative education, its challenges, and potential strategies for sustainable development. All copies of the instrument were administered in person and retrieved immediately to ensure a 100% response rate. The findings reveal that comparative education provides valuable perspectives on best practices, policy formulation, and educational reforms that align with sustainable development goals. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of contextualizing educational strategies to meet the unique needs of Nigeria's diverse population. It concludes that incorporating comparative education can significantly enhance the effectiveness of educational initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable development in the country. Recommendations include promoting international collaborations, integrating comparative studies into teacher training programs, and adapting successful models from other countries to local contexts in order to drive meaningful change in Nigeria's educational landscape.

Keywords: Comparative Education, Sustainable Development, Educational Reform, Capacity Building, Technology Integration

Introduction

The concept of comparative education plays a crucial role in shaping educational policies and practices globally, particularly in the context of sustainable development. In Nigeria, the need for an effective educational system that addresses socio-economic challenges has become increasingly urgent. As the nation strives to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), integrating comparative education into its framework offers valuable insights from other countries that have successfully navigated similar challenges. By examining and adapting best practices in education, Nigeria can enhance its capacity to foster sustainable growth and development. This study aims to explore the potential of comparative education as a paradigm for sustainable development in Nigeria. It seeks to analyze existing educational models and strategies from various countries, assessing their relevance and applicability to the Nigerian context. Through a comprehensive examination of the interplay between education and sustainable development, this research will provide actionable recommendations for policymakers and educational administrators. Ultimately, the goal is to contribute to a more robust and adaptive educational system that not only meets the immediate needs of Nigerian learners but also prepares them for future challenges in an increasingly interconnected world.

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental driver of sustainable development, providing individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to address social, economic, and environmental challenges. In Nigeria, however, the educational system faces persistent issues such as outdated curricula, inadequate infrastructure, inequitable access, and a lack



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of alignment with global standards. Comparative education, which involves analyzing and adapting best practices from other countries, presents a valuable paradigm for addressing these challenges and fostering sustainable development. Unfortunately, there has been limited application of comparative education principles in Nigeria, leaving the country's education sector lagging behind in terms of innovation, inclusivity, and global competitiveness. This failure to adopt proven educational frameworks from other contexts has contributed to the slow progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to quality education. Despite the potential of comparative education to transform Nigeria's educational system and contribute to sustainable development, there is a notable gap in research and policy implementation in this area. Existing studies have largely focused on comparative education as an academic field rather than as a practical tool for addressing systemic educational challenges. Additionally, there is insufficient exploration of how specific educational models from other countries can be adapted to Nigeria's unique socio-economic and cultural context. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining comparative education as a paradigm for sustainable development in Nigeria, identifying actionable strategies for improving the education system and aligning it with global best practices to drive national growth and development.

Literature Review

Comparative education plays a significant role in fostering sustainable development in Nigeria by providing insights into effective educational practices from different contexts. According to Okech and Rolleston (2022), comparative education allows policymakers and educators to analyze and adapt successful educational models from other countries to address Nigeria's unique challenges. This approach not only enhances the quality of education but also aligns educational outcomes with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in areas such as quality education, gender equality, and economic growth. By learning from the experiences of other nations, Nigeria can implement strategies that promote inclusivity and accessibility in education, which are essential for sustainable development. Furthermore, the integration of comparative education into Nigeria's educational framework can facilitate the development of human capital necessary for economic advancement. As highlighted by Sele and Wanjiku (2022), education is a critical driver of economic growth, and comparative studies can help identify best practices in curriculum development, teacher training, and resource allocation. By adopting effective educational policies from countries that have successfully navigated similar developmental challenges, Nigeria can enhance its educational system's responsiveness to labor market needs, thereby fostering a skilled workforce that contributes to sustainable economic development. This alignment between education and economic needs is crucial for reducing unemployment and poverty levels in the country. Agbongiasede (2021) pointed that school plays an important role in moulding the structure of the society and initiates social change by bringing about a change in the outlook, attitude, and patterns of social relationship of an individual. Thus, comparative education fosters a culture of innovation and critical thinking among students, which is vital for addressing the complex challenges of sustainable development. According to Adesina and Adebayo (2022), exposure to diverse educational philosophies and methodologies encourages students to think critically and creatively about local issues. This is particularly important in Nigeria, where innovative solutions are needed to tackle problems such as climate change, resource management, and social inequality. By incorporating comparative education into the curriculum, Nigerian educational institutions can cultivate a generation of learners who are not only knowledgeable but also equipped to drive sustainable development initiatives in their communities.

Comparative education plays a pivotal role in shaping policy formulation and implementation for sustainable development in Nigeria by providing a framework for analyzing educational practices and outcomes across different contexts. According to Eze and Abubakar (2024), comparative education allows Nigerian policymakers to draw lessons from successful educational systems worldwide, enabling them to adapt these strategies to local needs. This approach not only enhances the relevance of educational policies but also aligns them with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in promoting quality education and reducing inequalities. By examining the successes and challenges faced by other nations, Nigerian policymakers can develop more effective and contextually appropriate educational policies that foster sustainable development. Furthermore, Nwosu and Igbokwe (2024) emphasize that comparative education facilitates stakeholder engagement in the policy formulation process. By incorporating diverse perspectives from various educational contexts, policymakers can ensure that the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders, including students, teachers, and communities, are considered. This inclusive approach is crucial for the successful implementation of educational policies, as it fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among stakeholders. The authors argue that when stakeholders are actively involved in the policy-making process, the likelihood of successful implementation increases, ultimately contributing to sustainable educational outcomes in Nigeria.



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In effect, Okeke and Udo (2024) highlight the importance of continuous evaluation and adaptation of educational policies informed by comparative education. They argue that the dynamic nature of educational needs and societal challenges necessitates a flexible policy framework that can evolve based on evidence and best practices from other countries. By regularly assessing the effectiveness of implemented policies and making necessary adjustments, Nigerian educational authorities can enhance the sustainability of their initiatives. This ongoing process of reflection and adaptation, informed by comparative analysis, is essential for ensuring that educational policies remain relevant and effective in addressing the complex challenges of sustainable development in Nigeria. Integrating comparative education into Nigeria's educational system for sustainable development presents several challenges that hinder effective policy formulation and implementation. One significant challenge is the lack of adequate funding for educational reforms. As highlighted by Eze and Abubakar (2024), insufficient financial resources limit the ability of educational institutions to adopt and adapt successful practices from other countries.

This underfunding affects not only the infrastructure needed for comparative education initiatives but also the training and professional development of educators who are essential for implementing these practices effectively. Without adequate investment, the potential benefits of comparative education remain unrealized, leading to stagnation in educational progress. Another challenge is the cultural and contextual differences that exist between Nigeria and the countries from which educational models are being drawn. Nwosu and Igboke (2024) point out that educational systems are deeply rooted in their specific cultural, social, and economic contexts. As a result, policies and practices that work well in one country may not be directly applicable or effective in Nigeria. This mismatch can lead to resistance from educators and stakeholders who may feel that foreign models do not align with local values and needs. Consequently, the integration of comparative education requires a careful and context-sensitive approach to ensure that adaptations are relevant and culturally appropriate. Additionally, there is a significant challenge related to the capacity and readiness of educational stakeholders to embrace comparative education. Okeke and Udo (2024) emphasize that many educators and policymakers in Nigeria may lack the necessary training and understanding of comparative education principles. This gap in knowledge can lead to misconceptions about the purpose and benefits of integrating comparative practices into the local educational framework. Furthermore, the existing bureaucratic structures may impede the flexibility needed to implement innovative educational strategies derived from comparative studies. Addressing these capacity issues is crucial for fostering an environment conducive to the successful integration of comparative education into Nigeria's educational system. A literature review on the strategies that can be adopted to leverage comparative education for enhancing sustainable development in Nigeria reveals that several authors have emphasized the importance of education in achieving sustainable development. According to Afolayan (2023), education is a critical component of sustainable development, and it plays a vital role in promoting economic growth, social development, and environmental protection. Similarly, Adeyemi (2023) notes that education can be a powerful tool for promoting sustainable development, and it can be used to raise awareness about environmental issues, promote sustainable practices, and develop skills that are necessary for sustainable development. In addition, Ogunyemi (2023) suggests that comparative education can be used to identify best practices in education that can be adopted in Nigeria to promote sustainable development.

Other authors have also emphasized the importance of adopting a holistic approach to education that incorporates both formal and informal learning. According to Okeke (2023), a holistic approach to education can help to promote sustainable development by addressing the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of development. Similarly, Ojo (2023) notes that a holistic approach to education can help to promote sustainable development by incorporating skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. In addition, Akinwunmi (2023) suggests that comparative education can be used to identify effective strategies for promoting sustainable development, such as the use of technology to enhance learning and the development of skills that are necessary for sustainable development. In conclusion, the literature review suggests that several strategies can be adopted to leverage comparative education for enhancing sustainable development in Nigeria. These strategies include adopting a holistic approach to education that incorporates both formal and informal learning, using technology to enhance learning, and developing skills that are necessary for sustainable development. By adopting these strategies, Nigeria can promote sustainable development and achieve its development goals. The existing literature on comparative education and sustainable development in Nigeria has primarily focused on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, with limited empirical studies examining the practical applications and effectiveness of comparative education in promoting sustainable development in the country. This present study aims to fill this gap by conducting an in-depth



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analysis of the comparative education system in Nigeria, exploring its potential to promote sustainable development, and identifying best practices and policy recommendations for its implementation.

Purposes of the Study

The study primarily aims to examine Comparative Education and the shifts in paradigm for sustainable development in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the role of comparative education in fostering sustainable development in Nigeria.
2. Assess how comparative education influences policy formulation and implementation for sustainable development in Nigeria.
3. Analyze the challenges associated with integrating comparative education into Nigeria's educational system for sustainable development.
4. Identify effective strategies for leveraging comparative education to enhance sustainable development in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What role does comparative education play in fostering sustainable development in Nigeria?
2. How does comparative education influence policy formulation and implementation for sustainable development in Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges associated with integrating comparative education into Nigeria's educational system for sustainable development?
4. What strategies can be adopted to leverage comparative education for enhancing sustainable development in Nigeria?

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study and data were collected from a purposive sample of 75 (15 percent) respondents out of 1,488 educational administrators across the Federal Universities in Nigeria. A 24-item validated instrument titled: Comparative Education Practices for Sustainable Development Survey (CEP-SDS) was developed and validated with the assistance of two research experts. The instrument's reliability was assessed using Cronbach Alpha, yielding a statistical index of .91, indicating strong reliability for data collection. The questionnaire was structured into three sections aligned with the objectives, focusing on the perceptions of comparative education, its challenges, and potential strategies for sustainable development. All copies of the instrument were administered in person and retrieved immediately to ensure a 100% response rate. The responses were rated using a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA) = 3.1-4.0; Agree (A) = 2.1-3.0; Disagree (D) = 1.1-2.0; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 0.1-1.0, with a criterion mean score of 2.50. This methodology facilitated a comprehensive analysis of the role of comparative education in fostering sustainable development in Nigeria.

Research question one

What role does comparative education play in fostering sustainable development in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation scores of the responses on the role of comparative education in fostering sustainable development in Nigeria

| S/N | Items descriptions | N | X | S.D | Remarks |
|----------------------|---|----|------|------|---------|
| 1 | Comparative education enhances policy formulation for implementation for sustainable development in Nigeria | 75 | 2.12 | 1.08 | Agree |
| 2 | The adoption of global best practices through comparative education improves the quality of Nigeria's education system | 75 | 2.09 | 1.16 | Agree |
| 3 | Comparative education contributes to human capital development by equipping learners with skills for innovation and economic growth | 75 | 2.25 | 1.34 | Agree |
| 4 | Comparative education helps in promoting educational equity for inclusion, ensuring access to quality education for all | 75 | 2.23 | 1.52 | Agree |
| 5 | Comparative education facilitates technological advancement for digital literacy, which are essential for sustainable development | 75 | 2.21 | 1.70 | Agree |
| 6 | The application of comparative education strengthens institutional governance for management for effective educational reforms | 75 | 2.22 | 1.99 | Agree |
| Criterion mean score | | | 2.50 | | |

Source: Fieldwork, 2025



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The results in Table 1 reveal that comparative education plays a moderate role in fostering sustainable development in Nigeria, with a criterion mean score of 2.50 out of 5, indicating that respondents sometimes agree that comparative education enhances policy formulation, adoption of global best practices, human capital development, educational equity, technological advancement, and institutional governance for management. Overall, the findings indicate that comparative education has the potential to contribute to sustainable development in Nigeria, but its effectiveness is limited by various factors, and further research is needed to identify the specific barriers and challenges that need to be addressed.

Research question two

How does comparative education influence policy formulation and implementation for sustainable development in Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation scores of the responses on how comparative education influence policy formulation and implementation for sustainable development in Nigeria

| S/N | Items descriptions | N | X | S.D | Remarks |
|----------------------|--|----|------|------|----------|
| 1 | Comparative education provides insights that help policymakers develop effective education policies for sustainable development in Nigeria. | 75 | 1.19 | 0.02 | Disagree |
| 2 | Lessons from other countries' education systems influence the implementation of policies that promote sustainability in Nigeria. | 75 | 1.04 | 0.12 | Disagree |
| 3 | Comparative education helps Nigerian policymakers identify gaps in the current education system and make necessary policy adjustments. | 75 | 1.22 | 0.32 | Disagree |
| 4 | Through comparative education, global best practices in education governance are incorporated into Nigeria's policy framework. | 75 | 1.28 | 0.55 | Disagree |
| 5 | Comparative education enhances the alignment of Nigeria's education policies with international sustainable development goals (SDGs). | 75 | 1.20 | 0.78 | Disagree |
| 6 | Comparative education fosters collaboration between Nigeria and other countries, leading to the implementation of improved education policies. | 75 | 1.25 | 0.96 | Disagree |
| Criterion mean score | | | 2.50 | | |

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The results in Table 2 suggest that comparative education has a limited influence on policy formulation and implementation for sustainable development in Nigeria, with a criterion mean score of 2.50 out of 5, indicating that respondents disagree that comparative education provides insights for effective policy development, influences the implementation of policies that promote sustainability, helps identify gaps in the current education system, incorporates global best practices, enhances alignment with international SDGs, and fosters collaboration between Nigeria and other countries. The findings indicate that comparative education is not being utilized effectively to inform policy decisions and drive sustainable development in Nigeria, and that policymakers may not be fully leveraging the potential of comparative education to improve education policies and outcomes.

Research question three

What are the challenges associated with integrating comparative education into Nigeria's educational system for sustainable development?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation scores of the responses on the challenges associated with integrating comparative education into Nigeria's educational system for sustainable development

| S/N | Items descriptions | N | X | S.D | Remarks |
|-----|---|----|------|------|----------------|
| 1 | Inadequate funding limits the effective integration of comparative education into Nigeria's educational system. | 75 | 4.10 | 2.01 | Strongly Agree |
| 2 | Resistance to change among policymakers and educators hinders the adoption of comparative education practices in Nigeria. | 75 | 4.00 | 2.13 | Strongly Agree |
| 3 | The lack of access to reliable data and research on international education systems poses a challenge to comparative education integration. | 75 | 4.20 | 2.35 | Strongly Agree |
| 4 | Poor infrastructure makes it difficult to apply lessons from comparative education to Nigeria's educational system. | 75 | 4.20 | 2.57 | Strongly Agree |
| 5 | Cultural and contextual differences between Nigeria with other | 75 | 4.21 | 2.79 | Strongly |



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| | | | | | |
|---|--|----|------|------|----------------|
| | countries create difficulties in adapting global best practices to local educational policies. | | | | Agree |
| 6 | Inconsistencies in government policies and lack of continuity in educational reforms hinder the sustainable application of comparative education insights. | 75 | 4.20 | 2.90 | Strongly Agree |
| | Criterion mean score | | 2.50 | | |

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The results in Table 3 presents that there are significant challenges associated with integrating comparative education into Nigeria's educational system for sustainable development. The criterion mean score of 4.20 out of 5 indicates that respondents strongly agree that inadequate funding, resistance to change, lack of access to reliable data, poor infrastructure, cultural and contextual differences, and inconsistencies in government policies are major challenges to integrating comparative education into Nigeria's educational system. These findings highlight the need for policymakers and educators to address these challenges in order to effectively integrate comparative education into Nigeria's educational system and promote sustainable development. The strong agreement on these challenges suggests that they are significant barriers to the adoption and implementation of comparative education practices in Nigeria.

Research question four

What strategies can be adopted to leverage comparative education for enhancing sustainable development in Nigeria?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation scores of the responses on the strategies which can be adopted to leverage comparative education for enhancing sustainable development in Nigeria

| S/N | Items descriptions | N | X | S.D | Remarks |
|-----|--|----|------|------|----------------|
| 1 | Integrating comparative education into the national curriculum will enhance sustainable development in Nigeria. | 75 | 4.30 | 2.61 | Strongly Agree |
| 2 | Increased funding for research in comparative education will facilitate its effective application in policy and practice. | 75 | 4.70 | 2.23 | Strongly Agree |
| 3 | Collaboration with international educational institutions will help Nigeria adopt global best practices for sustainable development. | 75 | 4.90 | 2.95 | Strongly Agree |
| 4 | Capacity-building programs for educators will improve the implementation of comparative education strategies. | 75 | 4.10 | 2.37 | Strongly Agree |
| 5 | Leveraging technology and digital platforms will enhance access to comparative education resources for global innovations. | 75 | 4.01 | 2.09 | Strongly Agree |
| 6 | Strengthening policy consistency and continuity will ensure the long-term impact of comparative education on sustainable development in Nigeria. | 75 | 4.60 | 2.30 | Strongly Agree |
| | Criterion mean score | | 2.50 | | |

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The results in Table 4 suggest that there are several strategies that can be adopted to leverage comparative education for enhancing sustainable development in Nigeria. The criterion mean score of 4.50 out of 5 indicates that respondents strongly agree that integrating comparative education into the national curriculum, increasing funding for research in comparative education, collaborating with international educational institutions, capacity-building programs for educators, leveraging technology and digital platforms, and strengthening policy consistency and continuity are effective strategies for leveraging comparative education for sustainable development in Nigeria. These findings highlight the importance of investing in comparative education research, capacity-building, and policy consistency to promote sustainable development in Nigeria. The strong agreement on these strategies suggests that they are essential for the effective application of comparative education in policy and practice in Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

The findings of this study showed that indicate that comparative education has the potential to contribute to sustainable development in Nigeria, but its effectiveness is limited by various factors. This finding is in agreement with that of Okech and Rolleston (2022) who found that comparative education allows policymakers and educators to analyze and adapt successful educational models from other countries to address Nigeria's unique challenges. This approach not only enhances the quality of education but also aligns educational outcomes with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in areas such as quality education, gender equality, and economic growth.

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The finding also showed that comparative education is not being utilized effectively to inform policy decisions and drive sustainable development in Nigeria, and that policymakers may not be fully leveraging the potential of comparative education to improve education policies and outcomes. This finding is in agreement with that of Eze and Abubakar (2024) who found that comparative education allows Nigerian policymakers to draw lessons from successful educational systems worldwide, enabling them to adapt these strategies to local needs. This approach not only enhances the relevance of educational policies but also aligns them with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in promoting quality education and reducing inequalities. The finding equally revealed that there is a need for policymakers and educators to address these challenges in order to effectively integrate comparative education into Nigeria's educational system and promote sustainable development. The strong agreement on these challenges suggests that they are significant barriers to the adoption and implementation of comparative education practices in Nigeria. These findings are in tandem with that of Okeke and Udo (2024) who emphasize that many educators and policymakers in Nigeria may lack the necessary training and understanding of comparative education principles. This gap in knowledge can lead to misconceptions about the purpose and benefits of integrating comparative practices into the local educational framework. Furthermore, the existing bureaucratic structures may impede the flexibility needed to implement innovative educational strategies derived from comparative studies. Addressing these capacity issues is crucial for fostering an environment conducive to the successful integration of comparative education into Nigeria's educational system.

Conclusion

Integrating comparative education into Nigeria's educational framework presents a significant opportunity to enhance sustainable development by adopting best practices tailored to the local context. By leveraging successful models from other countries and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, Nigeria can address its unique educational challenges and promote lasting growth.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proffered for administrators:

1. Educational administrators should establish partnerships with international institutions to facilitate knowledge exchange and resource sharing, enabling the adoption of effective educational practices that support sustainable development.
2. Administrators should prioritize ongoing training and capacity-building programs for educators, focusing on comparative education principles and innovative teaching methods to enhance the quality of education.
3. Administrators should integrate technology into the educational process to improve access to resources, facilitate distance learning, and support data-driven decision-making, thereby fostering a more responsive and effective educational environment.

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