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**Priorities and Challenges of Actualizing Sustainable Development  
Goals: Perspectives of Business Educators in Delta State  
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***Abstract***

*This study is set out to investigate areas of priorities and challenges of actualizing sustainable development goals (SDGs) as perceived by business education practitioners. Three research objectives and three research questions guided the study. A survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised of Business Education practitioners in Delta State, Nigeria. The sample size was 126 respondents drawn from tertiary institutions. Research developed questionnaire in line with the three objectives and research questions was used as data collection instrument. Findings from the study show that sustainable development goals (SDGs) to be prioritized are fourteen (14) as perceived by Business Educators. Constraints to effective contribution of Business Education practitioners towards realization of SDGs include lip service to programme implementation, lack of reliable and accurate data, negligence of Business Education by governments, low level of private sector interest in business education, poor lobbying and advocacy skills amongst Business Educators. It is recommended that there is need for creating awareness/sensitizing the citizens, equipping of workshops and model office in Business Education to support research, provision of educational information to improve quality of education, provision of funds to revive Business Education, use of talks, shows/exhibitions in creating awareness amongst others, as strategies that can facilitate Business educators' contribution towards realization of SDGs.*

***Keywords:*** *Priorities, Sustainable Development, Business Education Practitioners, Model Room, Workshop*

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**Introduction**

Sustainable development refers to the development that is stable, durable, concerted, consistent, measureable and sustainable. This can be traced to the efforts of local and international community to protect the human aspect of the earth. According to Jegede, Irewole & Dada (2019)

the concept of sustainable development assumes that development must first occur before it can be sustained.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a global initiative aimed at making the nation a better place to live. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is an offshoot of Millennium



Developments Goals (MDGs). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contains seventeen goals that are target specific towards various sectors of the economy. Each goal is focused on a specific area of the nation's economy and is development-oriented (*Oyemike, Anyanwu, Onuoha & Nwauwa, 2016*). Among the 17 SDGs for transforming the world by 2030, SDG 4, which emphasizes "Quality Education", ranks high, and for obvious reasons. Basically, SDG 4 encourages all UN-member countries, including Nigeria, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all – through the Education 2030 (Framework for Action (FFA)).

Education is an important sector in the SDGs. Without education, there will be no meaningful development. In fact the lack of education is a serious limitation to the achievement of any development programme. Moreover, education has to be relevant and cogent to drive the much needed development. One of such education is Business Education.

Business education can be viewed as education for business (vocational in nature) and education about business (utilitarian in

nature). Udo (2015) described business education as an aspect of vocational and technical education which is designed to help learners acquire competencies in accounting, business management, banking and finance administration, marketing, bookkeeping, office technology, information and communication technology, business law, economics for business, business web page design, desktop publishing, shorthand, word processing among others. It is the type of education that is concerned with the acquisition of skills and knowledge for employment and sustainable livelihood (Olupayimo, 2018). In view of the foregoing, achieving the SDGs has a clear link with Business Education.

### **Goals of Business Education**

Ekpeyong (2012) identified the following as the generally acceptable goals of business education:

- Develop individuals who will be properly equipped with the pre-requisite knowledge and skills for productive work life.
- Develop a pool for competent and reliable technical manpower, capable of being mobilized in times of national economic emergency.



- ☐ Develop individuals who will be capable of meeting modern business and technological challenges.
- ☐ Develop in the youths the right attitudes and skills towards work.
- ☐ Equip the youths with the requisite knowledge and skills for paid or self employment.
- ☐ Prepare the youths for meeting community, state and national economic aspirations.
- ☐ Enable the youths to choose and perfect on those areas of business education for which they have interests and aptitudes.
- ☐ Equip the learners to develop skills for making rational economic decisions in various areas of business.
- ☐ Enable the learners to relate their expertise to the needs of their communicative and
- ☐ Produce business and industrial managers who will be capable of meeting technological and managerial complexities of modern industry and to provide the vocational and technical knowledge in various areas of business.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Over the years, Nigerian government has come up with various programmes and initiatives aimed at making life better for the citizens. In some of these cases, the Federal

Government has aligned itself with global initiatives that emanate from the United Nations. In spite of the benefits associated with most of these laudable initiatives, it seems that most developing countries hardly realized those goals. The year 2015, for example was the target year for the actualization of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), yet the level of poverty, hunger, inequality in education, rate of unemployment, among others have increased instead of reducing. What could have been responsible for this? Could it be that the various stakeholders have no clear definition of what these goals were all about? In all these, do the Business Education practitioners have any role to play? Now that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been unveiled, will it still go the way of other initiatives? This study, is therefore, set to unravel through empirical evidences, the areas of priorities and challenges of actualizing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from the perspectives of Business Education practitioners.

### **Objectives of the study**

The general objective of the study is to determine the areas of priorities and challenges of actualizing the Sustainable Development Goals from the perspective of



Business Education practitioners in Delta State. The specific objectives are as follows:

- i. to determine Business Education practitioners perception of areas of priorities in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- ii. to identify the strategies available to Business Education practitioners in Delta State to contribute towards the actualization of the SDGs
- iii. to ascertain the factors limiting the effectiveness of Business Education from contributing towards the actualization of SDGs.

### **Research questions**

The following research questions were raised for the study

- i. What are the areas of priorities in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as perceived by Business Educators?
- ii. What strategies is available to Business Education practitioners in Delta State to contribute towards the actualization of the SDGs
- iii. What the factors limiting the effectiveness of Business Education from contributing towards the actualization of SDGs.

### **Literature Review**

The expiration of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) gave way to the much heralded Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Though there is yet to be much empirical works on SDGs business education practitioners perspectives as at the time of the study, the available and related works were reviewed. Onoyeyan (2013) reported that libraries in Nigeria are faced with a number of challenges and it has affected the impact libraries can make on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It was recommended that library staff should appreciate the vital role they play in development by ensuring consistency in service delivery, acquiring of relevant materials on MDGs, being aggressive in providing mobile library services, information repackaging, literacy programme, partnership with other agencies and community information services.

Adejumo & Adejumo (2014) identified some factors as obstacles to achieving sustainable development in developing countries like Nigeria, and they are: the priorities of governments and individuals are often short termed, corruption which makes it difficult to prioritize long term issues, lack of qualified people to develop and implement alternative technologies due to poor educational system



and lack of education about finite resources. Onah, Urom & Amanze-Unagha (2015) contend that unhindered access to information in information agencies is required for the actualization of all the SDGs. In their view, information such as business information, economic information, agricultural information, for starting and managing small business etc, will lead to drastic reduction and possible end to poverty and hunger, economic growth, among others. Igbuzor (2011) citing Ibrahim & Igbuzor (2009) posited that for Nigeria to meet the MDGs goals in 2015, there is need to formulate and implement policies that will promote transparency and accountability, overcome institutional constraints, promote proper growth, bring about structural change, enhance distributive equity, engender social and cultural re-orientations, engineer political transformation and promote human development etc. These variables identified are some of the essential factors that should be considered as Nigeria warms up to see that SDGs are actualized. Ijaiya et al (2008) contend that achieving the MDGs looks bleak unless a number of measures such as heavy investment in human development, reduction in income poverty, stable macroeconomic policies to take care of the high rate of

inflation, hinge external debt and exchange rate volatility are taken into consideration. Ajiye (2014) indentified the following as challenges facing millennium development goals in Nigeria and these include: lack of human capacity and implementation, inadequate and unreliable data system, finance, indiscipline and endemic corruption. Aleyomi (2013) x-raying Africa and the millennium development goals, identified inequality, structural constraints, and unemployment as factors contributing to slow progress toward the MDGs targets in Africa. He further asserted that inadequate data collection is a huge constraint because the government at all levels in Africa are short of adequate data which has hindered the progress of meeting with the MDG targets by 2015. The implication of this is that Africa may likely not meet the target. Also, data which is the basis for quality planning are in short supply and will have an adverse effect on the realization of the MDGs by 2015.

Ofor & Ofole (2014) stated that the situation in Nigeria indicates that there are challenges in meeting the MDGs by 2015. However, they further suggested that for Nigeria to meet these goals, there is need to formulate and implement policies that will promote transparency and accountability, overcome



institutional constraints, promote pro-poor growth etc. According to Olabode et al (2014), it may be very difficult for some countries in developing societies to attain the MDGs because most of them share the same socio-economic and religious template. Olabode et al (2014) citing Gwary (2011) identified level and extent of poverty as one of the greatest threats to achieving MDGs.

This study therefore contributes to literature by examining the Priorities and Challenges of actualizing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from the perspectives of Business Educators in Delta State

### **Method**

The survey research method was used for the study. The population consisted of Business Educators working in various high institutions in Delta State.

Questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaires were distributed only to Business Educators in Colleges, Polytechnics and Universities in the State. A total of 126 questionnaire was administered and 102 retrieved back while 97 (95%) filled appropriately and found usable for the study. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and frequency count. The results were presented in tables.

### **Results and Discussions**

The results of the study based on the data analyzed are presented as follows:

*Research Question 1:* What are the areas of priorities in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as perceived by Business Educators?

**Table 1: Areas of Priorities**

S/N	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Freq	%
<b>Ranking</b>			
1.	End poverty in all its forms everywhere 6th	72	74
2.	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote Sustainable agriculture 9th	68	70
3.	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages 7th	71	73
4.	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all 3th	94	96
5.	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls 4th	91	94



6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	41	42
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all	52	54
11th		
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	96	99
1st		
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	94	96
3rd		
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries	49	51
12th		
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	69	71
8th		
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	75	77
5th		
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact	47	48
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable Development	53	55
10th		
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	42	44.9
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	96	99
1st		
17. Strengthening the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development	95	98
2nd		

**Source:** Field work, 2021

Table 1 shows areas of priorities based on the response of the participants. Results revealed that SDGs Goals number 8 and 16 received the highest score of 96 (99%) respectively. This is followed by Goal number 17 with 95 (98%) as score. Goals number 9 and 4

94(96%) scores respectively. The Goal No 5 is 91 (94%). The percentage scores for goals number 6, 13 and 15 were all below 50%. The findings therefore imply that the goals having scores above 50% should be priority areas as





perceived by Business education in Delta State to contribute towards the practitioners. actualization of the SDGs

*Research Question 2:* What strategies is available to Business Education practitioners

**Table 2: Strategies Adoptable for Realization of SDGs**

S/N	Strategies	Freq	%
<b>Ranking</b>			
18.	Creating awareness and sensitizing the citizenry	96	99
1st			
19.	Use of talks, shows/exhibitions in creating awareness	90	93
3rd			
20.	Provision of business/economic information to urban and rural dwellers	62	63
8th			
21.	Provision of educational information to improve quality of education	90	93
3rd			
22.	Equipping of business education workshops/model room/library to support research	92	95
2nd			
23.	Identification and collaboration in projects towards the realization of the SDGs	70	72
7th			
24.	Provision of adequate funding to revive business education workshops/model room/library	88	91
5th			
25.	Provision of information on access to availability of credit facilities	89	92
4th			
26.	Provision of information on viable small and medium scale enterprises to rural dwellers	79	81
6th			

**Source:** Field work, 2021

From Table 2, all the 12 items (strategies) listed received a response rate of above 60%. Creating awareness and sensitizing the citizens received the highest response rate of 96 (99%), followed by equipping of business education workshops/model room/library to

support research 92 (95%), provision of educational information to improve quality of education and use of talks shows /exhibitions in creating awareness have 90 (93%).

The implication of the findings presented in table 2 is that Business Education





practitioners agree that there are viable strategies that can be adopted to ensure that SDGs is actualized. Invariably, opportunities captured in the above strategies abound for

Business education practitioners to contribute towards the actualization of Sustainable Development Goals.

*Research Question 3:* What the factors limiting the effectiveness of Business Education from contributing towards the actualization of SDGs?

**Table 3: Constraints to effectiveness of Business Education contribution towards realization of SDGs**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Freq</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
27.	Lack of reliable and accurate data	91	94	2nd
28.	Negligence of Business Education by Nigeria governments	90	93	3rd
29.	Non-challant attitude of Nigerian policy makers	58	60	10th
30.	High level of corruption/misappropriation of funds	64	66	9th
31.	Lip services to development programmes by government	94	97	1st
32.	Low level of partnership drive between Business Education and industry	79	81	7th
33.	Inconsistent government policies	82	85	6th
34.	Poor perception of the Business Education profession	74	76	8th
35.	Low level of private sectors interest in Business Education	82	85	6th
36.	Low self esteem among Business Education professionals	43	44	
37.	Poor lobbying and advocacy skills among Business Education	84	87	5th

**Source:** Field work, 2021

From Table 3, 94 (97%) affirmed lip service to development programmes by governments is main constraint. 91(94%) respondents agreed that lack of reliable and accurate data is a limitation to Business Education contribution towards the realization of the SDGs. 90 (93%) indicated negligence of Business Education by government. 84 (87%) indicated poor lobbying and advocacy

skills for the profession among Business Educators. 82 (85%) identified low level private sector interest in Business Education. Also, low level of partnership between Business Education and industry 79 (81%). The finding on lip service is in agreement with Oyemike, Anyanwu, Onuoha & Nwauwa (2016). The finding also corroborates the findings of Aleyomi (2013)



and Ajiye (2014) that identified inadequate and unreliable data system as one of the challenge to MDGs in Nigeria.

The implication of the findings as presented in table 3 show that despite the abounding opportunities for Business Education to contribute towards the realization of SDGs, there are still multiples factors that can limit the effectiveness of Business Education contribution towards the realization of SDGs.

### **Conclusion**

The study centered on the perception of business education practitioners on the priorities and challenges of actualizing the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The finding shows that certain identifiable part in the SDGs goals should be prioritized as perceived by business education practitioners to ensure that SDGs is actualized. The areas of priorities for Business Education practitioners are fourteen (14) out of the seventeen (17) listed Goals of the SDGs. This clearly shows that the SDGs are geared to improve lives and standard of living which is part of the goals of Business Education.

In addition, awareness creation, equipping of Business Education centres, provision of educational information and provision of adequate funding to revive Business

Education workshops/model room/libraries are identified as viable strategies that business education practitioners could adopt to contribute meaningfully towards actualization of SDGs. The major challenges/constraints are lip service to development programmes by government, lack of reliable and accurate data, negligence of Business Education by Nigerian governments, low level of private sectors interest in Business Education.

### **Recommendations**

It is therefore recommended that:

1. The identified priorities with high score should be emphasized for implementation in order to actualize the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs within the time frame set for it.
2. There is need for synergy of business education practitioners, private sector and government to bring the strategies identified in the study into reality. The government alone cannot wholesomely achieve the goals. The private sector should be involved as well as business educators.
3. Information is power therefore reliable, timely and accurate data should be provided by relevant authorities to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs implementation.



4. The issue of corruption has to be addressed to forestall the failure of the programme.

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