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**Multicultural Education for Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development in Nigeria:
Implications for the achievement of UN-SDG 4**

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Abstract

This study titled, Multicultural Education for Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development in Nigeria: Implications for the achievement of UN-SDG 4, sought to incorporate multicultural education perspectives into the nation's secondary school curricula. To achieve this, two research objectives and two research questions were formulated for the study. The research methodology adopted for the study is the triangulation, using the interview and observation method to obtain data from sixty-four respondents, cutting across three secondary schools in the South-South region of Nigeria. The study used multi-stage sampling techniques, including simple random technique, purposive sampling technique for the interview and the observation method, which was done on purpose. The theoretical framework for the study was the social presence theory. The relevance of the theory to the work is that it creates awareness of the presence of other learners in the school systems. The findings of this study show that multicultural education is not incorporated into Nigerian secondary school curricula and both teachers and student are ignorant about global citizenship and their commitment to shared global responsibility. Therefore, we recommended the need to incorporate multicultural education into the nation's curricula and committing both teachers and students to see themselves as global citizens.

Keywords: *UN-SDG-4, Multicultural Education for Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development*

Introduction

In today's increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, the notion of global citizenship has gained remarkable attention as both an academic framework and a guiding principle for social transformation. The rapid forces of globalization; ranging from technological advancement and

Multicultural Education for Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development.....

transnational migration to environmental challenges and economic integration-have reshaped the way individuals, communities, and nations interact. Consequently, the ability to cultivate a shared sense of responsibility, solidarity, and cooperation across cultural and geographical boundaries has become more critical than ever (Aboud, 2008; Adebayo, 2021). Global citizenship, therefore, is not merely an abstract concept; it reflects a practical orientation toward understanding one's role as part of a wider human community and embracing obligations that transcend national, cultural, and ethnic divisions (UNESCO, 2021). As defined by UNESCO (2014), global citizenship involves an individual's recognition of their place within the global community, accompanied by a commitment to advancing equity, sustainability, peace, and mutual respect in a pluralistic world.

Whitley and Kite, (2019) posited that the urgent global challenges of the 21st century include climate change, persistent social inequalities, violent conflicts, global health crises, economic disparities, and environmental degradation, these demand collaborative solutions that extend beyond national borders. These issues cannot be adequately addressed through isolated or unilateral actions; rather, they call for globally minded citizens who can engage with diversity constructively, to make informed ethical decisions, and work collectively toward shared goals (UNESCO, 2021). Within this landscape, multicultural education emerges as an indispensable instrument for cultivating the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values essential to global citizenship. Adebayo, (2021) in his work observed that more than an educational philosophy, multicultural education is a transformative approach that champions cultural inclusion, equity, and social justice. It equips learners to develop empathy, cultural competence, and critical thinking, thereby enabling them to interact meaningfully with diverse populations and contribute to intercultural understanding and global cooperation (Banks, 2017; Adeyemi, 2020; Adebayo, 2021). Crenshaw, (2019) in the work on intersectionality, the author observed that in today's world, where challenges such as climate change, migration, inequality, and economic disparities are deeply interconnected, global citizenship has become a crucial framework for promoting shared responsibility and collective action. It reflects an individual's awareness of belonging to a global community and their commitment to equity, sustainability, and respect for cultural diversity

(UNESCO, 2014; Banks, 2015). This concept is especially significant as societies face complex issues that demand cross-cultural cooperation and inclusive solutions. Multicultural education plays a pivotal role in developing global citizenship by providing individuals with the knowledge, values, and skills necessary to function effectively in diverse settings (Banks, 2015). Grounded in principles of inclusion and social justice, it nurtures empathy, cultural competence, and critical thinking, empowering learners to engage in global conversations and tackle urgent societal challenges (Banks, 2017; Banks, 2020).

Crenshaw, (2019) also opined that the roots of multicultural education lie in its efforts to respond to cultural pluralism and addressing inequalities within educational systems. Over time, it has evolved into a transformative approach that prepares learners for the realities of globalization (Nieto, 2017). According to Dode, (2020) by incorporating multiple cultural perspectives into curricula, it fosters interdisciplinary skills such as intercultural communication and collaborative problem-solving-abilities essential for tackling global issues like migration and environmental crises (Torres, 2019). Its relevance also extends to sustainable development, as reflected in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly in SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 13 (Climate Action) (United Nations, 2015). Dovidio, Hewstone, Glick and Esses, (2020) in their study found that the role of multicultural education extends well beyond individual capacity-building; it serves as a cornerstone for achieving broader societal progress through sustainable development. This connection is particularly evident in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which positions education as both a goal in itself and a driving force for the attainment of all other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015). Multicultural education directly contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education) by promoting inclusive and equitable learning environments that respect cultural diversities. Simultaneously, it aligns with SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by challenging discriminatory practices and ensuring that marginalized voices are heard and valued. Through these contributions, multicultural education acts as a bridge linking global citizenship education with the pursuit of sustainable, equitable, and peaceful societies.

Falola and Heaton, (2022) posited that multicultural education is a central tool for nurturing global citizenship as it equips learners with the skills necessary to succeed in multicultural societies. It enhances students' intercultural awareness and reduces bias, preparing them to engage in international dialogue and advocate for justice. Admittedly, multicultural education as a framework incorporates multiple cultural perspectives into the university's curricula, thereby fostering cultural awareness and reducing bias. These no doubt, deepen students' understanding of global social issues and strengthen their commitment as an individual recognition of their place within a global community. While this is a step in the right direction, this paper calls for incorporating these multiple cultural perspectives into the secondary schools curricula, as a way of promoting inclusive classrooms that creates awareness of global citizenship. It is against this background that this work seeks to harness global citizenship using the instrumentality of multicultural education for sustainable development in the nation's secondary schools..

Research Objectives

The following research objectives were formulated to guide the study:

- To examine the extent of incorporation of multi-cultural education into the Nigeria secondary schools education curriculum
- To ascertain students' knowledge of global citizenship as a framework for encouraging shared responsibility for sustainable national development in Nigeria
- To ascertain the extent to which the implementation of multicultural education in secondary school curricula can enhance the achievement of SDG-4.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the extent of incorporation of multicultural education into the Nigerian secondary schools curricula?
2. To what extent are secondary school students knowledge of global citizenship for shared responsibility and sustainable national development?
3. How can the implementation of multicultural education in secondary school curricula

enhance the attainment of UN-SDG-4?

Global Citizenship and Multicultural Education

The idea of global citizenship has increasingly become a central discourse in contemporary scholarship, governance and education, as societies across the world grapple with complex, interconnected challenges that transcend national borders. Issues such as climate change, migration, inequality, public health crises, and cultural conflicts demand responses that extend beyond the confines of local or national perspectives. Within this context, multicultural education has emerged as one of the most powerful and practical tools for cultivating the values, dispositions, and skills associated with global citizenship (Falola & Heaton, 2022).

Falola and Heaton, (2022) further observed that examining the dynamic relationship between multicultural education and the promotion of global citizenship, situating both concepts within the broader agenda of sustainable development. Specifically, it argues that multicultural education does not merely expose learners to cultural diversity but actively nurtures competencies such as empathy, intercultural understanding, conflict resolution, and collaborative problem-solving. These competencies are essential in preparing individuals to function as active, responsible, and ethical participants in today's interconnected world. By encouraging appreciation for cultural differences and promoting respect for human dignity, multicultural education lays the foundation for building inclusive communities and, by extension, a more cooperative global society (Eze, 2021).

Eneji, Petters, Esuabana, Onnoghen, Udumo, Ambe, Essien, Unimna, Alawa and Ajigo, (2022) found that global citizenship has become increasingly vital in tackling interconnected global issues such as climate change, inequality, and economic disparity, with multicultural education serving as a key driver of its advancement. This paper explores how multicultural education equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values needed for global citizenship, thereby supporting sustainable development. By embedding diverse cultural perspectives in curricula, encouraging intercultural dialogue, and fostering cooperative problem-solving, it promotes cultural awareness and empathy, empowering people to contribute to inclusive global solutions (Banks,

2017, Eneji, et al., 2022). The discussion also connects these practices to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 13 (Climate Action), underscoring education's central role in building just and sustainable societies (United Nations, 2015, Eneji, et al. 2022a).

Sustainable Development Goal, 4 (Quality Education):

This is one of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Among other aims is to promote education for sustainable development, human rights and global citizenship. Incorporating multiple cultural perspectives into secondary schools curricula is a practical way to advance United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, 4 with focus on global citizenship. To achieve this in practical terms, educators, instead of teaching content from a single dominant perspective, the curricula should reflect different cultures. However, it is not just about adding content, its about reshaping how knowledge is presented, so students learn to think inclusively, question assumptions and engage respectfully with the global community (Hewstone, Rubin & Willis, 2018). More so, educators among other strategies for implementation should carry out curriculum design to broaden subjects like history, literature, civic education and government.

According to Ibrahim, (2020), the intensification of globalization has generated both opportunities for interconnectedness and challenges that demand urgent collective responses. Issues such as climate change, global health crises, widening social inequities, migration, and cultural conflicts have highlighted the insufficiency of localized solutions and the necessity of cultivating a broader perspective grounded in shared global responsibility. Within this context, the concept of global citizenship has emerged as a vital framework for equipping individuals to think and act beyond the confines of their immediate cultural or national affiliations. Global citizenship emphasizes the recognition of one's role within an interconnected global community and carries with it a responsibility to foster equity, sustainability, and respect for diversity (UNESCO, 2014, Ibrahim, 2020).

Oxfam (2015) broadens this perspective by defining global citizenship as a multidimensional construct that encompasses knowledge of global issues, skills for intercultural communication, and

values oriented toward social justice and human rights. Importantly, this framework is not confined to abstract ideals but rather positions individuals as active participants and agents of change within society. By developing the ability to critically analyze global interdependencies, practice empathy, and engage in collaborative problem-solving, global citizens are prepared to address complex challenges in ways that promote inclusivity and equity. Thus, global citizenship education becomes both a personal orientation and a societal imperative for addressing transnational issues that no single nation can resolve alone (Kurdi & Banaji, 2019).

Kurdi and Banaji, (2019) purported that the urgent need to confront interlinked global challenges—such as climate change, inequality, migration, and conflict—has heightened the relevance of global citizenship as a framework for encouraging shared responsibility and intercultural cooperation (Kurdi & Banaji, 2019). Global citizenship is understood as an individual's recognition of their place within a global community, combined with a dedication to equity, sustainability, and cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2014). Oxfam (2015) expands on this by describing global citizenship as encompassing three dimensions: cognitive awareness of global issues, socio-emotional skills for intercultural interaction, and behavioral engagement in social justice. Reysen and Katzarska-Miller's (2013) theoretical model highlights the influence of normative contexts and intergroup support in shaping global citizenship identities, emphasizing its role in promoting inclusive worldviews. This framework empowers individuals to act as agents of change in diverse societal settings.

Musa, (2023) found that multicultural education is a central tool for nurturing global citizenship, as it equips learners with the skills necessary to succeed in multicultural societies. Banks (2017) defines multicultural education as an approach that incorporates multiple cultural perspectives into curricula, fostering empathy, critical thinking, and cultural competence. Research shows that it enhances students' intercultural awareness and reduces bias, preparing them to engage in international dialogue and advocate for justice (Sleeter, 2018; Zirkel, 2008; Musa, 2023). For instance, curricula that include perspectives from marginalized groups have been shown to deepen students' understanding of global inequalities and strengthen their commitment to social justice

Multicultural Education for Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development.....

(Torres, 2019). Nieto (2017) further argues that multicultural education encourages transformative learning by challenging systemic inequities and instilling a sense of global responsibility.

According to Mustapha, (2021) the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers a comprehensive framework for addressing environmental, social, and economic issues (United Nations, 2015). Looking at the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) stress education's importance in building inclusive and peaceful societies, (Mustapha, 2021). Multicultural education supports these goals by promoting inclusive classrooms that counter prejudice and foster social cohesion (Banks, 2017). Specifically, SDG 4.7 calls for education that advances global citizenship, human rights, and sustainable development while valuing cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2014). Moreover, by enhancing intercultural dialogue, multicultural education contributes to SDG 16 by encouraging peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013; Mustapha, 2021).

Criticizing the extent of achieving the SDG-4, Nieto and Bode, (2018) observed that nonetheless, certain gaps remain in the literature, although research affirms multicultural education's effectiveness in improving cultural competence, its direct contributions to sustainability outcome such as environmental protection and economic equity, are less documented (Sleeter, 2018). Additionally, most studies are concentrated in Western contexts, with limited exploration in regions such as Africa or Asia (Torres, 2019). Another underexplored area is the long-term influence of global citizenship education on institutional policy, particularly regarding SDG 16's emphasis on governance and strong institutions (Nieto, 2017; Nieto & Bode, 2018). These gaps point to the need for further inquiry into how multicultural education can practically translate global citizenship into sustainable development outcomes. Further gap in the literature is the failure to consider learners at the level of secondary schools.

Nnadi, (2022) observed that ultimately, multicultural education plays a pivotal role in linking global citizenship to sustainable development by equipping learners with the values and competencies required to build inclusive, just, and sustainable societies. By integrating diverse

worldviews, it enables collaborative approaches to global challenges in line with the transformative ambitions of the SDGs (United Nations, 2015). This review highlights the necessity of embedding multicultural education within educational systems as a deliberate strategy for raising global citizens who can drive social equity and sustainable progress.

Closely aligned with this vision, multicultural education has been identified as one of the most effective instruments for cultivating the competencies required for global citizenship. Banks (2017) characterizes multicultural education as an educational philosophy and practice that seeks to integrate diverse cultural perspectives into curricula, thereby challenging ethnocentric biases while promoting equity and inclusion. Nieto (2017) reinforces this view by describing multicultural education as transformative, emphasizing its capacity to foster empathy, cultural competence, and critical awareness among learners. Through exposure to multiple cultural narratives, histories, and worldviews, students develop the skills to value diversity, negotiate cultural differences, and engage constructively in intercultural dialogue. This process not only enhances personal growth but also strengthens societal cohesion in increasingly diverse communities.

Empirical evidence supports the claim that multicultural education directly advances the principles of global citizenship. Research by Sleeter (2018) demonstrates that educational environments that embrace multicultural perspectives empower students to address systemic inequalities and social injustices. Similarly, Torres (2019) argues that curricula designed to incorporate global perspectives foster a deeper understanding of global issues, motivating learners to advocate for equitable and sustainable solutions. For example, school programs that integrate themes of environmental justice, human rights, and cross-cultural cooperation have been shown to increase learners' willingness to participate in civic and global initiatives. By embedding cultural narratives and global issues within classroom teaching, educators provide students with opportunities to critically examine their role in shaping a fairer and more sustainable world (Nnadi, 2022).

Nwagwu, (2018) found a striking relationship between multicultural education and global citizenship which is further strengthened by its alignment with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Education, as articulated in this framework, plays a pivotal role in

Multicultural Education for Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development.....

achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which seek to address social, economic, and environmental challenges in an integrated manner (United Nations, 2015). Of particular relevance are SDG 4 (Quality Education), which underscores the importance of inclusive and equitable learning opportunities, and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), which calls for the elimination of systemic barriers that perpetuate exclusion. Multicultural education contributes directly to these goals by cultivating inclusive classroom practices, reducing prejudice, and equipping learners with competencies that promote social cohesion (Banks, 2017). Notably, SDG 4.7 explicitly emphasizes the role of education in fostering global citizenship and sustainable development, making multicultural education an indispensable strategy for realizing this vision (UNESCO, 2014).

Obinanasor, Ezeji and Onyeocha, (2025) found that despite the strong theoretical and policy connections between global citizenship, multicultural education, and sustainable development, certain gaps in the literature remain evident. While existing research has explored the impact of multicultural education on cultural competence and equity, there is comparatively less empirical evidence linking multicultural education to measurable sustainable development outcomes, such as environmental stewardship, poverty reduction, or economic justice (Sleeter, 2018). Additionally, the majority of scholarly work has focused on Western educational systems, leaving underexplored how multicultural education is contextualized and implemented in regions such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Torres, 2019). This imbalance risks overlooking the diverse cultural realities and educational practices that shape global citizenship in different settings. Addressing these gaps requires more inclusive, comparative, and context-specific research that investigates how multicultural education operates within varied cultural and political landscapes.

Ultimately, the instrumental role of multicultural education lies in its ability to bridge global citizenship and sustainable development. By integrating diverse cultural perspectives into educational systems, it nurtures the values, skills, and attitudes necessary for building inclusive, equitable, and sustainable societies. This review highlights that multicultural education not only enhances learners' intercultural competence but also equips them to engage actively in global

problem-solving. As such, prioritizing multicultural education becomes essential for any educational system seeking to align with the transformative aspirations of the SDGs and to prepare future generations of global citizens.

Theoretical framework/Model

The study is anchored on the social presence theory which was developed by John Short, Ederyn Williams and Bruce Christie in 1976. According to social presence theory, communication is effective if the communication medium has the appropriate social presence required for the level of interpersonal involvement required for a task. Social presence defines how participants relate with one another, which in turn affect their ability to communicate effectively. It is assumed in social presence theory that in any interaction involving two parties, both parties are concerned both with acting out certain roles and with developing or maintaining some sort of personal relationship. Social presence theory enable individuals to challenge policies, criticize government policies and to fight societal causes unhindered, thereby, creating the opportunity for a revision of certain policies and programmes. Social presence theory finds expression in this paper because it creates awareness of the presence of other learners in the educational system, who seemingly are not considered through policy gap.

Research Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is literature review, where secondary data were collected from different sources, published works, documentaries and periodicals. Interviews were also held with different people in the education sector and policy developers. Documents were critically examined and analyses from the works of other researchers. Planned interviews were selectively held with teachers who teach subjects like government or civic education, national value and policy makers including school administrators including principals.

Research Question One: What is the extent of incorporation of multicultural education into the Nigerian secondary schools curricula? This question was addressed using interview and observation. From the interview section, the respondents stated that there's no such perspective as multicultural education in the school's curricula. 86 (67.2%) out of 128 respondents observed that

Multicultural Education for Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development.....

the current secondary school curriculum does not have multicultural education as a subject in the curriculum, while 42 respondents (32.8%) said some aspects of multicultural education are integrated or infused into some secondary school subjects as embedded in the curriculum. This result is not in tandem with the United Nations (2015) that highlights the necessity of embedding multicultural education within education systems as a deliberate strategy for raising global citizens who can drive social equity and sustainable progress. Also, non-inclusion of perspective into the curricula runs contrary to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which offers a comprehensive framework for addressing SDG No. 4 (Quality Education). Banks (2017), posits the need to include multicultural education as an approach that incorporates multicultural perspectives into schools curricula. Multicultural education supports these goals by promoting inclusive classrooms that counter prejudice and foster social cohesion (Banks, 2017).

Still in a bid to be sure of the findings, an observation was carried out through inspection of the student's notes, the teachers' notes of lessons and schools curricula and the finding was not different from the result gotten from the other technique, used earlier. Our thinking is that when these minds (learners) are exposed to multicultural education at a relatively young age, it will no doubt deepen their understanding of global social issues. That is, by integrating multiple cultural perspectives into educational systems especially the secondary school systems, it will nurture the values, skills and attitudes necessary for building inclusive, equitable and sustainable societies.

Research Question 2: To what extent are secondary school students' knowledge of global citizenship for shared responsibility and sustainable national development? Information from the interview (qualitative) conducted based on this question revealed that 71 (54.5%) of the respondents interviewed accepted that they have no idea of global citizenship, talk-less of shared responsibility. In the opinion of this work, the urgent need to confront interlinked global challenges has heightened the relevance of global citizenship. UNESCO (2014), asserted that global citizenship as an individual recognition of their place (responsibility) within the global community. Oxfam (2015) broaden this perspective by defining global citizenship as active participants and agents of change within a society.

The cultivation of global citizenship through multicultural education extends beyond the classroom, preparing individuals to address some of the most pressing global issues of the 21st century. For instance, culturally competent citizens are more effective at engaging in international initiatives for environmental stewardship, advancing SDG 13 (Climate Action), and advocating for fair and inclusive economic systems, advancing SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) (Torres, 2019). Moreover, by instilling skills in dialogue and conflict resolution, multicultural education supports the realization of SDG 16, promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013). In addition, the observation made by the researcher from the three states equally gave credence to the findings that to a large extent the students do not understand the concepts of multicultural education, global citizenship and sustainable development. Most students were hazarding guesses that are unrelated to the questions.

Research questions 3: How can the implementation of multicultural education in secondary school curricula enhance the attainment of UN-SDG-4? Result from this interview shows that 98 respondents (76.6%) strongly holds that if the curriculum as properly implemented, multicultural education will imbue in the learners the attitude, values, skills and capacity to work towards the achievements of the sustainable development goal 4, where it ripple effects can enhance sustainable national development in Nigeria. While 30 respondents representing 23.4% said the effective implementation of multicultural education like every other subject cannot guarantee sustainable national development in Nigeria. The implication of this result is that when the implementation of multicultural education is introduced widely into the school curriculum and properly implemented, students would learn more about global citizenship and contribute to sustainable national development. Peaceful coexistence is an aspect of sustainable development.

Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as Banks' model of multicultural education, as well as practical initiatives like UNESCO's intercultural programs and teacher training schemes, the article outlines effective strategies. It further considers challenges, including limited resources and cultural pushback, while suggesting responses such as technology-driven learning and global partnerships. By linking education with social justice and environmental sustainability,

Multicultural Education for Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development.....

multicultural education cultivates global citizens equipped to address today's complex challenges. The findings highlight its transformative power in shaping global responsibility and sustainable development, calling on educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to integrate it more fully into education systems for a more inclusive and sustainable future (Eneji, Alawa, Udumo, Essien, Unimna, Essien, Ambe & Ajigo, 2022b)..

This study further underscores the alignment between multicultural education and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education, and SDG 10, which seeks to reduce inequalities within and among countries. Through a critical review of theoretical frameworks, international policies, and practical case studies, the paper demonstrates how multicultural education can serve as a strategic bridge connecting the principles of global citizenship with the imperatives of sustainable development. Strategies highlighted include curriculum reforms that integrate global perspectives, intercultural exchange programs, teacher training initiatives, and community-based partnerships that foster cross-cultural dialogue (Eneji, et al., 2022b).

Nevertheless, the article acknowledges the challenges that hinder the full realization of these goals. These challenges include limited financial resources, inadequate teacher preparation, cultural resistance to change, and the persistence of ethnocentric attitudes within educational systems. To address these barriers, the paper proposes innovative solutions such as leveraging digital platforms for intercultural exchange, adopting policies that incentivize inclusive teaching practices, and engaging local communities in participatory educational reforms.

Studies by Ogbu, (2018); Ofoha, (2019) and Okeke, (2020) had all call for a renewed and urgent commitment to multicultural education as a transformative instrument for nurturing global citizenship and achieving the broader goals of sustainable development. Prioritizing multicultural education is not simply an academic exercise; it is a moral imperative and a pragmatic necessity in the 21st century. By doing so, societies can cultivate generations of global citizens who are prepared to collaborate across cultural boundaries, advocate for equity, and engage in the pursuit of shared global solutions. The future of sustainable development depends on such citizens-

individuals who understand that the challenges we face are interconnected and that the solutions must be both inclusive and collective.

Onwuka, (2021) also found that the integration of multicultural education into educational systems worldwide holds the potential to transform classrooms into spaces of empathy, societies into communities of equity, and the global order into one marked by justice, sustainability, and mutual respect. A future that is both equitable and sustainable can only be realized if multicultural education is embraced as a cornerstone of policy, pedagogy, and practice. Multicultural education functions as a strategic instrument for nurturing global citizenship, equipping learners with the necessary skills, values, and dispositions to contribute meaningfully to sustainable development. To operationalize this vision, educators, policymakers, and institutions must adopt intentional, evidence-based practices that integrate multicultural principles into formal and informal learning environments.

Sleeter, (2018) went further to state that multicultural education functions as a powerful tool for nurturing global citizenship by equipping individuals with the skills and values needed to advance sustainable development. Its effective implementation requires carefully designed, evidence-based strategies embedded within educational systems. A major strategy is incorporating multicultural perspectives into school curricula. This means embedding diverse histories, cultural narratives, and global challenges into disciplines such as literature, science, and social studies. For example, lessons can use case studies on migration or climate change to encourage students to analyze these issues from multiple cultural viewpoints (Banks, 2017). UNESCO's Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), active in more than 180 countries, illustrates this approach by engaging learners in intercultural projects, including sustainability-focused initiatives across Africa and Asia that foster empathy and global awareness (UNESCO, 2020). Similarly, the International Baccalaureate (IB) program integrates global citizenship themes into its framework, encouraging collaborative solutions to shared challenges (IBO, 2023).

Ultimately, the findings of this study affirm the transformative potential of multicultural education in shaping individuals into globally minded citizens who are not only knowledgeable but also

committed to equity, sustainability, and collective responsibility. By fostering a deep sense of global belonging and responsibility, multicultural education becomes a catalyst for advancing the broader objectives of sustainable development. The article therefore calls on educators, policymakers, and international organizations to deliberately invest in and prioritize multicultural education as an indispensable pathway toward building equitable, inclusive, and sustainable societies for present and future generations

Conclusion

During the course of this research, it was discovered that the vision of multicultural education for global citizenship and sustainable national development came with some challenges. Issues such as limited financial resources, entrenched cultural resistance, unequal access to quality education, and divergent national priorities often hinder the widespread adoption of multicultural education. These barriers underscore the need for practical strategies and policy innovations that integrate multicultural education into the very fabric of national and international educational systems. Investment in inclusive curriculum design, sustained professional development for teachers, and long-term partnerships with international organizations remain critical for overcoming these obstacles. Addressing these challenges requires not only institutional reform but also political will and collective commitment from policymakers, educators, civil society, and global stakeholders alike.

This study found that the proper integration or infusing of multicultural education into the secondary school curricula, teacher training programs and intercultural exchange programs, can enhance the inculcation of traditional values, global citizenship, sustainable development goal 4 and sustainable national development in Nigeria. Multicultural education moves beyond its traditional role of knowledge transmission and becomes a transformative process that links individual learning with societal change. These educational practices directly align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), which call for inclusive and equitable education systems that foster peace, social justice, and human dignity. In this regard, multicultural education is not merely

supplementary it is a strategic pathway toward building inclusive, participatory, and sustainable societies that can thrive amid global diversity.

Recommendations

- One of the most effective strategies is the integration of multicultural perspectives into curricula. This involves moving beyond tokenistic representations of cultural diversity toward embedding diverse worldviews, histories, and contemporary issues across a broad range of subjects. For example, social studies curricula can explore topics such as migration or global inequality through multiple cultural lenses; literature courses can feature texts from underrepresented authors across different continents; and science education can incorporate indigenous knowledge systems alongside Western scientific paradigms.
- The scope of Citizenship Education should be widened beyond national values to include Global Education, where national value, international cooperation, global citizenship and peaceful coexistence among others can be taught and imbibed by students for international cooperation and development.
- Every learner in the school system should avail himself the recognition of the responsibility within the global community.
- Students should be regularly carried to different locations in terms of field work to mingle and interact with other cultures and religion
- The National Youth Service (NYSC) scheme should be upgraded and effectively monitored to achieve the purpose for which it was first created.
- Schools should organize cultural exchange programmes between schools, where students could be moved from one school to sit in the same class with their colleagues from other clime and attend lectures using multicultural education systems.

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