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Workers experience and assessment of implementation of Environmental sustainability policies: Focus on Anambra State Environmental Protection Agency Awka Nigeria

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Abstract

The ineffectiveness and inefficiency of government policies to meet the target of environmental sustainability in Nigeria has been shown with the end of millennium development goals in 2015. However, there is need to analyze the situation in order to be able to predict the effectiveness of the Sustainable Development Goal six. Aim: to determine the effect of work experience on assessment of implementation of Government Policies on Environmental Sustainability in Anambra State, Nigeria. Methodology: Survey research design, using self-administered questionnaire on the available staff who were met in the office of Anambra State Environmental Protection Agency (ANSEPA) Awka. Analysis was done with frequency distribution tables and Chi-squared test. Result: Modal age group was 24-29 years with male preponderance (Male: Female ratio was 1: 0.875). A majority (60.0%) had secondary education, while the rest (40.0%) attained tertiary education level. The participants with work experience below 5 years constituted the majority (43.3%, while those with 7 years and above were least (26.9%). The majority (60.0%) of respondents rated ANSEPA's performance as low, compared to 13.3% that rated it high. Also, a majority (60.0%) agreed that ANSEPA's performance will improve if given the right condition, necessary material and resources. A majority of the staff (60.0%) were not aware of the policy that guard against felling of trees, bush burning and inappropriate dumping of industrial and domestic waste in Anambra, compared to 40.0% of staff who did. The study show that 7 years and above work experience group (100.0%) were strongly conversant with the MDG7 (SDG 6) Environmental sustainability, followed by the 5- 7 year work experience group (44.4% and the <5 years was least (23.1%), this was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, all participants (100.0%) with >7 years work experience were strongly conversant with state policy on environmental sustainability, compared to those 5-7 years (44.4%) and <5 years, the least (23.1%). The difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). All the participants (100.0%) with >7 years work experience strongly agree that ANSEPA operated according to policy on environmental sustainability, compared to half (50%) of those in 5-7 years work experience group and 19.2% of the <5 years group ($p < 0.05$). In conclusion, more experienced workers in ANSEPA had a better knowledge of policies on environmental sustainability both at the MDG7 (SDG 6) and at the state policy levels. There is the tendency for the workers knowledge of the policies to increase with their years of working experience.

Introduction

The Millennium Declaration was adopted by 191 countries in September 2000. Inherent in this was a global agenda of eight millennium development goals (MDGs), one of which was to ensure environmental sustainability (MDG7). The inclusion of MDG7 as one of the MDGs was informed by the recognition of the damage being done to the environment by man. Ibenwa (2014) stated that man's survival on planet earth absolutely depends on the environment. Therefore, unhealthy environment leads to unhealthy human existence. In recent times, one of the problems facing Nigeria is the issue of environmental sustainability. Following the end of MDGs in September 2015, a new set of development goals was adopted by 193 countries in a special summit at the United Nations. These are called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and each goal has specific targets to be achieved by 2030. There are 17 goals and 169 targets, and SDG6 which is ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, was used to replace MDG7. The situation in Nigeria especially with respect to the problems addressed by SDG6 is dangerous and difficult. For instance, United Nations Development Programme observed that the country's natural resources some of which constitute the country's national assets are seriously threatened. Similarly, access to safe water and sanitation is a serious challenge to Nigeria due to overwhelming population growth, rapid industrialization, and rural – urban migration (Adeagbo 2013).

Statement of Problem

A lot of doubt has been raised on the effectiveness and efficiency of government policies to meet the target of environmental sustainability in Nigeria by 2030. According to current findings, improved water and basic sanitation as stipulated in the millennium development goal (MDG7 or SDG6) was a mirage (Adeagbo 2013). His study noted that current report shows that Nigerian's water supply situation has not kept pace in meeting the millennium development goal target of 75 percent coverage for safe drinking water and 70 percent for basic sanitation due to lack of decent toilet, drainages, sewage networks, waste-water treatment and disposal facilities in both rural and urban areas. Also, the increasing number of slum settlements in the country due to increasing poverty rate is an indication of the decline in basic sanitation. The neglect of the rural areas by the Nigerian Government has resulted in a continuous mass-rural-urban migration in search of greener pasture, consequently resulting in over-population and increase in the slum settlement prevalent in the urban areas.

Moreover, this problem led to high generation of waste/refuse products in the environment. Wastes are inevitable consequences of human activities which include all unwanted and economically unusable materials resulting from human activities discarded purposefully or accidentally into the environment, (Aribigbola 2008). Waste can be solid or semi-solid, liquid, gaseous or radioactive which can result to disastrous consequences of serious health and environmental damages if left unchecked.

Another problem of environmental sustainability in Nigeria according to Amalu and Ajake (2014) is indiscriminate dumping of wastes into gutters, roadsides, drainages, bushes, streams, rivers and other unauthorized places resulting to drainage blockage, flooded roads and the spread of offensive odours and diseases. The Nigerian government at federal, state and local levels however, has made several serious efforts to arrest the ugly situation. They embarked on environmental awareness campaigns to educate and sensitize the citizenry on the dangers of indiscriminate dumping of waste/refuse in the society.

Efforts were also made to map out dumping sites, collection bins were placed at various intervals within reach, incinerators, were provided and defaulters were also sanctioned. Some Agencies like Anambra State Environmental Protection Agency (ANSEPA) were created by government to implement the environmental sustainability policies in the state. This study attempts to assess the effect of work experience on the implementation of this policy by ANSEPA in Anambra State.

Research Questions

Based on the above statement the study seeks to provide answer to the following research questions:

- To what extent does work experience affect assessment of implementation of environmental sustainability policies in Anambra State?
- To what extent are the ANSEPA workers conversant with environmental sustainability policies in Anambra State?

Objectives of the study

Aim: to determine the effect of work experience on assessment of implementation of Government policies on Environmental sustainability in Anambra state, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of this study include:

- To determine the effect of work experience on assessment of implementation of environmental sustainability policies in Anambra State.
- To determine how conversant ANSEPA workers are on the environmental sustainability policies in Anambra State.

Conceptual framework

Akinode (2002) stated that environment is the totality of the places and surroundings, in which we live, work and interact with other people in our cultural, religious, political and socio-economic activities for self-fulfillment and advancement of our communities. The Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) special publication (1991) stated that the environment includes water, air, land, plant, animal, human being, living therein and the inter-relationship that exists among them.

However, environment can be viewed according to Moughalu, et al (2004) as a determinant of the characteristic features of growth, development and sustainability of both the component elements of the environment and the environment itself. Although, evidence suggests that the prevailing global environmental degradation poses serious threat to sustenance of carrying capacity of the ecosystem.

Aribigbola (2008) opined that environmental sustainability has taken priority position in housing, infrastructure provision, planning, land use and urban development among others. Generally, Kjellstrom (2007) observed that environmental problems are mostly due to developmental processes and are of local, regional and global effect. These effects are viewed as consequences of human activities and are most often harmful on human beings, livelihood, animal and plant lives presently or transferred to posterity.

Environmental Sustainability

The need to achieve environmental sustainability is rooted on the benefits of development on the environment and on the existing social structure. Many traditional societies have been devastated by depletion of forests, disruption of water system, pollution, inadequate transport and jeopardized ecosystem. There is a very big link between environment and development. To address the problem of environmental sustainability there must be developmental sustainability. The concepts of sustainable development should be concerned with finding solutions to social inequalities, environmental damage and ensure a sound economic base. Harries (2000) noted that sustainable development implies that the conservation of natural capital is essential for sustainable economic production and inter-generational equality. The developmental sustainability according to him has to do with maximization of human welfare which includes food, clothing, housing, health, security, education, transport service and participatory democracy, and all are crucial element of development and are interrelated with environmental sustainability.

There are several definitions of the term environmental sustainability, some have defined it in relation to the ability of man to preserve the available natural resources in his surroundings and not over-use the resources in a way that will be deficient in future. But the definition given by the United Nations Development Programme (2005) seems to be generally acceptable. They defined it as that which meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own goals, (UNDP 2005).

Environmental sustainability seeks to sustain global life support system indefinitely. This refers principally to those systems for maintaining human life. According to Harris (2000), there are three aspects of sustainable development; economic sustainability, social sustainability and environmental sustainability. The concept of sustainable development is concerned with finding solution to social inequality, environmental damage and at the same time ensuring a sound economic base.

Theoretical Framework

The Goal setting theory was used to guide the analysis and discussion of this work. The theory of goal setting was propounded by Edwin Locke in the mid-1960s. He stated that goal setting involves the development of an action plan designed to motivate and guide a person towards the goal. He described Goal setting as a major component of personal development and management literature. Studies by Locke and Latham (1968) show that more specific and ambitious goals lead to more performance improvement than easy or general goals. As long as the person accepts a goal, has the ability to attain it and does not have conflicting goals, there is a positive linear relationship between goal difficulty and task performance. Goal setting theory states that several conditions are important in successful goal achievement, which includes Goal-acceptance, Goal-specificity, and Goal-difficulty (Locke and Latham, 1968).

Goal-Acceptance/commitment

states that a task must be taken as important and worthy to be achieved before time and monetary logistics can be offered for its accomplishment.

Goal-Specificity

states that a goal must be specific and measurable to gauge progress. It defines the extent to which an explicit goal exists on which problem solving activities are assessed. It also means that goals must be well defined and definite strategic plan made on how to achieve them.

Goal-Difficulty

means that a task must pose a certain amount of challenge to attain. Goals should be high enough to encourage high performance but low enough to be attainable. Critical thinking is needed to face task challenge in order to achieve a goal, (Locke & Latham 1968).

SDGs are goal oriented, they are also goal specific, has goal-acceptance and goal difficulty component in keeping with goal setting concept. Environmental sustainability as SDG6 is difficult, challenging and achievable; hence they are clear, measurable and quantitative in nature. The capacity of SDG6 to transform the conditions of the people through a sustainable environment is determined by the level of commitment of the people and the Nigerian government.

However, in applying the theory of goal setting in achieving the SDG6 which is ensuring environmental sustainability, the SDGs must possess the same basic characteristics with that of goal setting theory which are goal-specificity, goal acceptance and goal difficulty. Therefore, it is difficult in realization, but its achievement will be determined by the level of acceptance, commitment and high thinking, strategic plans and policies applied by the Nigerian government to foster its specific implementation and realization.

Methodology

Survey research method was used, which involved the use of Interviewer administered questionnaires administered on ANSEPA workers who were met on duty during the visit by the researchers.

Sixty workers in the Ministry of Environment/ANSEPA were selected from the 148 workers. All the workers at the head offices of ANSEPA/ Ministry of Environment were included, while workers in other ministries were excluded.

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the respondent for the study. All ANSEPA staff, who were met in the office at the Ministry of Environment were administered questionnaires and enrolled for the study. Analysis was done using frequency distribution tables with Chi squared test.

Data Analysis, Findings and Discussion

Sixty questionnaires were administered and all were analyzed giving a response rate of 100%.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents:

VARIABLE	CATEGORIES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Age grouping	18 – 23	8	26.6
	24 – 29	12	40
	30 – 35	4	13.3
	36 – 41	2	6.7
	42 – 47	2	6.7
	54 – 59	2	6.7
	60 and above	0	0
Sex	Male	16	53.3
	Female	14	46.7
Education status of respondents	Primary	0	0
	Secondary	18	60.0
	Tertiary	12	40.0
Work Experience (years)	<5yrs	26	43.3
	5-7yrs	18	30.0
	>7 -10yrs	16	26.7

The age bracket 24 – 29 is the modal age group followed by age group 18 – 23. The next was the group 30 – 35, from 36 – 55 recorded steady decrease in their number. The male respondents constituted 53.3%, while that of the females was 46.7% giving a male: female ratio of 1: 0.875.

The educational distribution of the respondents show that people with SSCE or less constituted the highest percentage of 53.33%, while the least respondent from the table has 13.33%.

The staff below 5 years constituted the greater proportion (43.3%) of the participants, while those above 7 years were the least (26.7%). The percentage of staff with >7 years work experience was 30.0%

Table 2: The respondents view on various questions on ANSEPA's performance and effectiveness in the implementation of environmental sustainability

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
How do you assess the performance of ANSEPA in Anambra state		
Low	36	60.0
Moderate	16	26.7
High	8	13.3
The performance of ANSEPA would be improve if given the right condition, material and resources.		
Yes	36	60.0
No	24	40.0
Don't know	0	0.0
Are you aware of any government policy that guards against destruction of environment through felling of trees, bush burning and indiscriminate dumping of commercial and domestic waste in Anambra State.		
Yes	24	40.0
No	36	60.0
Has the targets of Environmental Sustainability in Anambra state been achieved?		
High	4	6.7
Moderate	6	10.0
Low	50	83.3
Have government policies facilitated environmental sustainability in Anambra State?		
Yes	15	25.0
No	45	75.0
Total	60	100.0

Table 2 shows that 60% of the respondents rated the performance of ANSEPA as low, while 26.7% rated same as moderate and 13.3% as high.

A majority of respondents, (60%) agree that the performance of ANSEPA will improve if given the right condition, necessary materials and resources. The remaining 40% disagree. Less than half of the respondents, 40% were aware of a policy that guard against felling of trees, bush burning and inappropriate duping of industrial and domestic waste in Anambra State, while 60% of the respondents stated otherwise.

The highest percentage of respondents, 83.3% rated the achievement of the targets of the MDG on environmental sustainability as low, followed by 10% who rated it as moderate and 6.7% as high.

From table 2 above, 75.0% of the respondents are of the view that government policies have not facilitated environmental sustainability in Anambra State while 25.0% were of the opinion that government policies facilitated environmental sustainability in Anambra State. Table 3: Effect of Work Experience on Response of Respondents

Table 3: Work Experiences:

Work Experience	Not agreed	Agreed	Strongly agreed	X ²	Df	P - value
I am conversant with SDG 6 – environmental sustainability				29.133	4	.000
<5yrs	12 (46.2)	8 (30.8)	6 (23.1)			
5-7yrs	2 (11.1)	8 (44.4)	8 (44.4)			
>7 – 10	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (100)			
I am conversant with state policy on environmental sustainability						
<5yrs	11 (42.3)	10 (38.5)	5 (19.2)	29.626	4	.000
5-7yrs	2 (11.1)	8 (44.4)	8 (44.4)			
>7 – 10	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (100.0)			
ANSEPA operates according to policy on environmental sustainability						
<5yrs	11 (42.3)	10 (38.5)	5 (19.2)	28.611	4	.000
5-7yrs	2 (11.1)	7 (38.9)	9 (50.0)			
>7 – 10	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (100.0)			

Table 3: show that all (100.0%) of the >7years work experience group are strongly conversant with the ES policies, compared to the 5- 7years work experience group (44.4%), while majority (46.5%) of the lowest work experience <5years are not conversant with the SDG 6. The highest work experience group (>7years) are all conversant with the state ES policies, followed by the 5-7years work experience group (44.4%). The entire highest experience work group (>7years) agree that ANSEPA operates in accordance with the state ES policy, compared to (50.0%) for 5-7years group and >5years group (19.2%).

Discussion of the findings

The modal age group is the 24-29 years age group, while the male female ratio of the workers was 1: 0.875. Approximately, half of the staff (56.7%) have at least 5 years work experience.

Performance of ANSEPA

This study shows that the majority of workers rated the performance of ANSEPA in its function of refuse, collection disposal and management as poor but could be made to improve if given the right material, resources and operating environment. These resources include pay loaders, bulldozers, tippers, din chassis, compactors, waste bins and refuse vans for easy and efficient evacuation and removal of wastes.

Workers Awareness of Government Policies Prohibiting Felling of Trees and Bush Burning

A majority of the respondents are not aware of the policy prohibiting indiscriminate felling of trees and bush burning. The implication of this finding is that the policy will not be well implemented if majority of those responsible for its implementation are not aware of it.

Has Targets of Environmental Sustainability in Anambra State been achieved?

Majority of the respondents opined that the targets of SDG 6, which is to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation by the year 2030, has not been achieved in Anambra State. The implication is that the state Government may have to improve its funding. It is probable that poor management of material resources and lack of capacity building are the major problems to be tackled. Similarly, a majority of the respondents do not think that government policies have facilitated environmental sustainability in Anambra state of Nigeria. It is probable that many of these same workers are not conversant with the state policies on environmental sustainability and therefore lack the ability to assess its effect on the policy implementation.

Approximately half of the workers less than five years' work experience agree being conversant with the SDG 6 on environmental sustainability, compared to about 88.8% of the 5-7 year and hundred percent of those in the 7 years and above work experience.

The study shows that as the work experience increased their conversance with the policy increased, as well as their understanding about their organisation increased. This finding is not surprising. This finding agrees with the goal setting theory on which this article is based on.

Summary of the findings, conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings in the study it has been noted that (ANSEPA) the agency responsible for waste collection, disposal and management in Anambra State has not been effective and efficient in their charged responsibility in the study area. Again it is discovered that the offensive odour emanating from such waste sites or rubbish dumps in most cases resulted to a depletion in the atmospheric condition and health challenges on residents of Anambra State.

However the researcher has deduced that government policy has not facilitated environmental sustainability in Anambra State. Again that Anambra State Environmental Protection Agency (ANSEPA) has not coped with the charged responsibility of collection, removal, disposal and management of domestic, commercial and industrial generated waste in Anambra State. That the attitude of public towards indiscriminate dumping of waste, disposal and management has not been encouraging and the indiscriminate dumping of waste, disposal and management has badly and negatively affected the socio-economic lives of the public. In conclusion therefore, it can be deduced that although more experienced workers of ANSEPA had a better knowledge of policies on environmental sustainability, they are yet to make much impact in achieving the SDG 6 environmental sustainability target in Anambra State.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

- Effective collection, disposal and management of wastes require the involvement, participation and cooperation of local communities and the government.
- Waste collection, disposal and management should be provided in the yearly budget with a separate heading for the purpose of adequate revenue allocation, implementation and monitoring.
- There should be comprehensive environmental legislation that relates to environmental sanitation offences in Nigeria.
- There should be waste bins provided in all compounds with a frequent waste collection turn-around time.
- The agency responsible for waste disposal and management in the study area should operate a door to door system of waste collection.
- There should be adequate and proper town planning for effective waste collection, disposal and management. For example, there is need to provide good access roads, which should be properly linked to one another. Other needs are street lights, and good drainage system. All these will ease the evacuation of wastes from all the nooks and crannies of the state.
- There is need to enhance environmental education programmes and public participation as it affects waste collection disposal and management not only through the radio, television and print media but also through grassroots enlightenment campaigns via the chiefs, community leaders and age grades in different communities in state.

- Primary, secondary and tertiary schools curricula should include detailed topics on waste disposal and waste management so as to inculcate in our children the need for environmental sanitation from childhood.

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