

Developing Partnership for Quality Agricultural Education in Nigeria: A Narrative-Textual Case Study

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Abstract

The paper explored the Narrative-Textual Case Study (NTCS) to confront the present realities of how stakeholders in Agricultural Education can help meet the UN2030 Agenda for sustainable development in Nigeria through partnership. The UN2030 Agenda for quality education and partnership were critically examined to develop an understanding of what partnership can bring to stakeholders for a better-sustainable livelihood. The findings of the study showed amongst others that, the NTCS can be used to promote contributions to knowledge in tackling sustainable development issues of the present realities; Poverty, armed conflicts and other factors are obstacles confronting quality agricultural education in Nigeria and this is beyond just access; adopting an integrated approach to sustainable development issues and partnership can only be achieved through collaborative efforts by all relevant stakeholders. Based on the findings, the following were recommended among others: government of Nigeria and developing partners should develop a synergy on how best to tackle issues confronting the implementation of quality in our education, as well as ensuring that partnership is properly integrated to tackle these issues; also, the government of Nigeria should muster political will for necessary partnership for achieving quality in agricultural education.

Keywords: Narrative Textual Case Study, Partnership, Quality Agricultural Education, Agricultural Education Stakeholders, UN2030 Agenda

DOI: 10.7176/JEP/13-4-03

Publication date: February 28th 2022

Introduction

Over the years, Agricultural education has been a means where learning experiences about on-farm and off-farm practices are passed on from one generation to another. Agricultural education is a skill-oriented vocational study that is directed on “getting-ready” learners for productive on-farm or off-farm opportunities in life (lifelong learning). These opportunities that are available to the recipient of Agricultural education prepares them to be self-employed or be employable in the agriculture workplace. Part of these learning experiences are acquisition of knowledge and information necessary to develop relevant skills in agriculture. This suggests that, an informed and educated society may bring quality in innovations, productivity and fast track the use of new technologies for agricultural production (Nashash, 2013).

To actualize the primary focus of the United Nations 2030 Agenda (UN2030 Agenda) for ending poverty everywhere, adequate and high level information, knowledge, skills, and training in Agricultural education would enable Stakeholders in agricultural education to be knowledgeable in the use of modern farm tools/implements, and new technologies or ideas in tackling issues affecting their livelihoods. This suggests that with quality education, the Stakeholders in agricultural education may do well. It may even suggest that, an inefficient and “low quality” Agricultural education for on-farm and off-farm recipients may limit the development of stakeholders for better productive livelihoods especially those in the rural areas (Yang, 2019).

Partnership entails creating a relationship among stakeholders through collaborations and strong support. This enhances the development of local, national and global efforts in increased food production and better livelihoods (World bank, 2018). The Stakeholders in agricultural education are those that have vested interest in agriculture, both on-farm and off-farm activities. They may include among others, agricultural extension agents, teachers of agriculture at all levels, students of agricultural education at all levels, all categories of farmers, agromarketers, and agro-industrialist (Agbidi & Ikeoji, 2020). These sets of people are the recipients of Agricultural education, and developing their action of engagement clarifies the fact that the workplace practices calls for more efforts targeted at smooth transition from classroom teaching to on-farm or off -farm habits suitable for the industry.

To this end, the United Nation Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2017), recognized that quality education as reflected in extra knowledge, thinking skills, social skills, self-reflective skills, values, attitude and motivation skills are complimentary in bringing an end to poverty in the developing world. Consequently, these attributes may lead to better livelihoods for Stakeholders in agricultural education. Quality agricultural education encompasses not only the availability of learning materials or facilities but how best to use these resources along other variables for better livelihoods that will keep people away from poverty.

Achieving this fit, calls for developing partnership with Stakeholders in agricultural education (UN 2018; World bank, 2018).

Nevertheless, despite efforts by the Federal Government of Nigeria over the years aimed at producing Agricultural education graduates for the workplace industries, it seems that skill gaps persist or the type of education received is not of the quality required by the industries. Likewise, other Stakeholders in agricultural education also faces daunting task in accomplishing their routine assignments in the workplace environment. This limitation, makes stakeholders “unready” for productive capabilities in their livelihoods and therefore requires a concerted effort beyond one man (Singh, *et al.*, 2018).

Although, the nature of the UN2030 goals is not stereotyped, Mair, Jones, Ward, Christie, Druckman and Lyon (2017) argued that with different levels of engagement action, goals for some people are easily actualized, while for some others it is just making attempt. Based on this, Nilsson, Griggs and Visbeck (2016) noted that relationship among goals can be path-independent. This implies that the ambitious UN2030 Agenda for Quality agricultural education are intentional, inter-related, and transformational in nature. The UN2030 Agenda is made of 17 action points co-named Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and education is seen as a driving force. This force requires assistance (partnership) to generate the needed resource to fuel attainment objectives.

The world today survives because everyone, nation or government are dependent on one another for existence. To achieve the UN2030 Agenda for Quality agricultural education (SDG4), concerted efforts need to be made to attract Stakeholders in agricultural education, donor agencies, governmental agencies among others to develop a synergy (SDG 17) towards actualizing the UN2030 Agenda for ensuring that all persons irrespective of their socio-demographics receive a high level of education in agriculture. Recent knowledge in technology has given us the opportunities to explore Agricultural education to gain better learning outcomes. Therefore, this paper used the narrative technique to diagnose the UN2030 Agenda for sustainable development by developing an understanding of what partnership can bring to Stakeholders in agricultural education for a better livelihood.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this paper is to develop an understanding of partnership for a Quality agricultural education through the action plan for SDG 4 and 17. Specifically, this study will aim to:

- i. determine the relevance of Narrative-Textual Case Study (NTCS) approach to developing partnership for Quality agricultural education;
- ii. develop an understanding of the UN2030 Agenda for Quality agricultural education;
- iii. ascertain what Quality agricultural education entails;
- iv. identify elements necessary for achieving Quality agricultural education in Nigeria;
- v. find out how to develop an understanding of partnership with stakeholders; and
- vi. identify the reasons for partnership for Quality agricultural education.

Methods

The Narrative-Textual Case Study (NTCS) approach was employed in this paper. The technique affords the platform to gain needed knowledge through on-line sources with aid of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities (Abouzeedan & Leijon, 2007). The NTCS approach was employed to develop an understanding that addresses the issue of attaining Quality agricultural education in Nigeria. This technique is useful because it adopts quantitative observations, experiences, textual analysis and available data from related researches in varying degrees to address the reality on ground (Agbidi & Ikeoji, 2020; Abouzeedan & Busler, 2008).

The Narrative-Textual Case Study and Quality of Agricultural Education

Resulting from the advancement in the use of technology today in the educational industry, there are lots of changes in the way and manner Agricultural education can now be carried out for better outcomes that will consequently lead to quality in the kind of education we receive in developing countries like Nigeria. Abouzeedan and Leijon (2007) emphasized that the NTCS can utilize both the traditional social science research methods alongside the use of ICT facilities to produce a narrative approach to research findings. This information received through technology can be put to better use in Agricultural education to generate a rich data base of knowledge, skills and other variables.

The Narrative-Textual Case Study as described by Abouzeedan and Leijon (2007) is a means by which internet facilities, world-wide-web, e-library, e-learning, data from on-line sources among others are used to generate intensive array of information base that are available in other to arrive at a reasonable conclusion. This technique is a social science method designed to complement other traditional research methods (Abouzeedan & Busler, 2008; Abouzeedan & Leijon, 2007).

No doubt, the contribution of ICT to Agricultural education and sustainable development is enormous, it's

contribution to knowledge shows clearly the understanding of reality (Abouzeedan & Busler, 2008). The field of Agricultural education is very significant to sustainable development when utilizing the NTCS approach. The choice of using on-line sources of information to research favors a narrative-restructuring approach that is aimed at producing a deep and wide range analysis (Abouzeedan & Busler, 2008). This is so, because it helps to tackle sustainable development issues. Therefore, NTCS can be said to promote contribution to knowledge based on the narrative understanding of present realities.

Understanding the UN2030 Agenda for Quality Agricultural Education

Efforts in the past have been made to ensure that there is education for all through the Millennium Development Goals (MDG 2) with focus on basic education. Though, success was recorded in the number of school children enrolment and significant reduction of school drop outs in Nigeria (Funds for NGOs, 2020). It is disappointing to note that, this effort has not produced the desired results, because many are lacking quality in the type of education they received and most especially in Agricultural education. It is sad that, high level of poverty, armed conflicts and other natural factors such as climate change, Covid-19 among others has posed a great challenge to progress of education in Nigeria. The United Nation Development Programme (UNDP, 2018) acknowledged that these challenges remain a major obstacle confronting developing nations like Nigeria.

Owing to the success and resultant challenges faced in MDGs, the UN redefined their action plan to accommodate other emergent sustainable development issues in education for everybody. There is no gain saying that education remains the most powerful tool in achieving sustainable development in developing countries like Nigeria. In meeting the agenda for an inclusive and quality education, it reiterates the fact that Agricultural education is significantly important for numeracy-literacy towards actualizing the end to poverty (SDG 1) and zero hunger (SDG 2). Thus, to end poverty, people deserve quality education.

Quality agricultural education is one that gives opportunity to all recipients to develop their potentials and capabilities in livelihoods. It will also ensure that they become social and economically productive in a sustainable manner. Slade (2017) sees quality education to be one that is sound in pedagogy by developing students to become active and productive in the society. This type of education prepares the recipients for lifelong learning opportunities. Slade (2017) emphasized that, this type of education should ensure that resources are available and adequate and secondly, it gives room for institutions to integrate community resources for better learning outcomes. Notwithstanding, attaining quality education extend beyond mere access to education but ensuring that, the type of education given prepares recipients for productive capabilities for an enhanced livelihood. This implies that the quality of education is a significant issue (UN 2018; UNDP, 2018; World bank, 2018; Slade, 2017).

Quality education (SDG 4) according to the UN (2018) is focused on making sure everyone, irrespective of their socio-demographic variables have an inclusive and equal learning opportunities in life. It also puts into consideration a type of learning opportunity that would promote lifelong learning. Specifically, this agenda for quality agricultural education entails that:

- i. all ages of people (especially young ones) complete basic and secondary education. This is to ensure that all categories of persons engaged in on-farm and off-farm livelihoods are literate;
- ii. having literate Stakeholders in agricultural education may translate to better sustainable practices leading to improved livelihoods;
- iii. a standard and improved learning capabilities in Agricultural education are given to people of all ages especially at the pre-vocational stage of education as early as possible;
- iv. there is assured access to vocational education training and skills development for everyone, irrespective of their socio-demographic variables. This implies having equal access to quality agricultural education in schools;
- v. a high level of technical agricultural education, training and skill development be given to everyone, irrespective of their socio-demographic variables. This implies, quality agricultural education should be affordable for all;
- vi. it is attractive to all persons especially the youths to acquire skills and knowledge in agriculture. This is met for them to be employable or be self-employed;
- vii. a high level of agricultural education, training and skill development is current to what is obtainable in the work place environment. This ensures that recipients acquire skills that are relevant;
- viii. adequate provisions of infrastructural farm facilities and proper funding of schools;
- ix. only qualified and well trained personnel in Agricultural education handle teaching and learning experiences in schools; and
- x. cooperation and partnership is encouraged between the Stakeholders in agricultural education, learners, community ownership, donor agencies, governmental agencies and among others.

However, these targets of quality agricultural education are beyond the traditional focus of the MDGs because of its transformable asset in sustainable development as it demonstrates a learning behaviour that is

anchored on making quality decisions and developing an ability to react on the right path to emerging challenges (Asia – Europe Environment Forum, 2014). This suggests that there are key elements that is of necessity in achieving quality agricultural education (SDG 4). These may include among others the following:

- i. having clarity in understanding of sustainable development initiatives;
- ii. developing the relevant agricultural occupational skills needed in the workplace;
- iii. developing the use of quality teaching materials;
- iv. up-dating the professional development of stakeholders;
- v. sourcing for new knowledge, ideas and values that can solve agricultural problems;
- vi. developing the right attitude and perception towards Agricultural education;
- vii. encouraging on the job training of recipients;
- viii. developing Stakeholders in agricultural education experiences for a better livelihood outcome; and
- ix. sustaining quality in ensuring the learning environment is safe and supportive (Slade, 2017; UNESCO, 2017).

The indices or variables in the foregoing, suggests firstly, a quality agricultural education that can give recipients the opportunity to acquire skills that will make them economically productive; secondly, a means to develop a sustainable livelihood; thirdly, contribute meaningfully to solving problems; and lastly, help develop a balanced learning capabilities for all. Therefore, quality education puts the learner at the focus of skill acquisition, knowledge and other variables designed to make them active participants in production activities.

Understanding Partnership with Stakeholders in Agricultural Education

The UNDP (2020) stresses that “partnerships for the goals” can be actualized on the bases of strong collaborations and cooperation among stakeholders. The global village concept of our world depicts the inter-connectivity in improved access to technology, knowledge, ideas, new innovations in the way and manner things are now done in the workplace industry. This suggests that the UN2030 Agenda for partnership is aimed at creating cooperation and support for individual nations plans to attain the SDGs targets; and promote trade both at the local and international levels through helping developing nations like Nigeria to increase their exports.

Despite the UN2030 Agenda desire, there is growing concern among stakeholders on how best to go about partnership. Horan (2019) emphasized that, critical stakeholders, donor agencies, governmental agencies and among others need to engage one another in partnership. Although, issues such as disagreement in mode of implementation and effective transformational action; how to compensate losers; partnering barriers; time factor; coordination inadequacies; and mismatch incentives are hindrances still facing sustainable development initiatives today (Horan, 2019). Issues on partnership with Stakeholders in agricultural education are often centred on among other things, political will, finance and infrastructural facilities (Agbidi & Ikeoji, 2020); capacity building, trade, integration of national policy, and data (Horan, 2019; UN, 2018; Gorg, et al, 2017).

This suggests that, a desired partnership cannot be actualized when Stakeholders in agricultural education are misinformed, their capacity are not built, their engagement actions are not properly integrated or directed. Schindler, Graef & Konig (2015) remarked that, by involving stakeholders into action, it will integrate their divergent views to reduce chances of conflict or misunderstanding of ideas. This implies that integration helps in adding value to understanding implementation plans. An integrated approach to sustainable partnership for quality agricultural education can help create an enabling atmosphere for relevant stakeholders to understand the framework that support partnership (Gorg, et al, 2017).

Justification of Partnership for Quality Agricultural Education in Nigeria

The UN2030 Agenda clearly asserted that, partnership for goals can be achievable through two major means that include (a) collaborative vehicle driven by governmental nations. These drivers are governmental agencies, civil society groups, private sector, donor agencies among others and (b) multi-complimentary collaboration. This is a multi-stakeholder’s partnership aimed at complimenting the efforts of collaborative relationship (global partnership). This complimentary collaboration helps to strengthen the process of implementation among relevant stakeholders in knowledge, shared expertise, technology and finance (UNDP, 2020; UN, 2018).

Accordingly, it becomes necessary for relevant stakeholders to understand partnership for quality agricultural education for the following reasons:

- i. they help integrate a better approach to sustainable development emerging issues (Horan, 2017);
- ii. to harness the available ways of implementation;
- iii. to promote a sustainable integrated approach to sustainable development initiatives (Horan, 2017)
- iv. they strengthen local, national and international partnership resources to improve livelihoods;
- v. to mobilize additional funding to support implementation processes (Funds for NGOs, 2020);
- vi. to promote shared technological transfer and development to developing countries to enhance productivity;
- vii. to enhance capacity building of stakeholders in developing countries to support implementation plans; and
- viii. to encourage multi-stakeholder’s partnerships.

Therefore, a veritable tool to supporting and sustaining a quality education should be anchored on putting in place local, national and global collaborations among various Stakeholders in agricultural education. That is why SDG for partnership relies on firstly, developing collaborative actions for sustainable on-farm and off-farm livelihoods (World bank, 2018); secondly, developing cooperative action and engagement of Stakeholders in agricultural education (Agbidi & Ikeoji, 2020; UNDP, 2020).

Findings

From the foregoing, the findings of this paper showed among others that:

- i. the NTCS can be used to promote contributions to knowledge on understanding the present realities;
- ii. the NTCS is useful in tackling sustainable development initiatives;
- iii. poverty, armed conflicts and other factors like natural disasters are obstacles confronting quality agricultural education in Nigeria;
- iv. attaining quality agricultural education is beyond just access to education;
- v. quality agricultural education entails acquiring knowledge, skills and other variables relevant to the workplace;
- vi. elements such as having clarity in understanding of sustainable development initiatives; developing the relevant agricultural occupational skills needed in the workplace; developing the use of quality teaching materials; up-dating the professional development of stakeholders among others, are necessary for achieving quality agricultural education;
- vii. issues affecting partnership in Nigeria are centred around political will, finance, policy integration among others;
- viii. adopting an integrated approach to sustainable development issues is useful in improving stakeholders' livelihood; and
- ix. quality agricultural education partnership can only be achieved through collaborative efforts by all relevant stakeholders.

Conclusion

With the increasing level of unemployment (SDG 8) and corresponding poverty level (SDG 1) in developing nations like Nigeria, it behooves on the government and Stakeholders in agricultural education to think out of the box, ways or approaches that would make recipients of Agricultural education program get quality in their educational activities (learning instruction). Quality in the type of education we receive is a pathway for developing the livelihoods of Stakeholders in agricultural education. Therefore, concerted efforts need to be mobilized and developed to ensure that these stakeholders have a better and sustainable livelihood.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. the narrative of the present realities of sustainable development issues in Nigeria should be analyzed to find out if the country is making progress;
2. the government of Nigeria and developing partners should develop a synergy on how best to tackle issues confronting the implementation of quality in our education;
3. the government of Nigeria should ensure that all persons receive Agricultural education that is relevant to the present knowledge and skills of the workplace environment;
4. the government of Nigeria should ensure that partnership is properly integrated to tackle issues confronting the quality of Agricultural education; and
5. the government of Nigeria should develop a strong political will to support finance and partnership for achieving quality Agricultural Education.

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