CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CULTURAL DISSONANCE

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the role of cultural dissonance in mediating the impact of cultural diversity on sustainable development in Nigeria. The paper adopts a systematic review method and obtains information from Google Scholar, Google, and ResearchGate, among others, and only articles between 2010 and 2023 were used in this study. Content analysis and thematic analysis were used to analyse the articles obtained so as to address the objective of the study. The findings reveal that while cultural diversity holds potential for positive development, cultural dissonance introduces conflicts that hinder sustainable progress. In conclusion, cultural diversity, in the presence of cultural dissonance, could affect sustainable development negatively due to conflicts and confusion. Therefore, the study recommends that cultural dissonance should be mitigated and canvassed against, and encouraging cultural harmony through education, introducing policies that encourage cultural harmony and the use of social media, which could change the attitudes of the citizens towards appreciating the different cultural values in the society that would enhance sustainable development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Cultural Diversity, Cultural Dissonance, Sustainable Development, Cultural Disharmony, Nigeria

Introduction and Thesis Statement

The concept and idea of sustainable development originated to respond to the continuous economic growth due to the industrial revolution and globalization. It tried to find solutions to problems caused by industrialization, population growth, and globalization (ACCIONA, 2020), and almost every nation has tried as much as possible to push development efforts towards the attainment of sustainable development. In Nigeria, several efforts have been executed and put in place to achieve sustainable development, particularly those in line with the sustainable development goals (Emerald Built Environments, 2023). Omiunu (2012) defines sustainable development as the type of development which doesn't roll back or recede, even when threatened by reversal waves, or that can guarantee the protection of the environment and resources which also include the cultural resources today and tomorrow. It could also be defined as a self-sustaining type of development that meets the needs of the present and future without jeopardizing its indigenous resources, which is its culture (Omiunu, 2012). The concept of sustainable development focuses on three development pillars, which are economic, environmental and social, towards achieving sustainability in development (Iyahen, 2021).

This economic pillar is focuses on the ability to contribute to the economic development and growth of nation, the environmental pillar is committed to protect the environment by reducing the various risks and measuring the environmental impacts of activities of the nation. Also, the social pillar refers to values that promote equality and respect for individual rights handling social exclusion and discrimination, promoting solidarity, developing social dialogue, among others.

Although, the economic, environmental and social aspect to ensuring and achieving sustainable development are all very germane, this study focuses on the social aspect. This is because, much attention is always given to the economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development, but less attention is given to the social aspects, which cuts across putting into consideration the cultural diversities of the nation.

Cultural diversity implies the beliefs and behaviours that are put into consideration and also respects all the diverse groups, which include culture and ethics, among others, including their values and socio-cultural differences. It also acknowledges, encourages, and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context that empowers all within society (deBara, 2023). Nigeria is a society with diverse culture in terms of its multi-ethnic and multi-religious nature and has more than 400 ethnic groups (Suberu 1998; Omiunu, 2012) and two major religions (Islam and Christianity), it has a strong tie to the traditional religion, which was the major foundation of the Nigeria culture before civilization (Omiunu, 2012). Hence, Nigeria could be said to be very complex in terms of its culture (Joseph, 2006; Omiunu, 2012).

Omiunu (2012) argued that if Nigeria's cultural diversity is well managed, it is supposed to be a major asset to Nigeria. However, the natural inheritance of cultural diversity in Nigeria has constituted several social issues because it has been politicized and exploited, leading to drawbacks in national development that could affect sustainable development in the long run. Another important issue that has affected the significance of cultural diversity on sustainable development is cultural dissonance.

Cultural dissonance refers to where what is happening in the society is not in agreement with what ought to be in a given environment. It is an uncomfortable sense of discord, disharmony, confusion, or conflict experienced by society (Rauf, 2014). According to Sobande (2023), cultural dissonance implies the friction and misunderstandings that arise from the conflicts among differing cultural norms, values, and beliefs. It implies the feeling of discomfort that could arise when individuals from different cultures interact with each other in a society. It could be caused by several issues such as communication style differences, assumptions, knowledge gaps, lack of self-awareness, and expectations, among others. Therefore, cultural dissonance could affect the effect of cultural diversity on sustainable development. According to Deekor and Maekae (2015), cultural diversity is very germane in achieving sustainable development, but with the effect of cultural dissonance, such link would be affected hence, could dwindle sustainable development efforts in the long run.

The effect of cultural dissonance on the relational effect of cultural diversity on sustainable development leads to fueling several bloody conflicts between and among Nigerian ethnic groups (Albert 1993; Otite & Albert 1999; Uwazie, Albert, & Uzoigwe 1999: Albert 2001). This could further lead to social disorganization, dysfunctions, and deviation, among others (Hakizimana, 2017), destabilising the nation (Mustapha 2002, 2004) and even resulting in

several conflicts, civil war, among others (Nafziger 1983; Omiunu, 2012). Drawing emphasis from Omiunu (2012); Deekor and Maekae (2015); Hakizimana (2017), there could be a further need to examine how cultural dissonance could pose an effect on the use of cultural diversity towards ensuring and attaining sustainable development in Nigeria; this is a major gap this article seeks to address. Therefore, this article focuses on examining the mediating role of cultural dissonance in the relational effect of cultural diversity on sustainable development in Nigeria.

Conceptualising of the Problem

Ensuring sustainable development has become one of the biggest challenges facing societies around the world in recent times as the global sustainability debate centres on how to achieve sustainability in growth and development due to increased growth and population while trying to develop the social and economic world (Berglund et al., 2020). This has made several nations embark on development efforts, with particular focus on attaining the Sustainable Development Goals towards ensuring sustainable development, Nigeria inclusive. In Nigeria, several efforts have been put in place towards achieving sustainable development (Emerald Built Environments, 2023). However, the cultural diversity heritage has been a major concern in several development efforts.

Nigeria has diverse culture hence, its cultural diversity heritage (Suberu 1998; Omiunu, 2012), hence, possessing a very complex culture (Joseph 2006; Omiunu, 2012). Nigeria's multi-culture can be conceptualized considering five aspects in the society, these include: cultural diversity, language and the economy, language and democracy, how children learn, language and identity (UNESCO 2005). According to Omiunu (2012), development, particularly in modern and recent times, is a direct function of economic functions of language or set of languages within a diversified culture hence, cultural diversity is a very important factor towards achieving sustainable development in Nigeria.

Culture presents immense opportunities for sustainable growth and development (Sobande, 2023). According to Soini, Battaglini, Birkeland, Duxbury, Fairclough, Horlings and Dessein (2015) revealed that culture is a major tool for ensuring sustainable development hence, when it is boycotted, such development effort does not yield better results. Also, Sobande (2023) noted that cultural dissonance is a terrible silent enemy that affects development hence, sustainable development of nations or rather could have effect on the effectiveness of sustainable development efforts. Also, cultural misunderstandings or confusion, which in this study is referred to as cultural dissonance could lead to conflict, poor performance, and even failure of society and the nation (Sobande, 2023).

Cultural dissonance, which is referred to as an uncomfortable sense of discord, disharmony, confusion, or conflict that is experienced by the society (Rauf, 2014) could play severe role in the relational effect of cultural diversity on sustainable development. This is because it could fuel diverse social issues which could be wars, conflicts, and other issues that could lead to disorganization, dysfunctions, and cause deviation in the society (Mustapha 2002, 2004; Omiunu, 2012; Hakizimana, 2017). However, not much is known about the extent to which and how this cultural dissonance could mitigate the effective use of cultural diversity towards ensuring and achieving sustainable development, particularly in Nigeria. Therefore, this article

focuses on examining the mediating role of cultural dissonance in the relational effect of cultural diversity on sustainable development in Nigeria

Theoretical Perception of the Problem: The Cultural Theory

The cultural theory was propounded by Roe (1996). It suggested that the variability of an individual's involvement in social life, particularly in a given culture, is captured by the group unity. The group implies the extent to which individuals are being incorporated into bounded units within the cultural society. The increase in such incorporation propels a greater influence on individual choice being subjected to the group determination. The strong group produce social relations that are democratic and when an individual's social environment is characterized by strong group boundaries and binding prescriptions, which in this paper could be referred to as cultural dissonance, particularly within a cultural diversity environment, the resulting social relations become hierarchical therefore, the individuals within such social context could be subjected to control of other members in the group and the demands of socially imposed roles which could lead to conflicts and confusion that could affect sustainable development. This implies that within a social group or culture, every individual should be inculcated into the system, towards cushioning any form of cultural dissonance with a culturally diversified   society then, this could create a positive resonance effect on the attainment of sustainable development in such society.

METHODOLOGY

The paper adopts a systematic review method, and information and materials were obtained from Google Scholar, Google, ResearchGate, among others. However, only articles between 2010 and 2023 were used in this study. In addition, the Cochrane reviews style of reviewing literature by Chapman (2014) was used to inform the searching process. In addition, the use of PICOS was also deployed to inform the extraction and analysis process. PICOS represents (Richardson, 1995):

P –Problem or Population, which in this study is the cultural dissonance

I – Intervention (Doesn't hold in this study)

C –Control: Cultural diversity hence, serving as a moderating variable within the context of the relationship between cultural dissonance and the attainment of sustainable development in Nigeria.

O – Outcome(s) is the attainment of sustainable development in Nigeria

S - Study type (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, etc.)

The search process first commenced on September 6th, 2023 and was also repeated on September 2th and 22th, 2023, due to the need to achieve a high elasticity of retrieval rate with high   precision rate that would seek to address the aim of the paper. Thus, the search process was repeated to obtain relevant resources that would be deployed to provide effective discussion and also used to elaborate on the topic of interest. Moreover, the search engines from Google, Google Scholar and other search engines yielded several results and outcomes,

but very few were selected that were fit and used for this paper. In addition, articles obtained and selected for the study were subjected to content analysis, grouping the materials into major themes, hence, thematic analysis was used to synthesise the articles obtained towards addressing the objective of the study. With regards to the thematic analysis, various themes of the study, directed to achieve the objectives of the study were identified and coded, and analysis was done through a content analysis of the materials obtained during the search for the systematic review process.

OUTCOME OF THE REVIEW

Cultural Diversity on Sustainable Development

Attama, Egwum, Udenze, Uchenna, and Olise (2022) examined how cultural diversity could be used as a pillar for attaining sustainable development, and revealed that cultural diversity could be termed a future investment that serves as a driving force that fosters social cohesion which tends to enable sustainable development in any society if well maximized. In addition, it tends to foster cultural participation, and strengthens democracy, tolerance, and social cohesion to enable sustainable development in society. Drawing inference from the findings of Attama et al. (2022), and with regards to this present study, it could be affirmed that cultural diversity holds a promising characteristic on the achievement of sustainable development in the Nigerian society.

Also, Bunce (2021), examined cultural diversity in unequal societies sustained through cross-cultural competence and identity valuation and noted that cultural diversity could be used to sustain a society by identifying its several domains such as mutual benefit, inter-group interaction, inequality reduction, among others, towards fostering development, thus, sustainable development in the long run if well maintained.

Juxtaposing the findings from the works of Attama et al. (2022), and Bunce (2021), it could be evidence that there could be need for identifying the several domains of cultural diversity which are mutual benefit, inter-group interaction, inequality reduction amongst others to better reposition the diversity for better achievement of sustainable development in the Nigerian society. From this, it could be revealed that not identifying and understanding these domains of cultural diversity may lead to negative effect on the achievement of sustainable development in the Nigerian.

Also, Omiunu (2012) examined deploying indigenous knowledge towards sustainability development and revealed that indigenous knowledge, which includes the various diversities of culture in the Nigeria society, could be used to foster sustainable development in Nigeria. Therefore, any development efforts that ignore the nation's indigenous knowledge would waste huge amounts of resources and will not achieve expected yields hence, may affect sustainable development in the long run.

Also, putting together the findings from the works of Attama et al. (2022), Bunce (2021), and Omiunu (2012), it is important for societies, such as Nigerian society to leverage on the use of the diversities in its indigenous knowledge, like the identification of other several domains of cultural diversity as posited by Bunce (2021), to better reposition the diversity for better achievement of sustainable development in the Nigerian society.

Also, Deekor and Maekae (2015) examined culture and cultural diversity in sustainable development in Nigerian, and affirmed that culture, as a centre pillar, holds a very prominent place and role in achieving sustainable development by creating employment, preserving the resources and strengthening the resilience of communities hence, it is irreplaceable in its role in development. Also, Ikechukwu et al. (2022) examined cultural diversity as a pillar for sustainable development, and noted that cultural diversity plays a vital role in attaining sustainable development, due to the fact that, it aids economic growth, helping individuals and communities to be able to enhance and make life choices towards achieving certain development.

The findings from the works of Deekor and Maekae (2015) and Ikechukwu et al. (2022) reemphasized the significance of culture and cultural diversity in achieving sustainable development in the Nigerian society. Navigating across the findings from the works of Attama et al. (2022), Bunce (2021), and Omiunu (2012), that of Deekor and Maekae (2015) reveals that culture, from whence comes cultural diversity could be a major tool to use to enhance the propensity for achieving sustainable development in the Nigerian society.

Mediating Role of Cultural Dissonance on Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Development

Also, Hart and Sriprakash (2018) examined understanding cultural dissonance and the development of social identities, and revealed that in the present era of new technologies and globalization, cultural dissonance could pose a significant effect on social identity development in a society such as Nigeria. This could cut across affecting human relationships and social bonds at a hyper-level that includes generational, geographical and cultural aspects of the society. Also, Ejumudo (2015) examined the policy gap and action dilemma with regards to ensuring sustainable development in Nigeria, and argued that natural resource management, which in this study implies the management of the cultural differences which mean cultural diversity, is critical to the attainment of sustainable development in Nigeria. However, there is a mismanagement of the natural resources hence could pose a significant threat to the long-term sustainable development in Nigeria.

Also, Ugwu (2020) examines preserving language diversity for sustainable development in Nigeria and affirms that, for Nigeria to be able to reach and achieve sustainable development goals as set by the UN, the cultural diversity must be an important factor to be recognized and deployed by making local people informed, making them to actively participate in and also fully enjoy the several initiatives of government towards improving the quality of life among the society. Therefore, cultural dissonance could be very detrimental to such innovation.

Also, Uyanga (2023) examined religion and culture as agents of change for sustainable development in Nigeria, and noted that religion and culture, are inherent tool that Nigeria should deploy as agents for sustainable development but, Nigeria is subjected to several social problems leading to under-development that are evidenced in the educational, social, political and economic sector hence, the deterioration of sectors and the economy of the nation. This could be as a result of cultural dissonance.

Juxtaposing the findings of Ejumudo (2015), Hart and Sriprakash (2018), Ugwu (2020), and Uyanga (2023), cultural dissonance could affect the attainment of sustainable development in

Nigeria. However, when cultural conflicts and confusion exist that don't harness the benefits of cultural diversity, the attainment of sustainable development could be affected in the long run. Hence, it is very important that cultural diversity is harnessed as a major tool towards enabling the better attainment of sustainable development in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this article from the reviewed works of Omiunu (2012); Deekor and Maekae (2015); Ejumudo (2015); Hart and Sriprakash (2018); Ugwu (2020); Bunce (2021); Attama et al. (2022); Ikechukwu et al. (2022); and Uyanga (2023) revealed that cultural diversity is a major and inherent local resource that could be deployed towards ensuring and attaining sustainable development in Nigeria. This concurs with the work of Omiunu (2012); Soini et al. (2015); Deekor and Maekae (2015); Iyahen (2021); deBara (2023); among others that culture is a major tool to be deployed towards the attainment of sustainable development in Nigeria.

Also, despite the significance attached to cultural diversity in achieving sustainable development, cultural dissonance, which could mean cultural conflicts and confusion could pose significant impetus and affect the effective deployment of cultural diversity which could affect sustainable development in Nigeria hence, could result to underdevelopment. This also supports the works of Otite and Albert (1999); Uwazie et al. (1999): Albert (2001); Mustapha (2002, 2004); Omiunu (2012); Rauf (2014); Deekor and Maekae (2015); Hakizimana (2017); Sobande (2023); among others that cultural dissonance could pose significant effect on the relational role of cultural diversity on sustainable development. Therefore, the findings of this article revealed that cultural diversity is a potential heritage that could bring about development towards better attainment of sustainable development. However, when such society operates in dissonance, the cultural diversity may tend to pose a negative effect on sustainable development due to several disharmony, confusion and conflicts that could emanate within the society, thereby affecting the propensity to attain sustainable development.

Conclusion

This paper examined the mediating role of cultural dissonance in the relational effect of cultural diversity on sustainable development in Nigeria. In conclusion, cultural diversity is a potential heritage that could bring about development towards better attainment of sustainable development. However, cultural diversity, in the presence of cultural dissonance, could affect sustainable development negatively because of several conflicts and confusion hence, no multi-culture society could attain sustainable development in the presence of cultural dissonance. Therefore, the study recommends that:

  i.   Cultural dissonance should be mitigated and canvassed against, thereby encouraging cultural harmony through education and increased awareness of the different cultural values in society and ensuring sustainable development in Nigeria.
  ii. Also, there would be need for policy makers and governments to introduce policy that encourage cultural harmony towards ensuring harmony in the society that could be a major tool to foster sustainable development in Nigeria in the long run and also appreciating the different cultural values in the society,
  iii. In addition, in ensuring increased awareness in the society, the social media could also be deployed and used towards changing the attitudes of the citizens in

appreciating the different cultural values in the society towards the achievement of sustainable development in Nigeria.

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