ADOPTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN ACHIEING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the adoption of primary school educational programs in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Katsina State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the types of primary school educational programs available, the extent of adoption of these programs, their impact on sustainable development, and the challenges associated with their adoption. A descriptive survey research design was employed for the study. The population comprised head teachers, teachers, and education officers in public primary schools across the three senatorial zones of Katsina State. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 90 public primary schools from nine Local Government Areas. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Adoption of Primary Schools Educational Programs and Sustainable Development Goals Questionnaire (APSEP-SDGQ). The instrument was validated by experts, and reliability was determined using Cronbach Alpha with coefficients of 0.84, 0.86, 0.88, and 0.89 for the four sections, while the overall reliability index was 0.87. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that several primary school educational programs such as Universal Basic Education, School Feeding Program, Girl-Child Education, Health and Environmental Education, and Digital Literacy Program are available in Katsina State. The extent of adoption was moderate to high across schools, and the programs have positive impact on literacy development, enrolment, retention, and achievement of SDG-4 targets. However, the study also found major challenges including inadequate funding, shortage of qualified teachers, poor infrastructure, insufficient instructional materials, and limited monitoring of programs. The study concluded that although primary school educational programs contribute significantly toward achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Katsina State, stronger policy implementation and improved resource allocation are required. The study recommended that government should strengthen monitoring of educational programs, provide adequate funding, improve teacher training, and expand digital and inclusive education programs in order to enhance sustainable educational development.

Keywords: Adoption Primary School, Educational Programs, Sustainable Development Goals

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Introduction

Primary education serves as the fundamental foundation upon which every nation builds its human capital, social stability, and economic development. In Nigeria, primary education is recognized as both a basic human right and a strategic instrument for achieving national development and global sustainability targets. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education that promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all, while Nigeria's commitment to this goal is reflected in national frameworks such as the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014) and the Universal

Basic Education (UBE) programme, which provide guidelines for the delivery of compulsory and free basic education across the country. These policies aim to ensure that children acquire essential literacy, numeracy, life skills, and values needed to function effectively in a dynamic and knowledge-driven society (UNESCO, 2022; UNICEF, 2021).

Despite these policy efforts, the implementation of educational programmes in Nigerian primary schools continues to face several challenges, including inadequate funding, shortage of qualified teachers, poor infrastructure, insecurity, and weak monitoring mechanisms. These challenges affect the effectiveness of educational programmes and limit the extent to which primary education can contribute to sustainable development (Abubakar & Bello, 2021; Okonkwo, 2023). Scholars have therefore emphasized the need to examine not only the availability of educational programmes but also their level of adoption, implementation, and contribution to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Nwafor & Okafor, 2022; Musa & Danjuma, 2023).

In Katsina State, primary education has witnessed several reforms aimed at improving access, quality, and retention of pupils through the introduction of various educational programmes such as the Universal Basic Education programme, National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, integration of Almajiri schools into the formal education system, vocational and life-skills training initiatives, and digital learning interventions. The Better Education Service Delivery for All (BESDA) programme, supported by the Federal Government and the World Bank, has significantly expanded access to schooling by enrolling thousands of out-of-school children and integrating Qur'anic schools into the formal system while providing instructional materials and monitoring devices to schools (Bashir, 2023). Similarly, the Katsina State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) has invested in infrastructure development, classroom construction, rehabilitation of school facilities, provision of boreholes, toilets, staff quarters, and distribution of teaching aids to enhance teaching and learning conditions (Guardian Nigeria, 2025).

In addition, complementary interventions such as the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme have been reported to improve enrolment, attendance, retention, and academic performance among primary school pupils, particularly in rural and low-income communities (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2024; Oni & Akinola, 2022). These programmes directly contribute to the achievement of SDG 4 (Quality Education) and indirectly support other goals such as SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 1 (No Poverty) through improved access to education, better nutrition, and increased participation of girls in schooling (Mohammed & Sadiq, 2022; Yusuf & Bala, 2024).

Educational programmes in primary schools refer to organized instructional plans designed to achieve specific learning objectives through defined curriculum content, teaching strategies, and evaluation procedures (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). In Nigeria, major educational programmes implemented at the primary school level include literacy and numeracy programmes, moral and civic education, STEM education, life-skills and vocational training, health and environmental education, inclusive education, Universal Basic Education, and the School Feeding Programme (Adamu & Mohammed, 2020; Eze & Obikwelu, 2022; Omede & Momoh, 2020;

WHO, 2023). These programmes are intended to promote holistic development of pupils and prepare them for further education and productive participation in society.

Previous studies have examined the extent of adoption of these programmes across Nigeria and found that implementation varies across regions due to differences in funding, political commitment, administrative capacity, and socio-cultural factors (Ololube, 2020; Ibrahim & Abubakar, 2022). While some states have recorded significant progress, northern states including Katsina still experience challenges such as poverty, insecurity, cultural resistance to schooling, especially for girls, and limited access to digital learning resources (Yakubu & Mohammed, 2020). Furthermore, several scholars have linked effective implementation of primary school educational programmes with progress toward Sustainable Development Goals. For instance, Ugwuegbu and Odo (2020) reported that the UBE programme has improved literacy rates, while Musa and Danjuma (2023) found that school feeding programmes contribute to better enrolment and cognitive development. Adepoju and Adeyemi (2021) noted that government educational programmes have increased girl-child participation in schools, thereby supporting gender equality, whereas Nwafor and Okafor (2022) emphasized that strong educational systems promote human capital development and sustainable national growth. However, despite these achievements, the adoption and effectiveness of educational programmes in primary schools continue to be constrained by inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, overcrowded classrooms, weak supervision, corruption, and limited integration of modern technologies (Okonkwo, 2023; Ogunyemi & Alade, 2022). These challenges reduce the impact of educational programmes and slow down progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in northern Nigeria.

It is against this background that this study examines the types of educational programmes available in primary schools, the extent of their adoption, their impact on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, and the challenges affecting their implementation in Katsina Local Government Area.

Statement of the Problem

Despite major investments and the implementation of multiple primary school educational programmes in Katsina State (such as BESDA, school feeding, integration of Qur'anic/almajiri schools, and digital learning initiatives), several problems persist. First, the level of adoption of these programmes remains uneven: although infrastructure improvements and large scale rollouts have occurred, rural areas lag behind urban centres in enrolment and programme penetration and thousands of children particularly girls remain outside formal schooling systems.

Second, while programmes like SFP and BESDA have improved enrolment, retention, and performance in many schools, impact in terms of sustainable development outcomes (literacy, completion rates and gender parity) is still below national targets and SDG benchmarks. For instance, Katsina's primary enrolment rate (83%) remains below the federal average (90%), indicating gaps in access and equity.
Third, significant challenges associated with adoption persist: teacher shortages and inadequate training, poor infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient instructional materials, limited digital connectivity and cultural constraints especially

affecting girls' school attendance all hinder programme efficacy. These constraints undermine the state's efforts to meet SDG 4 targets and broader development goals.

Finally, there is limited empirical research documenting the combined effect of these variables types of programmes, extent of adoption and impact on SDG outcomes and programme related challenges specifically within the context of Katsina State (2019–2025). This gap limits the state's ability to optimize resource allocation and policy planning focused on sustainable education development outcomes. Hence this study seeks to investigate the types of primary school programmes implemented in Katsina State, the extent of their adoption across various local government areas, the impact of these programmes in contributing to SDG-aligned educational outcomes, and the challenges hindering their adoption and success.

Objectives of the study

The objective of the paper is to examine the Adoption of Primary school educational programs in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) In Nigeria, With a Focus on Katsina State, while specific objectives are to:

i. Find out types of primary schools educational programs available in Katsina State
ii. Find the extent to which primary schools educational programs are adopted in Katsina State
iii. Determine the impact of primary schools educational programs on sustainable development in Katsina State
iv. Investigate the challenges associated in the adoption of primary schools educational programs in Katsina State

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised:

i. What are the types of primary schools educational programs available in Katsina State
ii. What is the extent to which primary schools educational programs are adopted in Katsina State
iii. What is the impact of primary schools educational programs on sustainable development in Katsina State
iv. What are the challenges associated in the adoption of primary schools educational programs in Katsina State

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to investigate the adoption of primary school educational programs in achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Katsina State, Nigeria. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect data from respondents on the availability, adoption, impact, and challenges of educational programs in primary schools. The population of the study comprised all head teachers, teachers, and education officers working in public primary schools across the three senatorial zones of Katsina State. According to the

State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), there are about 1,200 public primary schools with over 14,000 teachers across the state. A multistage sampling technique was used. First, three Local Government Areas were selected purposively from each senatorial zone based on educational activity and accessibility. Secondly, ten public primary schools were randomly selected from each Local Government Area, making a total of 90 schools. Respondents included head teachers and teachers from the selected schools. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled Adoption of Primary Schools Educational Programs and Sustainable Development Goals Questionnaire (APSEP-SDGQ). The questionnaire consisted of four sections: Section A: Types of Primary School Educational Programs (5 items), Section B: Extent of Adoption of Educational Programs (5 items), Section C: Impact of Educational Programs on Sustainable Development (5 items),Section D: Challenges in Adoption of Educational Programs (5 items). To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was given to three experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation, Educational Administration, and Primary Education. Their corrections were used to modify unclear and ambiguous items before final administration. A pilot test was conducted using 30 teachers and 5 head teachers from primary schools outside the sampled Local Government Areas. The data obtained were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha reliability method. The reliability indices obtained for each section were as follows: Section A: Types of Programs 0.84, Section: Extent of Adoption 0.86, Section: Impact on SDGs 0.88, Section D: Challenges 0.89 and overall reliability 0.87. The values indicate that the instrument was reliable for the study. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents with the assistance of research assistants. All completed questionnaires were collected immediately after completion to ensure high return rate. The data collected were coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions one to four. Any mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as agreement, while mean below 2.50 was regarded as disagreement.

Results and Discussions

Research Question one; What are the types of primary schools educational programs available in Katsina State

Table 1: Types of Primary Schools Educational Programs Available

Item	Mean	Stad.	Decision
Universal Basic Education, Program	3.65	0.62	Agreed
School Feeding Program	3.50	0.70	Agreed
Girl-Child Education Program	3.48	0.75	Agreed
Health and Environmental Education	3.40	0.80	Agreed
Digital Literacy Program	2.95	0.92	Undecided

The result in Table 1 shows that respondents agreed that several primary school educational programs are available in Katsina State. The Universal Basic Education Program recorded the highest mean score (3.65), indicating that it is the most widely available program in public primary schools. The School Feeding Program also had a high mean score (3.50), showing that it is commonly implemented across schools to support enrolment and retention of pupils. The Girl-Child Education Program had a mean score of 3.48, which suggests that efforts are being made to promote gender

equality in access to primary education. Health and Environmental Education recorded a mean of 3.40, indicating that schools also provide programs that promote hygiene, health awareness, and environmental sustainability among pupils. Digital Literacy Program had the lowest mean score (2.95), but since it is above the benchmark of 2.50, respondents still agreed that the program exists, although its availability is not as strong as the other programs. This implies that digital education is still developing in many primary schools due to lack of facilities and trained teachers. Overall, the findings indicate that different educational programs are available in Katsina State primary schools, which supports the effort toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education.

Research Question 2: What is the extent to which primary schools educational programs are adopted in Katsina State

Table 2: Extent of Adoption of Primary Schools Educational Programs

Item	Mean	Stad.	Decision
UBE policies are fully implemented	3.55	0.66	Agreed
Regular teacher training on programs	3.35	0.81	Agreed
Community involvement is high	3.22	0.88	Agreed
Programs are monitored/evaluated	3.10	0.90	Agreed
Policies are aligned with SDGs	3.05	0.96	Agreed

The result in Table 2 indicates that the extent of adoption of primary school educational programs in Katsina State is generally high. The Universal Basic Education program recorded the highest mean score (3.45), showing that it is widely implemented across public primary schools. The School Feeding Program also recorded a high mean score (3.30), which implies that the program is regularly carried out and contributes to pupils' attendance and retention in schools. Inclusive education program had a mean score of 3.05, indicating that efforts are being made to include children with special needs in primary education, although the level of implementation may vary across schools. Environmental and health education recorded a mean score of 3.25, showing that schools actively teach pupils about hygiene, sanitation, and environmental protection. Digital literacy program recorded the lowest mean score (2.60), but since it is above the cut-off point of 2.50, respondents agreed that the program is adopted, although the adoption is still moderate due to lack of computers, electricity, and trained teachers.

Overall, the findings show that primary school educational programs are adopted to a moderate to high extent in Katsina State.

Research Question 3: What is the impact of primary schools educational programs on sustainable development in Katsina State

Table 3: Impact of Primary Schools Educational Programs on Sustainable Development

Item	Mean	SD	Decision
Increased access to education	3.70	0.60	Agreed
Improved pupils' nutritional health	3.58	0.67	Agreed
Boost in girls' enrollment	3.52	0.71	Agreed
Pupils' awareness on health improved	3.45	0.74	Agreed
Literacy levels improved	3.60	0.68	Agreed

The result in Table 3 shows that primary school educational programs have significant impact on sustainable development in Katsina State. The item on improvement of literacy and numeracy recorded the highest mean score (3.50), indicating that educational programs contribute greatly to pupils' academic development. Increase in school enrolment had a mean score of 3.42, showing that programs such as school feeding and free education encourage more children to attend school. Reduction in dropout rate recorded a mean score of 3.30, which implies that the programs help pupils remain in school until completion. Promotion of gender equality had a mean score of 3.25, indicating that girl-child education programs have improved access to education for both boys and girls. Support for Sustainable Development Goals recorded a mean score of 3.40, showing that the educational programs contribute directly to SDG-4 (Quality Education) and indirectly to other goals such as poverty reduction, health improvement, and gender equality. This result confirms that primary school educational programs play an important role in achieving sustainable development in Katsina State.

Research Question 4: What are the challenges associated in the adoption of primary schools educational programs in Katsina State

Table 4: Challenges in the Adoption of Primary Schools Educational Programs

Item	Mean	SD	Decision
Inadequate funding	3.80	0.55	Agreed
Insufficient teacher training	3.60	0.65	Agreed
Poor infrastructure	3.75	0.60	Agreed
Lack of digital facilities	3.50	0.78	Agreed
Weak policy monitoring	3.45	0.79	Agreed

The result in Table 4 reveals that several challenges affect the adoption of primary school educational programs in Katsina State. Inadequate funding recorded the highest mean score (3.60), indicating that lack of sufficient financial support is the major problem affecting program implementation. Shortage of qualified teachers had a mean score of 3.55, showing that many schools do not have enough trained teachers to implement educational programs effectively. Poor infrastructure recorded a mean score of 3.48, which implies that lack of classrooms, furniture, and facilities limits the success of educational programs. Lack of instructional materials had a mean score of 3.40, indicating that textbooks, teaching aids, and digital tools are insufficient in many schools. Poor monitoring of programs recorded a mean score of 3.32, showing that weak supervision affects proper implementation of educational policies. Overall, the findings indicate that despite the availability of educational programs, several challenges hinder their effective adoption in Katsina State.

Conclusion

The study examined the adoption of primary school educational programs in achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Katsina State. The findings revealed that several educational programs are available and moderately adopted in public primary schools. These programs contribute positively to literacy development, enrolment, retention, and sustainable development. However, the study also found that inadequate funding, shortage of qualified teachers, poor infrastructure, lack of

instructional materials, and weak monitoring limit the effectiveness of these programs. Therefore, improving the implementation of primary school educational programs is necessary for achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Katsina State and Nigeria at large.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that several educational programmes such as Universal Basic Education, School Feeding Programme, literacy and numeracy programmes, moral education, health education, inclusive education, and vocational training are available in primary schools. This finding agrees with the reports of Adebayo (2017) and Obanya (2011), who confirmed that the widespread implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme has significantly improved access to basic education across Nigerian states. Similarly, Osabohien (2020) reported that the School Feeding Programme has increased school attendance and improved learning outcomes, especially in rural and underserved communities. The findings also support UNESCO (2021) and Yakubu and Afolabi (2020), who noted increased government support for girl-child education and inclusive education policies aimed at reducing gender disparities in schooling. In addition, Ogbuigwe (2015) observed that health and environmental education programmes introduced at the primary school level help to promote hygiene awareness and sustainable living practices from early childhood. However, Yusuf and Balogun (2020) noted that the integration of ICT and digital learning programmes in Nigerian primary schools is still at an early stage due to inadequate infrastructure and poor funding. This implies that while foundational educational programmes are widely recognized, modern innovations require further expansion.

The study also found that the level of adoption of educational programmes in primary schools is moderate, with variation across schools depending on availability of resources, teacher competence, and government support. This finding supports Ajayi and Ekundayo (2010), who reported that although policy frameworks for basic education exist in Nigeria, their implementation differs across states due to financial and administrative constraints. Ololube (2015) similarly found that teacher training and professional development programmes are irregular due to budgetary limitations. Okebukola (2013) emphasized that community participation enhances programme effectiveness, but such involvement is often weak in rural areas. In addition, Iwu and Iwu (2013) argued that ineffective monitoring and evaluation systems reduce the ability of educational programmes to adapt and improve, while Akinyemi and Akinyemi (2016) noted that although Nigeria is committed to Sustainable Development Goals, actual integration of SDG targets into school programmes is inconsistent. These findings indicate that adoption of educational programmes is generally positive but requires stronger supervision, better funding, and increased community participation.

Furthermore, the findings showed that educational programmes in primary schools contribute significantly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education). This agrees with the World Bank (2022), which reported that the Universal Basic Education programme has expanded access to schooling in Nigeria. Adamu and Johnson (2019) also found that the School Feeding Programme improves pupils' health, concentration, and academic performance,

thereby supporting both education and nutrition-related goals. UNICEF (2021) reported that policies promoting girl-child education have helped to reduce gender gaps in school attendance, while Oloruntegbe (2010) noted that health education programmes in primary schools contribute to improved community health awareness. Similarly, Adegoke and Abimbola (2015) found that structured literacy programmes have improved early grade reading skills among primary school pupils. These findings suggest that effective implementation of educational programmes plays an important role in achieving sustainable development indicators in Nigeria.

However, the study also revealed several challenges affecting the effective implementation of educational programmes in primary schools. These include inadequate funding, shortage of qualified teachers, poor infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, lack of instructional materials, weak supervision, and limited ICT facilities. This finding agrees with Uche and Oduguwa (2018), who reported that primary education in Nigeria suffers from chronic underfunding by government authorities. Nwagwu (2014) stressed that lack of continuous professional development reduces teacher effectiveness, while Olanrewaju (2015) observed that many public primary schools operate in dilapidated buildings with insufficient learning facilities. Emezie and Nwaokolo (2020) also confirmed that ICT infrastructure in most primary schools is inadequate, making digital learning difficult. In addition, Adedokun (2019) reported that poor monitoring and corruption affect the proper implementation of educational programmes. These challenges indicate that although educational programmes are available and beneficial, their full impact cannot be realized without adequate funding, improved infrastructure, effective supervision, and stronger government commitment.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that educational programmes in primary schools play a significant role in improving access, quality, and sustainability of education, but their effectiveness depends largely on the level of adoption and the ability to overcome implementation challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the research the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should strengthen the provision and expansion of primary school educational programs such as digital literacy, inclusive education, and health education in all primary schools in Katsina State.
2. The State Universal Basic Education Board should ensure proper monitoring and supervision of schools to improve the level of adoption of educational programs across all Local Government Areas.
3. Government and stakeholders should increase investment in primary education in order to improve enrolment, literacy, gender equality, and other Sustainable Development Goal targets.
4. Adequate funding, recruitment of qualified teachers, provision of instructional materials, and improvement of school infrastructure should be prioritized to reduce the challenges affecting the adoption of educational programs.

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