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The Role of Policy, Governance, and Education for Sustainable Development in the Majority World: Leadership

ABSTRACT: Rural development remains a major challenge for different governments across the majority world. The reason for this has been attributed to different factors. However, education has been identified as a significant tool for change, capable of promoting rural development. This is not in isolation of policy and governance, which are seen as being able to hinder education and other relevant sectors from contributing to rural development. This study identified specific roles to be performed by policy and good governance in ensuring sustainable development in rural communities in the majority world through education. The study recommends that educational leaders should be involved in policy-making with regard to rural communities. The governance provided to rural communities should take cognizance of local needs and the values of the people, thus, promoting glocalization while giving room for globalization.

KEYWORDS: educational leaders, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), governance, majority world; policy(s), sustainable rural development (SRD)

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Jak cytować:	Uleanya, C. (2023). The Role of Policy, Governance, and Education for Sustainable Development in the Majority World: Leadership. <i>Forum Oświatowe</i> , 36(1), 75–90. https://doi.org/10.34862/fo.2023.1.4
How to cite:	Uleanya, C. (2023). The Role of Policy, Governance, and Education for Sustainable Development in the Majority World: Leadership. <i>Forum Oświatowe</i> , 36(1), 75–90. https://doi.org/10.34862/fo.2023.1.4

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development remains a crucial debate in Africa (Begashaw, 2019; Ibrahim, n.d; International Labour Office, 2015; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2008), which comprises predominantly developing and underdeveloped nations/majority world (Wale-Oshinowo, Omobowale, Adeyeye & Lebura, 2020). It continues to grapple with sustainable development due to various factors (Nel, 2020; Veselovská, 2017; Kutor, 2014). Among these factors are: political (Veselovská, 2017), poor infrastructure (Kutor, 2014), technological (Veselovská, 2017), social (Veselovská, 2017), lack of funds (Kutor, 2014), eco-logical (Veselovská, 2017), corruption (Imiera, 2020), communication issues (Kutor, 2014), poor/bad governance (Thovoethin & Ewalefoh, 2019; Ukwandu, 2019), and among others, policy (Veselovská, 2017; Kutor, 2014). The rural areas of the majority world which are commonly characterized by high poverty rate (Siphesihle & Lelethu, 2020; Katayama & Wadhwa, 2019; Khan, 2000), high level of illiteracy (Seretse, Chukwuere, Lubbe & Klopper, 2018; Olojede, Adekunle & Samuel, 2013), poor road network (Olojede, Adekunle & Samuel, 2013), dispersed buildings/settlement (Lee & Moulton, 2022; Dorrel & Henderson, 2020), among others, are more vulnerable and likely to lack sustainable development (Birkmann et al., 2022; United Nations, 2021) in the majority world. Education which is considered a tool for change (Agrawal, 2022; Pandey, 2020; Yuliani & Hartanto, 2017), becomes the game changer and possible solution for rural settlements in the majority world. For instance, a review of the works of (Damons & Cherrington, 2020; Schoole & Nkomo, 2007) suggests that institutions of learning are intentionally and strategically established in certain identified rural settlements in order to bring about change in certain areas, thereby promoting sustainable development. The question, however, remains, if education is considered a tool for change and schools are established in rural areas, why is there still critical underdevelopment in rural areas of the majority of the world?

Conversely, policies (Ivic, Saviolidis & Johannsdottir, 2021; OECD, 2015; Dare, Schirmer & Vanclay, 2014; Deegan, 2009) and governance (Thovoethin & Ewalefoh, 2019; Ukwandu, 2019) are recognized as major driving forces of sustainable development in different areas inclusive of rural settlements. Thus, this study attempts to explore factors hampering sustainable development in rural areas from the lens of

policy, governance, and educational leadership. In order to achieve the focus of this study, an attempt is made to proffer answers to the research questions guiding the study: What are the roles of policy in promoting sustainable rural development in the majority world? How does governance promote or hamper sustainable development in the majority world? How does educational leadership promote sustainable rural development? The study is divided into the conceptualization of terms, materials and methods, results, discussion, and conclusion, together with recommendations, as well as limitations and suggestions for further studies.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF TERMS

Educational leadership: This is described as a collaborative process that combines the forces of teachers, parents, students, and talents in order to enhance and improve the system of education as well as the quality of provided education (Mary Mount University, 2021; Patro, 2021). In this study, educational leadership is used to mean the process of infusing, organizing, and engaging the resources and talents of different education stakeholders in order to ensure the provision of desired quality and relevant education.

Rural communities: Using the United States of America as an example of rural communities in developed countries, the work of Dobis et al. (2021) shows that residents living in rural areas as of the year 2020 made up 14 percent of the entire population. According to Flora and Flora (2013), cited in Uleanya (2022), rural communities in developed countries are usually characterized by a lack of rail stations and airports. This is not the case of what is experienced in developing and underdeveloped countries. Funmilayo, Asena, Mayula, and Seoka (2022) report that “The government and other regulatory bodies often marginalize rural communities in developing countries” (par. 1). Suffice to state that rural communities in developing countries, which make up the majority world are commonly known to be marginalized. Thus, they are characterized by high rates of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and untarred road, among others (Uleanya, 2022). This corroborates the report by the United Nations (2019), which shows that countries from the majority world are left behind. In the context of this study, rural communities are used to mean rural areas of countries in the majority world, which are commonly known to be underdeveloped and experience high poverty rates, illiteracy, and unemployment, among others.

Rural development is a process of improving the quality of lives lived and experienced by people in rural areas, as well as their economic well-being (Moseley, 2003). In this study, rural development implies any process channeled towards the enhancement of the economic well-being and quality of life of rural dwellers.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a literature review for this conceptualization study. This was done by reviewing different literature considered relevant to the study. This is based

on the submission of the Complete Dissertation by Statistics Solutions (n.d) that “literature review focuses on areas that offer support for new research and offers the student an opportunity to analyse and synthesize past research in the context of their present problem” (par. 8). Similarly, the method was adopted based on the review of the work of Snyder (2019) which shows that literature review is one of the adoptable means of gathering necessary and relevant information for a study. In support, a review of the work of Webster and Watson (2002) had earlier shown that when a literature review is conducted well and effectively as a research method, it helps to create a good foundation that is capable of ensuring knowledge generation and enhancing the development of the theory(s). Suffice it to state that a literature review is crucial in research. Thus, for this study, the researcher identified various relevant literature using the research questions guiding the study. In other words, in an attempt to answer the research questions of the study, relevant literature was identified, analyzed, and synthesized in the context of this present study. The table below shows the different identified, reviewed, and analyzed relevant literature adopted for this study.

Table 1. Retrieved, reviewed, and analyzed relevant literature

Research questions	Selected retrieved and analyzed literature
<p>1. What are the roles of policy in promoting sustainable rural development in the majority world?</p>	<p>Funmilayo, Asena, Mayula, and Seoka (2022). How rural development and agriculture can support social inclusion in developing countries – A Sub-Saharan approach.</p> <p>UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Division of Sustainable Development (n.d). Core Publications Agenda 21.</p> <p>Avila (2005). Participatory policy development for sustainable agriculture and rural development: Guidelines from the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development – Farming Systems Evolution Project</p> <p>OECD. (2001). Policies to Enhance Sustainable Development. Meeting of the OECD Council at Ministerial Level, 2001.</p> <p>Towah (2019). The Impact of Good Governance and Stability on Sustainable Development in Ghana.</p>
<p>2. How does governance promote or hamper sustainable development in the majority world?</p>	<p>Stojanović, Ateljević and Stević (2016). Good Governance as a Tool of Sustainable Development.</p> <p>Zimu-Biyela (2019). Using the School Environmental Education Programme (SEEP) to Decolonise the Curriculum: Lessons from Ufasimba Primary School in South Africa.</p> <p>Ngumbela, Khalema and Nzimakwe (2020). Local worlds: Vulnerability and food insecurity in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa.</p> <p>Towah (2019). The Impact of Good Governance and Stability on Sustainable Development in Ghana</p>

<p>3. How does educational leadership promote sustainable rural development?</p>	<p>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2014). <i>Sustainable Development Begins with Education: How education can contribute to the proposed post-2015 goals</i>. Sajjad (2019). The role of education in rural communities. Rural Development Institute. Müller, Hancock, Wang, Stricker, Cui and Lambert (2022). School Leadership, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Perspectives of Principals in China, Germany, and the USA Müller, Lude, and Hancock (2020) Leading Schools Towards Sustainability. Fields of Action and Management Strategies for Principals.</p>
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RESULTS

The findings of this study are presented using the different identified research questions which guided this study following the submission of scholars as presented in the literature.

Research question 1: What are the roles of policy in promoting sustainable rural development in the majority world?

The review and analysis of the literature show that policy plays a pivotal role in ensuring and promoting sustainable development in rural areas of the majority world. For instance, alluding to the challenges faced by rural dwellers which hampers sustainable development (Funmilayo, Asena, Mayula & Seoka, 2022) reporting for the World Bank state that “Rural dwellers in developing countries face a long list of challenges. They include inconsistent government policies.” Meanwhile, a review of the work of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Division of Sustainable Development (n.d) shows that policy can proffer solutions to the challenges of rural settlements. For instance, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Division of Sustainable Development (n.d) states that “countries need to assess comprehensively the impacts of policies on, rural welfare and international trading relations as a means for identifying appropriate offsetting measures”. The review of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Division of Sustainable Development (n.d) further shows that policies are capable of aiding or marring the making of quality decisions that can enhance trade and capital flows. Policies can help rural settlements of the majority world to carry out actions that can support them in overcoming a “lack of awareness of the environmental costs incurred by sectoral and macroeconomic policies and hence their threat to sustainability” (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Division of Sustainable Development, n.d). Also, according to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Division of Sustainable Development (n.d) “insufficient skills and experience in incorporating issues of sustainability into policies and programmes.” This suggests the way and manner by

which policies can necessitate certain actions capable of promoting sustainable development in rural areas of the majority world. This further accounts for the reason why Avila (2005) states that “Pursuant to Article 1 of the Convention signed in Paris on 14th December 1960, and which came into force on 30th September 1961, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shall promote policies designed:

- » to achieve the highest sustainable economic growth and employment and a rising standard of living in Member countries, while maintaining financial stability, and thus to contribute to the development of the world economy;
- » to contribute to sound economic expansion in Member as well as non-member countries in the process of economic development; and
- » to contribute to the expansion of world trade on a multilateral, non-discriminatory basis in accordance with international obligations” (p. 3).

The foregoing indicates the crucial roles the policies when properly designed and duly implemented, can perform in ensuring sustainable development. However, OECD (2001) cautions that “There will be *no viable rural development if rural people, and especially the poor, have no voice in the design of policies* and institutions that affect them” (p. I, italics added for emphasis). This implies that for policies to be very effective, there is a need for rural dwellers, including the poor, to be involved in the designs. This would enable them to own it and ensure its implementation. Additionally, from one of the findings of the work of Towah (2019), it is deduced that sustainable development is yet unachieved in many countries of the majority world because “governments’ policies have not been focused on the people as defined by the concept of sustainable development” (pp. 1-2). This indicates that there is a need for the government of different nations to focus their policies on their citizens with the demand(s) of sustainable development in view.

Research question 2: How does governance promote or hamper sustainable development in the majority world? Governance is pivotal to expectations in society. In other words, the type of governance obtainable in a given society is envisaged to determine the experiences in such an environment. Reporting for the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (2008) explains that “governance have also mirrored declines in allocations to infrastructure and production” (p. 4). In other words, governance has the potency of affecting infrastructure and production, which in turn have ripple effects on the social and economic wellness of the society.

A study was conducted by Stojanović, Ateljević, and Stević (2016) with the aim of analyzing the effects that good governance has on sustainable development, especially considering socio-economic development, using various categories of countries. The findings of the study showed that the governance that can ensure sustainable development in any society, especially in rural environments in the majority world, which is the focus of this study, must be good. Alluding to the post-Washington Consensus with regards to sustainable development, Stojanović, Ateljević, and Stević (2016) state that “the central place of development policy is occupied with the

model of good governance which has become the mantra of development policy. Good governance is the new approach that recognizes the role of the state in the economy where the joint participation of state and non-state actors, civil society and private sector, is essential in the process of public governance” (p. 558). This implies that with good policies in place, without good governance, sustainable development remains a mirage in a society. Invariably, bad governance is tantamount to underdevelopment. This accounts for the reason why Stojanović, Ateljević, and Stević (2016) can describe good governance as a tool for sustainable development. Further review of the work of Stojanović, Ateljević, and Stević (2016) shows that good governance can be relative. This is explained by citing the case of countries like Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, and Ukraine, where attempts made to ensure democratic changes for providing good governance failed to translate into the provision of political and economic sustainability. Suffice it to state that what may be considered good governance in a given country may be otherwise in another. Various factors and settings are to be considered. Thus, Stojanović, Ateljević, and Stević (2016) submit and caution based on the findings of their study that:

“By accessing the ‘one size fits all’ approach many significant problems have occurred in the implementation of the public sector reforms leading to the in-effectiveness of development aid and spending limited financial resources without achieving the objectives of sustainable development. In this sense, the multi-dimensional nature of the model of good governance and the heterogeneity of different goals of sustainable development are not recognized” (p. 571).

This implies that in clamoring for good governance, dynamism is to be in view. In this regard, glocalization is to be desired. Glocalization is used to imply using global standards to meet local needs. This finding is in alignment with the works of Ngumbela, Khalema, and Nzimakwe (2020) and Zimu-Biyela (2019), who advocate for glocalization being useful for promoting sustainable development.

Additionally, Towah (2019) conducted a qualitative study that was targeted at identifying and describing good governance practices as well as threats to sustainable development, using Ghana as a case study. Marxist theory was used as a guide for the thematic analysis of data which was collected through interviews with 20 participants, field notes, and artifact documents. It must be noted that the participants of the study were selected from different walks of life, that is, professions and diverse perspectives directly involved in issues of governance or policy implementation in Ghana. The findings of the study showed that “good governance practices for sustainable development that were identified integrated some Western practices while maintaining and sustaining its own cultural norms and priorities” Towah (2019). The foregoing suggests that while glocalization may be desired and promoted, globalization is also important. Thus, for good governance to be embraced and ensured, there is a need to consider best practices across the globe and explore their suitability to the local context while still promoting localization based on the culture and norms of the people using the rural context in the case of this study.

Research question 3: How does educational leadership promote sustainable rural development? Sequel to reviewed and analyzed literature, the finding of this study showed that the roles of governance, policies, and educational leadership are intertwined. For instance, while it is true that policies and governance are capable of controlling and determining practices in the education system, this study finding showed that without education, sustainable development, which is the goal of different government and policies, remain unachievable. For instance, according to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2014), “sustainable development begins with education” (p. 1). This explains the importance and dear need for education as a requirement towards ensuring the achievement of desired sustainable development in any society – rural societies of the majority world, to be precise, based on the focus of this study. In congruence, Sajjad (2019), upholding that education plays a crucial role in rural communities, states that “Educating communities means developing schools and educating children and leaders. By doing so, rural communities will lead to a healthier and more sustainable future” (par. 2). Buttressing on how education affects governance and policies, Sajjad (2019) further states that “*Education can lead to many positive outcomes, such as an improved ability to understand policies, procedures, rights, duties, government schemes, legislation, available benefits, and protection laws*” (par. 2, italics added for emphasis). This suggests that good governance can be enhanced together with appropriate policies made and duly implemented. Thus, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2014), citing Ban Ki-Moon, a one-time Secretary-General of the United Nations, reports that:

Education is a fundamental right and the basis for progress in every country. Parents need information about health and nutrition if they are to give their children the start in life they deserve. Prosperous countries depend on skilled and educated workers. The challenges of conquering poverty, combatting climate change and achieving truly sustainable development in the coming decades compel us to work together. With partnership, leadership and *wise investments in education, we can transform individual lives, national economies and our world* (p. 2, italics added for emphasis).

The foregoing suggests the potency of education to proffer solutions to various challenges of society. Meanwhile, Müller, Hancock, Wang, Stricker, Cui, and Lambert (2022) allude to the submission of UNESCO’s attempts to describe institutions of learning leaders to include “school principals, presidents and rectors of universities and colleges, heads of TVET centres and of staff training centres in private companies as main actors” (p. 3). The review and analysis of the study of Müller et al. (2022), which was targeted at investigating the roles of educational leadership and education for sustainable development (ESD) using the case studies of China, Germany, and the United States (US) show that educational leadership has pivotal and strategic functions to perform. Alluding to the works of Warner and Elser (2015) and Pepper

(2014), Müller et al. (2022) highlight that educational leadership has an important role to perform in order to ensure ESD. For instance, referring to the work of Müller, Lude, and Hancock (2020), Müller et al. (2022) state that “Principals must create a shared vision related to ESD within their schools and organize a participative process, emphasize ESD in daily life, support teachers in the application of ESD, and facilitate students’ engagement” (p. 3). This indicates that achieving ESD and, by extension, sustainable development through the route of educational leadership begins with the leaders of learning institutions having relevant visions aligned with sustainable development. Leaders should be able to communicate with their followers and see their achievements in their institutions. Thus, ESD and sustainable development can be a gradual process beginning from one institution of learning to another and the community. However, for such to be accomplished, educational leaders need to motivate themselves (Müller et al., 2022; Bennell, 2015). Motivation is also needed from other educational leadership members (Müller et al., 2022; Kanyimba, Katewa & Claassen, 2015). Conversely, Müller et al. (2022) identify the administrative duties of heads of learning institutions as a hindrance to their achievement of ESD. Suffice it to state that should hindrances be removed and ESD is achieved through the roles performed by leaders of institutions of learning, sustainable development can be in view. This corroborates the submission of Sajjad (2019), who in reference to rural settlements, submits that “In the long term, education in a rural setting should be focused on making rural people responsible for their participation in the following elements of rural development” (par. 5): employment and income opportunities, increase in the productivity of rural labor force, as well as education developing leadership. These are envisaged to bring about the desired rural development.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study show that policies play crucial roles in ensuring sustainable development. However, they are to be well-designed and implemented. Thus, all relevant stakeholders, regardless of their status in society, are to be engaged in ensuring good design and promotion of the implementation of policies. This finding is supported by the work of Gondo (2019) as well as Matsenjwa, Grobelaar, and Meyer (2019), who hold the view that policy is critical in ensuring and sustaining development. Meanwhile, the findings on good governance are supported by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (2008), who sees the need and calls for governance to be strengthened as it is considered as one of the ways to sustainable development. Hence, governance being strengthened must be geared in the right direction by upholding the people’s values, which take cognizance of global practices and standards. Inclusivity in governance is also to be promoted. For instance, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (2008), opines that “There is now acceptance of the fact that we need to bring about a shift to a more inclusive concept of governance, including cooperation of various levels of government, the private sector

and civil society” (p. 22). Additionally, the work of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (2008) suggests the need for synergy in terms of policy and governance with regard to sustainable development. In other words, there are links between policy and governance in ensuring the desired sustainable development. Additionally, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (2008) reporting on a global scale presents that “Multilaterally coordinated policy action is necessary to prevent a global recession and a disorderly adjustment of the global imbalances” (p. 22). This implies that even at a larger scale, to avoid global imbalance as well as recession which hampers sustainable development, policies that are agreed upon and embraced by different relevant parties should be advocated for. Thus, in the case of specific rural societies in the majority world, various relevant stakeholders are to be engaged and made to buy into the policies before such can thrive appropriately.

Additionally, the findings of the study showed that whilst governance and policies of government can impact educational leadership, the reverse can also be the case. Thus, the roles of educational leadership in promoting sustainable development can be considered hinged on good governance, which brings about and promotes the design and implementation of needed appropriate policies. At the same time, good governance and policies can influence the quality of provided education. This finding supports the work of Edgerton, Polikoff, and Desimone (2017), who holds the view that policy is capable of affecting classroom practices. The foregoing indicates that policy, good governance, and educational leadership are interconnected.

CONCLUSIONS

Sustainable rural development is achievable through good governance, appropriate design and implementation of policies as well as educational leadership. These three are interconnected though they can be independent and perform diverse roles in isolation. They also influence and affect one another in different capacities and in the end, determine the extent to which sustainable development can be achieved. Sequel to the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- » Educational leaders should be engaged in policy-making with regard to rural communities. This can be done by allowing a representation of educational leaders during policy-making or review sessions.
- » Leaders of learning institutions in rural communities in the majority world should be encouraged to promote ESD in their schools. This can be done by deliberately reducing their administrative duties and holding them to task with regard to ESD.
- » The governance provided to rural communities should consider the needs of the local people as well as their values. This would aid the promotion of glocalization, though, at the same time, globalization should be kept in view.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was limited to review, analysis, and synthesis of relevant literature. The study is targeted and hoped to serve as an inspiration to researchers and provoke them into undertaking quantitative and/or qualitative or mixed method studies in the direction of this review. It is therefore suggested that a similar study be conducted in this area empirically. This can be done using qualitative, and/or quantitative, or mixed methods approaches.

Funding: This research received no external funding

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Data sharing is not applicable to this article

Acknowledgments: The author acknowledges Dr. Mofoluwake Oluwadamilola Uleanya for all the technical support provided.

Conflicts of Interest: There is no conflict of interest.

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ROLA POLITYKI, ZARZĄDZANIA I EDUKACJI NA RZECZ ZRÓWNOWAŻONEGO ROZWOJU W KRAJACH GLOBALNEGO POŁUDNIA: PRZYWÓDZTWO

ABSTRAKT: Rozwój obszarów wiejskich pozostaje głównym wyzwaniem dla rządów w większości krajów świata. Powodem tego są różne czynniki, jednak edukacja została zidentyfikowana jako znaczące narzędzie zmian, zdolne do promowania rozwoju tych obszarów. Nie dzieje się to w oderwaniu od polityki i zarządzania, które są postrzegane jako utrudnienia dla edukacji i innych sektorów we wspieraniu rozwoju obszarów wiejskich. W niniejszym badaniu zidentyfikowano konkretne role, jakie polityka i dobre zarządzanie mają do odegrania w zapewnieniu zrównoważonego rozwoju społeczności wiejskich w krajach globalnego Południa za pośrednictwem edukacji. Wyniki badania wskazują, że istotne jest, aby liderzy edukacyjni byli zaangażowani w tworzenie polityki w odniesieniu do społeczności wiejskich. Zarządzanie zapewniane społecznościom wiejskim powinno uwzględniać lokalne potrzeby i wartości ludzi, promując w ten sposób globalizację, dając jednocześnie miejsce na globalizację.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: liderzy edukacyjni, edukacja na rzecz zrównoważonego rozwoju (EZR), zarządzanie, kraje globalnego Południa; polityka (polityki), zrównoważony rozwój obszarów wiejskich