

## The Role of Green Creativity in Enhancing Eco-Poetry for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

This study defines the concept of green creativity and eco-poetry. It further explores the critical role which green creativity will play in enhancing eco-poetry and achieving sustainable development across communities, cities, campuses and companies in Nigeria. This study also identifies that universities can enhance eco-poetry by adopting green creativity in their operations. Green creativity will provide a strong foundation for concrete actions especially among the youths towards achieving the SDGs 4 & 13 in Nigeria. This study further highlights eco-poetry as a form of green creativity which can be used in climate change education and communication in Nigeria. It further enumerates the psychological, socio-economic and therapeutic benefits of eco-poetry. It concludes with the clarion call for deeper research on identifying the role of green creativity in enhancing eco-poetry for sustainable development in Nigeria.

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### Introduction

Climate change is a global problem that demands global co-operation towards adaptation and mitigation for sustainable development. Climate change education is therefore very vital across communities, cities, campuses and companies in Nigeria [1]. Poetry has been identified as a valuable tool for climate change education in Nigeria [2]. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change defines climate change as statistical variations that persist for an extended period, typically decades or longer. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines adaptation as the “adjustment in natural or human systems to a new or changing environment. Adaptation to climate change refers to adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities [3]. Climate mitigation is any action taken to eliminate or reduce the long-term risk and hazards of climate change to human life, property and the society [4]. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change defines mitigation as: “An anthropogenic intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases [3]. Climate change poses an immediate and long-term threat to our environment, our people and our planet. Climate change is a global problem, and it requires solutions on a global scale. Appropriate and urgent actions must be taken both by individuals, institutions and the government to deal with climate change issues in order to ensure

a sustainable future for her citizens in Africa [5]. Education is an essential element of the global response to climate change. Climate change education is therefore vital in every community, city, campus and company in order to prepare for climate change impacts and to learn how to adapt and mitigate effectively [1, 2]. Through its Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development programme, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) aims to make climate change education a more central and visible part of the international response to climate change. The programme aims to help people understand the impact of global warming today and increase “climate literacy” among young people. It does this by strengthening the capacity of its Member States to provide quality climate change education; encouraging innovative teaching approaches to integrate climate change education in schools and by raising awareness about climate change as well as enhancing non-formal education programme through media, networking and partnerships [6]. This study identifies the role of green creativity in enhancing eco-poetry for sustainable development in Nigeria.

### Methodology

Data used for this study is derived from published works including academic articles, journals, conference papers, textbooks and internet materials. The researchers gathered materials for the research but summarized the characteristics that centered more on “the role of green creativity in enhancing eco-poetry for sustainable development in Nigeria”.

## **Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development**

The term ‘Sustainable Development’ has been popularized by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), in its 1987 report entitled, ‘Our Common Future’. The commission defined sustainable development as ‘the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs’ [7]. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were launched in September 25, 2015. The SDGs are 17 and have 169 targets, of which SDG 4 is on quality education which is critical to this study. This is because achieving quality education will serve as an enabler and a link to the achievement of other SDGs [8]. Education at all levels and in its entirety, constitutes an important instrument for tackling virtually all global issues [9]. Education being an agent of change is a vital tool for achieving the objectives of SDGs, especially, quality education and lifelong learning. Lifelong learning which springs from the quest for continuous education can be formal or informal, online or offline. Lifelong learning is about meeting the diverse and context specific learning needs of all age groups including the acquisition of basic literacy technical skills through both formal education and effective alternative pathways to learning [8]. Young people at every stage of their education should be informed about the dangers of environmental degradation and excessive use of fossil fuels as well as the prospects of renewable energy. Educators are therefore urged to include climate change education, environment and energy-related topics in the primary and secondary school curricula (UNICEF 2015). Climate change education will go a long way to help scale up climate resilience in Nigeria and this is presently being achieved through the role of green creativity. Therefore, green creativity represents an important strategy in enhancing climate change education across communities, cities, campuses and companies in Nigeria.

### **What is Green Creativity?**

Creativity has been identified as one of the core values for enhancing quality of life locally, nationally and globally. Creativity helps the entrepreneur to increase productivity and maximize profitability. The pursuit of quality of life for all can be the inspiration for new ideas and can fuel creativity [10]. Creativity is the process in which new ideas are generated that lead to producing new approaches that result in taking newer actions. This process of converting novel ideas into productive and useful business practices are the foundation of innovation to take place in any organization [11]. Creativity is a necessary step within the innovation process because creativity is a starting point for innovation [12]. The theory of creativity posits that individuals’ creativity can be influenced by the social or work climate [13,14]. This study aims to conceptualize the green innovation climate (GIC), which provides flexibility and freedom to think in green creative ways to unleash green innovation. Building on the creativity theory, it is argued that the GIC helps to direct and channel activities toward green innovation [14]. Green creativity refers to “the development of new ideas about green products, green services, green processes, or green practices that are judged to be original, novel, and useful” [15].

Furthermore, Green creativity is the form of creativity that focuses on tackling environmental problems through green solutions thereby achieving sustainable development. Green creativity (GCT) is vital for sustainable green and clean production [16,17]. GCT is crucial for developing unique green ideas that may lead to green innovation and production [18]. In the automotive industry, green creative behavior is the foremost step in the green innovation process, as it is crucial for environment friendly innovation [19].

Green Creativity Researchers have recently identified the effects of green transformational leadership, green innovation and green autonomy in enhancing green creativity for sustainable development [17]. Although various factors influence green creative behavior, such as green passion, green organizational identity, green intrinsic, and extrinsic motivation [17-19]. A few recent studies explicated that green creative performance is highly dependent on leaders who have a green vision [17]. For instance, Juliet Davenport, CEO of Good Energy, has the vision to help Britain become 100% renewable energy compliant by supplying 100% electricity devices and equipment [20]. Leaders, such as Elon Musk (CEO of Tesla), Sarah, a voice of green energy (Founder Director of Ashden), and many others, have shared their vision and inspiration for climate change [20]. For instance, Elon Musk, the CEO of Tesla, removes the hierarchy barrier in the organization to listen to any green idea that can help to innovate green vehicles and solve environmental problems [21]. There is great need for companies and institutions in Nigeria to design training programs related to green strategies to foster green creativity and green innovations [22]. Green creativity will enable the youths to be vital forces in enhancing climate resilience in their various communities. Green Creativity is a vital tool which can be innovatively used in enhancing climate change education across various communities, cities, companies and campuses in Nigeria. It can be expressed through eco-poetry and other forms of arts aimed at tackling climate change issues. Green creativity which includes the use of eco-poetry has been identified to have numerous psychological, emotional, mental, socio-economic and environmental benefits.

### **Understanding Eco-Poetry**

Eco-poetry is poetry with a strong ecological emphasis or message. Many poets, poems and books of poems have expressed ecological concerns; but only recently has the term eco-poetry gained use [23]. “One of the chief characteristics of eco-poetry, as defined by James Engelhardt, is that it is connected to the world in a way that implies responsibility. As with other models that explore and assume engagement (Marxism, feminism, etc.), Eco-poetry is “surrounded by questions of ethics” [23]. Poetry has a unique way of expressing emotions, ideas and experiences which is so appealing and attractive to the human mind. It turns out that there are some important psychological, therapeutic and developmental benefits of poetry. Poetry helps in language development, creative language skills, writing skills, self-expression, and in the development of natural rhythms [2]. Poetry is important for children, and poetry is good for adults as well. Through poetry, we can express the beauty and wonders of nature, and the need to preserve our globe from environmental pollution and global warming. There is so much to be done both locally and globally to ensure that our generation and future generations can benefit from the climate change education, mitigation and adaptation using the tool of poetry [2]. Eco-poetry also entails the use of poems in conveying the message of climate change adaptation and mitigation for sustainable development locally, nationally and globally. Through eco-poetry we can express the beauty and wonders of nature in a pleasant manner thereby helping to achieve environmental sustainability. Eco-poetry uses language to deepen a sense of nature’s presence in our lives; and these invocations of nature’s presence-celebratory of the biological fact that we are nature-suggest an ecological understanding of nature and its processes. Eco-poetry uses comparable metaphors for describing the relationship between poetic making and ecology [24]. Furthermore, Eco-poetry involves the innovative use of poetry in climate change education for sustainability in Africa [25].

### A Case Study of the Benjy Poetry and Music Global Concepts (BPAMGC)

A good example of the projects that promote eco-poetry is the world environment day events being held across the globe in June annually. The World Environment Day is usually commemorated with a plethora of events and activities such as seminars, tree planting activities, musicals and poetry recitations, street walk, awareness creation on environmental issues, etc. all through the weeklong. It is a global platform for inspiring positive change especially as it relates to the issues of climate change and the environment [26]. With over 150 countries participating, this UN International day engages governments, businesses, civil society, schools, celebrities, cities and communities, raising awareness and celebrating environmental action. The United Nations also recognizes that individuals can be drivers of change through their support for businesses and governments in their quest to achieve environmental sustainability. Each year, World Environment Day is hosted by a different country where the official celebrations take place [26]. The Benjy Poetry and Music Global Concepts is notably one of the new companies in Nigeria which among other things is very passionate about climate change education, adaptation and mitigation for global sustainability [2]. This passion to see the environment kept clean and green has led to a lot of study and research work on climate change education, adaptation and mitigation. This passion has also inspired multi-stake holder partnerships with various institutions and investors towards scaling up climate resilience in Nigeria and in Africa. Furthermore, The United Nations Environment having declared the theme “Only One Earth” for World Environment Day 2022 presented a greater challenge and an unprecedented opportunity for the youths all around the world. Thus, the Benjy Poetry And Music Global Concepts in collaboration with the Institute of Climate Change Studies, Energy and Environment, University of Nigeria, Nsukka; and Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany organized an educational event on the 8th of June, 2022 to commemorate the World Environment Day 2022 featuring the recitation of inspiring world environment day poetry, seminars by climate change professionals and networking opportunities for the youths from around the world [27,28]. The testimonials from the events organized by the Benjy Poetry and Music Global Concepts in collaboration with other educational institutions further identified the role of green creativity in enhancing climate change education for sustainable development in Nigeria.

The Poem “Keep Clean, Stay Cool” Advanced by the Benjy Poetry and Music Global Concepts Goes a Long way to Highlight how Green Creativity can be used to Enhance Eco-Poetry for Sustainable Development in Nigeria. Here is it:

Poem: Keep Clean, Stay Cool  
Keep clean, Stay cool  
Be disciplined and dutiful  
Think positive, think creative  
Be passionate and innovative

Keep clean, Stay cool  
Make the earth bright and beautiful  
Help make the earth a better place  
Earth’s pollution we must efface

Keep clean, Stay cool  
Be diligent, be careful  
Pick the trash and keep clean  
Throw the trash into the waste bin

Keep clean, Stay cool  
With poetry as a tool  
Go green, Keep clean  
With a formidable team

Keep clean, Stay cool  
With a heart so grateful  
Enjoy the beauty of nature  
Help create a sustainable future

Keep clean, Stay cool  
Drink freely from wisdom’s pool  
Feel the gentle whispering breeze  
Enjoy the sweet fragrance of peace

Keep clean, Stay cool  
Be disciplined and dutiful  
Help make the world a better place  
Put a smile on someone’s face [29].

### The Benefits of Eco-Poetry in Nigeria Include

- **Environmental Awareness:** Eco-poetry raises awareness about environmental issues and promotes ecological consciousness.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Eco-poetry helps preserve Nigerian cultures and traditions by exploring environmental themes rooted in cultural heritage.
- **Climate Change Engagement:** Eco-poetry provides a creative platform for discussing climate change and its impacts on Nigerian society.
- **Emotional Connection:** Eco-poetry fosters emotional connections with nature, encouraging empathy and environmental stewardship.
- **Educational Tool:** Eco-poetry serves as a teaching aid, facilitating environmental education and promoting sustainability.
- **Community Engagement:** Eco-poetry encourages community involvement in environmental issues, promoting collective action.
- **Therapeutic Benefits:** Eco-poetry provides a creative outlet for processing environmental concerns and emotions, promoting mental well-being.
- **Promoting Sustainable Development:** Eco-poetry inspires sustainable development by highlighting the interconnectedness of human and environmental well-being.
- **Supporting Eco-Feminism:** Eco-poetry provides a platform for exploring eco-feminist perspectives, highlighting women’s roles in environmental conservation.
- **Encouraging Intergenerational Dialogue:** Eco-poetry bridges the gap between older and younger generations, fostering discussions about environmental heritage and legacy.

### Recommendations

- It is our recommendation that the immense benefits of green creativity should be well recognized and used as valuable tool in scaling up climate resilience for sustainable development in Nigeria.
- Climate change education should be included in the curricula for both primary schools, secondary schools and even our Universities in Nigeria because of the many benefits which we have listed above.
- Climate change poems should be systematically featured in special radio and television programs, jingles, social media

like YouTube, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc. Apart from providing entertainment, they also provide education on environmental issues to individuals and communities in Nigeria.

- Our youths should be encouraged towards green creativity and green innovations in acquiring relevant artistic skills in eco-poetry towards climate change education, adaptation and mitigation for sustainable development.
- The role of artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing green creativity and eco-poetry for sustainable development in Nigeria should be recognized.
- The federal, state and local government in Nigeria should recognize their role in promoting green creativity for enhancing climate resilience.
- Multilateral organizations such as the World Bank Group can play a great role through green financing for enhancing eco-poetry for climate resilience in Nigeria [30].
- There is need for further research on the role of green creativity in enhancing eco-poetry for sustainable development.

### Conclusion

Green creativity which includes the use of eco-poetry has been identified to have numerous psychological, emotional, mental, socio-economic and environmental benefits. There is therefore need for further research on the subject matter of green creativity which should be undertaken by researchers in the field of environmental sustainability across various communities, cities and campuses in Nigeria. Through this study, it is clearly seen that green creativity is a veritable tool which can be used to enhance eco-poetry for sustainable development in Nigeria [31-33].

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