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IMPACT OF EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL PLANNING ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of effective educational planning on economic development in Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted with a population of 3,850 comprising educational planners, lecturers in educational management and officials of planning agencies. A sample of 400 was selected using multi-stage sampling and 382 copies of the questionnaire titled Effective Educational Planning and Economic Development Questionnaire were retrieved. Instrument validated by experts had reliability index of 0.86 using Cronbach Alpha. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions and Chi-square to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed low extent of effective educational planning in Nigeria with cluster mean of 2.26, curriculum and manpower planning (3.46), access and equity planning (3.29), funding and infrastructure planning (3.41) and various challenges (3.58) significantly influence economic development. Chi-square values of 48.72 greater than critical value 16.92 led to rejection of all null hypotheses, confirming significant relationship. The study concluded that effective educational planning is critical to economic development but hampered by poor data, funding and policy inconsistency. It recommended establishment of functional EMIS for data-driven planning and increased funding to UNESCO benchmark with stronger industry linkage.

Keywords: Education Planning, Economic Development, Curriculum Relevance Planning Educational Funding

Introduction

Education remains the most potent instrument for transformation of any nation, and its relevance to economic development has been widely acknowledged across the globe. In contemporary knowledge-based economies, human capital development through education determines the level of innovation, productivity and competitiveness of a nation in the global market. Nigeria, as the most populous country in Africa and one of the largest economies on the continent, is endowed with vast natural and human resources, yet its economic trajectory has been characterized by volatility, high unemployment, low industrial capacity and persistent poverty. This paradox has drawn attention to the quality and structure of its educational system and, more importantly, to how the education sector is planned and managed to drive economic goals. Effective educational planning therefore emerges as a critical variable in explaining the

disconnect between Nigeria's educational investments and its economic development outcomes.

Educational planning is a systematic and continuous process of setting educational objectives, determining priorities, mobilizing resources and designing strategies to achieve set goals within a specified time frame. It involves forecasting future needs for manpower, aligning curriculum with labour market demands, ensuring equitable distribution of educational opportunities, and guaranteeing efficient use of scarce resources. In Nigeria, the history of educational planning can be traced to the colonial era, but formal national planning began after independence with the Ashby Commission of 1960 and subsequent National Development Plans. Despite several policy frameworks such as the National Policy on Education revised in 2013 and the Education for Change: A Ministerial Strategic Plan 2018-2022, the implementation of educational plans has been plagued by inconsistency, politicization and poor funding (Ogunode & Stephen, 2023). The result is a mismatch between graduate output and industry requirements, leading to high graduate unemployment and underemployment.

Globally, evidence has shown that countries that have achieved rapid economic transformation did so by strategically planning their education to support their economic visions. The Asian Tigers, for instance, invested heavily in technical, vocational and science education as a deliberate planning strategy to fuel industrialization (World Bank, 2022). Adeyemi & Akpotu (2023) averred that in Nigeria, educational planning has often been reactive rather than proactive, with emphasis on expansion in enrolment without corresponding improvement in quality, infrastructure and relevance. The Universal Basic Education program, while laudable, has suffered from poor coordination between federal, state and local governments, leading to overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teachers and learning poverty. At the tertiary level, unplanned proliferation of universities and polytechnics without adequate manpower planning has diluted standards and reduced the employability of graduates.

The link between educational planning and economic development is theoretically grounded in Human Capital Theory as propounded by Schultz and Becker, which posits that investment in education increases the productive capacity of individuals and by extension the economy. When education is effectively planned, it produces the right mix of skills needed for agriculture, manufacturing, services and the emerging digital economy. It fosters entrepreneurship, reduces income inequality and enhances national productivity. In Nigeria, where the economy is struggling to diversify away from crude oil dependence, effective educational planning is imperative to build competencies in technology, agribusiness, creative industries and green economy. Recent studies have emphasized that educational planning that incorporates labour market intelligence, ICT integration and entrepreneurship education has a stronger correlation with economic growth than mere expansion of access (Nwankwo & Ugwu, 2024; UNESCO, 2023).

Moreover, the Nigerian context presents unique challenges that make effective planning indispensable. The country's youthful population, with over 60% under the age of 25, is a potential demographic dividend if properly educated and skilled, but could become a demographic disaster if left unplanned for. The rapid population growth rate of about 2.4% annually puts immense pressure on educational facilities, requiring robust projection and

resource planning. In addition, regional disparities in educational access between the North and South, gender inequalities and the impact of insecurity on schooling in the North-East further complicate the planning landscape (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Without a data-driven, inclusive and future-oriented educational plan, Nigeria's ambition of becoming a top 20 economy by 2030 as envisioned in Agenda 2050 may remain elusive.

Despite huge annual budgetary allocations to education and numerous reforms, Nigeria's education system has not translated into commensurate economic development. The country continues to experience high youth unemployment estimated at over 33%, low ranking on the Human Capital Index, and heavy reliance on foreign expertise for critical sectors. Graduates from Nigerian institutions often lack the practical and digital skills required by employers, forcing companies to spend heavily on retraining or to import skilled labour. This skills gap is largely attributable to ineffective educational planning where curriculum design is disconnected from the needs of the economy, manpower forecasting is weak, and there is poor linkage between education, industry and research institutions.

Furthermore, educational planning in Nigeria is characterized by poor data management, absence of reliable Education Management Information System (EMIS), political interference in siting of institutions, inadequate funding with Nigeria consistently allocating less than 10% of its budget to education against UNESCO's recommendation of 15-20%, and lack of continuity in policies with each administration abandoning previous plans (Eze & Okotie, 2023). The result is wastage, duplication of efforts, decaying infrastructure and brain drain. While several studies have examined educational funding and economic growth, there is limited empirical focus on how the planning process itself – its comprehensiveness, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – impacts economic development indicators in Nigeria. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by critically examining the impact of effective educational planning on economic development in Nigeria.

This study focuses on the impact of effective educational planning on economic development in Nigeria from 2015 to 2024. The period is chosen to capture recent policy interventions and economic realities including the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan. The study will cover all levels of education – basic, secondary and tertiary – but with emphasis on how planning at these levels influences human capital formation, employment generation, productivity and national income. Geographically, the study covers Nigeria as a whole, but data will be drawn from federal ministries, state ministries of education, and selected institutions across the six geopolitical zones to ensure national representation. The variables under investigation include educational planning indices such as access planning, curriculum relevance planning, teacher recruitment and development planning, infrastructure planning and funding planning as independent variables, while economic development indicators such as GDP growth, employment rate, poverty reduction and innovation capacity serve as dependent variables.

This study is significant in several respects. First, it will provide empirical evidence to policymakers in the Federal Ministry of Education, National Planning Commission and state governments on the need to strengthen educational planning as a driver of economic transformation. Secondly, it will benefit educational administrators and planners by highlighting best practices in strategic planning, data utilization and stakeholder engagement.

Thirdly, for students, researchers and development partners, the study will contribute to the existing literature on education-economy nexus in developing countries and serve as a reference point for future research. Finally, for the Nigerian economy at large, the findings will underscore how deliberate and effective planning of education can accelerate diversification, reduce unemployment and position Nigeria competitively in the global knowledge economy, thereby supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 and Goal 8.

The specific objectives are;

1. To examine the extent of effective educational planning and economic development in Nigeria?

2. To examine the impact of curriculum relevance and manpower planning on economic development in Nigeria.

3. To determine the effect of access and equity planning in education influence economic development in Nigeria

4. To evaluate the impact of educational funding and infrasture planning on economic development in Nigeria.

5. To identify the challenges facing effective educational planning in Nigeria

In line with the specific objectives, the following research questions were formulated in this study

1. What is the extent of effective educational planning and economic development in Nigeria?

2. To what extent does curriculum relevance and manpower planning impact economic development in Nigeria?

3. What is the effect of access and equity planning in education on economic development in Nigeria?

4. To what extent does educational funding and infrastructure planning impact on economic development in Nigeria?

5. What are the challenges facing effective educational planning in Nigeria?

A single null hypothesis was postulated to guide this study

H0: There is no significant relationship between effective educational planning and economic development in Nigeria

Conceptual Review

The topic, Impact of Effective Educational Planning on Economic Development in Nigeria is built on two broad constructs: educational planning and economic development, with four specific planning variables.

Educational Planning

Educational planning is defined as a systematic, rational and continuous process of setting educational goals, determining strategies, mobilizing and allocating resources for the attainment of those goals (Ogunode & Stephen, 2023). It is a future-oriented decision-making process that seeks to bridge the gap between where an education system is and where it ought to be. According to UNESCO (2023), educational planning goes beyond statistical projection to include qualitative improvement, equity and relevance. In the Nigerian context, it involves federal, state and local actors coordinating policy to avoid duplication and wastage. Effective educational planning is therefore not just planning on paper, but planning that is data-driven, implementable, monitored and adaptable to socio-economic changes (Adeyemi & Akpotu, 2023).

Effective Educational Planning

Effectiveness in educational planning refers to the degree to which planning inputs lead to desired educational and economic outcomes. An effective plan is comprehensive, participatory, realistic in costing, and has clear implementation and evaluation mechanisms. Nwankwo and Ugwu (2024) argued that effectiveness is measured by alignment between educational output and national manpower needs, efficiency in resource utilization, and sustainability. Without effectiveness, educational plans become mere political documents.

Curriculum Relevance Planning

Curriculum relevance planning is the deliberate process of designing and updating educational contents to reflect current and future labour market demands, technological changes and societal needs. It ensures that what is taught in schools equips learners with employable, entrepreneurial and digital skills. Eze and Okotie (2023) noted that curriculum planning in Nigeria has often been slow to respond to the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, leading to skills mismatch. A relevant curriculum integrates technical and vocational education, ICT, and entrepreneurship to support diversification of the Nigerian economy.

Teacher Recruitment and Development Planning

This refers to the systematic forecasting of teacher needs, recruitment of qualified personnel, and continuous professional development to maintain quality. Teachers are the most important factor in educational delivery. Ogunode et al. (2022) emphasized that poor teacher planning characterized by shortage of qualified teachers in science and mathematics, high pupil-teacher ratio and inadequate in-service training has undermined educational quality in Nigeria. Effective planning in this area involves needs assessment, merit-based recruitment and structured capacity building.

Educational Infrastructure Planning

Educational infrastructure planning involves the projection, provision and maintenance of physical and digital facilities required for teaching and learning such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, workshops and ICT facilities. Adeyemi and Akpotu (2023) observed that many Nigerian schools operate with dilapidated structures and lack basic learning resources due to poor planning and maintenance culture. Strategic infrastructure planning ensures

equitable distribution of facilities, reduces overcrowding and creates a conducive learning environment that improves human capital quality.

Educational Funding Planning

This is the process of estimating costs, identifying sources of funds and allocating financial resources efficiently and equitably within the education sector. It includes budgeting, disbursement and accountability. Despite being Africa's largest economy, Nigeria consistently allocates less than 10% of its national budget to education against UNESCO's recommended benchmark of 15-20% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022; World Bank, 2022). Effective funding planning ensures adequacy, transparency and prioritization of critical areas that drive economic returns.

Concept of Economic Development

Economic development is a multidimensional process involving sustained increase in national income, reduction in poverty and unemployment, improvement in living standards and structural transformation of the economy (Obizue & Obizue 2025). It goes beyond economic growth to include human well-being and capability expansion. In this study, economic development in Nigeria is conceptualized through indicators such as GDP growth, employment generation, poverty reduction and innovation capacity. The World Bank (2022) and UNESCO (2023) posit that education is the foundation for long-term economic development because it builds human capital which drives productivity.

Relationship between effective educational planning and economic development in Nigeria

The relationship between effective educational planning and economic development in Nigeria is fundamentally symbiotic, where education serves as the engine that powers economic transformation while economic development provides the resources and direction for educational improvement. Effective educational planning ensures that the education system does not operate in isolation but is deliberately aligned with the manpower needs, industrial aspirations and developmental priorities of the nation. When planning is effective, it projects the future demand for skills in critical sectors such as agriculture, technology, manufacturing and services, and then designs curricula, teacher development and infrastructure to produce such skills. This alignment reduces the chronic mismatch between graduate output and labour market requirements that has plagued Nigeria for decades.

In the Nigerian context, where the economy is in dire need of diversification from oil, effective educational planning becomes the bridge that converts the country's large youthful population into productive human capital. Through proper forecasting and resource allocation, planning facilitates the development of entrepreneurial competencies, digital literacy and technical skills that enhance employability, foster innovation and stimulate small and medium scale enterprises which are the backbone of economic growth (Nwankwo & Ugwu, 2024). Conversely, poor or absent planning leads to wastage of resources, production of unemployable graduates and perpetuation of poverty. Ogunode and Stephen (2023) noted that nations that integrate educational planning with national development planning achieve higher productivity and more equitable growth because education improves the quality of the labour force, raises

earning capacity and drives technological adoption. Therefore, in Nigeria, effective educational planning is not merely an administrative routine but a strategic economic tool that determines the pace and sustainability of national development.

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on two relevant theories that explain the relationship between education and economic development: Human Capital Theory and Systems Theory of Educational Planning.

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory was originally propounded by Theodore Schultz in 1960 and later developed by Gary Becker in 1964. The theory postulates that education and training are forms of investment in human beings that increase their productive capacity, earnings and contribution to national output, similar to investment in physical capital. According to the theory, a more educated, skilled and healthy workforce is more innovative, efficient and adaptable to technological changes, thereby driving economic growth. Becker argued that differences in earnings and productivity among individuals and nations are largely explained by differences in educational attainment and skill acquisition. The theory emphasizes that expenditure on education should not be seen as consumption but as a productive investment with long-term returns. Nations that strategically plan and invest in quality education reap higher returns through increased labour productivity, higher tax revenues, reduced poverty and enhanced competitiveness. Recent empirical works have validated this position in the Nigerian context, showing that human capital formation significantly influences GDP growth when educational investments are well planned and aligned with economic needs (Adeyemi & Akpotu, 2023; Nwankwo & Ugwu, 2024). This theory is directly relevant to this study because it explains that Nigeria's economic challenges such as unemployment, low productivity and over-reliance on oil are partly a consequence of under-investment and poor planning of human capital. The theory therefore supports the argument that if Nigeria effectively plans its education to produce relevant skills for agriculture, industry, technology and entrepreneurship, it will build the human capital stock required to diversify and grow the economy. As well this theory forms the basis for measuring how planning for access, quality and relevance translates to economic indicators.

Systems Theory of Educational Planning

Systems Theory, as applied to educational planning, was popularized by Ludwig von Bertalanffy and later adapted to education by Chester Barnard and other management scholars. The theory views education as a system composed of interrelated subsystems input, process, output, environment and feedback. Inputs include students, teachers, funds, facilities and policies; processes involve teaching, curriculum implementation and administration; outputs are graduates and skills produced; while the environment is the socio-economic and political context in which education operates. The theory argues that for the system to function effectively, there must be harmony, coordination and continuous feedback among all components, and the system must respond to demands from its external environment, which is the economy.

In educational planning, Systems Theory emphasizes comprehensive, integrated and data-driven planning. A failure in one subsystem, such as inadequate funding or poor teacher planning, will affect the entire system and its ability to meet societal needs. Effective planning therefore requires forecasting, efficient resource allocation, monitoring and evaluation to ensure the education system produces outputs that satisfy the manpower and developmental needs of the economy (Ogunode & Stephen, 2023).The theory's relevance lies on the fact that it explains why fragmented and uncoordinated educational planning in Nigeria has failed to drive economic development. Nigeria's education system cannot operate in isolation; it must interact with the economic system by supplying relevant manpower. The theory provides a framework for analyzing educational planning in Nigeria holistically, thereby looking at policy formulation, implementation, resourcing and linkages with the labour market. It justifies the scope of this study which examines multiple dimensions of planning such as curriculum, infrastructure, teacher development and funding as interconnected inputs that collectively determine the quality of educational output and its impact on economic development.

Empirical Review

Obizue & Obizue (2025) carried out a longitudinal ex-post facto research design study with time-series data to examine the causal relationship between educational management efficiency and economic development in Nigeria from 1993 to 2023. It used GDP per Capita (GDPPC) as the proxy for economic development as the dependent Variable and the independent variables were Public Education Expenditure Efficiency (PEEE), Teacher-Student Ratio (TSR), Budget Allocation Ratio (BAR) Secondary data were extracted from the World Bank Development Indicators (WDI), UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletin. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and ARDL regression analyses reveal a significant positive association between efficient educational management and sustainable economic development in Nigeria. The paper recommended strengthening institutional capacity, adopting performance-based funding and integrating educational planning with national development strategies.

Ogunode & Stephen (2023) examined the problems affecting educational planning in Nigeria using a descriptive survey of 150 education officers in FCT Abuja. Findings revealed inadequate funding, lack of reliable data, shortage of professional planners, poor Education Management Information System (EMIS), political interference in siting of schools, and lack of continuity in policies are major impediments to effective planning, resulting in poor implementation of education policies. The study concluded that these challenges lead to poor quality education and weak human capital formation which have negatively affected the quality of graduates and their contribution to the economy. This study is relevant because it identifies the specific planning deficiencies in Nigeria that this research seeks to link to economic development indicators. It provides empirical grounding for analyzing why educational planning has not translated into economic transformation.

Nwankwo & Ugwu (2024) investigated the relationship between curriculum planning and youth employability in South-East Nigeria. The study sampled 400 graduates and 50 employers in Anambra and Enugu States. Results showed that 72% of employers rated graduates low on practical, entrepreneurial and digital skills due to outdated and theoretically-biased curriculum.

The study established a positive correlation between industry-driven curriculum planning and employability. This empirical work is relevant because employability is a key indicator of economic development. It justifies the inclusion of curriculum relevance as a dimension of effective educational planning and shows that failure to plan curriculum with economic needs in mind fuels unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria.

Adeyemi & Akpotu (2023) examined manpower planning and its effect on economic growth in Nigeria from 2010-2022. Using secondary data from the National Bureau of Statistics and Federal Ministry of Education, and employing regression analysis, they found a significant mismatch between educational output and labour market demand. Over 60% of graduates were from arts and social sciences while critical sectors like agriculture, technology and manufacturing suffered skill shortages. This imbalance, they argued, was due to absence of effective manpower forecasting in educational planning. Ineffective manpower planning, a core component of educational planning, constrains economic development in Nigeria. It supports the objective of this study to assess how aligning educational planning with manpower needs can enhance productivity and GDP growth.

Eze and Okotie (2023) assessed the impact of ICT integration planning in secondary and tertiary institutions on innovation capacity in Delta State. Through a survey of 300 teachers and students, the study revealed that schools without a strategic ICT plan had low digital literacy levels and poor innovation outputs, limiting students' ability to participate in the digital economy. UNESCO (2023) in its Global Monitoring Report also affirmed that countries with clear ICT-in-education plans recorded higher youth entrepreneurship.

The UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (2023) on technology in education and the World Bank Development Report (2022) on human capital development compared educational planning models in Nigeria, Kenya and South Korea. Both reports found that countries with integrated, data-driven and long-term educational plans that prioritized STEM, TVET and ICT recorded higher innovation capacity, economic diversification and growth. Nigeria was cited as having expansion without strategic planning, leading to low ranking on Human Capital Index and Global Competitiveness Index. This comparative empirical evidence is relevant because it places Nigeria in a global context and shows that effective educational planning is a distinguishing factor between developed and developing economies. It strengthens the argument of this study that for Nigeria to achieve its economic development goals, including Agenda 2050, it must adopt effective, future-oriented educational planning.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design to assess opinions on the impact of effective educational planning on economic development in Nigeria without manipulating variables, covering the whole country with its 36 states, FCT and six geopolitical zones. The population of 3,850 consisted of educational planners in federal and state ministries, lecturers in Educational Management and Economics of Education, and staff of the National Planning Commission and National Bureau of Statistics, from which 400 respondents were sampled using Taro Yamane formula through multi-stage sampling involving stratified random selection of two states per zone plus FCT and purposive selection of planners, lecturers and agency officials for balanced representation. Data were collected with a structured

questionnaire titled Effective Educational Planning and Economic Development Questionnaire with Section A for demographics and Section B for 25 items in five clusters on extent of planning, influence of access planning, curriculum and manpower planning, funding and infrastructure planning, and challenges, rated on a four-point Likert scale with 2.50 as acceptance benchmark. The instrument was validated by three experts from University of Nigeria, Nsukka and its reliability tested on 30 respondents outside sampled areas yielding Cronbach Alpha of 0.86. Out of 400 copies administered directly with six research assistants, 382 were retrieved representing 95.5% return rate. Analysis was done using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions with acceptable level of 2.5 and above while the Chi-square tool was used to test the single hypothesis at 0.05 significance with the aid of SPSS version 26.

Results and Analysis

This chapter presents the results of data analysis, interpretation and discussion of findings. 382 copies of questionnaire were retrieved and used for analysis.

Research Question 1: What is the extent of effective educational planning in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on Extent of Effective Educational Planning in Nigeria

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	There is a comprehensive national framework for educational planning	2.31	0.82	Disagree
2	Educational plans are based on reliable data and EMIS	2.18	0.79	Disagree
3	There is continuity in implementation of educational policies	2.04	0.91	Disagree
4	Stakeholders are involved in educational planning process	2.42	0.88	Disagree
5	Educational planning is aligned with national economic blueprint	2.36	0.85	Disagree
Cluster Mean		**2.26**		**Low Extent**

Table 1 shows that the respondents disagreed on all the items as the extent to which education is effectively planned in Nigeria and this was further validated by the cluster mean of 2.26 which is below 2.50 benchmark. This indicates the low level of educational planning in Nigeria. All items were rated below acceptance level, with continuity in policy having lowest mean 2.04. The low SD range 0.79-0.91 shows respondents were homogeneous in their views.

Research Question 2: To what extent does curriculum relevance planning impact economic development in Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Impact of Curriculum Relevance and Manpower Planning on Economic Development in Nigeria

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
11	Curriculum planning aligned with labour market needs improves employability	3.56	0.61	Agree
12	Technical/vocational education planning provides skills for industrialization	3.48	0.58	Agree
13	Manpower forecasting prevents graduate unemployment and brain drain	3.31	0.70	Agree
14	Entrepreneurship education planning promotes self-reliance and job creation	3.52	0.63	Agree
15	ICT and digital skills planning enhances competitiveness in global economy	3.44	0.65	Agree
Cluster Mean		**3.46**		**Agree**

Cluster mean 3.46 shows strong agreement that curriculum and manpower planning has high influence on economic development. The various standard deviation below 0.70 indicates consensus.

Research Question 3: What is the effect of access and equity planning in education on economic development in Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Effect of Access and Equity Planning on Economic Development in Nigeria

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
6	Equitable access planning reduces illiteracy and increases productive workforce	3.41	0.64	Agree
7	Planning for UBE and adult literacy enhances human capital for economic growth	3.38	0.69	Agree
8	Gender equity planning in education improves labour force participation	3.22	0.71	Agree
9	Regional balance in educational access planning reduces poverty and inequality	3.15	0.68	Agree
10	Proper enrolment projection prevents wastage and improves economic efficiency	3.28	0.66	Agree
Cluster Mean		**3.29**		**Agree**

The respondents scored high means scores. Highest rated was reduction of illiteracy and increased productive work force with mean of 3.41 and the Cluster mean of 3.29 indicates respondents' overall agreement that access and equity planning significantly influences economic development. The Sd below 0.70 gives credence to this fact.

Research Question 4: What is the impact of education funding and infrastructure planning on economic development in Nigeria?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Impact of Education Funding and Infrastructure Planning on Economic Development in Nigeria

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
16	Adequate funding planning improves quality of education for productivity	3.62	0.59	Agree

17	Infrastructure planning enhances learning environment and innovation	3.39	0.67	Agree
18	Teacher recruitment and development planning raises efficiency of education system	3.46	0.62	Agree
19	Effective resource allocation planning reduces corruption and wastage	3.24	0.73	Agree
20	Public-private partnership planning bridges funding gap for economic benefits	3.33	0.69	Agree
Cluster Mean		**3.41**		**Agree**

Table 4 result shows that educational funding and infrastructure planning significantly influences economic development in Nigeria having recorded the cluster mean of 3.41.

Research Question 5: What are the challenges facing effective educational planning in Nigeria?

Table 5: Challenges facing Effective Educational Planning in Nigeria

S/N	**Items**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Decision**
21	Inadequate and unreliable data for planning	3.58	0.60	Agree
22	Political interference and policy inconsistency	3.61	0.57	Agree
23	Poor funding below UNESCO benchmark	3.69	0.54	Agree
24	Weak EMIS and poor monitoring and evaluation	3.47	0.66	Agree

25	Corruption and poor implementation of plans	3.55	0.62 Agree
Cluster Mean		**3.58**	**Agree**

Cluster mean 3.58 confirms that all the items in table 5 are major challenges facing effective educational planning in Nigeria with poor funding of education in Nigeria below the UNESCO benchmark as the critical challenge.

Testing of Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between effective educational planning and economic development in Nigeria.

Table 6: Chi-square Test for no Significant Relationship between Effective Educational Planning and Economic Development in Nigeria

Variable	**N**	**Df**	**X2 cal**	**X2 crit**	**P-value**	**Decision**
Educational Planning vs Economic Development	382	9	48.72	16.92	0.000	Rejected

The table above revealed the calculated Chi Square X2 of 48.72 which is greater than the chi square X2-critical value of 16.92. Given the fact that the probability of 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that there is a statistical significant relationship between effective educational planning and economic development in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide empirical insights into the nexus between educational planning and economic development in Nigeria.

First, the finding that the extent of effective educational planning in Nigeria is low with a cluster mean of 2.26 is revealing. This indicates that educational planning in the country is still characterized by ad-hocism, poor data utilization and lack of continuity. This corroborates the position of Ogunode and Stephen (2023) who observed that Nigerian educational plans are often well articulated on paper but poorly implemented due to political interference and absence of reliable Education Management Information System. Similarly, Eze and Okotie

(2023) found that policy somersault and lack of stakeholder involvement have weakened educational planning. The low rating on continuity of policies with mean 2.04 reflects the common practice where each administration abandons previous educational programmes, leading to waste and stagnation.

Secondly, curriculum relevance and manpower planning was found to have the highest influence with mean 3.46. The strong agreement that curriculum aligned with labour market needs improves employability confirms that the major driver of graduate unemployment in Nigeria is skills mismatch. This supports Adeyemi and Akpotu (2023) who argued that Nigerian curriculum is too theoretical and detached from industry requirements. The high rating of entrepreneurship and TVET planning is consistent with World Bank (2022) report that technical and vocational skills planning is the engine of industrialization in emerging economies. Manpower forecasting prevents overproduction of graduates in saturated fields while neglecting critical areas like technology and agriculture.

In the third research question, the study found that access and equity planning significantly influences economic development with cluster mean of 3.29. Respondents strongly agreed that equitable access reduces illiteracy and expands productive workforce. This is in line with Human Capital Theory and recent evidence by UNESCO (2023) which reported that countries that expanded equitable access to basic and secondary education recorded faster reduction in poverty and higher labour productivity. In Nigeria, where out-of-school children is estimated at over 10 million, proper enrolment projection and regional balancing are critical to harness the demographic dividend. The finding aligns with Nwankwo and Ugwu (2024) who established that inclusive access planning correlates positively with employment generation.

Furthermore, funding and infrastructure planning was also found to significantly influence economic development with mean 3.41. This affirms that effective resource planning determines quality of education and ultimately productivity. Nigeria's allocation to education which has consistently been below 8% of national budget against UNESCO recommendation of 15-20% explains decaying infrastructure and brain drain. Adeyemi et al. (2023) similarly found that efficient funding planning reduces wastage and enhances innovation capacity.

On challenges, the cluster mean of 3.58 shows that inadequate data, political interference, poor funding, weak EMIS and corruption remain major bottlenecks. This is consistent with National Bureau of Statistics (2022) and other recent studies.

Finally, the chi-square results rejecting all null hypotheses confirm a statistically significant relationship between educational planning indices and economic development. The calculated chi-square values of 48.72 is greater than critical value of 16.92 and with p-value of 0.000 at 0.05 significance indicate that improvement in educational planning will yield measurable economic gains. The single null hypothesis was rejected hence the conclusion that educational planning positively and significantly affects economic development in Nigeria.

Overall, findings underscore that Nigeria cannot achieve sustainable economic development without deliberate, data-driven and continuous educational planning.

Conclusion

The study concluded that effective educational planning in Nigeria is at a low extent, yet its components of access, curriculum relevance, manpower, funding and infrastructure planning have significant positive influence on economic development as confirmed by chi-square results. Therefore, addressing challenges of poor data, policy inconsistency, inadequate funding and weak implementation is imperative for education to drive sustainable economic growth and diversification in Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Federal and State Governments should establish a functional and digitized Education Management Information System (EMIS) for reliable data to drive evidence-based educational planning.

2. Government should ensure policy continuity and reduce political interference by enacting educational plans into law to promote sustainable implementation.

3. Curriculum and manpower planning should be aligned with labour market needs through strong industry-education linkages, emphasizing TVET, ICT and entrepreneurship education.

4. Government should increase budgetary allocation to education to meet UNESCO benchmark of 15-20% and promote effective public-private partnership in funding and infrastructure.

5. A robust monitoring and evaluation framework should be instituted to ensure accountability, curb corruption and ensure efficient resource utilization in educational planning.

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