



Literature and Focus Group Analysis of the Approaches and Obstacle to Effective Educational Planning in Higher Education in an Emerging Economy

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Abstract

The Nigerian educational system has undoubtedly encountered a number of significant impediments in the last few decades and continues to struggle with the implementation and assurance of educational and teaching quality because of lack of effective planning. A shortage of accurate statistical data, financial, qualified planners, poor national economic performance, unsuitable governing structures, political interference, and general instability have all contributed to low quality in educational planning. This article looks at the meaning and context of educational planning, approaches and problems of educational planning. The paper employed literature and focus group analysis as sources of data collection. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the perception of male and female participants on the problems and approaches of educational planning in Nigeria. It further revealed that economic circumstance (finance), political interference, inaccurate statistical data and personnel among others are constraints to planning and implementation of educational programs in Nigeria. The paper concludes that in spite of the increasing complexity in universities administration created by rising students' enrollments and problems of research, programs of study must be tailored to the ever-more complex needs of the society. Universities are established for the improvement of society and thus, socio-economic planners and educational planners need to cooperate in planning processes for the benefit of both the universities and society.

Keywords: Educational planning, Planning process, Problems, Approaches, universities, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

Uncertainty trails educational systems globally, and planning is arguably a phenomenal task aimed at addressing fears. It becomes much more daunting when it raises its head in an uncertain socio-political and economic environment for which Nigeria represents today. Uncertainties in the nation's educational systems, combined with other institutional inadequacies, might be grossly responsible for this situation (Dike, [n.d]). These worries have tended to inhibit educational production in most third world countries and particularly in Nigeria (Ololube, 2013). Over the years these doubts is obvious are the human and material resources base of the nation's educational systems. In general, the major problems affecting the universities in Nigeria are poor management and control of educational programs, training and retraining staff for capacity building, the selection and organization of curriculum content, curriculum implementation and evaluation, the development, distribution and use of teaching materials, and the relevance of the curriculum to the needs of society. Not surprisingly, there is also a problem with poor motivation and discipline (Adeniyi, 2001). Effective educational planning is a determinant of schooling quality as reflected in students' teachers and administrators' performance (see Bishop and Wößmann 2001). They went further to argue that the parameters which influence the level of schooling quality achieved in the model of educational production are mainly driven by educational planning.

Academics (Adeniyi, 2001; Nwabueze, 1995; Agi & Adiele, 2009) have discussed in their respective works the crises and problems facing educational planning in Nigeria. These problems are not peculiar to developing countries; schools in developed countries still compete for public funds with other sectors of the economy. Educational objectives can be achieved when resources are made available and put into maximum use. Thus, educational planning evolved as disciplines to guide the allocation and utilization of educational resources in the school system. This is required to arrest areas of waste of resources to make educational production more effective. In this regard, educational planning has become indispensable tool in the management of the university systems in order to achieve the desired goals of education systems around the world. However, educational planning is constrained by a number of factors. Onyeike and Owuama (2012) study revealed that inadequacy of funds, planning without accurate statistical data, political influence, and misappropriation of funds and shortage of qualified manpower were major constraints to educational planning.

Notwithstanding, the output of the educational planning process is the plan itself, which is a blueprint for action. It prescribes the activities needed for the education industry to realize its goals. Therefore, the purpose of planning is simply to ensure that the educational industry is effective in its activities. In a broader sense, an educational system must develop a plan that ensures that the appropriate products and services are offered to its students. More specifically, planning gives guidance and direction to members of an organization as to their role in the products and services delivery (Peretomode 1991, 1995; Naylor 1999). For example, a wise person who has enough money to build a house must necessarily make some initial decisions prior to the actual building of the desired house. In the first place, he may decide on the area or site of his interest and find out ways of representing the proposed building on paper for approval by experts. He may need to consult other experts to estimate the cost of the building so that he will know how much money will be required at each stage of the work. This is planning in action: planning is the process of determining a scheme for accomplishing a purpose. Such a scheme of arrangement is to be made beforehand by preparing a purposeful method of achieving the desired objectives (Whawo, 1993). According to Musaaazi (1982), planning is a rational process of preparing and coordinating a set of economic decision making for future actions directed at achieving objectives by optimal means. Admittedly, planning is a guide to the actions that are to be implemented at a future date. In other words, planning is futuristic. The rationale for planning is to effectively utilize available resources to attain a predetermined objective. The process involves strategies for manipulating several variables at the time of planning and their projection into the future.

Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to appraise and understand faculty perception and beliefs concerning approaches and problems of educational planning in Nigeria universities products and services delivery. In spite of studies (e.g., Coombs, 1972; Ololube, 2009; Agabi & Ogah, 2010; Alabi & Okemakinde, 2010; Onyeike & Owuama, 2012) confirming the importance of educational planning to the well-being of student, teachers and administrators performances, there remains the perception among some academic and non-academic staff in Nigerian universities that the ability to plan effectively and with enthusiasm may not be tied to the use of appropriate planning methods. Instead, they see planners' performance to be tied to intelligence, interest, and other personal traits.

This study also aims to identify best practices around the use of planning approaches and strategies in higher education administration and/or management, particularly in this time of scarcity when educational systems the world over are doing more with less. This atmosphere of inadequate resources is one of the strongest influences on education planning in higher education today, because in Nigeria, educational planning has not achieved much in terms of reforming the educational system (Alabi & Okemakinde, 2010). In this context, administration or management are used interchangeably to mean the process of achieving organizational objectives within a changing environment by balancing efficiency, effectiveness and equity, and obtaining the most from limited resources.

Educational planning in developing nations is faced with serious difficulties and the approaches adopted during the planning process are limited. In addition, there are limited research publications in Nigeria on the theme of this study, even those that exist tend to be quite narrow in that they fail to address the full range of possible features that might improve educational planning in higher education. This study looks to offer new insights into the diverse factors that support the use of approaches and methods. One of the central purposes of this study is to address the intellectual gap in understanding faculty perception around university productivity. In doing so, this study enters into the global debate on the use of planning for improvement of students', faculties and administrators performances from the viewpoint of a developing country.

Due to these short comings, the processes for effective implementation of planning have little hope of being achieved. It is quite imperative to investigate the problems that restrain effective planning and implementation and the approaches adopted in educational planning in Rivers State, Nigeria. To achieve this purpose, the following research questions were addressed:

- What are the major problems of educational planning in Nigeria?
- How effective are the approaches used in educational planning in Nigeria?
- What are the qualities of effective educational planning?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Planning Process

Educational planning in its broadest generic sense is the application of rational, systematic analysis to the process of educational development with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the needs and goals of its students and society (Coombs 1972; Ololube, 2009). The principal focus of educational planning in this definition is to make education more result-oriented for the development of the individual and the larger society. Adesina (1981) pointed out that educational planning is the process of applying scientific or rational procedures to the process of educational growth and development so as to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational system through a planning mechanism (see the Figure 1 for planning mechanism). In the planning mechanism, once feasibility of the

proposed service had been established a number of specific actions were necessary in order to ensure that an operational service could become a reality (Robertson, 1991).

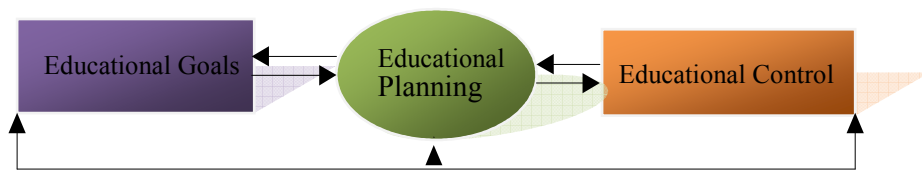


Figure 1: Planning Mechanism. Adapted from Ololube, N. P. (2013)

The aforementioned characterizations suggest that educational planning is a “process” as depicted in the Figure 2. This means that the outline of activities to be done is drawn up and sequentially arranged for implementation. A plan is described as efficient if the resources put into it are sufficient in meeting the stated objectives. An effective plan is one in which the desired objectives have been achieved. It is essential for educational production to be both efficient and effective if it is to properly guide the internal changes in the university as it utilizes the resources available. In other words, educational planning provides a foundation for all educational activities (Ololube, 2006a,b). It is the process of outlining the activities that are necessary to achieve the goals of education. Through planning, educational planners determine how education resources are to be allocated and how the activities of the education system will be assigned to individuals and work groups. Therefore, educational planning is a concise and deliberate attempt, through organized and continuous processes to identify the different elements and aspects of the university system. It helps us in determining the present state and interaction, hence projecting them throughout a given period of time. This is done by analyzing, formulating, implementing and controlling the actions that have evolved to attain the desired aims and objectives of university system (Ololube, 2013). This leads us to focus on enhancing the competitive position and the overall performance of students, faculty and administrators through strategic planning.

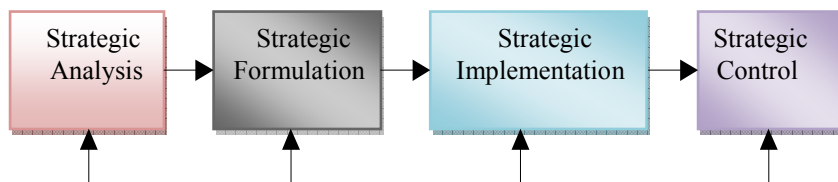


Figure 2: Feedback Process. Adapted from Ololube, N. P. (2013)

The history of strategic planning began in the military. According to Webster's *New World Dictionary*, strategy is “the science of planning and directing large-scale military operations, of manoeuvring forces into the most advantageous position prior to actual engagement with the enemy”. Although our understanding of strategy as applied in management has been transformed, one element remains prominent: the aim to achieve competitive advantage. Taking its name and roots from the military model, early formal strategic planning “reflected the hierarchical values and linear systems of traditional organizations, undertaken by elite planning function at the top of the organization, its structure was highly vertical and time-bound. A certain period would be set aside to analyze the situation and decide on a course of action. This would result in a formal document; once this was done the actual work of implementation - which was considered a separate, discrete process - could begin” (Wall & Wall, 1995). Although individual definitions of strategy vary between authors, traditionally, theorists have considered planning an essential part of organizational strategy (Ololube, 2009). Applying this to the university system, educational strategic planning is the process by which the universities make decisions and take actions that affects its long-term performance. It is an output of the planning process. It defines both the faculties in the universities and the students in relation to the

teaching and learning process. Operationally in this context, the feedback process is a mechanism in which educational institutions may need to cycle back to a previous stage in the planning process thereby creating room for adjustments if need be. At this point let us briefly take a glance at the various components of the strategic planning process.

Strategic Analysis

This is the first stage of the strategic planning process; it aims at evaluating the present condition of the education system. That is, it requires a thorough evaluation of the system's internal operation. The purpose of internal/external analysis is to identify the educational system assets, skills, and resources that represent strengths, weaknesses, obstacles and challenges (*SWOT*). Strengths are favorable internal characteristics that the educational system can apply to achieve its strategic goals. Weaknesses are internal characteristics that hinder or limit goal accomplishment. Obstacles are features of the environment that will cause the educational system not to realize its goals if it cannot resist or avoid them. Challenges are features of the environment that favor the educational system provided it is able to take advantage of them (Naylor, 1999). The focus here is that analysis looks at the current position of the educational system. The underlying idea here is that an application of SWOT into Nigeria's university system will go a long way in solving the ever-complex strategic management scenario facing university administrators instead of scavenging for thoughts.

Strategic Formulation

If the strategic analysis is completed and the current position of the educational system is ascertained, the next step is to look at where the educational system wants to be. It now follows that the mission of the educational system (the rationale for which the education system exists) has to be established. It involves setting strategic goals (the results that the educational system seeks to achieve in the long-term), identifying strategic alternatives as well as evaluating and choosing the strategy that provides the optimum performance of the educational industry in a long term. This idea is in line with what ICMBA (2004) opined when they asserted that once a clear picture of an organization and its environment is in mind, specific strategic alternatives can be developed. While different organizations have different alternatives depending on their situation, there also exist generic strategies that can be applied across a wide range of organizations. ICMBA cited Michael Porter who identified cost leadership, differentiation, and focus as three generic strategies that may be considered when defining strategic alternatives. Porter advised against implementing a combination of these strategies for a given product instead arguing that only one of the generic strategy alternatives should be pursued.

Strategic Implementation

After strategic formulation comes the implementation stage. The best-formulated strategy is useless or rather worthless if it cannot be implemented effectively. If the educational industry is to achieve the best result for which it was established through its strategic planning efforts, it must make sure that its strategy is put into action. The underlying idea here is ascertaining how the universities can get to where they want to be. The strategic planning process is the critical stage in the history of Nigerian educational development. Implementation of plans in the university system has been inconsistent and statistical deficiencies as well as inadequately skilled personnel inhibit the planning process in most cases. However, if a choice has been made on the strategy to use, according to ICMBA (2004), the strategy likely will be expressed in high-level terms and priorities. For effective implementation, it needs to be translated into more detailed policies that can be understood at the functional level of the university system. The expression of the strategy in terms of functional policies also serves to highlight any practical issues that might not have been visible at a higher level. For effective implementation of a strategic plan, the policies has to be translated as much as possible

into specific policies for the functional level line staff in the university system (academic and non-academic) to understand the purpose for which the plan is carried out.

Strategic Control

This is the final stage of the strategic planning process. Strategic control involves the monitoring of the implementation process thereby ensuring that it is in line with the expected performance. An effective university control system identifies problems inherent in the process and alerts the policy and decision makers who then make modifications. The underlying idea here is determining how the university system will know when it has arrived (Ololube, 2004; 2006b).

The reason that the university education production needs planning is vital at this stage of our discussion since there are several problems that face the university system in Nigeria (Nwabueze, 1995). One such problem is of the rising demand for university education and thus the increasing number of students enrolled. Brint (1998, pp. 37-38) argues that this rising demand for university education is necessitated to a significant degree by changes in the kinds of occupations produced by maturing economies. Though, he allows that occupational change is probably not the most important factor behind the rising demand for university education.

OBSTACLES TO EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN NIGERIA

However nice this might be, educational planning in Nigeria face many challenges. Some of these problems include:

Administrative problem: Administrators are expected to be futuristic in all their activities. Since planning is goal oriented, educational planners are to identify various means that can lead to the attainment of educational goals and objectives, arrange them in terms of their effectiveness and efficiency and choose the most effective means in that regards (Ololube, 2013). The effect of bureaucracy on plan implementation is huge. A major function in the planning and implementation is performed by bureaucratic process, which is the administrative machinery of the government. An educational plan of necessity is filtered through the bureaucratic system for implementation. Bureaucracy is beset with myriads of problems which are likely to constitute impediments to plan implementation. This includes its own norms of functioning, which are commonly viewed as difficult and slow. This is sometimes termed red tape system of functioning (Gbenu, 2013).

Corruption: High level of corruption leads to the wastage of the limited resources that is made available into personal purses and sometimes used for projects not budgeted for (Gbenu, 2012). Ololube et al. (2012) and Dike, (2004) view corruption as the behaviour that deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the action of someone in position of public authority because of private motives such as wealth, power or status. The latest Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI) placed Nigeria as the 35th most corrupt country out of 174 countries that were assessed in 2012 (Transparency International, 2012). This is an improvement over the 2010 and 2011 ratings. It is clear that corruption is a major threat facing humanity and educational planning. Corruption destroys lives and communities, and undermines countries and institutions. It generates popular anger that threatens to further destabilize education and exacerbate violent conflicts in educational institutions (United Nations, 2012).

Economic circumstances: The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the Gross National Product (GNP) form an important economic indicator for measuring economic development. Other indices such as inflation and recession also help to assess the health and strength of an economy. Distress in economies, has led to the adoption of harsh economic policies that have adversely affected the management and planning of the education sector (Ololube, 2013). Regrettably, educational planning in Nigeria and other developing countries has faced a number of problems. Economic instability results to fluctuating budgetary allocation to

programs of education. This circumstance has a negative effect on a number of areas including, the quality, supply and demand for teachers, and the funding of new, improved and innovative schools (Agabi & Ogah, 2010). According to Samuel (2006) and Ololube (2013), the budgetary allocations that are available for educational planning in Nigeria are nothing to write home about. Funds provide for education planning is too small for proper planning to take place. The condition of the sector remains a thing of concern. Underfunding and systemic corruption makes the matter worse. The insufficient funding of the education planning sector stands as one of the major factors working against effective planning and implementation of education programmes (Alabi & Okemakinde, 2010).

Inaccurate Data: One of the most difficult challenges that educational planners face is the issues of inaccurate statistical data (Ololube, 2013). The quality of technical planning is in most cases inhibited by statistical deficiencies and inaccurate data. Nigerian education systems has failed to effectively plan because of lack of accurate data, which is because of the use of mediocre to prepare data for use in the planning and forecasting processes (Alabi & Okemakinde, 2010; Agabi & Ogah, 2010). Furthermore, issues such as ethnicity, culture and religion play major role in this regard. The religion-cultural problems to education are comprised of people's attitudes, behaviour patterns, norms and values, traditions and beliefs, lifestyles and demography. All of these factors have greatly influenced the way education planning is being managed in Nigeria. For the most part, Nigerian women are not given the same preferences or opportunities as their male counterparts. This is particularly common in the Northern part of the country where the girl child is withdrawn from school for early marriages or not permitted to attend school at all (Ololube, 2013). As a result the data collected are unreliable due to inappropriate collection, which makes it factually wrong and misleading. At times data are deliberately falsified to reflect a particular education bias (Onyeike & Owuama, 2012).

Inadequate and poor planning: There is a popular saying that "he or she who has failed to plan has planned to fail". Education planning in Nigeria has always been inadequate in line with the enormous facing our educational system. The lack of effective planning poses a significant obstacle to the advancement of education across the country (Agabi & Ogah, 2010). Poor planning technique is as a result of having incompetent planners manning planning sections in the Ministries of Education. Some of staff are not well versed in modern planning techniques that will make the job easy to minimize cost. They can hardly use or interpret data and of course can hardly subject data to real analysis (Gbenu, 2012). The evidence is true that the success of any educational system hinges on proper planning. Planning of human and material resources has evolved to guide the allocation and utilisation of educational resources in the school systems. Such planning is required to arrest areas of wasted resources and to make educational production more successful. Consequently, for any educational system to truly develop effective planning is indispensable as education and planning are essential characteristics for effective education (Ololube, 2013).

Inadequate skilled personnel: This has manifested its ugly head in the areas of those who plan for education and implement such plans. In addition to personnel being inadequate, some of those available are incompetent. All these have made planning for education difficult (Gbenu, 2012). Most educational planners in Nigerian do not have complete competence in planning. Professionally qualified planners are the single most significant resource that can lead to greater and efficient planning, productivity and performance (Adeyemi & Oguntimehin, 2000). In planning, what is needed is the effective utilisation resources by connecting the totality knowledge, skills and talents to achieve planning objectives. The quality of planners should not be nothing less than the basic acceptable standards worldwide (Ololube, 2013) (read more about professionalism and competence in a section of this article).

Inconsistent educational policies: Lots of educational plans have been jettisoned before they are ready for implementation because of government directives and counter directives. Besides, there is always a wide gap between policy formulation and execution, which researchers (Alabi & Okemakinde, 2010) say have rendered the educational planning process almost irrelevant. Often times, policies are changed by the Nigerian government.

Political arrangement: This refers to the effect of the use of power, influence and authority by the government of the day, especially in the allocation of resources. Legislation as a tool of government has

direct influence on policy formulation and the planning process. In general, legislators are compelled to serve the interest of special interest groups. There is therefore the possibility of conflicts between legislation and the rational ideas proposed by the technical planners (Gbenu, 2012). The existing political arrangement has influenced the control over educational planning in Nigeria (Agabi. & Ogah, 2010). According to Ololube (2006b), political instability have had its toll on educational programmes. Planning process started by one administration is brutally interrupted by the next and the differences between federal and state government education policies are quite challenging. The inability of the Nigerian political structure does not allow for education planners to be accountable for their wrong doings (Alabi & Okemakinde, 2010).

Technological Problem: Another serious problem in the planning of education in Nigeria is the lack of attention paid to emerging technological innovations in planning mechanisms. The success of education planners depends upon their ability to identify and respond to technological changes in other to elevate their planning output. Over the years, a number of technological changes have taken place that involves the introduction of modern advancements into the planning process and approaches, and understanding emerging issues related to educational planning (Ololube, 2013). According to Yusuf (2005), information communication technology can make planning more efficient and productive, thereby engendering a variety of tools to enhance and facilitate professional planning activities. Evidence (Ololube, 2013) reported that a large number of Nigerian educational planners and administrators do not know how to use ICT tools in their planning activities. This is a result of chronic limitations brought about by economic disadvantages and government policies; these factors have direct consequences on educational planning.

APPROACHES TO EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Olambo (1995) identified three basic approaches to educational planning. They include:

1. The social demand approach
2. The human resources (HR) requirement approach
3. The cost benefit analysis

The Social Demand Approach

This approach requires the education authorities to provide universities and find facilities for all students who demand admission and who are qualified to enter university. This approach looks on education, as service demanded by people just like any other social services. Politicians in developing countries often find the approach expedient to use because of its appealing nature. The approach provides planners with the approximate number of places where educational facilities has to be provided. It is as well a suitable political tool to meet the need to satisfy the demands of the general public. In situations where resources are acutely limited, and where we are seeking to provide quantity education, which will offer the greatest good to the greatest number, this planning technique is presumed to be the best (Agi & Adiele, 2009; Ololube, 2013).

The Human Resources Requirement (HRR) Approach

The focus of this approach is to forecast the human resources needs of the economy. That is, it stresses output from the universities to meet the human resources needs at some future date. HRR approach could usefully call attention to extreme gaps and imbalances in the education out-put pattern that need remedy and provides educators useful guidance on how roughly educational qualifications of the labor force ought to be developed in the future. That is, the relative proportion of people who would have primary education, secondary education and various amount of post-secondary training. This approach looks at the unemployment and underemployment situations. Over-emphasis on HRR approach may become a challenge

to move towards the right kind of education which may be development-oriented, and thereby creating its own job. The HR approach focuses on 3 main elements, namely:

- Specification of the composition of human resources need at some future date, for example, 2020-2025.
- Specification of human resources availabilities, for example, in 2013.
- Specification, which reconciles the former specification with the later.

Cost-Effective Strategies

There is no general agreement on the most cost-effective strategies university administrators should use to demonstrate appreciation of their employees. However, the following have been cited by Wali and Elekwa (2012, pp. 190-196) as possible methods or alternatives:

- (1) Staff awards: staff will appreciate that their activities or actions are noticed and appreciated by their supervisor. For the administrator to achieve this, one option is offering a “behind the scene” award at the end of the year for humble employees who perform well. A teacher whose students excel in his or her subject in public examinations could, for example, be rewarded with such a prize. Similarly a teacher who makes a successful outing with students on an inter-school competition may deserve an award.
- (2) A surprise achievement celebration: quite simply, this can be achieved by providing a special lunchtime treat to an employee or team of employees whose actions deserve recognition. Alonge in Wali (2002) is of the opinion that administrators who give small gifts for special occasions (birthdays, weddings, etc.) or give free tea, coffee and snacks to their employees also makes them feel appreciated and motivated. In all of these cases it is the act of acknowledging the contributions and value of the employees.
- (3) Pass on praise: if a university administrator hears or is made aware of a positive remark about a staff person, he/she should repeat it to that employee as soon as possible, perhaps via email or send a thank you note to the employee’s home address, copying the Dean and Head of Department. This will show that the administrator understands how much the employee may have sacrificed or given to complete their assignment with excellence.
- (4) Publish a *Kudos Column* in the school newsletter and ask employees to submit kudos for their peers. Similarly set up a suggestion program by either establishing a suggestion box or completing university-wide questionnaires so that employees feel that their opinions and ideas are taken seriously.
- (5) Recognize employee value by delegating functions according to levels of competence: Wali (2010) observed that delegation is necessary for an organization like a university to exist and grow. Employees who are neglected in the distribution of functions often become apathetic to the achievement of goals.
- (6) Make teaching jobs challenging: University administrators should not allow teachers to stay too long in one assignment. In other words, classes and responsibilities should be rotated. University administrators should avoid saddling a willing staff with too many responsibilities, since a heavy work load has been identified as a major source of stress (Nwankwo, 1982).
- (7) Ensure that existing policies are not frustrating: Obnoxious policies can be an obstacle to an employee’s competence at work. There are, for example, schools where employees must fill out forms or wait for “visiting hours” before seeing their Vice Chancellors. Enyi (2004) notes that unless such rigid bureaucratic arrangements are dismantled and more open systems of administration are adopted, employees will continue to face unnecessary frustration at work.

- (8) Express interest in employee's professional development: Faculty training does not end when they begin teaching. Teaching demands rigorous and continuous training. Employee professional development and training should be seen as a continuum. University administrators should ensure that their employees attend programs that will increase their professional growth and capacity. Even if they cannot fund professional development opportunities, employees will still appreciate an administrator's interest and guidance in this regard (Ornstein & Levine, 2006).

Cost-Benefits Analysis of Education

The Cost-benefits analysis technique gives a simple, quantitative approach for deciding whether to go ahead with a decision. Cost-effectiveness analysis provides a method of comparing alternatives for their relative costs and results and in this way provides guidelines on which of the alternatives provides the most impact relative to cost (Wali & Elekwa, 2012). Applying this to the education context, Levin in Ololube (2013) asserts that cost-effectiveness enables measures of learning and other contextually-appropriate indicators to assess educational outcomes relative to costs. Adesina (1981) noted that cost-benefits approach looks at each level of education as investment in human beings with the purpose that the returns will help to improve the whole economy. Assumptions are that the wages and salaries paid to worker reflect differences in productivity. The variations in productivity result from different amount and kind of education people receive. It is a mode of analysis of current relationship between education and income. The benefits of this approach are that by looking at the age earnings structure of the educated person, it is possible to measure or quantify the increase in productivity of an educated person. The analysis can show or suggest the directions in which education systems in a society should expand so as to maximize the earning capacity of their products, and the relationship between the cost of gaining more education and the increase in payment which results from additional education (Olambo, 1995; Wali & Elekwa, 2012).

Advantages of Cost-Effective Strategies to Universities

The first advantage of cost effective strategies is that they are useful to university administrators given the limited and often inadequate resources at their disposal. Cost effective strategies can help to make the best use of the resources that are available. Secondly, cost effective strategies are useful where budget allocation or funds to perform certain activities are fixed and administrators are considering alternatives that may use the given level of funds in a new way so to achieve greater benefits or greater effectiveness. Finally, cost-effective strategies are useful to university administrators, policy makers and planners in situations where the objectives and benefits of a program and accomplishment are fixed. Cost-effectiveness analyses can enhance and complement national strategies to garner new political commitments and evidence-based action (Hu et al., 2007; Wali & Elekwa, 2012).

SWOT Analysis

A fourth approach to educational planning is the SWOT analysis approach. SWOT Analysis is a simple framework for generating alternatives from situation analysis. It is applicable to either the corporate level or business unit level and frequently appears in marketing plans. SWOT (sometimes referred to as TOWS) stands for Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats. The SWOT framework was described in the late 1960's by Edmund P. Learned, C. Roland Christiansen, Kenneth Andrews, and William D. Guth in Business Policy, Text and Cases (1969). The General Electric Growth Council used this form of analysis in the 1980's because it concentrates on the issues that could potentially have the most impact; the SWOT analysis is

useful when a very limited amount of time is available to address a complex strategic situation (ICMBA, 2004). The Figure below shows how a SWOT analysis fits into the strategic analysis of education.

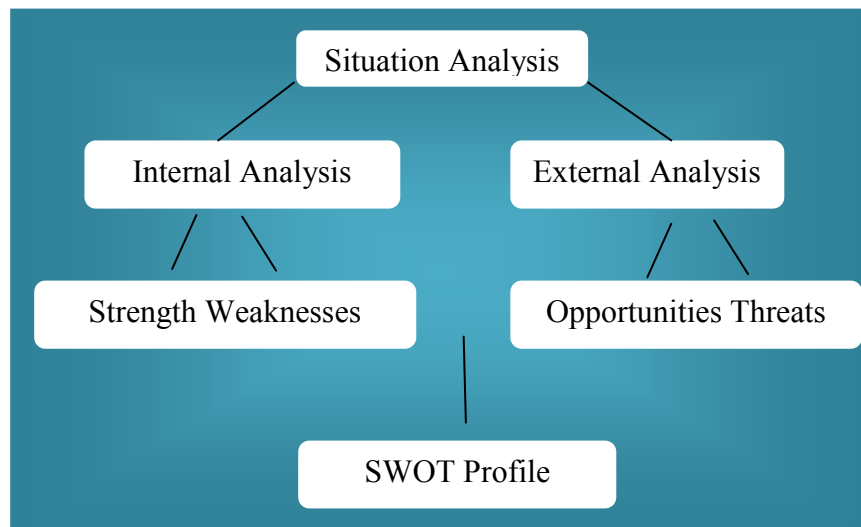


Figure 3: SWOT Analysis. Source: Internet Center for Management and Business Administration (2004).

Lerner maintained that SWOT analysis identifies factors that may affect desired future outcomes of education. The SWOT model is based on identifying the education industry's internal strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities of the external environment, and consequentially identifying the educational industry's distinctive competencies and key success factors. These, along with considerations of societal and educational values lead to creation, evaluation and choice of strategy. SWOT's objective is to recommend strategies that ensure the best alignment between the external environment and internal situation (Lerner, 1999).

The internal and external situation analysis can produce a large amount of information, much of which may not be relevant. The SWOT analysis can serve as an interpretative filter to reduce the information to a manageable quantity. SWOT analysis classifies the internal aspect of an organization as strengths or weaknesses and the external situational factors as opportunities or threats. Strengths can serve as a foundation for building a competitive advantage while weaknesses may hinder it. By understanding these four aspects of its situation, an organization can better leverage its strengths, correct its weaknesses, capitalize on golden opportunities, and deter potentially devastating threats (ICMBA, 2004).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/COMPETENCIES IN PLANNING

What is professional competence? What are the main domains and structure of professional competence? What part of competence can be upgraded by education? The answers to these questions are necessary for trying to find the most successful ways in maintaining and developing professional competence (Kautto-Koivula, 1993, 1996). There are considerable diversities in the terminology used in the study of professional competence in planning. The main reason for this is the early developmental status of the field and the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon being studied. Most of the research work to date has been discipline specific, so the concepts and terminology much reflect the perspective of a given discipline.

Moreover, since there are enormous diversities in the definition of the concept of professional competencies, and in as much as the competency concept is young and in development, the multiplicity of definitions does not mean that various scientific and professional publications do not agree on a single aspect of the competency concept. For example, Kirschner and Thijssen (2005) described the competency concept as a cluster of person-related qualities suitable to deal in a fitting manner with a clearly defined problem situation. Their definition holds where a reasonable level of agreement exists.

Though Eraut (1994) distinguished between professional competence claims, he noted that sometimes this is very general and means little more than being properly qualified, especially in professions where the unqualified are not permitted to practice. For instance, when clients or service users describe a professional as competent they usually mean that they have had nothing detrimental on the grapevine. That means the everyday use of the term professional competence carries some performance referencing, although it may be neither extensive nor specific.

According to Willis and Dubin (1990) professional competence involves the ability to function effectively in the tasks considered essential within a given profession. Nevertheless researchers like Willis and Dubin (1990); Eraut (1994); Kautto-Koivula (1993, 1996); Leino (1996) and Kirschner and Thijssen (2005) recognized that a network of colleagues or experts (professional associations) is an important tool in broadening the competence of individual professionals. By whatever means, there is a strong case for professional development according to OECD (1998). They concluded that for professional competence to flourish there must be greater collaboration between individuals, universities, and society at large.

METHODS

Since we entered the 21st century, current perspectives in scientific writings have evolved and researchers began to emerge in geometric progression in their methodological approaches which may favour a particular scientific pattern, as well as change track, either directly or indirectly in some instances. Researchers want their respondents tell their own stories and perceptions that reflects on their day-to-day experiences (Ololube & Kpolovie, 2012). Such reflections can become useful qualitative and quantitative data for researchers (Bowen, 2005; Poldner et al., 2012). This study encountered somewhat sceptical decision on the best kind of research approach to adopt. In the end, the choice to appreciate and support this choice that dictates the methodology to adopt in study was made.

This study employed a qualitative research design. The qualitative design adopted in this study is an inquiry process aimed at understanding the problems and approaches to educational planning with the purpose of building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants that is conducted in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998). Furthermore this approach was used because it enabled obtaining and interpreting of information, its meaning and experiences in a broad standpoint. Two basic qualitative approaches were used:

Literature/Text Analysis

This study used literature and text analyses to evaluate problems and approaches to educational planning in Nigeria. The use and analysis of literature/text materials are an integral part of the instruments for data gathering. They are valuable sources of data gathering in educational management and planning. The categories of materials used in this study include both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are in the form of report and publications that have first-hand information on the theme of this paper. Secondary sources include textbooks, journals, quoted materials, reports of researches carried out by other investigators, relevant to the theme of this study (Ololube & Kpolovie, 2012). The choice for this method is because its major advantage is that literature and text are generated contemporaneously with the events they refer to. Therefore, they are least expected to be subjected to memory decay or memory distortion compared with data obtained using interview method (Bowen, 2009). The materials used for this study were validated using Scott (1990) overlapping validity criteria *vis-à-vis*, authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning, which is guided my document selection (Bowen, 2005, 2009; Curry, Nembhard & Bradley, 2009).

Focus Group Discussion

The second approach that was used for data gathering was focus group discussion session (see Rabiee, 2004; Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009; Krippendorff, 2011). The focus group discussion was an interpersonal role situation in which the moderators ask questions designed to obtain answers pertinent to a research problem (Ololube & Kpolovie, 2012). The purpose of this second approach is to evaluate or assess respondents' perception on the theme of this study. The resolve is to produce a clear view about every piece of information obtained during the research period and find some unifying characteristics that portray a holistic feature of them all (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009; Maxwell & Loomis, 2002).

In this study, it is realized that the analysis and interpretation of focus group data require a great deal of judgment and care, just as any other scientific approach. The analysis and interpretation of focus group data can be as rigorous as that generated by any other method. Indeed, there is no one best or correct approach to the analysis of focus group data. Focus group interview was determined by the research question and the rationale for which the data are collected.

The interview was a focus group session scheduled to last for forty minutes during each session in a convenient and peaceful environment. At the inception of each session, the lead moderator of the interview took some minutes off to discuss with the group members the purpose of carrying out the research. It begins with open-ended grand tour questions that seek to obtain participants' overall orientation toward the theme of this study. In addition, a leaflet was handed to the participants stating the reasons and the basis for the research and guidelines for the discussion. At every stage the moderators raise the topic for discussion.

On completion of the discussion session, the initial step adopted was to first listen to the tape prior to the transcription as a method of analyzing the data. After the transcription, the researchers read the discussion transcripts repeatedly and wrote observational notes: memos, categorizing strategies (such as coding and thematic analysis) and note contextualization strategies. At this point memos were regularly written to capture the analytic thinking of the data collected. The next step is the categorization strategy through the use of coding method (see Maxwell & Miller, 2008). Its main objective is to crack the data and reorganize it into categories that will facilitate the comparison of data within and between the categories. This is followed the contextualization strategy, that is, linking the data or looking for various methods to identify the relationships among the different elements of data, which enabled looking for relationships that connect statements and events within a context into a coherent whole.

To achieve the goal of data analysis, the data gathered during the discussion session were graphed the same day they were gathered. As the day passes by, the points on the graph tells more about progress so far. According to Heinrich in Maxwell (1996), it is like a fox pursuing a hare. The graph is the hare's track, and we must stay close to that hare.

The final stage was to sort out ways to display the obtained data in a way that it will have meaning for the audience. Thus, tables were employed to make the ideas and analysis visible and permanent to facilitate thinking about the relationships among different elements, which gives it the most detailed presentation. All the members of the group were in their late 40's. They were comprised of 4 males and two females. Four from the Faculty of Education of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt, while two were from the Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The academic ranking of the participants in the group discussion comprised two Professors, two Associate Professors, and two Senior Lecturers (SL).

To establish the reliability of the recording exercise and the entire data-making process, Krippendorff (2011) four overlapping reliability criteria guided this process: (1) the nature of the raw data from which the recording/transcript was done; (2) the characteristics of the coder, including special skills such as familiarity with the subject matter and scientific research; (3) the training the coders needs in order to do the recording and (4) the specific rules for placing units into categories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question One: Problems of Educational Planning in Nigeria

Analysis of data in Tables 1 of this study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the perception of male and female participant on the problems of educational planning in Nigeria. Same is true of Onyeike and Owuama (2012) findings. Their study revealed that there were no significant difference between male and female unit heads on the perception of constraints to educational planning and implementation. Thus, both male and female unit heads are of the view that economic circumstance (finance), political interference, inaccurate statistical data and personnel are constraints to planning and implementation of educational programs in Nigerian universities. The appointment into strategic decision making levels of educational planning is highly politicized, people who do not possess the technical competence in planning find themselves occupying such technically demanding positions. Even in situations where technical planers try to prove balanced superiority of their decisions, there has always been evidence of arbitrary use of political power to impose decisions over technocrat planners (Ololube, 2013). The study further found that shortage of accurate statistical data is a major impediment to effective planning. This implies that the unavailability of adequate and accurate data are essential constrains to effective planning of education programs. Onyeike and Owuama (2012) reported that in Nigeria, Malaysia and Indonesia data are falsified because of ethnic, religion and political implication. As a result, most of the data collected in these countries are unreliable due to inappropriate collection, making it literally wrong and misleading.

The quality of planners and the methods used should be basis within the planning content. The content of a plan, level of technological innovation and facilities used during planning determines whether the plan will have positive or negative change in instructional and administrative processes. It is obvious that professionally trained planners are the pillars of educational planning because of the kind of services they offer. The calibre of planners determines the outcome and growth of the planning process. No matter the availability of planning infrastructures they mean nothing if there are no competent planners. To ensure the successful operation of the planning process, professionally qualified planners are desirable to perform effectively. In other words, there is a great need for a sound professional planning background. An unqualified planner is an enemy to the educational progress and a danger to the development of education. For a non-professional planner to handle any aspect of the planning process is a very delicate problem because it concerns the growth, development and sustainability of educational planning.

In general, respondents recognized that some of the major problems affecting educational productivity in Nigeria are poor management and control of teacher education programs, teacher training and retraining, the selection and organization of curriculum content, curriculum implementation and evaluation, the development, distribution and use of teaching materials, and the relevance of the curriculum to the needs of society. Not surprisingly, ineffective educational planning supersedes all of the factors mentioned above. Effective planning is the determination of schooling quality, while schooling quality is reflected in students' educational performance (Bishop & WöBmann, 2001).

There are increasing demands for educational planning accountability and this universal phenomenon necessitates appropriate university management and planning. Respondents agree that inadequate and ineffective planning coupled with unplanned activities results in random, dysfunctional and are not directed towards the accomplishments of educational objectives. This is partly responsible for education ineffectiveness. Nigerians must make educational institutions in line with global best practices to account for the resources entrusted to them in terms of how these resources are used to meet educational goals and objectives. This logical philosophy underpins the process of feedback in education planning (Ololube, 2013).

Respondents are of the view that the high rate of corruption is responsible for faulty planning in Nigeria, and this has resulted into wastage of the thin resources available. The slim resources are put into personal purses and sometimes used for projects not budgeted for (see, Gbenu, 2012). This predominant behaviour deviates from the formal rules and conduct governing Nigeria universities.

The analysis revealed that the effect of bureaucracy on plan implementation in Nigeria is vast. Administrators fail to look at the future in their planning exercises. This problem is responsible for faulty educational planning in Nigeria. The function of planning and implementation is performed by bureaucratic process, which is the administrative machinery of the government. Educational plans pass through this bureaucratic system for implementation as a result this process is snowed under with several problems which are likely to obstruct effective plan implementation.

Table 1: Respondents' perception of the problems of educational planning in Nigeria

Focus group question on problems of planning	Professor Member 1	Professor Member 2	Assoc. Prof. Member 3	Assoc. Prof. Member 4	SL Member 5	SL Member 6
Inaccurate data is responsible for faulty planning in Nigeria	A	A	A	A	A	SE
Inadequate skilled personnel is responsible for faulty planning in Nigeria	A	A	A	A	SE	A
Technological problem is responsible for faulty planning in Nigeria	SE	SE	SE	A	ND	SE
Political arrangement is responsible for faulty planning in Nigeria	A	SE	SE	SE	SE	NR
Economic circumstances are responsible for faulty planning in Nigeria	A	SE	A	A	A	A
Inadequate planning is responsible for faulty planning in Nigeria	SE	SE	SE	SE	A	SE
Inconsistent policies is responsible for faulty planning in Nigeria	NR	SE	SE	NR	NR	SE
Corruption is responsible for faulty planning in Nigeria	A	A	A	SE	A	A
Administrative problem is responsible for faulty planning in Nigeria	A	A	NR	SE	SE	SD

Framework adapted from Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009), but modified to suit the purpose of this study.

Key to responses:

A = Indicated agreement (i.e., verbal or nonverbal)

D = Indicated dissent (i.e., verbal or nonverbal)

SE = Provided significant statement or example suggesting agreement

SD = Provided significant statement or example suggesting dissent

NR = Did not indicate agreement or dissent (i.e., non-response)

Research Question Two: Approaches to Educational Planning in Nigeria

Data from table 2 revealed that responses from the focus group discussion were not satisfied with the social demand approach of educational planning in Nigeria. They were of the opinion that education planners fail to determine the needed resources and facilities in universities in line with the rising demand for university admission. In addition, the HRR in universities are not adequately addressed. Predictions are always defective in the determination and forecast of the human resources needs of the Nigeria economy. Planners usefully are unsuccessful in calling attention to the excessive gaps and disparity in the education output pattern. They fail in their attempt to provide practical guidance on how the qualification levels of the labour force will change direction in the future. Thus, educational planners fail in their specifications of the composition of human resources needs and availabilities at some future date. Most importantly, they fail in their capacities to reconcile HR needs and availabilities.

Response shows that the cost-effective analysis approach to educational planning in Nigeria is ineffective. Educational planners fail to tally quantitative approach to decision making, provide a method of comparing alternatives for their relative costs and results and provide guidelines that determines alternatives impact that is relative to cost. Thus, planners do not emphasize cost-effectiveness and benefits that enables measures of teaching and learning. Tallying wages and salaries paid to workers to reflect productivity. Their analysis do not suggests the directions education systems should follow. This revelation is in line with the studies of Olambo (1995), Wali and Elekwa (2012) and Ololube (2013). According to (c.f., Hu et al., 2007), cost-effective strategies are useful to university administrators, policy makers and planners in situations where the objectives and benefits of a program and accomplishment are fixed. They further observed that cost-effectiveness analyses can enhance and complement nationwide strategies to garner new economic, political, social and educational commitments and evidence-based action.

Results from the respondents show that educational planners fall short in their determination of the internal strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities in relation to the external environment, and are unable to identifying universities distinctive competencies and major success factors. According to Ololube (2013), planners are unproductive in their evaluation of the present conditions of the universities system, evaluate where the university system want to be, put into action university’s strategic plans and fail to identify the problems inherent in the university planning process and inform the policy/decision makers and government on modifications and the way forward.

Table 2: Respondents’ perception of the approaches to educational planning in Nigeria

Focus group question on approaches to planning	Professor Member 1	Professor Member 2	Assoc. Prof. Member 3	Assoc. Prof. Member 4	SL Member 5	SL Member 6
Is the social demand approach to educational planning in Nigeria effective?	SD	SD	D	SD	D	SD
Is the human resources (HR) requirement approach to educational planning in Nigeria effective?	D	D	SD	D	D	NR
Is the cost-effective analysis approach to educational planning in Nigeria effective?	SD	D	SD	SD	SD	SD
Is the cost-benefit analysis approach to educational planning in Nigeria effective?	SD	SD	D	SD	SD	SD
Is the SWOT analysis approach to educational planning in Nigeria effective?	SD	D	D	SD	SD	SD

Framework adapted from Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009), but modified to suit the purpose of this study.

Key to responses:

A = Indicated agreement (i.e., verbal or nonverbal)

D = Indicated dissent (i.e., verbal or nonverbal)

SE = Provided significant statement or example suggesting agreement

SD = Provided significant statement or example suggesting dissent

NR = Did not indicate agreement or dissent (i.e., non-response)

Research Question Three: Qualities of Effective Educational Planning

The under listed were summarized to answer research question three:

Professors’ perception of effective planning:

Effective planning result in a conducive environment in educational programs
Effective planning motivates students, faculty and administration
Effective planning promotes skills and knowledge
Effective planning meet the aspiration of current situations
Effective planning improves management techniques and problem-solving methods
Effective planning equips educations managers to effectively do their jobs
Effective planning hastens the integration of education and socio-economic opportunities.
Effective planning propels future expectations of education

Associate professors' perception of effective planning:

Effective planning brings about proper application of management principles
Effective planning accelerates quality education reform
Effective planning brings about innovations and new methods in educational system
Effective planning stimulates students, teachers and administrators to better performance
Effective planning creates conducive environment for stakeholders to strive
Effective planning cuts operations costs in the education system
Effective planning reduces the risk of uncertainties in educational system
Effective planning leads to more effective and efficient response to education problems

Senior lecturers perception of effective planning:

Effective planning produces quality changes in the educational systems
Effective planning brings about low dropout rate school
Effective planning creates good environment for teaching and learning to take place
Effective planning creates oom for effective implementation of the curriculum
Effective planning is aimed at all round development of the education system
Effective planning is result-oriented
Effective planning leads to systematic analysis to the process of educational development
Effective planning leads to improve standards of education

CONCLUSION

As enrollment in universities increases daily, the available resources may become over-stressed. The situation becomes even more frightening when university education programs globally are been reformed. Therefore, adequate planning of the human and material resources is needed to address the issue of ever-increasing enrollment and the need to provide them with faculties who are experts and can help them achieve appropriate educational objectives. Additionally, the rising cost of education leaves some universities with low quality and inadequate material and human resources. This is because there is no cheap higher education the world over. Thus, the need for alternative ways of running and utilizing slim resources, and best practices to attain set objectives makes planning imperative. The complexity of schooling, its constraints, contingencies, and other difficulties also make planning a necessity. The scarce resources in universities may be wasted if their utilization is not properly planned.

According to Meyer (1998), the rapidly increasing universities enrollments around the world, in industrial and non-industrial societies alike, cannot simply be explained by occupational changes. At any given level in the schooling process an S-shaped enrollment curve can be traced. At first enrollments increases slowly, and when they reach a "tripping point", however, they rapidly level off once near-universal universities enrollment has been achieved. Thus, even more important than occupation change has been changing expectations about how much schooling is "enough." Some families may begin to see universities

as providing important social benefits, such as the prospect of mixing with a higher class of people while others may see it as providing possible opportunities for economic advancement. These families will pursue strategies that allow them to invest more heavily in university education.

Despite the increasing complexity of universities created by rising enrollments and problems of research, programs of study must be tailored to the ever-more complex needs of the society. Universities are established for the improvement of society and thus, socio-economic planners and educational planners need to cooperate in planning for the benefit of both the universities and society. The need to plan for quality higher education reform in any nation cannot be over-emphasized. When reforms are adequately planned, it accelerates structural integration of a plural society by equalizing economic, social and political opportunities (Alabi & Okemakinde, 2010), this can only be achieved through effective educational planning, because educational planning is concerned with the problems of how to make the best use of limited resources allocated to education in view of the priorities given to different stages of education or different sector of education and the need of the economy (Olambo, 1995; Ololube, 2013).

Future Trends

This study suggests several possibilities and propositions for future research and practice. These inferences pertain most directly to students, researchers, faculty and higher education institutions. At the management level in higher education, this study calls for policies to ensure balanced investments in, and increased funding for education planning that will allow for the effective use, integration and diffusion of educational planning services and methods in the teaching and learning processes. As with other studies, the findings in this study should not be regarded as definitive but offering students, faculty, educators, researchers, planners and administrators a view of the author's reality on the use of educational planning higher education in a developing economy. The importance of effective planning in higher education cannot be over-emphasized, however, the evidence points to the fact that educational planning is critical at this stage of developing countries effort towards meeting the millennium development goals (MDG's) as well as the stated global vision for education, particularly in meeting Nigeria's Vision 20: 2020. Therefore, effort should be put toward a better and sustained educational planning agendas for our future development in education, social, economic, political and cultural goals.

A pertinent question need to be asked, how do we counter the effects of corruption on educational planning? Lucid answer to this question would be that governments globally need to integrate anti-corruption actions into all aspects of corruption; prioritize better rules on lobbying and political financing and appointments into planning systems, make public spending and contracting more transparent, and make public bodies more accountable. Thus, it is expected that Nigeria should take tougher stance against the abuse of power. The 2012 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) (Transparency International, 2012) results demonstrate that there are still many societies and governments especially in the third world that need to give a much higher priority to the issue of corruption.

The issue of ethnicity, religion and culture arising from beliefs, traditions, behavior pattern and values, should not supersede the issue of proper planning. Government should intensify efforts to orientate people using the mass media for people to understand the uniqueness and importance of planning and the need to provide adequate data.

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