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EDITORIAL DESK

I wish to express my profound gratitude to Almighty God for the grace to successfully complete the volume 2 of the West African Journal of Educational Administration and Planning (WAJEAP).

The twelve articles were the products of well researched papers that were presented at the international conference held in May 2024 at the Presbyterian University of East Africa in Kikuyu, Nairobi, Kenya. The conference was well attended by over 25 universities across the globe. These published articles have been peer reviewed and plagiarism checks conducted on them before publication.

I, therefore, want to deeply appreciate the management team of the Presbyterian University of East Africa for making this publication a reality. All the writers and authors are congratulated for passing the stringent measures set by the guild of editors.

Congratulations to everyone.

Prof. M. O. B. Mohammed FNAEAP

Head, Editorial Team

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INNOVATIVE RESEARCH APPROACHES TO ECONOMICS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A SITUATION ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable development has emerged as a critical global imperative, demanding higher education institutions to impart knowledge and skills necessary for addressing contemporary economic and societal challenges. This research paper presented a comprehensive situation analysis of innovative research approaches to economics education for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria. This is done by systematically reviewing peer-reviewed articles, policy documents, and educational reports. The literature review delves into the existing pedagogical practices, educational policies, and initiatives aimed at integrating sustainable development principles into economics curricula. The findings revealed that while there is a growing awareness of the importance of sustainable development in the context of economics education in Nigeria, the actual implementation of these principles remained limited. Most economics programmes lack dedicated courses on sustainable development topics, with the curriculum predominantly centred around traditional economic theories and concepts. However, the literature also highlights pockets of innovation and best practices within certain higher education institutions, where sustainable development is actively embraced as a core component of economics education. To address the identified gaps and capitalise on the opportunities, this research offered these recommendations among others. Firstly, higher education institutions should revise their economics curricula to incorporate sustainable development topics, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills related to economic and environmental challenges. Secondly, collaborations between academia, government bodies, and industry should be fostered to give students practical experiences and exposure to sustainable economic practices.

Keywords: Economics Education, Innovative Research, Higher Education, Sustainable Development

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is the continued and sustained qualitative improvement in the general standard of living of a people in a nation, and the structural transformation or changes in the productive and distributive input and output systems of the nation's economy (Mensah, 2019). It is hinged on eradicating poverty, achieving higher levels of prosperity, enabling continued gains in economic welfare, improving quality education, health, housing, and community welfare, and reducing the environmental effects of industrialisation and human activity (Azuka, 2015).

Abanyam et al., (2020) posited that higher education plays a major role in ensuring sustainable development in Nigeria. They argued that higher education creates a quality workforce, instills in individuals the value of achievement, promotes life learning, supports businesses, industries and research, and promotes technologies as well as innovations. Akarowhe (2018) posited that without knowledge of economics, sustainable development in any nation may be impossible. According to Yahaya et al., (2022), economics education provided by higher education is a time phase that inculcates the needed skills, values, and vital economics knowledge in learners enabling them to improve their standard of living, engage in meaningful ventures and become desirable to employers and society which ultimately fosters sustainable development (Akarowhe, 2018; Yahaya et al., 2022).

It was put forth that the key indicators of sustainable development in a nation such as people's standard of living, level of infrastructural facilities, income, cost, literacy, political stability and self-reliance are all components of economics education (Yahaya et al., 2022). However, a situational analysis of higher education in Nigeria shows that economics education seems far from attaining sustainable development (Bashar & Buhari, 2023). This author is of the position that innovative approaches to economics education in higher education institutions for sustainable development in Nigeria are inadequate. Empirical data show that innovative strategies, tools, and techniques for economics education in higher institutions in Nigeria are largely inadequate (Adeoti, 2021; Ogbueghu & Ugwu, 2017).

In a similar vein, it is observed that various aspects of economics education such as curriculum content, teaching methodology, materials, and lecturers' competency seem to be devoid of innovative research approaches for sustainable development in some higher institutions in Nigeria. Furthermore, pedagogical practices, educational policies, and initiatives aimed at integrating sustainable development principles into economics curricula in some higher institutions of learning in Nigeria are limited. The actual implementation of principles of sustainable development in economics education in higher education also remains limited (Ogbueghu & Ugwu, 2017; Obaizamomwan, 2024). Moreover, research efforts seem to be limited to the situation analysis of innovative research approaches to economics education for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria which form the rationale for this paper.

Statement of the Problem

The pursuit of sustainable development is a crucial global goal; for that reason, therefore, the role of higher education in equipping students with knowledge and requisite skills remains critical to efforts aimed at arresting the problems of economic, social, and environmental dimensions. In Nigeria, however, the principle of sustainable development remains poorly integrated into economics education. Despite its recognised significance, there are vast gaps that exist in curriculum, teaching methodologies, and the availability of resources. In most Nigerian higher educational institutions, Economics programs lean more towards the traditionalistic orientation of economics theories, leaving very little room for sustainable development topics. This narrow focus leaves students unprepared for contemporary economic and environmental issues. Teaching methodologies are often outdated and do not foster critical thinking, problem-solving, or innovation. The traditional lecture approach still prevails with very little effect on engaging students in the processes of analysis related to real-world economic problems. In this regard, innovative pedagogies, such as project-based learning and digital technologies, are seldom put into practice, thus hampering the practical application of knowledge. In addition, modern teaching materials and resources, such as digital tools and updated textbooks, are lacking in providing hands-on experience and

practical knowledge students need to engage in sustainable practices. The competency of economics lecturers themselves in incorporating sustainable development is also usually limited by a lack of necessary training and exposure to new methodologies. There seems to be little or no professional development of lecturers, hence transfer of essential skills and knowledge cannot be achieved to any meaningful extent. A major problem is the very low level of integration of principles of sustainable development in the higher education setting of Nigeria. This study is, therefore, set out to carry out a situational analysis of new ideas in innovative approaches in research on economics education for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria. More precisely, this will involve identifying existing gaps and highlighting best practices with actionable recommendations towards enhancing the integration of principles of sustainable development into economics education.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research is the situation analysis of innovative research approaches to economics education for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria. The objectives are to examine the following:

- i. Innovative research approaches to economics education curricula for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria;
- ii. innovative research approaches to economics education teaching methodology for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria;
- iii. innovative research approaches to economics education teaching materials for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria;
- iv. innovative research approaches to economics education lecturers' competency for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria; and
- v. integration and implementation of sustainable development principles into economics curricula in higher education institutions in Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study provided answers to the following research questions

- i. What are the innovative research approaches to economics education curricula for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the innovative research approaches to economics education teaching methodology for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria?
- iii. What are the innovative research approaches to economics education teaching materials for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria?
- iv. How competent are lecturers to adopt innovative approaches in economics education for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria?
- v. To what extent are sustainable development principles integrated into economics curricula and implemented in higher education institutions in Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The section provided a comprehensive understanding of the various innovative approaches being explored and their relevance to sustainable development in higher education. Each of the concepts identified below is critical to explaining how innovative research approaches transforms economics education in higher education, particularly in the context of promoting sustainable development in Nigeria. The key concepts underpinning this study is delineate as follow;

Innovative Research Approach to Economics Education Curricula in Higher Education

An innovative research approach portrays the creative way or novelty associated with the problems, doing of research, or the exploration of new ideas attributed to the application of out-of-box thinking with the introduction of new perspectives. In economics and economics education, it calls for a rethink of established concepts and rejection of easy resorts to past models, forms, or styles. It requires making a tabula rasa of conventional wisdom in order to look at economic reality with fresh eyes and devise new pedagogical ways to teach and learn economics (Fontana & Fornari, 2010). Higher education encompasses all post-secondary and tertiary institutions that promote the exchange of knowledge, research, and innovation. Higher education creates a quality workforce, instils in individuals the value of achievement, promotes life learning, supports businesses, industries and research, and promotes technologies as well as innovations (UNESCO, 2024).

Economics is a broad discipline that helps individuals understand historical trends, interpret today's headlines, and make predictions about the coming year which are useful for sustainable development (Akarowhe, 2018). Economics education deals with the study of scarcity, how people make decisions, use resources and respond to incentives, which are crucial to sustainable development (Yahaya et al., 2022). Economics education is a time phase that inculcates the needed skills, values, and vital economics knowledge in learners enabling them to improve their standard of living, engage in meaningful ventures and become desirable to employers and society which ultimately fosters sustainable development (Akarowhe, 2018; Yahaya et al., 2022).

According to Okafor (2011), the economics curriculum involves planned and guided learning experiences and intended learning outcomes in economics, systematically reconstructed under the auspices of higher educational institutions. It aims at securing the continuous wilful growth of students in personal, economic, and social competencies. The curriculum embraces a wide array of theoretical and practical courses, some of which may be extra-curricular in nature. The economics curriculum is based on the Reconstructionism Philosophical Foundation, which, according to Mohammed and Pitan (2022), is a philosophy of having a dynamic curriculum that will be responsive to societal changes. It encourages students to participate in critical analyses, interpretations, and evaluation of social problems and efforts toward constructive change.

Innovative research approaches to economics education curriculum include a focus on project-based learning, personalized learning, and experiential learning. Project-based learning involves students working on real-world projects in economics that are relevant and meaningful to them. This approach helps students to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills in economics. Personalized learning involves tailoring the economics curriculum to the individual needs and interests of each student. This approach helps to increase student engagement and motivation in economics. Experiential learning involves hands-on, real-world experiences that allow students to apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-world situations. This approach helps to reinforce learning and make it more meaningful to students (Global Services in Education, 2023).

Innovative Research Approaches to Economics Teaching Methodology in Higher Education

Economics teaching methodology has to do with the mechanism that is used by economics education lecturers to organize and implement several educational means and activities to achieve certain goals in economics instruction (Ismail, 2013; Mugu & Eniwaiye, 2018). Higher

education equips learners with the knowledge, competencies and values needed to tackle interconnected global challenges encompassing economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Higher education is a system that supports economic growth and poverty reduction and equips students with the skills needed to meet the ever-changing labour market (UNESCO, 2024). Innovative research approaches to economics teaching methodology are innovative instructional strategies that involve the use of technology, and hands-on activities that help students learn economics in a meaningful way. These approaches focus on engaging and encouraging students to take an active role in learning economics (Strobel Education, 2023).

Innovative research approaches to teaching methods provide students with the chance to explore various topics through discussion, experimentation, critical thinking, and collaboration. Students therefore gain a deeper understanding of the subject, think critically, collaborate, and develop problem-solving and decision-making skills which are crucial for sustainable development (Mugu & Eniwaiye, 2018; Strobel Education, 2023).

Innovative research approaches economics teaching methods include project-based learning where economics students work together on a project to create a final product which encourages collaboration and critical thinking skills; inquiry-based learning which involves asking questions and allowing economics students to explore the answers through experimentation, research, and discussion; flipped classrooms which involve using technology such as videos or podcasts to introduce economics concepts before class time so that during class discussions, educators can focus more on student engagement; and gamification where economics instructional materials are designed like games to make learning of economics fun and engaging for students (Mohammed & Pitan, 2022; Strobel Education, 2023).

Innovative Research Approaches to Economics Education Teaching Materials

Teaching materials refer to materials and facilities used for disseminating economics knowledge to students in higher education institutions. Innovative research approaches to economics teaching materials involve the use of creative teaching materials and resources such as digital technologies (ICT), digital textbooks, online courses, and interactive learning tools to enhance learning, facilitate communication and collaboration between economics lecturers and students, as well as to monitor students' progress and provide personalized feedback (Global Services in Education, 2023).

An innovative research approach will ensure that economics materials such as textbooks contain the capabilities outlined by Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). This implies that economic problems are designed based on sustainable development goals so that the economics materials such as textbooks provided can be more useful for students and more able to develop teachers' skills and creativity in designing problems according to the problems in the neighbourhood (Eliyawati et al., 2022; Mohammadnia & Moghadam, 2019). The economics course is a bit abstract and will be better understood using appropriate innovative teaching materials which enhance practical work. These innovative materials allow economics students to observe and manipulate real objects and materials in higher education which can enable them to foster sustainable national development (Bello, 2021).

Innovative Research Approaches and Economics Education Lecturers' Competency for Sustainable Development

Economics lecturers' competency is a range of knowledge and behaviour which must be possessed by economics lecturers to do their duties. These competencies should include but are not limited to communication skills, aptitude to learn, conduct social connections, quandary solving, and working with ICT or other support tools. These lecturers are also able to innovatively approach the teaching of economics in higher education (Bendriyanti et al., 2019; Žeravíková et al., 2015).

Sustainable development refers to the continued and sustained qualitative improvement in the general standard of living of a people in a nation and the structural transformation or changes in the productive and distributive input and output systems of the nation's economy for human welfare and development (Adam *et al.*, 2023). Bello (2021) defined sustainable development as a process of change in which the utilization of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological innovation and exchange and institutional change reflect both the future and present needs of humans. Sustainable development is a balanced pursuit of three goods such as - ecological health, social equity, and economic welfare for all human beings. It is grounded on the ethical commitment to enhanced opportunities and well-being of not only the present human generation but that of the future human generation (Emina, 2021).

Integration and Implementation of Sustainable Development Principles into Economics Curricula

It is very important that students study economics; therefore, the integration and implementation of sustainable development principles into the economics curriculum is relevant in equipping students with those necessary sets of knowledge and skills to consider the global challenges of economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Sustainable development, as it concerns education, refers to the embedding of the principles and goals of sustainability into the teaching and learning processes for an integrated pursuit of ecological health, social equity, and economic welfare for present and future generations (Mohammed & Pitan, 2022; Adams *et al.* 2023).

Economics curriculum designed to incorporate sustainable practices should be so designed as to afford learners maximum encouragement to critically analyse, interpret, and assess economic issues through a sustainability lens. These include the introduction of topics that deal with sustainable use of resources, impacts of economic activity on the environment, and need for sustainable economic policy. Incorporating the SDGs into the curriculum will, therefore, enable educators to take students through a detailed understanding of how economic practices can either support or hinder sustainable development. For example, issues such as the green economy, renewable energy, and business sustainability are some of the themes that must form part of any serious curriculum (Eliyawati *et al.*, 2022; Adams *et al.*, 2023).

Moreover, sustainable development needs new pedagogies and learning materials that support its implementation. These devices will include the use of digital technologies, interactive learning tools, and experiential learning opportunities exposing students to real-world challenges in sustainability (Adams *et al.*, 2023). Educators should be trained in their integration into teaching practices for the purpose of creating an enabling environment where students acquire critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills that are fundamental for sustainable development. This will ensure that the learning system enriches students with an understanding of sustainability and prepares them to meaningfully

contribute to sustainable economic growth and well-being of societies (Bello, 2021; Mohammadnia & Moghadam, 2019).

Theoretical Underpinnings

The Socioeconomic Approach to Learning and Teaching (SEALT), Functional Curriculum Theory (FCT) and Theory of Innovative Education served as roadmaps that led the ideas and conclusions in this study.

Socioeconomic Approach to Learning and Teaching (SEALT)

The “Socioeconomic Approach to Learning and Teaching (SEALT) theory” emphasises the integration of students’ socioeconomic realities and experiences into the teaching method. According to the theory, teaching methods should be innovative to bring more relevant, engaging, and applicable economics education to students’ lives (Balsiger et al., 2017). The theory encourages educators to relate economic concepts to real-world situations and local contexts. It promotes problem-based and inquiry-based learning approaches which encourage students to explore and analyse real economic problems or issues instead of solely focusing on theoretical concepts which form the basis of teaching methodologies in some Nigerian higher institutions (Adu, 2023; Balsiger et al., 2017).

According to SEALT, innovative research approaches to economics teaching methodology encourage students to ask questions, conduct research, collect data and propose solutions which build their critical thinking, problem-solving and analytical skills. Differentiation, scaffolding and the use of technology can address individual needs and promote equal opportunities for all students (Taylor, 2017). When economics teachers combine learners’ socioeconomic background and real-world examples in local contexts, the learners can overcome the challenges being faced and better understand the connection between economic concepts and the society in which they live. Students can think critically about the distribution of resources, inequality, poverty and other social issues influenced by economic factors investigate and explore economic problems and propose possible solutions which are useful for the attainment of sustainable development (Balsiger et al., 2017).

Functional Curriculum Theory (FCT)

Functional Curriculum Theory emphasises that learners should have a world pool of knowledge, ideas, inventions, and human and financial capital and become fully participating members of the global economy. The theory further emphasises that a curriculum must have innovative research approaches and be practical (Adamu & Yahaya, 2021). The theory also states that a functional economics curriculum should be connected to the day-to-day life of Nigerian students so they can solve economic challenges in line with problems around their neighbourhood. The curriculum should also emphasise students’ personal development for contribution to social transformation, vocational activities, entrepreneurship, creativity, communication, interpersonal conduct, and self-awareness (Adamu & Yahaya, 2021; Obanya, 2004).

Theory of Innovative Education

The theory of innovative education posits that an educational curriculum should be a purposeful process of innovative training of a person so he or she can contribute to the development of his/her creative abilities, self-learning skills, and self-improvement which ultimately fosters sustainable development. According to the theory, an economics curriculum should ensure that the quality of human development is ahead of the way. Innovative research approaches to economics curriculum in professional or higher education

should express the integrative content of technical and technological, pedagogical, organizational and managerial, and socio-economic innovations. These innovations ensure the innovative development of not only professional education but also science, production, economy, management and the social sphere which invariably boost sustainable development (Mikheeva & Pankova, 2021).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

i. What are the innovative research approaches to economics education curricula for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria?

A situational analysis of economics education curricula in some higher institutions in Nigeria seems to be insufficient. This author is of the position that innovative research approaches in economics curricula in some higher education institutions in Nigeria are inadequate to enhance sustainable development. This position is supported by studies which show that most economics programs in higher education in Nigeria lack dedicated courses on sustainable development topics, with the curriculum predominantly centred on traditional economic theories and concepts (Bashar & Buhari, 2023; Gotip & Dungrit, 2022).

Furthermore, studies also show that past and even present economics education curricula in some Nigeria higher education are far from the attainment of sustainable development. The economics education curriculum is far from the standard criteria, lacks a great deal of innovation, and is disconnected from the day-to-day life of Nigerian children. Hence, most students are unable to design and solve economic challenges in line with problems around their neighbourhood or peculiar to their society which hinders sustainability. The implication of this is also seen in students' inability to economically provide technological solutions for sustainable development in the nation. Many students are unable to contribute to sustainable development goals such as industry, innovation and infrastructure (Goal 9), and sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11) (Adamu & Yahaya, 2021; Bashar & Buhari, 2023; Obaizamomwan, 2024).

ii. What are the innovative research approaches to economics education teaching methodology for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria?

An analysis of the situation of economics education teaching methodology in some Nigerian higher institutions is below standard and outdated (Obaizamomwan, 2024; Ogbueghu & Ugwu, 2017). A careful evaluation of economics teaching methodology in Nigeria reveals a more traditional or teacher-centred approach than an active or student-centred teaching method. This teaching method when compared to standard criteria for teaching economics in higher education is less suitable for sustainable development (Bashar & Buhari, 2023).

Studies show that the common method of instruction adopted in Nigeria's higher education is the lecture method or direct instruction. Any economics concepts taught in such conditions would be too abstract and unfamiliar to the students (Anyanwu & Iwuamadi, 2015; Bakare, 2011; Mugu & Eniwaiye, 2018). Students are merely passive listeners who are neither engaged nor encouraged to think, innovate, and create. The direct teaching method provides for no initiative on the part of students as it stimulates only the auditory sense and creates problems because of the inability of most students to take proper notes (Gotip & Dungrit, 2022). Studies also reveal that the little or non-provision of an activity-oriented and innovative student-centred economic lesson, which could demystify the teaching and learning of the subject,

could be a reason for the low attainment of sustainable development in Nigeria (Bashar & Buhari, 2023; Niyi & Musa, 2020).

Innovative teaching approaches in economics education such as quantitative techniques, massive open online course methods, computer-assisted instruction methods, forecasting models, field trip/industrial work base experience, team teaching, micro-teaching technique, project-based learning, individualised instruction, inquiry-based learning, game-based learning, and flipped classrooms are limited in economics education in Nigeria (Dauda, 2017; Gampala, 2023; Ogbueghu & Ugwu, 2017). These innovative teaching methodologies enable students to construct their knowledge and understanding of economics which invariably enables them to solve critical economic and technological problems in society thereby contributing to sustainable development (Dauda, 2017; Gampala, 2023; Gotip & Dungrit, 2022; Ogbueghu & Ugwu, 2017).

iii. What are the innovative research approaches to economics education teaching materials for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria?

A situational analysis of economics education teaching materials in some higher education in Nigeria shows insufficiency in the aspect of innovativeness (Ogbueghu & Ugwu, 2017; Orji et al., 2020). Appropriate and innovative teaching materials for practical work are widely and frequently used in the teaching of economics in developed countries unlike Nigeria (Adeoti, 2021; Bello, 2021; Ugwu and Obegbulem, as cited in Koko & Elekwachi, 2023).

In some Nigerian higher institutions, economics education is usually taught in theory. Furthermore, inadequate innovative economics content contained in many economics textbooks contributes to the unrapid improvement of technology in Nigeria which invariably hinders sustainable technological development in the nation, especially in areas of no poverty (Goal 1), industry, innovation and infrastructure (Goal 9), sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11) etcetera. Students are also unable to solve economic problems for technological sustainable development (Ogbueghu & Ugwu, 2017; Orji et al., 2020).

iv. How competent are lecturers to adopt innovative approaches in economics education for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Nigeria?

A situational analysis of economics education lecturers' competency in some higher education in Nigeria shows deficiencies especially in their competency to innovatively approach economics (Basil et al., 2013; Niyi & Musa, 2020; Tolorunleke et al., 2023). Literature shows that some economics educators lack ICT skills in the usage of basic tools like word processing, spreadsheets, presentation tools, graphics, editing and video capture tools, anti-plagiarism tools, learning management systems, Economics software for teaching and learning Economics (such as MINITAB, EVIEWS, SPSS, STATA and SAS), and Electronic e-Labs as virtual labs with simulations and video demonstrations (Gotip & Dungrit, 2022). The above lecturers will be unable to approach economics education innovatively which would prevent economics from performing its role in fostering sustainable development.

Furthermore, the statistical report shows that in some Nigerian universities, less than 43% of university economics lecturers have PhD and can innovatively approach economics education. More than 57% of the lecturers have lesser academic qualifications of which some are unable to approach economics education innovatively. Only very few universities have up to 50% of teaching staff with PhDs that can innovatively approach economics education which may be hindering sustainable development through economics education in the nation

(Niyi & Musa, 2020). For instance, higher institutions such as Kano State University of Science and Technology, Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, not only have a shortage of qualified economics lecturers but also lecturers who are unable to innovatively approach economics. This is a situation in some higher educational institutions across Nigeria (Niyi & Musa, 2020).

The inability of some economics lecturers to approach economics innovatively hampers higher education from fostering sustainable development through economics education in Nigeria. This is because, the students will not gain the required economic skills to make them products of quality education (sustainable development goal 4) or be able to contribute to industry, innovation and infrastructure sustainable development goals in the nation (Niyi & Musa, 2020; Tolorunleke et al., 2023).

v. To what extent are sustainable development principles integrated into economics curricula and implemented in higher education institutions in Nigeria?

It was put forth that existing educational policies and initiatives aimed at integrating sustainable development principles into economics curricula in Nigeria include - developing students' research and data analysis skills in the field of economics which are essential for analysing economic trends, conducting impact assessments, and formulating evidence-based policies for sustainable development. Although existing policies and initiatives ensure practical training in data collection, analysis, and interpretation are integrated into the economics curriculum so that students gain a deep understanding of the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (Association for the Development of Education in Africa, ADEA, 2019), this author is of the position that these are not properly implemented in many Nigeria higher institutions.

Arthur (2017) asserts that the economics curriculum in Nigeria's higher education is a great problem because of the disparity between the policies formulated and the actual implementation. Furthermore, a situational analysis of pedagogical practices and curricula in economics education in some higher education in Nigeria does not foster sustainable development principles (Ahunanya, 2009; Akpan & Okoro, 2018). Aberu and Lawal (2022) in a study revealed that economics education pedagogical practices and curricula have a significant negative and weak effect on sustainable development attainment in Nigeria's higher educational institutions. Also, in some higher education in Nigeria, sustainable development principles have not been fully integrated and implemented into the economics curricula (Adamu & Yahaya, 2021).

Although there are certain higher institutions, where pockets of innovation, and sustainable development practices are actively embraced as a core component of economics education (Abenu et al., 2024; Ahunanya, 2009; Bashar & Buhari, 2023), this author is of the position that this is not true for the majority of Nigeria's higher education. In support of this position, statistics show that Nigeria's best-placed university is ranked as the 1335th Best Global Universities in the world in the area of economics education and concerning innovative research and implementation of sustainable developmental practices (World Bank, 2020).

Also, empirical findings reveal that while there is a growing awareness of the importance of sustainable development in the context of economics education in Nigeria, the actual implementation of these principles remained limited (Abenu et al., 2024; Ahunanya, 2009; Babalola & Olawuyi, 2021). The existing pedagogical practices in economics education in higher education in Nigeria emphasise theories and knowledge that make students become

job seekers upon graduation (Achilike, 2006). The economics curriculum is broad with overloaded content and outdated which creates a huge gap between what is learnt, and what should be learnt, which ultimately affects the quality of economics research, innovativeness, and sustainable development goals attainment (Gotip & Dungrit, 2022).

CONCLUSION

It can therefore be concluded based on the empirical and non-empirical evidence, theories, and arguments provided in this paper that innovative research approaches to various aspects of economics education such as curriculum, teaching methodology and materials, and lecturers' competency are insufficient for sustainable development in some higher institutions. Furthermore, pedagogical practices, educational policies, and initiatives aimed at integrating sustainable development principles into economics curricula in some higher institutions of learning in Nigeria are limited and not properly implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are therefore given based on the study's conclusion:

1. Higher education institutions should revise their economics curricula to incorporate sustainable development topics, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills related to economic and environmental challenges;
2. Economics lecturers should be sponsored for training and workshops where they will be equipped with innovative teaching methodologies in economics education that foster sustainable development in the nation;
3. Economics lecturers should also be sponsored for training and workshops where they will be equipped with the competence and skills to approach economics education innovatively for sustainable development;
4. Collaborations between academia, government bodies, and industry should be fostered to provide innovative economics teaching materials that give students practical experiences and exposure to sustainable economic practices;
5. University management should ensure that all the vital principles of sustainable development are properly integrated into the economics curriculum and also strictly implemented.

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