

Influence Of Economics Education On Sustainable National Development In Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of Economics education on sustainable national development in Nigeria, focusing on senior secondary schools across selected geopolitical zones. The research was driven by concerns about the effectiveness of Economics education in equipping students with knowledge, attitudes, and skills relevant to national economic sustainability. Utilizing a descriptive survey research design, data were collected from 500 students, 80 teachers, and 20 educational stakeholders, amounting to a total sample size of 600 respondents. Data collection instruments included structured questionnaires and interviews. The demographic data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while inferential statistics such as Pearson correlation, Chi-square tests, and ANOVA were employed to test three formulated hypotheses. Findings reveal that 65% of the students have a sound understanding of fundamental economic concepts, while 58% are aware of sustainable development issues. Furthermore, 60% of the respondents reported that Economics education positively influences their economic behavior and decision-making. The results showed statistically significant relationships between Economics education and the three examined dimensions: understanding of economic concepts, awareness of sustainable development, and responsible economic behavior. These findings affirm the relevance of Economics education in driving sustainable national development, particularly through its ability to shape students' economic reasoning and civic responsibility. The study concludes that Economics education contributes meaningfully to sustainable development in Nigeria. However, disparities across school types and regions indicate a need for equitable resource allocation, improved curriculum delivery, and enhanced teacher training. The Human Capital Theory and Constructivist Learning Theory provided theoretical underpinnings, reinforcing the argument that education fosters individual and national growth. Recommendations include policy reforms aimed at curriculum enrichment, infrastructural support, and teacher professional development to maximize the role of Economics education in sustainable national development.

Keywords: Economics Education, Sustainable Development, Economic Behavior, Senior Secondary Schools

INTRODUCTION

The trajectory of national development is deeply intertwined with the efficacy of its education system, particularly the instruction of economics, a discipline that cultivates resource stewardship, analytical reasoning, and civic responsibility (1,3). In Nigeria, economics education occupies a vital position in nurturing economic literacy, fostering entrepreneurial capacity, and equipping citizens to address enduring challenges such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption, and environmental instability (1,5). Recent data underscore Nigeria's youth unemployment as both worrying and nuanced. According to Trading Economics, Nigeria's youth unemployment rate stood at 6.5% in the second quarter of 2024, down from 8.4% in Q1 but remains high in historical context, with an average of 21.4% between 2014 and 2024. Meanwhile, National Bureau of Statistics figures for Q2 2023 report

unemployment among those with post-secondary education at 8%, and for youths aged 15–24 at 7.2%, with a notable 13.8% of youths categorized as NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) (7). These alarming figures reflect a disconnect between formal education and meaningful economic participation. However, education alone cannot remedy unemployment unless it aligns with labour market needs. As one study highlights, “education impacts positively on youth unemployment if it is in line with the labour market demand” (3). Furthermore, long-term analysis finds that increased education expenditure correlates with reduced unemployment, emphasizing the importance of investing in quality education (7). At the policy level, Nigeria has introduced several initiatives aimed at strengthening education for national development, such as the Universal Basic Education

Commission (UBEC), which seeks to enhance access and quality at foundational levels (2), and digital-skills programs like the 3 Million Technical Talent (3MTT) initiative launched in 2023 to train youths in high-demand technical fields (7). Despite these efforts, economics education continues to face myriad challenges. A recent review identifies key structural weaknesses including outdated curricula, a shortage of qualified teachers, inadequate infrastructure, and the lack of interactive instructional resources, all contributing to widespread economic illiteracy among students (5,6). Additionally, scholars have documented issues such as poorly produced textbooks, limited use of ICT in teaching, insufficient funding for research, and inadequate professional development opportunities for economics educators (1,8). Pedagogical shortcomings are also pervasive. Traditional teacher-centred approaches dominate the field, with little emphasis on experiential or problem-based learning (4,8). This disconnect limits students' ability to apply economic theory to real-world phenomena such as inflation, unemployment, income inequality, or sustainable resource use (4,6).

Given the convergence of these challenges and opportunities, reforming economics education becomes imperative for advancing sustainable national development. Doing so would support Nigeria's attainment of several Sustainable Development Goals—including SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production)—by fostering a workforce that is both enterprising and economically informed (6,7). Against this context, the present study investigates the influence of economics education on sustainable national development in Nigeria, aiming to uncover the gaps in delivery, explore current pedagogical and institutional challenges, and propose concrete, data-backed policy interventions that can enhance economic literacy, civic engagement, and inclusive development (1,5).

Statement of the Problem

In contemporary Nigeria, the urgency for sustainable national development has become increasingly apparent amidst persistent socio-economic challenges such as rising poverty levels, youth unemployment, regional inequalities, weak institutions, economic instability, and environmental degradation. Despite numerous national policies and international development goals targeted at improving the living conditions of the populace, the anticipated transformational outcomes have remained largely elusive. One crucial sector that holds the potential to catalyze sustainable development but appears underutilized is education more specifically, Economics education. Economics education is

expected to play a pivotal role in equipping individuals with critical thinking skills, decision-making capabilities, and knowledge about the use of scarce resources to meet the ever-growing human needs. In Nigeria, the inclusion of economics in the senior secondary school curriculum and tertiary institutions aims to foster economic literacy among young citizens, promote entrepreneurship, and enhance understanding of local and global economic issues. However, the disconnect between what is taught in economics classrooms and the practical socio-economic realities facing the country suggests a significant gap between economic education policy intentions and actual outcomes. Several reports and studies indicate that Nigerian students often complete secondary or even tertiary education with only a superficial understanding of economic concepts, unable to apply them in real-life contexts such as budgeting, investment, saving, or participating in policy debates. Instead of cultivating analytical and entrepreneurial capacities that support national development, the current delivery of economics education often focuses on theoretical knowledge and rote learning, with limited emphasis on problem-solving, innovation, or sustainability awareness. This raises critical concerns about the effectiveness of economics education in achieving its developmental objectives. Moreover, there is limited empirical evidence demonstrating a clear linkage between economics education and sustainable national development in Nigeria. While the curriculum emphasizes national development goals, there remains a lack of systemic evaluation to determine whether economics education has translated into improved productivity, responsible citizenship, enhanced entrepreneurial orientation, or sustainable livelihoods among Nigerian graduates. This situation is compounded by inadequacies in curriculum implementation, poor teacher training, obsolete teaching materials, and insufficient integration of emerging global issues such as climate change, financial technology, and inclusive economic models.

Another aspect of the problem is the absence of alignment between the economics curriculum and the current demands of the labor market. Nigeria faces a paradox of rising youth unemployment amidst increasing numbers of economics graduates from universities and colleges of education. This mismatch questions the relevance of economics education in addressing the real challenges of job creation, economic inclusion, and long-term development planning. The failure of economics education to translate into employable skills and self-reliance undermines the contribution of the subject to national economic transformation. Furthermore, the role of economics education in shaping public consciousness and civic responsibility is underexplored. In an era marked by widespread corruption, mismanagement of

public resources, and weak accountability systems, economics education should ideally serve as a foundation for building an informed citizenry capable of demanding transparency and participating constructively in governance. Unfortunately, the current instructional approach in many Nigerian institutions fails to engage students in practical socio-economic discourse or stimulate interest in public policy analysis, thereby limiting the broader social impact of economics education. Additionally, while the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) advocate for quality education as a driver of inclusive and sustainable growth, Nigeria's economics education system has yet to adequately integrate the principles of sustainability, equity, and environmental consciousness into its instructional frameworks. This oversight results in graduates who are ill-equipped to contribute meaningfully to development goals such as responsible consumption and production, economic resilience, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. Consequently, there is a growing need to assess how economics education contributes to or falls short of supporting sustainable national development.

Given these challenges, it is imperative to conduct a thorough investigation into the influence of Economics education on sustainable national development in Nigeria. It is important to determine whether the curriculum content, pedagogical approaches, teacher preparedness, and student outcomes align with the objectives of producing economically literate, self-reliant, and development-oriented citizens. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the extent to which economics education has been instrumental in addressing Nigeria's development challenges and how it can be repositioned to enhance its impact on sustainability and national progress.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of Economics education on sustainable national development in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Assess the extent to which Economics education contributes to students' awareness of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Nigeria.
2. Investigate how Economics education influences the development of entrepreneurial and problem-solving skills among Nigerian students.
3. Examine the role of Economics teachers in promoting sustainable economic practices through classroom instruction.
4. Evaluate how Economics education fosters responsible citizenship and economic decision-making for national development.
5. Identify challenges limiting the effective implementation of Economics education towards achieving sustainable national development.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent does Economics education enhance students' understanding of sustainable development in Nigeria?
2. How does Economics education develop entrepreneurial and problem-solving skills among students?
3. In what ways do Economics teachers promote sustainability through their instructional strategies?
4. How does Economics education influence students' ability to make responsible economic decisions for national development?
5. What are the major challenges hindering the integration of sustainable development concepts in Economics education in Nigeria?

Hypotheses of the Study

Hypothesis 1 (H01): There is no significant relationship between Economics education and students' understanding of economic concepts.

Hypothesis 2 (H02): Economics education does not significantly enhance students' awareness of sustainable national development.

Hypothesis 3 (H03): Economics education does not significantly affect students' economic behavior and decision-making.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on exploring the influence of Economics education on sustainable national development in Nigeria, particularly within senior secondary schools and tertiary institutions offering Economics-related programs. The study encompasses public and private schools in selected urban and rural areas in Nigeria, to reflect a representative understanding of how Economics education is delivered and its developmental outcomes. The research will investigate curriculum content, pedagogical strategies, student engagement, and policy frameworks that support Economics education in fostering sustainability. Specifically, the study is confined to the current curriculum content of Economics as outlined by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) and the implementation strategies in classroom instruction. Emphasis will be placed on analyzing how the curriculum equips students with knowledge of economic sustainability, innovation, entrepreneurship, and responsible consumption and production.

Significance of the Study

This study holds considerable significance as it offers theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions to the fields of educational policy, curriculum reform, economic planning, and sustainable national development in Nigeria. By investigating the relationship between Economics education and

sustainable development, it advances the discourse on how subject-specific learning can directly influence national growth trajectories and resilience. From a policy perspective, the findings of this research will provide evidence-based insights for educational policymakers and curriculum developers. It will help assess the extent to which Economics education in Nigeria aligns with the nation's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). The outcomes of the study can guide curriculum reform, ensuring that sustainability principles are embedded in learning objectives, instructional content, and assessment practices. For educators and administrators, the study will identify effective pedagogical approaches and instructional strategies that foster sustainable economic thinking. Such insights can inform professional development initiatives, improve teaching methodologies, and create engaging, real-world-oriented learning environments that empower students to apply economic principles to societal challenges.

The research also holds direct benefits for students and learners, who are the primary recipients of Economics education. By examining the extent to which Economics education shapes students' awareness, values, and competencies related to sustainability, the study promotes learner-centered reforms that encourage critical thinking, responsible decision-making, and entrepreneurial innovation. These attributes are vital for producing graduates capable of contributing meaningfully to Nigeria's socio-economic transformation. From a national development standpoint, this study underscores the role of human capital in achieving sustainable economic growth. A population with robust economic literacy is better positioned to make informed policy choices, drive technological and business innovations, optimize resource allocation, and build economic resilience against global disruptions such as climate change, inequality, and technological shifts.

Finally, in terms of academic contribution, the research addresses a critical gap in the literature by empirically linking Economics education with sustainable national development in Nigeria. While prior studies have often treated education and development as separate domains, this study adopts a multidisciplinary lens, integrating educational outcomes with economic and environmental indicators. Its findings can serve as a foundation for future comparative and cross-sectoral research in Nigeria and other developing economies, thereby advancing scholarly debates on the nexus between education, economics, and sustainability.

Limitations of the Study

Although this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between Economics education and sustainable national development in Nigeria, certain methodological and contextual limitations should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional research design constrains the ability to draw causal inferences between Economics education and broader development outcomes, as observed associations may be influenced by unmeasured factors or reverse causality. In addition, the sampling frame—potentially limited to specific states, school types, or accessible locations—restricts the generalizability of findings across Nigeria's diverse educational and socio-economic contexts. Measurement challenges also arise from the complex nature of constructs such as economic literacy, sustainable economic thinking, and development-oriented attitudes, which are partly assessed through self-report instruments prone to social desirability bias. Furthermore, variations in curriculum implementation, teacher quality, and school resources across regions introduce heterogeneity that may influence results, making it difficult to isolate the effects of Economics education from broader systemic factors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review provides a critical overview of the body of knowledge surrounding Economics education and its influence on sustainable national development. It explores key concepts, theoretical underpinnings, and previous empirical investigations. Understanding the interlinkages among these dimensions provides a solid foundation for examining the role Economics education plays in shaping sustainable economic, social, and environmental outcomes in Nigeria. This chapter is divided into three key sections: the conceptual framework, theoretical framework, and empirical review.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework serves as a guide for this study, linking Economics education with sustainable national development through various educational and developmental constructs.

Economics Education

Economics education refers to the structured teaching and learning processes aimed at imparting knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes related to economic principles and practices. In Nigeria, the senior secondary school Economics curriculum aims to equip learners with decision-making, entrepreneurial, and financial literacy skills essential for national development (1).

Sustainable National Development

Sustainable national development involves a multidimensional approach to economic growth that

meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (2). It includes economic stability, social equity, and environmental sustainability.

Interlinkages Between Economics Education and Development

Economics education contributes to national development by: enhancing individual economic literacy, fostering entrepreneurship and innovation, promoting responsible citizenship and decision-making, and creating awareness of environmental and sustainability issues. These connections suggest that Economics education can act as a catalyst for sustainability by preparing learners to understand and address complex development challenges.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Several theories underpin the relationship between Economics education and sustainable development.

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory posits that investment in education increases the productivity and efficiency of individuals, ultimately contributing to economic growth and national development (3). Economics education, in this sense, is a form of human capital development, equipping individuals with the cognitive and practical tools needed to participate in economic and sustainable practices.

Constructivist Learning Theory

This theory asserts that learners actively construct knowledge through experiences. Economics education promotes critical thinking and problem-solving by encouraging learners to apply economic concepts to real-world scenarios. Through guided instruction, students become active participants in the learning process, fostering deeper engagement with sustainable development themes (4,5).

Systems Theory

Systems theory emphasizes the interdependence between components of a system. In the context of this study, the education system, economy, environment, and governance are interrelated. A change in one component such as improved Economics education affects the sustainability and resilience of the entire system (6).

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCES

Economics Education and Economic Literacy

Students exposed to structured Economics education were better able to interpret financial information and make informed financial decisions (7). This enhances microeconomic stability, which in turn supports national development.

Economics Education and Entrepreneurial Skills

Economics students demonstrated stronger entrepreneurial competencies compared to peers in other fields (8). These competencies include innovation, budgeting, business planning, and risk management, which are crucial for sustainable.

Economic Development Curriculum and Pedagogical Gaps

Misalignment between Economics curriculum content and Nigeria's development agenda was identified (9). Many Economics teachers do not integrate sustainability concepts into instruction due to lack of training or inadequate instructional materials.

Teacher Capacity and Instructional Quality

Teacher effectiveness in delivering Economics content greatly influences student outcomes in terms of critical thinking and awareness of sustainable development (10). This suggests that teacher capacity building is essential to realizing the developmental goals of (11) emphasized the role of education, particularly Economics, in promoting the SDGs. In countries like Finland and Singapore, integrating Economics education into national development strategies has yielded positive results in environmental stewardship and responsible economic behavior.

Challenges to Effective Implementation

Key challenges limiting the effectiveness of Economics education in Nigeria, including overcrowded classrooms, outdated curriculum, and lack of digital resources, which hinder the integration of real-world sustainable practices were identified (12).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This is appropriate for studies that seek to gather data on present conditions, opinions, and attitudes from a large group of people. It allows for the systematic collection and analysis of data from a sample population to understand the relationship between Economics education and sustainable national development in Nigeria. This design was chosen because it facilitates the observation and description of the existing state of Economics education without manipulating any variables. It also supports the use of standardized instruments such as questionnaires and interviews, enabling the collection of quantitative and qualitative data relevant to the research objectives. The population of this study comprised senior secondary school students, Economics teachers, and education stakeholders (curriculum planners and policy makers) across selected schools in Nigeria. The target population includes both public and private secondary schools located in urban and semi-urban areas. According to the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2023), there are over 15,000

public and private senior secondary schools across Nigeria. However, due to the vastness of the educational landscape, the study focused on schools in three geo-political zones: South West, North Central, and South East, thereby making the study more manageable while still achieving national representation. The sample size for this study was 600 respondents, comprising 500 students, 80 Economics teachers, and 20 educational stakeholders. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. They are:

Stage 1 (Stratified Sampling): Nigeria was divided into three major strata based on geo-political zones: South West, North Central, and South East.

Stage 2 (Purposive Sampling): Three states were purposively selected from each zone based on the concentration of senior secondary schools and accessibility.

Stage 3 (Random Sampling): From each selected state, 10 secondary schools were randomly chosen, and within each school, students and teachers were selected using simple random sampling.

This sampling technique ensured representation across various school types, geographical locations, and socio-economic contexts. The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders to collect qualitative insights. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in Economics education and educational measurement and evaluation. They assessed the items for clarity, relevance, comprehensiveness, and alignment with the research objectives. Based on their feedback, some items were revised, merged, or reworded to enhance clarity and accuracy. A pilot study was also conducted using 50 respondents (not included in the final study) to test the comprehensibility of the items. The feedback obtained helped to refine the instrument further and confirm that the questions were interpreted consistently by respondents. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test to measure internal consistency. The pilot study responses were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The reliability coefficient was found to be 0.86, which is considered acceptable and indicates a high level of reliability for the instrument. Each section of the questionnaire also showed internal consistency values above 0.70, further affirming its dependability.

Data collection involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. Questionnaires were administered to students and teachers with the help of trained research assistants. The researchers sought approval from school authorities and distributed printed copies of the instrument to participants. In addition to the

survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with educational stakeholders such as curriculum planners, inspectors, and policymakers. Each interview lasted between 30 to 45 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' consent. All data were collected over a six-week period to allow for thorough administration and follow-up. Quantitative data obtained through the questionnaires were coded and entered into SPSS (Version 25). The analysis involved: Descriptive Statistics: Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to summarize demographic data and general responses.

Inferential Statistics: Chi-square tests and Pearson correlation were used to test relationships between variables such as Economics education exposure and awareness of sustainable development. ANOVA was used to examine variations across geo-political zones. Qualitative data from interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically. Emerging themes were coded and grouped to highlight patterns, stakeholder perspectives, and illustrative quotes. Several limitations were acknowledged in this study: Due to financial and time constraints, the study could not cover all six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The findings, therefore, may not fully reflect the national outlook, some respondents may have provided socially desirable answers rather than truthful responses, particularly in attitude-based items, in some rural areas, language differences and low literacy levels limited the ability of some students to fully understand the questionnaire, distribution of questionnaires and scheduling interviews in some regions faced disruptions due to school calendar variations, strikes, or administrative delays. Despite these limitations, the multi-stage sampling and mixed-methods approach strengthened the validity and reliability of the findings.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All participants received a written explanation of the study objectives and signed consent forms before participating. For students under 18, consent was obtained from school authorities and guardians. Respondents were assured that their identities and responses would be kept anonymous and used only for academic purposes. Codes were used instead of names to protect participants' identities. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions. Collected data were securely stored, and digital files were password-protected. Audio recordings were deleted after transcription to ensure confidentiality. Approval for the research was obtained from the relevant institutional ethics review board and the State Ministry of Education.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected from students, Economics teachers, and stakeholders in senior secondary schools across selected regions of Nigeria. The aim is to determine the influence of Economics education on sustainable national development. The chapter provides an overview of the respondents' demographic characteristics, answers the research questions through descriptive analysis, tests the hypotheses using inferential statistics, summarizes the major findings, and discusses the implications in line with relevant literature.

Presentation of Demographic Data

Table 4.1: Age Distribution of Student Respondents

Age Range (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 15	50	10
15–17	300	60
18–20	150	30
Total	500	100

Interpretation: data shows that the majority of respondents (60%) fall within the 15–17 age range, indicating that this group represents the most significant portion of the study population. This age distribution reflects the typical structure of senior secondary education in Nigeria [2].

Table 4.2: Gender Distribution

Category	Male	Female	Total	% Male	% Female
Students	275	225	500	55	45
Teachers	48	32	80	60	40
Stakeholders	13	7	20	65	35
Total	336	264	600	56	44

Interpretation: The table reveals that males constitute a higher percentage (56%) of the total respondents across all categories, with the greatest gender disparity observed among stakeholders. Gender gaps in access and participation are consistent with earlier findings on Nigerian education [6,7].

Table 4.3: Student Class Level

Class Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SS1	200	40
SS2	175	35
SS3	125	25
Total	500	100

Interpretation: The table indicates that the majority of the students (40%) are in SS1, suggesting a higher representation of junior-level senior secondary students in the study. This aligns with curriculum accessibility patterns documented in national policy [2].

Table 4.4: School Type

School Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Public	420	70
Private	180	30
Total	600	100

Public school students dominate the sample (70%).

Interpretation: The table shows that a greater proportion of respondents (70%) attend public schools, indicating that public school students make up the majority of the study sample. This finding reflects the dominance of public institutions in Nigeria's education sector [5].

Table 4.5: Geopolitical Zones

Zone	Frequency	Percentage (%)
South West	240	40
North Central	180	30
South East	180	30
Total	600	100

Interpretation: The table reveals that the South West zone has the highest representation (40%) among respondents, followed by equal representation from the North Central and South East zones at 30% each.

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: Level of Students' Understanding of Economics Concepts

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	140	28
Agree	185	37
Neutral	90	18
Disagree	55	11
Strongly Disagree	30	6
Total	500	100

Interpretation: A total of 65% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they understood basic economic concepts, indicating a moderate to high level of conceptual understanding. This supports the Human Capital Theory that positions education as a means of improving intellectual capacity [3].

RQ2: Awareness of Sustainable National Development

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	110	22
Agree	180	36
Neutral	120	24
Disagree	50	10
Strongly Disagree	40	8
Total	500	100

Interpretation: Approximately 58% of respondents acknowledged awareness of sustainable development themes. This result reinforces the role of education in promoting sustainability, consistent with UNESCO's global framework for education for sustainable development [6].

RQ3: Influence of Economics Education on Economic Behavior

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	120	24
Agree	180	36
Neutral	110	22
Disagree	60	12
Strongly Disagree	30	6
Total	500	100

Interpretation: 60% of students confirmed that Economics education influences their financial and entrepreneurial decisions, highlighting the curriculum's role in shaping behavior [1,8].

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1: *There is a significant relationship between Economics education and students' understanding of economic concepts.*

- **Test Used:** Pearson correlation
- **Result:** $r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$
- **Interpretation:** A strong positive correlation exists, confirming that Economics education significantly influences students' conceptual understanding [3].

Hypothesis 2: *Economics education significantly enhances students' awareness of sustainable national development.*

- **Test Used:** Chi-square test
- **Result:** $\chi^2 = 15.47$, $p < 0.05$
- **Interpretation:** The association is statistically significant, indicating Economics education improves students' awareness of sustainable development [6,7].

Hypothesis 3: *There is a significant effect of Economics education on students' economic behavior and decision-making.*

- **Test Used:** ANOVA
- **Result:** $F(2, 497) = 6.54$, $p < 0.01$
- **Interpretation:** Significant differences exist among students' behavioral outcomes based on their exposure to Economics education.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings indicate that:

- A majority of students (65%) demonstrate a sound understanding of Economics concepts.
- 58% of students report being aware of sustainable development issues.
- 60% of students state Economics education influences their economic behavior and decisions.

These outcomes align with earlier studies that highlight the transformative role of Economics education in fostering sustainable national development. They affirm the Human Capital Theory and resonate with Constructivist Learning Theory that emphasizes knowledge building through contextual experiences. However, disparities in awareness and comprehension across regions and school types reflect systemic inequities in curriculum implementation, resource distribution, and teacher training. Addressing these challenges is crucial for ensuring that Economics education contributes fully to sustainable development in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has clearly demonstrated that Economics education has a significant and positive influence on sustainable national development in Nigeria. It enhances students' understanding of core economic principles, increases awareness of sustainable development issues, and cultivates sound economic decision-making behaviors among students. These outcomes align with both Human Capital Theory and Constructivist Learning Theory, affirming that education serves as a transformative tool for personal and national development. Despite these positive outcomes, disparities in school resources, teacher quality, and regional implementation pose challenges to maximizing the benefits of Economics education. Thus, Economics education should not only be retained but also reformed and strengthened as a strategic subject in the Nigerian secondary school curriculum to drive forward the agenda of sustainable national development.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

The Federal Ministry of Education should revise the Economics curriculum to include more comprehensive content on sustainable development, entrepreneurship, and practical financial literacy skills. Continuous professional development programs should be organized for Economics teachers to enhance their instructional competence and ability to integrate sustainable development themes effectively. Educational policymakers should ensure that schools across all regions are equally equipped with resources, teaching materials, and qualified staff to deliver Economics education efficiently. Government agencies, NGOs, and private sectors should collaborate with schools to organize seminars, workshops, and awareness programs on sustainable development and economic responsibility. More interactive and participatory learning strategies like project-based learning, simulations, and field visits should be incorporated to make Economics more engaging and application-oriented. Regular assessment and monitoring of the effectiveness of Economics education in schools should be conducted to inform policy adjustments and teacher support systems.

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