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Enhancing the Utilization of Research Findings from Departments of Educational Planning and Management in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions for Evidence-Based Policy and Educational Development

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Abstract: Research remains one of the most important functions of tertiary institutions because it provides evidence for solving educational problems and improving policy decisions. Departments of Educational Planning and Management in Nigerian universities, colleges of education, and other higher institutions generate numerous research findings on educational finance, school administration, policy implementation, quality assurance, teacher management, leadership, and institutional development. Despite the growing volume of research outputs, many of these findings are not adequately utilized by public and private organizations responsible for educational planning and administration. This situation has created a persistent gap between educational research and policy implementation. This paper reviews factors that can enhance the effective utilization of research findings generated from Departments of Educational Planning and Management in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The review identifies university-policy maker collaboration, effective dissemination mechanisms, knowledge transfer structures, accessibility of research outputs, policy-relevant research agendas, capacity building for educational administrators, adequate funding, and evidence-based decision-making culture as critical factors for improving research utilization. The paper argues that educational development can be accelerated when research findings are systematically integrated into policy formulation, planning processes, programme implementation, and institutional management. The study concludes that strengthening the linkage between researchers and educational stakeholders will improve the contribution of tertiary institutions to educational transformation and national development.

Keywords: Research Utilization, Educational Planning, Educational Management, Evidence-Based Policy, Knowledge Transfer

1. Introduction

The role of research in educational development cannot be overemphasized. Across the world, educational systems depend on research evidence to identify challenges, formulate policies, allocate resources, improve institutional performance, and enhance learning outcomes. Research provides reliable information that assists governments, educational institutions, development partners, and private organizations in making informed decisions [1]. In the field of Educational Planning and Management, research serves as a valuable tool for understanding complex educational issues and developing practical solutions that promote efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and quality in education. Consequently, universities and other tertiary institutions are expected not only to generate

knowledge but also to ensure that such knowledge contributes meaningfully to societal development. In Nigeria, Departments of Educational Planning and Management have become important centres for the production of educational research. Academic staff, postgraduate students, and undergraduate researchers regularly conduct studies on educational financing, school leadership, teacher motivation, educational policy implementation, quality assurance, enrolment management, educational administration, institutional governance, and strategic planning [2], [3]. These studies often contain valuable recommendations capable of addressing pressing educational challenges at local, state, national, and international levels. Unfortunately, a significant proportion of these research findings remain underutilized. Many reports are stored in departmental libraries, institutional repositories, and academic journals without influencing policy decisions or management practices within educational organizations.

The underutilization of research findings has become a major concern among scholars, policymakers, and educational administrators [4]. While substantial resources are invested in conducting educational research, the expected impact on policy and practice often remains limited. In many instances, government agencies formulate policies without adequate consultation of existing research evidence, while researchers frequently conduct studies without sufficient engagement with potential users of their findings. This disconnect has contributed to the persistence of educational challenges such as inadequate funding, poor policy implementation, declining educational quality, ineffective school management, and inefficient resource utilization. As a result, the enormous intellectual resources available in Nigerian tertiary institutions have not been fully harnessed for educational development. Several factors have been identified as barriers to the effective utilization of research findings [5]. These include weak collaboration between universities and policymakers, poor dissemination of research results, inadequate knowledge-transfer mechanisms, limited accessibility of research reports, insufficient funding for dissemination activities, and the technical nature of many academic publications. Beyond these challenges, there is often a weak culture of evidence-based decision-making within some educational organizations. Decisions are sometimes influenced more by political considerations, administrative traditions, or personal experiences than by empirical evidence generated through research. Consequently, valuable findings that could improve educational planning and management remain largely ignored [6].

There is increasing recognition that research findings must move beyond academic publications and become integral components of educational decision-making processes. Educational Planning and Management departments possess enormous potential to support educational reforms, strengthen institutional effectiveness, improve resource management, and address policy gaps through evidence-based recommendations. However, achieving this objective requires deliberate efforts to create stronger connections between researchers and users of research [7]. It also requires institutional structures that facilitate knowledge transfer and encourage the adoption of research evidence in both public and private educational organizations. Against this background, this paper examines the factors that can enhance the effective utilization of research findings generated from Departments of Educational Planning and Management in Nigerian tertiary institutions [8], [9]. The review is particularly important because it highlights practical strategies through which educational research can contribute more effectively to policy formulation, educational planning, institutional management, and sustainable educational development in Nigeria.

2.0 Conceptual Terms

2.1 Concept of Tertiary Institutions

Tertiary institutions are post-secondary educational establishments that provide advanced academic, professional, and vocational training. These include universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. They are central to national development,

producing skilled manpower, promoting research and innovation, and serving as models for sustainable practices, including energy management and environmental stewardship. Tertiary education, also called post-secondary education, is any level of education pursued beyond high school, including undergraduate and graduate credentials. These credentials encompass certificates, diplomas or academic degrees. Tertiary education refers to specialized education in a specific field, taken on after finishing high school. Tertiary education is non-compulsory and provided in a specialist institution, usually a college, polytechnic or university. This form of education may be delivered virtually or at a distance [10]. Tertiary education offers a broad range of academic disciplines and professional programs, including bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, doctoral degrees, and professional certifications. It focuses on in-depth exploration of subject areas, critical thinking, research skills, and the development of specialized expertise. Tertiary institutions is an organized social institutions made up with stakeholders like the students, lecturers (academic staff), non-academic staff and researcher whose responsibilities are lecturing, organization of instructional resources, assessment of students, marking of students' scripts and projects supervision.

Tertiary education according to Ogunode is an organized educational system that is consciously designed for manpower production, in-service training and national development [11]. Tertiary education is an education that advances teaching, research and community services for national development. Tertiary education is an education industry that is meant for the production of manpower and national development via implementation of teaching, research and provision of community services. The objectives of tertiary education includes; to provide higher education opportunities via effective teaching, researching and provision community services; to develop produce students with specialized knowledge and skills for solving personal problem and national problem; to prepare student for national workforce and to contribute to societal and community development; to provide academic program of various disciplines; to provide quality instruction in field of studies and to conduct researches to generate new knowledge for national development and to solve complex problems [12].

Tertiary institutions are classified into faith based, public and private, tertiary institutions. Private tertiary institutions in Nigeria includes; faith-based tertiary institutions, Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and Teachers' Institutes (TI) that are owned by the private individual or institutions. These private tertiary institutions are contributing positively to national development in Nigeria.

2.2 Concept of Educational Administration and Planning

Universities in Nigeria offered different academic programme. One of the academic programme offered in the Nigerian universities is the educational administration and planning in the faculty of education. Ogunode & Yahaya defined educational Administration and Planning programme is an organized education programme designed to be offered in tertiary institutions for the production of professional planners and administrators while Ogunode & Babatunde, viewed educational administration and planning programme as an educational programme offered in faculty of Education. Educational Administration and Planning is a management science education programme. Educational administration and planning are offer in majorities of Nigerian higher institutions [13]. Educational Administration and Planning programme is offer in tertiary institution meant for development of manpower in all forms of education with focus on educational planning and administration.

Educational administration and planning programme according to Ogunode, Jegede and Olumide was introduced into the Nigerian higher institutions with the aims of producing educational administrators and planners for all phases of the educational sector in Nigeria. Educational administration and planning is offered in most Nigerian

universities as a programme in department. Educational administration and planning is also offered as an elective course in 400 levels. The nomenclature of the programme is Bachelor of Arts Education i.e B.A [Ed] Educational Administration and Planning. The duration of the programme is four academic section. The minimum credit unit required for graduation is 148. The admission requirements entry into the programme in universities is five Credits at SSCE, GCE 'O' Level, NECO and NABTEB Including English Language, Mathematics and other relevant three credit passes and Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination [UTME], the candidate shall be required to pass the University post UTME Screening test before being admitted for hundred level [100L]. Ogunode & Ibrahim (2024b) asserted that educational Administration and Planning programme is a field of study that focus at producing effective and efficient educational planners and administrators for all forms and level of education for the development of education. From the above, educational administration and planning can be seen as an education programme meant for the production of educational administrators and manager. Educational administration and planning [14], [15].

The objectives of educational administration and planning in Nigerian Higher institutions according to Ogunode, Jegede & Ogunode and Yahaya, include: to raise an educational administrators and planners who are confidence, independence, efficient, visionary and innovative and problem solving in the educational sectors; to create in students the awareness and enthusiasm for educational administration and planning; to generate in students an appreciation of the importance administration and planning in education, economic, technological and social context; to provide students with the knowledge and skill-base for further studies in projection, forecasting, statistics, micro-planning, data management and demography; and to provide a broad and balance foundation, knowledge and practical skills in educational administration and planning.

The objectives of the educational administration and planning programme according to CCMAS (2020) are, among others, to: produce graduates that are competent as both teachers and managers of educational organizations; enhance the productivity and relevance of education to the society through professional management of the sector; lead the spirit of enquiry, creativity and entrepreneurship of teaching through leadership by example; enlist motivation into all personnel of the different segments of the Education sector [16]. Be in a better position to lead others in the education sector and outside it; produce the needed manpower and human resource to fill vacancies in Ministries of Education, Several Education Related Agencies and in all levels of educational institutions; and adequately train and produce graduates for employment in all levels of educational ladder, the Ministries of Education, Local Government and other Education related agencies.

The objectives of educational administration and planning in Nigerian universities include; to provide basic knowledge and skills needed for the understanding and analysis of problems related to the educational management and administration in areas of planning, policy design, formulation and implementation; to equip students with knowledge and skills of decision making; especially the analytical skills needed for recognising, defining and solving educational problems; and to develop in students, education leadership, communicative, supervision, interpersonal relations skills in educational management; to develop in students entrepreneurial skills in education and competencies to adequately prepare them to be innovative in analyzing current and pressing educational issues; to develop in students ICT skills in educational management [17].

2. Materials and Methods

This study adopted a systematic review research design. The review approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to examine and synthesize existing literature on factors that enhance the utilization of research findings generated from Departments of Educational Planning and Management in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Data for the study were obtained from secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, textbooks, conference proceedings, policy documents, government publications, postgraduate theses, dissertations, and reports from national and international organizations. Relevant literature published on educational research utilization, educational planning, knowledge transfer, policy implementation, and evidence-based decision-making was purposively selected and reviewed.

The reviewed materials were sourced from academic databases, university repositories, educational journals, and official publications of educational agencies. The collected literature was critically analyzed using thematic content analysis. Information extracted from the reviewed documents was categorized into major themes such as university-policy maker collaboration, research dissemination strategies, accessibility of research findings, knowledge transfer mechanisms, policy relevance of research, funding support, capacity building, and evidence-based decision-making. The thematic approach enabled the identification of common patterns, emerging issues, and practical strategies for improving research utilization in educational planning and management.

The findings of the review were synthesized and interpreted in relation to the Nigerian educational context. Emphasis was placed on how research findings generated within tertiary institutions can contribute to solving educational problems, addressing policy gaps, improving educational administration, and promoting sustainable educational development. The review method provided a comprehensive understanding of existing knowledge and offered evidence-based recommendations for enhancing the utilization of research outputs in public and private educational organizations.

3. Results and Discussions

Result and Discussion on Factors that Enhance Effective Utilization of Research Findings from Departments of Educational Planning and Management in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions for Evidence-Based Policy and Educational Development

Capacity Building for Policymakers and Educational Administrators

The ability of decision-makers to understand, interpret, and apply research evidence is essential for research utilization. Many educational administrators and policymakers may not possess sufficient research literacy to evaluate complex research findings. Consequently, even relevant studies may remain unused. Building the capacity of policymakers through training workshops, professional development programmes, and evidence-based planning seminars can enhance their ability to utilize research findings effectively. Ward, House, and Hamer (2009) emphasized that successful research utilization depends not only on the quality of research but also on the absorptive capacity of users. Strengthening the analytical skills of educational administrators would increase their confidence in using research evidence during policy formulation and implementation.

Provision of Adequate Funding for Research Dissemination and Utilization

Research dissemination and knowledge transfer activities require financial resources. Unfortunately, funding for educational research in Nigeria often ends once data collection and report writing are completed. Limited resources are available for policy engagement, stakeholder consultations, dissemination workshops, and publication of policy briefs. Adequate funding from government agencies, donor organizations, private foundations, and university management would enable researchers to promote their

findings more effectively. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, investment in knowledge mobilization activities significantly improves the societal impact of research. Funding support would therefore enhance the visibility and practical application of research findings generated by Educational Planning and Management departments.

Encouraging Evidence-Based Decision-Making Culture

Perhaps the most important factor is the development of an organizational culture that values evidence in decision-making. In many public and private institutions, decisions are sometimes influenced by political considerations, personal experiences, or administrative traditions rather than empirical evidence. Establishing an evidence-based culture requires leaders to recognize research as a strategic resource for solving educational problems. Such a culture encourages policymakers to consult research findings before introducing new programmes, reforms, or policies. International experiences demonstrate that educational systems that consistently rely on research evidence tend to achieve better outcomes in planning, resource allocation, and institutional performance. Therefore, fostering a culture of evidence use within Nigerian educational institutions and agencies would significantly improve the utilization of research findings.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The effective utilization of research findings generated by Departments of Educational Planning and Management in Nigerian tertiary institutions depends on several interconnected factors. These include stronger collaboration between researchers and policymakers, effective dissemination strategies, establishment of knowledge-transfer mechanisms, improved accessibility to research outputs, policy-relevant research agendas, capacity building for decision-makers, adequate funding, and the promotion of evidence-based decision-making cultures. When these conditions are present, research findings can move beyond academic archives and contribute meaningfully to solving educational problems, addressing policy gaps, and improving educational development at local, state, national, and international levels.

Based on the review, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) Universities should strengthen partnerships with educational agencies and policymakers. Regular interaction between researchers and decision-makers will ensure that research findings are aligned with policy needs and are more likely to be utilized in educational planning and management.
- 2) Departments of Educational Planning and Management should establish research dissemination units. These units should be responsible for translating research findings into policy briefs, executive summaries, newsletters, and other user-friendly formats that can be easily understood by policymakers and practitioners.
- 3) Government agencies should institutionalize evidence-based policymaking. Ministries of Education, educational commissions, and regulatory agencies should require the use of empirical research findings as part of policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes.
- 4) Research findings should be digitized and made accessible through open-access repositories. Easy access to completed studies will encourage educational administrators, development partners, and private organizations to utilize available evidence when making decisions.
- 5) Dedicated funding should be provided for research dissemination and knowledge-transfer activities. Government, donor agencies, and university management should allocate resources for policy dialogues, stakeholder workshops, conferences, and publication of policy-oriented research outputs.

- 6) Educational administrators and policymakers should receive regular training on research utilization. Capacity-building programmes will enhance their ability to interpret, evaluate, and apply research findings in solving educational challenges.
- 7) Researchers should focus on practical and policy-relevant issues affecting the education sector. Studies addressing funding, quality assurance, teacher management, educational technology, leadership, and policy implementation are more likely to attract the attention of stakeholders and influence decision-making.
- 8) Research translation centres should be established in tertiary institutions. Such centres would serve as bridges between researchers and users of research by facilitating communication, stakeholder engagement, and the application of research evidence in educational practice.
- 9) Private educational organizations should collaborate with universities in commissioning and utilizing research. Such collaboration would promote innovation, improve institutional effectiveness, and support educational development across the country.
- 10) A culture of evidence-based decision-making should be promoted at all levels of the education system. Educational leaders should prioritize the use of credible research findings when making decisions related to planning, administration, funding, and educational reforms.

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