Sustainable Development Goals and Quality Education in Nigeria: A Study of Rivers State Universal Education, 2012 – 2023

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Abstract
The study examined Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the achievement of quality education through the instrument of the Rivers State Universal Basic Education (RSUBE) policy in Rivers State, Nigeria, aimed at evaluating the policy's impact on improving student access to quality education and identify challenges hindering the achievement of SDG 4 objectives. Grounded in Human Capital Theory, which emphasizes investments in human capital for economic growth, the research employs a descriptive design focused on education stakeholders, with a sample size of 400 determined through purposive sampling from the population involved in Rivers State education. Data collection utilized a 20-item questionnaire (reliability index: 0.67) addressing three primary research questions on the RSUBE policy's contribution to SDG initiatives, challenges to quality education, and policy effectiveness in improving educational access. Analysis involved descriptive statistics (percentages, means, standard deviations) for research questions and chi-square tests (0.05% significance) for hypotheses. Findings highlight the RSUBE policy's positive impact on educational development, revealing significant progress in aligning with SDG initiatives and promoting inclusivity, while also identifying key challenges such as limited resource access, inadequate teacher training, and socio-economic disparities. The study underscores the importance of stakeholder collaboration in advancing SDG initiatives and the critical role of targeted interventions in addressing challenges. Concluding that aligning educational policies with SDG 4 objectives is crucial for enhancing educational outcomes and promoting sustainable development, the research recommends further promotion of SDG 4 initiatives, increased education investment, strengthened policy implementation, and targeted interventions to address identified challenges, providing valuable insights for policymakers and educators working towards achieving quality education and sustainable development in Rivers State and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the existence of international intervention programs aimed at promoting quality education in Nigeria, progress towards sustainable development goal remains slow and uneven. Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) is a global initiative that aims to provide quality education to all children and young people worldwide. The goal recognizes the important role education plays in human development, and its correlation with economic growth, social progress, and environmental sustainability. Nigeria, being the most populous country in Africa, faces a number of challenges in achieving SDG 4. For this reason, the United States Agency for Development (USAID) Education Program, designed to support Nigeria's education system by increasing access, improving quality, and enhancing governance. It provided technical

assistance to the government in areas such as teacher training, curriculum development, and infrastructure improvement.).

Despite the significant investment in education through international intervention programs, Nigeria still faces challenges in achieving SDG 4. Quality education is essential to ensure that children and young people acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to lead productive lives and contribute to the development of their communities. However, Nigeria's education system faces a number of issues, including inadequate funding, teacher shortages, poor infrastructure, and inadequate policy implementation (UNICEF, 2019). It is against this backdrop this study seeks to assess the effectiveness of international intervention programs in advancing sustainable development goal 4 in Nigeria, and to identify the barriers that prevent these programs from being more effective.

The current state of education in Nigeria is a cause for concern, as it is insufficient and inadequate to meet the demands of the student population, particularly in terms of quality. This inadequacy is evident in various aspects of the education system, including inadequate educational facilities, a lack of qualified teachers, insufficient funding, and inadequate infrastructure. These factors pose significant challenges to achieving Sustainable Development Goal - quality education.

One of the major issues facing the education system in Nigeria is the lack of adequate access to quality educational. Many schools in Nigeria lack basic amenities such as classrooms, libraries, and laboratories. This shortage of facilities hinders the learning process and prevents students from receiving a quality education. Additionally, the lack of qualified teachers is another challenge that affects the quality of education in Nigeria. Many teachers are not properly trained or qualified, which compromises their ability to effectively impart knowledge to students.

Furthermore, is the deteriorating quality of education system in Nigeria schools hindering their ability of students to access quality education. The consequences of the inadequate education system in Nigeria are far-reaching. The government's inability to provide quality education for its citizens contributes to high levels of poverty and unemployment. Without a solid education, individuals struggle to secure employment and escape the cycle of poverty. This, in turn, hinders the country's economic growth and development. Another issue that exacerbates the problems in the education system is the lack of access to quality education for girls and vulnerable groups. Gender disparities and discrimination prevent many girls from receiving an education, denying them equal opportunities and perpetuating gender inequality. Similarly, children from disadvantaged communities face significant barriers to accessing quality education, further marginalizing and excluding them from educational benefits.

Given the gravity of the situation, there is a need for the Nigerian government to support improvement of quality education peddle and ensuring that all children have access to education, particularly those in disadvantaged communities. The aim of this study is to assess the contribution of Rivers State Universal Basic Education policy towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4. The objectives of the study are to identify and analyze the specific challenges faced by the education system, Nigeria, in achieving quality education as outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 4 in Rivers State, evaluate the effectiveness of current education policies implemented in Rivers State Universal Basic Education in improving access to and quality of education for all students, Through a comprehensive analysis of these factors, this study aims to identify strategies and interventions that can help address the issues plaguing the education system in Nigeria and contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study was to examined the effectiveness in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 initiatives in Rivers State Universal Basic Education. The study was specifically guided by the following specific objectives;

i. Evaluate the effectiveness of Rivers State Universal Basic Education policy in achieving Sustainable Development Goal initiatives in Rivers State

ii. Identify the specific challenges hindering the achievement of quality education in Rivers State

iii. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Rivers State Universal Basic Education policy in improving access to quality education for all students, in accordance with sustainable development goal 4

Research Questions

i. To what extent have the Rivers State Universal Basic Education policy contributed to the achievement of sustainable development goal initiative in Rivers State?

ii. What are the specific challenges hindering the achievement of quality education as outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 4?

iii. To what extent have current policies in Rivers State Universal Basic Education improved access to quality Education for all students, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 4?

Research hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the Rivers Sustainable University Basic Education policy and the achievement of sustainable development goal initiative in Rivers State.

Ho2: There are no specific challenges hindering the achievement of quality education as outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 4.

H3: There is no significant relationship between current policies in Rivers State Universal Basic Education and improved access to quality Education for all students, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 4.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory originated in the mid-twentieth century and has since been developed and expanded upon by several prominent economists. The theory's foundation can be attributed to the work of economist Theodore W. Schultz and his seminal paper "Investment in Human Capital" published in 1961. Schultz, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 1979, emphasized the significance of human capital as a form of productive asset that contributes to economic growth and development. He argued that investments in education, training, and healthcare lead to an increase in the skills, knowledge, and overall productivity of individuals. This, in turn, enhances economic performance and ultimately contributes to societal well-being. Another influential contributor to the Human Capital Theory is economist Gary S. Becker. In his book "Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis with Special Reference to Education" published in 1964, Becker expanded on Schultz's ideas and presented a comprehensive framework for analyzing human capital investments. Becker outlined how individuals make rational decisions regarding their

education, considering the costs and expected returns of investing in human capital. He further emphasized that human capital is not limited to formal education but encompasses various forms of learning and skill acquisition. Becker's work had a significant impact on the field of economics, providing a robust theoretical foundation for understanding the role of education and training in economic development. His research on human capital earned him the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 1992. Since Schultz and Becker, numerous economists and scholars have contributed to the development and refinement of the Human Capital Theory. Notable contributors include Jacob Mincer, who extended the theory to include the concept of earnings and labor market outcomes, and Theodore R. Breton, who explored the relationship between human capital and economic inequality.

The Human Capital Theory continues to be influential in economics and other social sciences, shaping policies and discussions around education, training, and workforce development. It provides a framework for understanding the value of investing in human potential and highlights the importance of education and skills in fostering economic growth and societal progress.

The Human Capital Theory is built upon several underlying principles, which are key to understanding its framework and implications. The principles include:

 (i)   Investments in Human Capital: The theory posits that individuals and societies can invest in their own human capital through education, training, and healthcare. These investments enhance individuals' skills, knowledge, and abilities, making them more productive and valuable in the labor market.

 (ii) Productivity and Economic Growth: Human capital is seen as a valuable asset that contributes to economic growth and development. As individuals acquire more knowledge and skills, their productivity increases, leading to higher levels of output and economic performance. The theory suggests that improving human capital can drive economic growth by creating a more skilled and productive workforce.

 (iii) Returns on Human Capital Investments: The Human Capital Theory emphasizes that investing in education and training brings returns in the form of higher incomes and greater opportunities. Individuals who acquire higher levels of education and skills are more likely to secure better-paying jobs and have access to more fulfilling career paths. These higher returns incentivize individuals and societies to invest in human capital.

 (iv) Individual Decision Making: The theory recognizes that individuals make rational decisions regarding their education and training, considering the costs and anticipated benefits. Individuals assess the time, effort, and financial resources required for education and weigh them against the potential returns in terms of career opportunities, income levels, and overall well-being.

 (v)   Lifelong Learning: The Human Capital Theory acknowledges that learning is not limited to formal education but extends throughout an individual's life. Continuous learning and skill acquisition are crucial for adapting to changing work environments, technological advancements, and evolving labor market demands. The theory highlights the importance of fostering a culture of lifelong learning to maintain and enhance human capital.

 (vi) Human Capital as an Equalizer: The theory suggests that investments in human capital have the potential to reduce income inequality and promote social mobility. By providing individuals with access to quality education and training, societies can level the playing field and enhance opportunities for socio-economic advancement, regardless of an individual's background or initial socio-economic status.

These underlying principles of the Human Capital Theory provide a foundation for understanding the relationship between education, skills, productivity, and economic development. They highlight the importance of investing in human capital as a means to foster personal and societal well-being and promote sustainable economic growth.

The Human Capital Theory is based on several fundamental assumptions that underlie its framework and analysis. These assumptions include:

(i) Individuals are Rational Decision-Makers: The theory assumes that individuals make rational decisions based on their own self-interest. They carefully weigh the costs and benefits of investing in education, training, and other forms of human capital development. Individuals are assumed to maximize their own utility or well-being when making decisions about their human capital investments.

(ii) Education and Training Enhance Human Capital: The theory assumes that investments in education and training contribute to the accumulation and enhancement of human capital. Education is seen as a means to acquire knowledge, skills, and competencies that increase an individual's productivity and earnings potential. It is believed that education and training improve human capital and lead to higher employment opportunities and better job security.

(iii) Human Capital is Transferable: The theory assumes that human capital is transferable and can be utilized across different occupations and industries. The knowledge and skills acquired through education and training are seen as valuable assets that can be applied in a variety of work settings. This assumption suggests that individuals can adapt and transition to different jobs and industries based on their human capital.

(iv) Higher Education Levels Bring Higher Returns: The theory assumes that higher levels of education bring higher economic returns. It suggests that individuals who have acquired more education and skills are more likely to secure higher-paying jobs and experience greater career advancement. This assumption is based on the belief that higher education levels denote higher levels of human capital and, therefore, lead to greater economic benefits.

(v) Human Capital Is Dependent on Time and Effort: The theory assumes that the acquisition of human capital requires time, effort, and resources. It recognizes that education and skill development are not instant processes and require investments in terms of time spent in schools, training programs, or on-the-job learning. Human capital is seen as a result of continuous investments and efforts made over time.

(vi) Human Capital Enhances Economic Growth: The theory assumes that there is a positive relationship between human capital development and economic growth. It suggests that societies with higher levels of human capital are more likely to experience higher levels of productivity, innovation, and overall economic performance. This assumption implies that investments in human capital can be instrumental in promoting sustained economic growth.

These basic assumptions provide a foundation for understanding the premises of the Human Capital Theory and form the basis for analyzing the relationship between education, skills, productivity, and economic development. They guide the theory's application in explaining the importance of human capital investments and their impact on individuals and societies.

The study of Human Capital Theory involves various dialectics or dualities that highlight contrasting perspectives or tensions within the theory. These dialectics represent key areas of debate and inquiry within the field. Some of the prominent dialectics include:

(i)   Education vs. Training: One dialectic within the Human Capital Theory is the distinction between education and training. While education refers to formal academic learning that develops broad-based knowledge, skills, and critical thinking, training focuses on specific skills and job-related knowledge required for a particular occupation. The dialectic explores the balance and trade-offs between general education and specialized training in terms of their impact on human capital development and economic outcomes.

(ii)   Quantity vs. Quality of Education: Another dialectic revolves around the quantity and quality of education. It addresses the debate between increasing the number of years of education (quantity) versus improving the effectiveness and relevance of education (quality). The dialectic considers whether investing in longer educational periods or prioritizing the quality of education better enhances human capital and economic growth.

(iii)   Formal Education vs. Informal Learning: This dialectic examines the value of formal education versus informal learning experiences as sources of human capital development. Formal education includes structured programs in schools and universities, while informal learning encompasses experiences gained through on-the-job training, apprenticeships, or self-directed learning. The dialectic explores the relative significance of different learning methods and their impact on human capital and individual success.

(iv)   Credentialism vs. Skill Mismatch: The dialectic between credentialism and skill mismatch highlights the tension between educational credentials and actual job-relevant skills. Credentialism refers to the overemphasis on formal qualifications and degrees, possibly leading to a gap between the skills individuals possess and the skills demanded by the labor market. The dialectic scrutinizes whether educational credentials accurately reflect individuals' actual skills and whether skill mismatches hinder the efficient matching of individuals to jobs.

(v)   Public vs. Private Investment in Human Capital: This dialectic focuses on the roles of government and the private sector in investing in human capital. It explores the division of responsibility between public investments in education systems, such as funding for schools and universities, and private investments by individuals and firms in training programs. The dialectic examines the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity implications of various models of human capital investment.

(vi)   Immediate Economic Returns vs. Long-Term Benefits: This dialectic explores the trade-off between immediate economic returns and long-term benefits of human capital investments. While some investments in education and training may yield relatively quick financial returns, others, such as higher education degrees, may have longer payback periods. The dialectic delves into the timing of returns on human capital investments and considers both short-term economic needs and long-term economic growth.

Conceptual Clarifications

Quality Education

Quality education is a crucial aspect of any educational system. It encompasses various dimensions, including the teaching and learning process, curriculum relevance, educational infrastructure, teacher quality and professionalism, and equitable access to education.

According to UNESCO, quality education refers to "equitable, inclusive, and relevant learning opportunities that lead to the acquisition of the foundational knowledge, skills, values, and competencies needed to thrive in a global society" (UNESCO, 2021). Source: UNESCO. (2021). Quality education. According to the World Bank, quality education is characterized by effective learning outcomes, relevant and up-to-date curriculum, competent and motivated teachers, safe and conducive learning environments, and equitable access for all (World Bank, 2021). Source: World Bank. (2021). Education.

The Education for All Global Monitoring Report highlights that quality education is not just about access or enrollment rates but also about the learning outcomes and the skills acquired by students. It emphasizes the need for an education system that equips learners with the knowledge, skills, values, and competencies necessary for personal development, citizenship, and employability (UNESCO, 2015). Source: UNESCO. (2015). Education for All Global Monitoring Report. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) identifies quality education as a transformative force that can reduce poverty, promote gender equality, foster economic growth, and enhance sustainable development. It emphasizes the importance of quality education in equipping individuals with the skills and knowledge to navigate a rapidly changing world (UNDP, 2019). Source: UNDP. (2019). Human Development Report.

According to the Global Partnership for Education, quality education involves providing inclusive, learner-centered teaching and learning environments that promote critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and 21st-century skills. It stresses the need for relevant and culturally responsive curricula, qualified and motivated teachers, adequate resources, and effective monitoring and evaluation systems (Global Partnership for Education, 2020). Source: Global Partnership for Education. (2020). Quality Education for All. These citations highlight the multi-dimensional aspects of quality education, emphasizing the need for equitable access, relevant curriculum, competent teachers, and effective learning outcomes. Achieving quality education requires a comprehensive approach that addresses both the inputs and outcomes of education, ensuring that learners acquire the knowledge and skills they need for personal development, active citizenship, and success in the modern world.

Quality Education and Sustainable Development Goal 4

Quality education is a fundamental pillar for human development and a key factor in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4, which focuses specifically on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. SDG 4, also known as the Education Goal, aims to ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, primary, and secondary education, as well as affordable and inclusive technical, vocational, and tertiary education. It also emphasizes the importance of literacy, numeracy skills, and a relevant and effective learning environment.

To achieve SDG 4, several targets have been set which include:

1. Ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education.
2. Ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education.

3. Ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education.
4. Substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment and entrepreneurship.
5. Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education for vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations.

Achieving SDG 4 requires addressing various challenges, including inadequate infrastructure and resources, teacher quality and training, gender disparities, and the need for inclusive and relevant curricula. International intervention programs play a crucial role in supporting countries like Nigeria in their efforts to improve education quality and accessibility. These intervention programs often involve collaboration between governments, non-governmental organizations, and international agencies to provide financial support, expertise, technical assistance, and capacity building. They aim to address gaps in education systems, promote inclusive policies and practices, enhance teacher training and support, and empower marginalized communities.

In summary, quality education is a key driver of sustainable development, and achieving SDG 4 is crucial for creating a more equitable and prosperous society. International intervention programs can facilitate progress towards this goal by providing the necessary resources and expertise to overcome challenges and improve education outcomes for all.

Challenges in achieving quality education in Nigeria

Achieving quality education in Nigeria faces several challenges that need to be addressed to ensure inclusive and equitable education for all. Some of the key challenges include:

1. Inadequate Infrastructures: Many schools in Nigeria lack basic infrastructure and facilities such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and sanitation facilities. This hampers the learning environment and affects the overall quality of education.
2. Insufficient Funding: The education sector in Nigeria suffers from limited funding, with a significant portion of the budget allocated to other sectors. This inadequacy affects the availability of resources, teacher training, infrastructure development, and the implementation of quality education programs.
3. Limited Access to Education: Access to education remains a significant challenge, particularly in rural areas and among marginalized communities. Barriers include long distances to school, lack of transportation, affordability, and cultural norms that discourage girls' education.
4. Teacher Quality and Training: Nigeria faces challenges in terms of the quality of its teaching workforce. Many teachers lack proper training and qualifications, leading to a shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas. This affects the delivery of quality education to students.
5. Gender Disparities: Gender disparity is a persistent issue in Nigeria's education system. Cultural and societal norms often hinder girls' access to education and contribute to high dropout rates among girls, especially at the secondary level.
6. Curriculum Relevance: The curriculum in Nigeria is often criticized for being outdated, rote-centered, and not aligned with addressing relevant skills for the 21st century. There

is a need to revamp the curriculum to make it more responsive to the changing societal and economic needs.

7. Insecurity and Conflict: Insurgency and conflicts in certain regions of Nigeria, such as the northeastern part of the country, disrupt the education system, leading to the closure of schools and the displacement of students and teachers. This hampers access to education and affects the overall quality of education.

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, including increased investment in education, policy reforms, enhanced teacher training and recruitment, infrastructure development, community engagement, and targeted strategies to promote gender equality and inclusion. International intervention programs, support from the government, and collaborations between stakeholders can play a crucial role in overcoming these challenges and ensuring quality education for all in Nigeria.

The Role of Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board

The Rivers State Universal Basic Education (RSUBEB) has a pivotal role in the education sector of Rivers State, Nigeria. It is responsible for implementing the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program at the primary and junior secondary school levels. Here are some key roles and responsibilities of RSUBEB:

1. Policy Implementation: RSUBEB is responsible for implementing the policies and guidelines set by the Federal Ministry of Education and the State Ministry of Education. It ensures that schools in Rivers State comply with the national and state education policies.
2. School Management: RSUBEB oversees the management and administration of public primary and junior secondary schools in Rivers State. It provides support and guidance to school administrators, principals, and teachers to ensure efficient school operations.
3. Infrastructure Development: RSUBEB plays a crucial role in the construction, renovation, and maintenance of school infrastructure. It identifies the infrastructure needs of schools, allocates funds, and monitors the implementation of projects to improve school facilities such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and sanitation facilities.
4. Teacher Recruitment and Training: RSUBEB is responsible for recruiting, deploying, and training qualified teachers in public primary and junior secondary schools. It collaborates with teacher training institutions to ensure that teachers receive quality training to enhance their teaching skills and professional development.
5. Monitoring and Evaluation: RSUBEB conducts regular monitoring and evaluation of schools to ensure adherence to standards and quality of education. It assesses the implementation of curriculum, teaching methods, student performance, infrastructure utilization, and overall school management.
6. Stakeholder Engagement: RSUBEB facilitates collaboration between various stakeholders, including government agencies, communities, parents, and teachers, to ensure their active participation in the education sector. It encourages community involvement in school management, promotes parent-teacher associations, and seeks feedback to improve the education system.
7. Resource Allocation: RSUBEB is responsible for optimizing the allocation of resources to schools in Rivers State. It ensures equitable distribution of funds, instructional materials, textbooks, and other resources to enhance teaching and learning outcomes.

Through its various roles and responsibilities, RSUBEB contributes to improving the quality of education, promoting access and equity, and enhancing the overall education system in Rivers State. Collaboration with international intervention programs, NGOs, and other stakeholders can further strengthen RSUBEB's efforts in achieving quality education for all in the state.

Empirical Review

Nwagwu & Imonye (2019) 3. Nwagwu, F. N., & Imonye, E. C. (2019). Effect of the Global Partnership for Education on Enrolment in Basic Education in Nigeria. The objective of this study was to assess the impact of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) on enrollment rates in basic education in Nigeria. This study employed a quantitative approach, analyzing statistical data on enrollment rates and conducting interviews with education officials. The findings of this study indicate that the financial support and policy interventions by GPE have led to a significant increase in enrollment rates in primary and secondary education in Nigeria. However, challenges related to equity and the quality of education still need to be addressed. To further improve access to education and address issues of equity and quality, the study recommends that GPE continue to provide financial assistance while also implementing targeted interventions such as teacher professional development and curriculum reforms.

Aiyede & Ugwuanyi (2019) Implementation Challenges and Impact of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria: The objective of this study was to examine the implementation challenges and impact of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in Nigeria, with a focus on Enugu state. This study utilizes a qualitative research design, involving document analysis and interviews with key stakeholders. The researchers analyze program reports, policy documents, and administrative data, and conduct interviews with government officials, teachers, and community members. The study identifies implementation challenges in the UBE program in Enugu state, including inadequate funding, administrative bottlenecks, and infrastructure deficits. However, the UBE program has had a positive impact on improving access to education, enhancing quality, and promoting infrastructure development in the state. The study recommends addressing the identified implementation challenges by increasing funding, streamlining administrative processes, and prioritizing infrastructure development. It also suggests strengthening teacher training and community engagement for improved program outcomes.

Hillary & Pepple (2019): This work aims to address the issue of underdevelopment in Nigeria by using education as a tool. The researcher focuses on education for sustainable development in Nigeria, which is a developing country. The concept of development has evolved in recent times, shifting towards the idea of sustainable development. This shift was highlighted in the Brundtland Report, the Stockholm Conference of 1972, and most recently, in Paris where 169 countries adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Nigeria faces challenges with failed leadership, resulting in declining education, economy, social issues, and politics. The paper argues that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) can play a crucial role in addressing these problems by providing citizens with the necessary skills, perspectives, values, and knowledge to live sustainably in their communities. ESD can also produce leaders who are capable of managing government and private sector industries for sustainable development. To achieve this, ESD should be delivered through various strategies, including formal, non-formal,

informal, and casual education. The paper recommends reorienting existing education at all levels to include principles, skills, perspectives, and values of sustainable development. It also suggests promoting education that focuses on poverty alleviation and human development through formal, non-formal, and casual approaches.

Laurie, Nonoyama-Tarumi & Mckeon, (2016).This work explores the challenges faced by Nigeria in providing quality education that promotes SDGs and sustainable development. challenges faced by Nigeria in providing quality education that aligns with the requirements of sustainable development goals (SDGs). The study explores the key competencies needed in today's innovation-driven economy and the link between education quality and economic growth. It also discusses the barriers to achieving quality education in Nigeria, such as limited access and inadequate structure. The review emphasizes the importance of promoting critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills to foster sustainable development. Additionally, it discusses the need to address cultural conflicts and improve the assessment methods used in education. the study proposes policy reforms, including rigorous teacher education programs and an emphasis on participatory learning, to enhance the quality of education in Nigeria.

Van Fleet (2012) reveals that in Nigeria, a significant percentage of children fail to meet minimum academic standards by grades 4 or 5. This lack of basic skills by the end of primary school hampers the adoption of critical pedagogies geared towards sustainable development (UNESCO, 2012). The traditional education system in Nigeria often promotes passive learning, discourages active participation, and hinders creativity and innovation (Markovic, 2012; Marinho, 2009). Additionally, cultural conflicts restrict students from engaging in critical debates or correcting elders, limiting opportunities for growth and development.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design to evaluate the effectiveness of the Sustainable Development Goals and Quality Education in Rivers State Universal Basic Education, Nigeria. Using purposive sampling, 400 participants were selected from a population of 7,476,800 based on the Taro Yamane formula. Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources, with primary data gathered through structured closed-ended questionnaires administered to stakeholders in the education sector, including teachers, administrators, parents, and non-teaching staff. The questionnaire, validated by experts and achieving a reliability index of 0.64 using Pearson Moment Correlation, was designed to address four research questions. Secondary data were obtained from existing reports and literature. A pilot study with 40 respondents was conducted to ensure instrument reliability. The study area focused on Rivers State, chosen for its diversity and representation of Nigeria's educational challenges. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, including frequency means, and standard deviation, while while chi-square was used to test the three hypotheses to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intervention programme's effectiveness in achieving quality education in Rivers State.

Analysis

Research Questions 1
Table 1: To what extent have percentage Mean(x) Ratings of response on the effectiveness of Rivers State Universal Basic Education policy in achieving Sustainable Development Goal initiatives in Rivers State

To what extent have the RSUBE policy contributed to the achievement of sustainable development goal initiative in Rivers State?	Total	SA f(%) 4	A f(%) 3	D f(%) 2	SD f(%) 1	Mean (X)	STD	Remark
1. The RSUBE policy has positively influenced the educational development in Rivers State.	286 (100)	98 (34%)	100 (35%)	51 (18%)	37 (30%)	2.91	1.01	Agreed
2. The implementation of the RSUBE policy has led to improved access to quality education in Rivers State.	286 (100)	89 (31%)	97 (34%)	56 (20%)	44 (15%)	2.81	1.04	Agreed
3. The RSUBE policy has effectively addressed the educational needs of marginalized communities in Rivers State.	286 (100)	67 (23%)	83 (29%)	107 (37%)	26 (9%)	2.65	1.31	Agreed
4. The RSUBE policy aligns well with the sustainable development goals set for education in Rivers State.	286 (100)	87 (30%)	68 (24%)	91 (32%)	40 (14%)	2.71	1.04	Agreed
5. The RSUBE policy has promoted inclusivity and diversity in education provision in Rivers State.	286 (100)	80 (28%)	90 (31%)	96 (34%)	20 (7%)	2.80	0.93	Agreed
6. The RSUBE policy has effectively addressed the digital divide among students, promoting educational equity.	286 (100)	59 (21%)	59 (21%)	133 (47%)	35 (12%)	2.50	0.91	Average
7. The monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the RSUBE policy have helped in assessing its impact on sustainable development goals.	286 (100)	79 (28%)	61 (21%)	99 (35%)	47 (16%)	2.60	1.06	Agreed

Source: Researchers field Survey, (2024).

Table 4.4 above presented provides detailed information on the mean ratings of the effectiveness of the RSUBE policy in achieving Sustainable Development Goal initiatives in Rivers State, along with the respective percentages, Mean(x), and standard deviation for each questionnaire item. The analysis and interpretations based on this data are as follows:

The RSUBE policy has positively influenced the educational development in Rivers State, with a mean rating of 2.91 and a standard deviation of 1.01. This rating was supported by 98 respondents (34%) strongly agreeing and 100 respondents (35%) agreeing, indicating a strong consensus among participants that the policy has had a positive impact on educational development in the state.

The implementation of the RSUBE policy has led to improved access to quality education in Rivers State, evidenced by a mean rating of 2.81 and a standard deviation of 1.04. The majority of respondents (31% strongly agree and 34% agree) supported this positive impact, suggesting that the policy has contributed to enhancing access to quality education in the state.

The RSUBE policy has effectively addressed the educational needs of marginalized communities in Rivers State, with a mean rating of 2.65 and a standard deviation of 1.31. While there was agreement among respondents (23% strongly agree and 29% agree) that the policy has been effective in this aspect, the higher standard deviation indicates some variability in opinions regarding the extent of its effectiveness.

The RSUBE policy aligns well with the sustainable development goals set for education in Rivers State, as indicated by a mean rating of 2.71 and a standard deviation of 1.04. The agreement among respondents (30% strongly agree and 24% agree) suggests that the policy is in alignment with the sustainable development goals related to education in the state.

The RSUBE policy has promoted inclusivity and diversity in education provision in Rivers State, with a mean rating of 2.80 and a standard deviation of 0.93. The majority of respondents (28% strongly agree and 31% agree) supported this aspect, highlighting the policy's success in promoting inclusivity and diversity in education.

6. The RSUBE policy has effectively addressed the digital divide among students, promoting educational equity. While the mean rating was 2.50, indicating an average rating, the standard deviation of 0.91 suggests some level of agreement among respondents (21% strongly agree and 21% agree) with room for improvement in addressing the digital divide.

The monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the RSUBE policy have helped in assessing its impact on sustainable development goals, as indicated by a mean rating of 2.60 and a standard deviation of 1.06. This rating was supported by 28% of respondents strongly agreeing and 21% agreeing, confirming the value of the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in assessing the policy's impact.

In summary, the analysis of mean ratings, percentages, and standard deviations reveals that the majority of respondents agreed on the positive impact of the RSUBE policy on educational development in Rivers State. While there were areas identified for potential improvement, such as addressing the digital divide among students, the overall consensus indicated that the policy has been effective in achieving Sustainable Development Goal initiatives in the state.

Hypothesis 1 Testing

Ho$_1$: There is no significant relationship between the RSUBE policy and the achievement of sustainable development goal initiative in Rivers State.

Frequency Responses

Variable	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Contribution of SDG to Rivers State UBE	93	27	16	27	163
Impact of RSUBE on the education sector in Rivers state	22	67	21	13	123
Total	115	94	37	40	286

Expected Value = (Row Total) (Column Total) ÷ Grand Total

Computation of Expected Value;

$(115 \times 163) \div 286 = 66$

$(115 \times 123) \div 286 = 49$

$(94 \times 163) \div 286 = 54$

$(94 \times 123) \div 286 = 40$

$(37 \times 163) \div 286 = 21$

$(37 \times 123) \div 286 = 16$

$(40 \times 163) \div 286 = 23$

$(40 \times 123) \div 286 = 17$

O	E	(O – E)	$(O – E)^2$	$\sum (O-E)^2 \div E$
93	66	27	729	11
22	49	-27	729	14.9
27	54	-27	729	13.5
67	40	27	729	18.2
16	21	-5	25	1.2
21	16	5	25	1.6
27	23	4	16	0.7
13	17	-4	16	0.9
			$X^2 =$	62

The Chi-square test conducted to examine the relationship between the Rivers SUBE policy and the achievement of the sustainable development goal initiative in Rivers State yielded a significant result (χ^2=62, df=3, p<0.05). The analysis revealed that the observed frequencies significantly deviated from the expected frequencies, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between the RSUBE policy and the achievement of the SDG initiative in Rivers State. The calculated Chi-square value exceeding the critical value at the 5% significance level highlights the association between the variables, suggesting that the RSUBE policy is linked to the progress towards the sustainable development goals in Rivers State.

Research Question 2

Table 2.: Percentage /mean(x) Ratings of challenges hindering the achievement of quality education in Rivers State

What are the specific challenges hindering the achievement of quality education as outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 4?	Total	SA f(%) 4	A f(%) 3	D f(%) 2	SD f(%) 1	Mean (X)	STD	Remark
8. Limited access to educational resources and facilities hinders the achievement of quality education in Rivers State.	286 (100)	77 (27%)	108 (38%)	48 (17%)	53 (19%)	2.73	1.05	Agreed
9. Socio-economic disparities among students create barriers to achieving quality education.	286 (100)	119 (42%)	92 (32%)	50 (17%)	25 (9%)	3.07	0.97	Agreed
10. Inadequate teacher training and support impact the quality of education delivered in Rivers State.	286 (100)	145 (51%)	81 (28%)	32 (11%)	28 (10%)	3.20	0.72	Agreed
11. Insufficient government funding leads to challenges in providing quality education services.	286 (100)	114 (40%)	94 (33%)	55 (19%)	23 (8%)	3.05	0.95	Agreed
12. Lack of parental involvement and community support affects the quality of education in Rivers State.	286 (100)	99 (35%)	98 (34%)	53 (19%)	36 (13%)	2.90	1.01	Agreed
13. Limited infrastructure and overcrowded classrooms hinder the delivery of quality education in Rivers State.	286 (100)	102 (36%)	117 (41%)	31 (11%)	36 (13%)	3.00	0.97	Agreed
14. The lack of teacher training in modern pedagogical approaches	286 (100)	120 (42%)	106 (37%)	32 (11%)	28 (10%)	3.11	0.95	Agreed

affects the quality of education in Rivers State.	

Source: Researchers Field Survey, (2024).

Based on the data presented in Table 4.4, which outlines the mean ratings regarding challenges hindering the achievement of quality education in Rivers State, the following interpretations are made:

Limited access to educational resources and facilities hinders the achievement of quality education in Rivers State, with a mean rating of 2.73 and a standard deviation of 1.05. A significant percentage of respondents (27% strongly agree and 38% agree) acknowledge the hindrance caused by limited access to educational resources and facilities in achieving quality education in the state.

Socio-economic disparities among students create barriers to achieving quality education, earning a mean rating of 3.07 and a standard deviation of 0.97. The ratings indicate that a considerable percentage of respondents (42% strongly agree and 32% agree) believe that socio-economic disparities among students pose significant barriers to achieving quality education in Rivers State.

Inadequate teacher training and support impact the quality of education delivered in Rivers State, with a mean rating of 3.20 and a standard deviation of 0.72. A high percentage of respondents (51% strongly agree and 28% agree) recognize the negative impact of inadequate teacher training and support on the quality of education provided in Rivers State.

Insufficient government funding leads to challenges in providing quality education services, reflected in a mean rating of 3.05 and a standard deviation of 0.95. The ratings show that a significant percentage of respondents (40% strongly agree and 33% agree) acknowledge the challenges stemming from insufficient government funding in delivering quality education services.

Lack of parental involvement and community support affects the quality of education in Rivers State, with a mean rating of 2.90 and a standard deviation of 1.01. While a portion of respondents (35% strongly agree and 34% agree) agree on the impact of lack of parental involvement and community support on the quality of education, there is room for improvement in enhancing parental and community engagement.

Limited infrastructure and overcrowded classrooms hinder the delivery of quality education in Rivers State, earning a mean rating of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 0.97. The ratings reveal that a significant percentage of respondents (36% strongly agree and 41% agree) recognize the challenges posed by limited infrastructure and overcrowded classrooms in delivering quality education.

The lack of teacher training in modern pedagogical approaches affects the quality of education in Rivers State, as indicated by a mean rating of 3.11 and a standard deviation of 0.95. A considerable portion of respondents (42% strongly agree and 37% agree) recognizes the impact of the lack of teacher training in modern pedagogical approaches on the quality of education in the state.

In summary, the analysis of mean ratings and standard deviations highlights the various challenges hindering the achievement of quality education in Rivers State, including limited access to educational resources and facilities, socio-economic disparities, inadequate teacher training and support, insufficient government funding, lack of parental involvement, limited infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and the lack of teacher training in modern pedagogical

approaches. Addressing these challenges through targeted interventions and policy initiatives can significantly improve the quality of education in Rivers State and enhance educational outcomes for students.

Hypothesis 2 Test

H_{02}: There are no specific challenges hindering the achievement of quality education as outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Frequency Responses

Variable	SA	A	D	SD	Total
There are specific challenges hindering the achievement of quality education in Rivers State.	55	57	40	6	168
The identified challenges have been effectively addressed to improve the quality of education in the state.	44	41	13	30	128
Total	99	98	53	36	286

Expected Value = (Row Total)(Column Total) ÷ Grand Total

Computation of Expected Value;

(98 × 163) ÷ 286 = 55
(98 × 123) ÷ 286 = 44
(100 × 163) ÷ 286 = 54
(100 × 123) ÷ 286 = 44
(51 × 163) ÷ 286 = 29
(51 × 123) ÷ 286 = 24
(37 × 163) ÷ 286 = 20
(37 × 123) ÷ 286 = 16

O	E	(O – E)	(O – E)²	$\sum$(O-E)² ÷ E
59	56	3	9	0.2
39	42	-3	9	0.3
40	57	-17	289	5.1
60	43	17	289	6.7
34	29	5	25	0.9
17	22	-5	25	1.1
30	21	9	81	3.9
7	16	-9	81	5.1

$X^2 = 31.5$

Degree of Freedom at 5% (0.05) level of significance (n-1)(n-1), (2-1)(4-1) = (1)(3) = 3,
Critical Value = 7.815

The Chi-square test conducted to investigate the presence of specific challenges hindering the achievement of quality education in Rivers State in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 4 yielded a result of χ^2=31.5 with 3 degrees of freedom, surpassing the critical value of 7.815 at a significance level of 5%. The analysis demonstrated a significant difference between the observed and expected frequencies, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This

implies that there are identifiable challenges impacting the attainment of quality education in Rivers State as per SDG 4. The calculated Chi-square statistic exceeding the critical value indicates a significant association between the identified challenges and the efforts to enhance the quality of education in the state. Therefore, it can be inferred that specific hindrances exist in achieving quality education, necessitating targeted interventions for improvement.

Research Question 3

Table 3:Percentage/Mean(x) Ratings of the effectiveness of the Rivers State Universal Basic Education policy in improving access to quality education for all students, in accordance with sustainable development goal 4.

To what extent have current policies in Rivers State Universal Basic Education improved access to quality Education for all students, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 4?	Total	SA f(%) 4	A f(%) 3	D f(%) 2	SD f(%) 1	Mean (X)	STD	Remark
The current policies in Rivers State Universal Basic Education have enhanced educational opportunities for all students.	286 (100)	87 (30%)	91 (32%)	62 (22%)	46 (16%)	2.77	1.05	Agreed
The policies implemented have increased the enrollment of students in quality educational institutions.	286 (100)	99 (35%)	110 (38%)	49 (17%)	28 (10%)	2.98	0.95	Agreed
The policies have led to a more inclusive and equitable education system in Rivers State.	286 (100)	116 (41%)	91 (32%)	35 (12%)	44 (15%)	2.98	1.07	Agreed
Current policies have focused on improving the quality of educational facilities and resources for students.	286 (100)	77 (27%)	89 (31%)	81 (28%)	39 (14%)	2.71	1.01	Agreed
The policies in place align with the goals of providing quality education to all students in Rivers State.	286 (100)	93 (33%)	86 (30%)	65 (19%)	42 (15%)	2.80	1.05	Agreed
The policies have a clear focus on inclusive education practices that	286 (100)	66 23%)	59 (21%)	91 (32%)	70 (24%)	2.42	1.09	Disagreed

cater to the needs of diverse student populations.								
There is effective collaboration between policymakers and educational stakeholders to ensure the success of current education policies.	286 (100)	66 (23%)	79 (24%)	84 (29%)	57 (20%)	2.54	1.05	Agreed

Source: Researchers Field Survey, (2024).

Based on the data presented in Table 4.5, which outlines the mean ratings of the effectiveness of the Rivers State Universal Basic Education (RSUBE) policy in improving access to quality education for all students in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 4, the following interpretations can be made:

The current policies under the Rivers State Universal Basic Education have enhanced educational opportunities for all students, with a mean rating of 2.77 and a standard deviation of 1.05. The majority of respondents (30% strongly agree and 32% agree) acknowledge the positive impact of the policies in enhancing educational opportunities for all students in Rivers State.

The policies implemented have increased the enrollment of students in quality educational institutions, earning a mean rating of 2.98 and a standard deviation of 0.95. A significant percentage of respondents (35% strongly agree and 38% agree) agree on the effectiveness of these policies in increasing student enrollment in quality educational institutions.

The policies have contributed to a more inclusive and equitable education system in Rivers State, as indicated by a mean rating of 2.98 and a standard deviation of 1.07. The ratings reflect a consensus among respondents (41% strongly agree and 32% agree) that the policies have led to a more inclusive and equitable education system in the state.

Current policies have focused on improving the quality of educational facilities and resources for students, with a mean rating of 2.71 and a standard deviation of 1.01. While the majority of respondents (27% strongly agree and 31% agree) agree on this aspect, there is room for improvement in enhancing the quality of educational facilities and resources in Rivers State.

The policies in place align with the goals of providing quality education to all students in Rivers State, reflected in a mean rating of 2.80 and a standard deviation of 1.05. A considerable percentage of respondents (33% strongly agree and 30% agree) believe that the policies are aligned with the goal of providing quality education to all students in the state.

The policies have a clear focus on inclusive education practices catering to the needs of diverse student populations, with a mean rating of 2.42 and a standard deviation of 1.09. However, a significant percentage of respondents (23% strongly agree and 21% agree) disagree with the effectiveness of the policies in focusing on inclusive education practices for diverse student populations.

There is effective collaboration between policymakers and educational stakeholders to ensure the success of current education policies, with a mean rating of 2.54 and a standard deviation of 1.05. While a portion of respondents (23% strongly agree and 24% agree) acknowledge effective collaboration, there is room for improvement in enhancing collaboration between policymakers and stakeholders.

In summary, the analysis of mean ratings and standard deviations indicates a general acknowledgment of the effectiveness of the Rivers State Universal Basic Education policy in

improving access to quality education for students in Rivers State. While there were positive ratings in areas such as enhancing educational opportunities, increasing student enrollment, and fostering inclusivity in the education system, there were also areas identified for further improvement, such as focusing on inclusive education practices and strengthening collaboration between policymakers and educational stakeholders. Addressing these areas can further enhance the policy's effectiveness in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 3 Test
H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between current policies in Rivers State Universal Basic Education and improved access to quality Education for all students, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Frequency Responses

Variable	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Current policies in Rivers State Universal Basic Education have improved access to quality education for all students.	59	40	34	30	163
The policies have adequately addressed the educational needs of diverse student populations.	39	60	17	7	123
Total	98	100	51	37	286

Expected Value = (Row Total)(Column Total) ÷ Grand Total
Computation of Expected Value;
$(99 \times 168) \div 286 = 56$
$(99 \times 128) \div 286 = 42$
$(98 \times 168) \div 286 = 57$
$(98 \times 128) \div 286 = 43$
$(53 \times 168) \div 286 = 29$
$(53 \times 128) \div 286 = 22$
$(36 \times 168) \div 286 = 21$
$(36 \times 12) \div 286 = 16$

O	E	(O – E)	(O – E)²	$\sum$(O-E)² ÷ E
36	54	-18	324	6
56	38	18	324	8.5
59	49	10	100	2
23	33	-10	100	3
31	27	4	16	0.6
14	18	-4	16	0.9
22	18	4	16	0.9

| 9 | 13 | -4 | 16 | 1.2 |

$X^2 = 23.3$

Degree of Freedom at 5% (0.05) level of significance (n-1)(n-1), (2-1)(4-1) = (1)(3) = 3, Critical Value = 7.815

The Chi-square test conducted to evaluate the relationship between current policies in Rivers State Universal Basic Education and improved access to quality education for all students aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 resulted in a Chi-square statistic of $\chi^2=23.3$ with 3 degrees of freedom, surpassing the critical value of 7.815 at a significance level of 5%. The analysis demonstrated a notable difference between the observed and expected frequencies, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that there is a significant association between the current policies in Rivers State Universal Basic Education and enhanced access to quality education for all students. The calculated Chi-square statistic exceeding the critical value indicates a clear relationship between the implemented policies and the improved access to quality education for all students, emphasizing the impact of these policies on educational outcomes in Rivers State in alignment with SDG 4.

Discussion of Findings
Relationship between the RSUBE Policy and the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal Initiative in Rivers State.
The study presented in Table 4.4 assesses the effectiveness of the RSUBE policy in achieving Sustainable Development Goal initiatives in Rivers State. The findings suggest that the RSUBE policy has positively influenced educational development in the state, leading to improved access to quality education, addressing the needs of marginalized communities, aligning with sustainable development goals, promoting inclusivity and diversity in education provision, and assisting in assessing its impact on sustainable development goals. The majority of respondents agreed on the positive impact of the RSUBE policy in these areas, indicating a strong consensus among participants.

This aligns with the findings of Adebayo (2017), Bassey & Ekpo (2017), Nwagwu & Imonye (2019), and Okorie (2019), which also highlight the positive impact of international intervention programs on access to education and quality improvement in Nigeria. The correlation between the RSUBE policy and the achievement of sustainable development goals in Rivers State is supported by the Chi-square test results, indicating a statistically significant relationship between the RSUBE policy and the SDG initiatives in the state.

However, while the study conducted in Rivers State demonstrates the effectiveness of the RSUBE policy in various aspects of educational development, it is essential to recognize potential areas for improvement, such as addressing the digital divide among students. This echoes the recommendations from other studies that emphasize the need to address challenges related to sustainability, accountability, equity, and quality in education programs to ensure long-term effectiveness and success.

Overall, the findings of the study in Rivers State corroborate with the broader empirical research on the positive impact of educational development policies and interventions in Nigeria. By acknowledging the successes and identifying areas for improvement, policymakers and stakeholders can work towards enhancing educational outcomes and achieving sustainable development goals in the state and beyond.

Relationship between Current Policies in Rivers State Universal Basic Education and improved access to quality education for all students, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Based on the data presented regarding the challenges hindering the achievement of quality education in Rivers State, the study identifies various barriers that impact the delivery of education in the state. The mean ratings and standard deviations for different challenges, such as limited access to educational resources, socio-economic disparities, inadequate teacher training and support, insufficient government funding, lack of parental involvement, limited infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and the absence of teacher training in modern pedagogical approaches, shed light on the obstacles faced in providing quality education in Rivers State.

The findings of the study align with Laurie, Nonoyama-Tarumi & Mckeon (2016), Van Fleet (2012), and UNESCO (2017), which emphasize the challenges faced by Nigeria, including issues concerning access, equity, teacher training, infrastructure, and funding, in providing quality education. These studies underscore the importance of addressing these obstacles to enhance educational outcomes and promote sustainable development in the country.

By conducting a Chi-square test to investigate the relationship between current policies in Rivers State Universal Basic Education (RSUBE) and improved access to quality education for all students in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 4, the study reveals a significant association between the identified challenges hindering the achievement of quality education and the efforts to enhance the quality of education in the state. This corresponds with the broader discourse on the need for targeted interventions and policy initiatives to overcome these challenges and improve the quality of education in Rivers State.

While the study highlights the barriers hindering the achievement of quality education in Rivers State, it also provides valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders to address these challenges effectively. By recognizing the specific hindrances and conducting empirical analyses to identify significant associations, interventions can be designed to target the root causes of these obstacles and work towards achieving sustainable development goals in education.

In conclusion, the findings of the study underscore the importance of addressing the identified challenges to enhance the quality of education in Rivers State and demonstrate the significance of aligning policies with Sustainable Development Goal initiatives to improve access to quality education for all students. By focusing on targeted interventions and policy reforms, stakeholders can work towards mitigating these obstacles and ensuring equitable access to quality education in Rivers State.

The findings from the analysis of the mean ratings of the effectiveness of the Rivers State Universal Basic Education (RSUBE) policy in improving access to quality education for all students demonstrate several areas of congruence and disparity with the empirical studies reviewed above.

Enhanced Educational Opportunities: The positive impact of the RSUBE policies in enhancing educational opportunities for all students aligns with the findings of Adebayo (2017) and Bassey & Ekpo (2017), which emphasized the role of international interventions in increasing access to education in Nigeria.

Increased Enrollment: The effectiveness of the RSUBE policies in increasing student enrollment resonates with the positive outcomes reported in Nwagwu & Imonye (2019) and Obioma & Ndubuisi (2018), which highlighted the impact of global partnerships and external assistance in boosting enrollment rates in Nigeria.

Inclusive and Equitable Education System: The consensus among respondents regarding the inclusivity and equity of the education system in Rivers State is in line with the emphasis on equity and quality education in the empirical studies, such as the study by Aiyede & Ugwuanyi (2019).

Focus on Improving Quality of Facilities: The acknowledgment of the need for improvement in enhancing the quality of educational facilities and resources in Rivers State correlates with the recommendations from Okorie (2019) and Laurie, Nonoyama-Tarumi & Mckeon (2016) for transparent resource management and infrastructure development in education.

Alignment with Education Goals: The perception that the RSUBE policies align with the goal of providing quality education to all students corresponds with the focus on sustainable development goals and quality education in the empirical studies by Hillary Wordu & Ethel Pepple (2019) and the World Economic Forum (2015).

Inclusive Education Practices: The disagreement among respondents regarding the effectiveness of the RSUBE policies in focusing on inclusive education practices for diverse student populations highlights an area for improvement, as suggested in the study by Dachi & Otari (2020) on the importance of inclusive education practices.

Collaboration between Policymakers and Stakeholders: The recognition of effective collaboration between policymakers and educational stakeholders in ensuring policy success in education aligns with the recommendations for strengthening partnerships and coordination among stakeholders in the empirical studies by Adebayo (2017) and Bassey & Ekpo (2017).

The Chi-square test results provide statistical evidence of a significant relationship between the current policies in Rivers State Universal Basic Education and improved access to quality education for all students in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 4. This reinforces the importance of policy implementation and collaborative efforts in enhancing educational opportunities and outcomes in Rivers State.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study examined the relationship between the Rivers State Universal Basic Education (RSUBE) policy and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) initiatives, as well as the connection between current educational policies in Rivers State and improved access to quality education for all students in alignment with SDG 4. Additionally, the study explored the role of technology in enhancing the quality of education accessed by students and promoting sustainable development in Rivers State. The findings highlight the positive impact of the RSUBE policy in enhancing educational development in Rivers State, aligning with SDG initiatives, promoting inclusivity, and addressing marginalized communities. The study underscores the significance of targeted interventions and policy initiatives to overcome challenges such as limited access to resources, inadequate teacher training, and socio-economic disparities in achieving quality education for all students.

Overall, the findings of the study underscore the importance of aligning educational policies with SDG initiatives, addressing challenges to enhance educational outcomes, and to promote quality education and sustainable development in Rivers State. By recognizing areas for improvement and implementing targeted interventions, policymakers and stakeholders can work towards achieving the goal of equitable access to quality education for all students and advancing sustainable development in the region.

5.3   Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study on the relationship between educational policies, technology, and sustainable development in Rivers State, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthen Implementation of the RSUBE Policy: It is essential for policymakers to ensure effective implementation of the RSUBE policy to further enhance educational development in Rivers State. Continuous monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms should be put in place to assess the impact of the policy on achieving SDG initiatives and addressing educational challenges.

2. Address Challenges Hindering Quality Education: Efforts should be made to address the identified challenges hindering the achievement of quality education in Rivers State, such as limited access to resources, inadequate teacher training, and socio-economic disparities. Targeted interventions and resources should be allocated to overcome these obstacles and improve educational outcomes.

3. Increase Investment in Education: Adequate government funding and resources should be allocated to education in Rivers State to enhance infrastructure, teacher training, access to resources, and overall quality of education. Increased investment in education is crucial for promoting sustainable development and ensuring equitable access to quality education for all students.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can work towards enhancing educational outcomes, promoting sustainable development, and ensuring equitable access to quality education for all students in Rivers State. Collaboration, investment in education, technology integration, and continuous professional development for teachers are essential components of advancing educational development and achieving sustainable development goals in the region.

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