



CONSTRUCTIVE ACADEMIC PLANNING AND STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN BENJAMIN UWAJUMOGU STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, IHITTE UBOMA

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ABSTRACT

Constructive academic planning remains pivotal to student success in Nigerian colleges of education, where teacher trainees require structured support to develop professional competencies. This study examined the impact of constructive academic planning on students' academic performance at Benjamin Uwajumogu State College of Education (BUSCED), Ihitte Uboma, Imo State. Employing a quantitative-dominant mixed-methods design, the research assessed planning practices, identified implementation barriers, and evaluated correlations with performance indicators such as cumulative grade point averages (CGPAs) and retention rates. Data from 200 NCE students, 30 academic staff, and 10 department heads revealed strong positive relationships between effective planning elements (timetable stability, resource allocation, and curriculum alignment) and improved academic outcomes. Findings underscore the need for streamlined institutional strategies to enhance teacher preparation. Recommendations include tailored frameworks for resource-constrained colleges to boost retention and overall educational quality.

Keywords: Constructive; Academic; Planning; Students' Performance

Introduction

Constructive academic planning refers to the deliberate, systematic, and proactive process through which students set clear academic goals, develop structured study schedules, utilise available institutional support systems such as academic advising, and continuously monitor and regulate their learning progress. It is a core component of self-regulated learning that empowers students to take ownership of their educational journey rather than relying solely on external directives (Zimmerman, 2002; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2013). Unlike passive or sporadic study habits, constructive academic planning emphasises intentionality, adaptability, and reflection, enabling learners to align their daily actions with long-term academic and professional objectives.

In higher education, particularly in resource-constrained environments, constructive academic planning serves as a critical mechanism for enhancing student success. Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that students who engage in effective planning exhibit higher levels of motivation, better time management, improved metacognitive awareness, and superior academic achievement (Credé & Kuncel, 2008; Kitsantas et al., 2019). Goal setting provides direction and purpose, study scheduling optimises the use of limited time, academic advising offers expert guidance on course selection and career pathways, while self-monitoring allows for timely identification and correction of learning gaps.

The relationship between constructive academic planning and students' academic performance has received considerable attention globally. Research indicates moderate to strong positive



associations between planning behaviours and cumulative grade point average (CGPA), retention rates, and overall degree completion (Lotkowski et al., 2004; Robbins et al., 2004). In the Nigerian tertiary education context, where challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, inconsistent power supply, and varying levels of student preparedness are prevalent, structured academic planning becomes even more essential. It acts as a compensatory strategy that helps students maximise available resources and maintain academic momentum despite systemic constraints (Adeyemo, 2010; Ogbuanya et al., 2021).

Despite its recognised importance, many students in Nigerian colleges of education still demonstrate low levels of planning skills, resulting in suboptimal academic performance and high failure rates in several courses. This gap highlights the need for empirical investigations that examine the extent to which constructive academic planning predicts academic outcomes in teacher-training institutions. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the impact of constructive academic planning on students' academic performance at Benjamin Uwajumogu State College of Education, Ihitte Uboma. Specifically, it sought to assess current planning practices, identify key barriers to effective implementation, evaluate their correlation with performance indicators such as grade point averages and retention rates, and recommend tailored strategies for institutional improvement to support teacher trainees in achieving higher educational outcomes. This investigation aligns with growing scholarly emphasis on institutional planning as a predictor of goal achievement in Nigerian colleges of education (Oyeniran, 2021). By addressing these deficiencies, the study provided actionable insights for enhancing educational quality in similar institutions.

Scholarly discourse consistently links effective academic planning to improved student outcomes in higher education, particularly within resource-limited settings like Nigeria's colleges of education. Constructive planning encompasses systematic processes such as program initiation, resource projection, curriculum alignment, and continuous monitoring, which collectively enhance institutional efficiency and learner achievement (Oyeniran, 2021). In Nigerian contexts, however, planning often encounters systemic hurdles, including inadequate funding, policy inconsistencies, and administrative instability, which undermine teacher education programs (Adeyemi, 2014; Okoedion et al., 2019).

Empirical evidence highlights how institutional factors such as timetable stability and resource availability directly influence academic performance. Adeyemi (2014), for instance, demonstrated that institutional predictors accounted for significant variance in students' achievement in Southwestern colleges of education, with planning deficiencies correlating to lower CGPAs and higher attrition. Similarly, Okoedion et al. (2019) identified student-related, lecturer-related, and institutional-related factors as primary determinants of performance in Nigerian universities, noting that fragmented planning exacerbated these challenges.

In teacher training institutions specifically, poor academic planning manifested in overcrowded classrooms, irregular assessments, and limited instructional materials, perpetuating cycles of underachievement (Akinsolu, 2016). Recent studies further affirm the predictive power of planning functions. Oyeniran (2021) found that program accreditation, information processing, and monitoring functions significantly predicted goal attainment in Kwara State colleges of



education, while resource and financial planning gaps limited broader impacts. Complementary research on educational facility planning and school plant mapping underscores the role of physical and logistical infrastructure in performance outcomes (Chukwuma, 2024; school plant studies in Delta State). These findings resonate with BUSCED's context, where rural teacher training demands adaptive planning to overcome typical Nigerian challenges like enrollment surges and infrastructural deficits (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2001). Collectively, the literature establishes a robust foundation for examining how constructive planning can mitigate performance barriers and elevate teacher preparation standards.

Method

The study employed a quantitative-dominant mixed-methods design to provide a comprehensive analysis of planning practices and their effects on performance, allowing for statistical validation supplemented by qualitative insights. The research was conducted at Benjamin Uwajumogu State College of Education, located in Isinweke, Ihitte Uboma Local Government Area, Imo State, Nigeria. This institution, formerly known as Imo State College of Education, specializes in NCE programs across arts, sciences, and education disciplines, serving approximately 500 students with a focus on rural teacher training. Participants comprised 200 NCE students (100 from Year One and 100 from Year Two) selected via stratified random sampling to represent diverse departments (Education, Arts, Sciences, and Vocational Studies), along with 30 academic staff involved in planning and teaching. Ten department heads were purposively selected for interviews.

The site was chosen for its representativeness of state-owned colleges facing typical Nigerian challenges, including resource limitations and administrative flux. Primary data were gathered through structured questionnaires administered to the 200 students and 30 staff to measure perceptions of planning elements like timetable stability, resource availability, and curriculum alignment (using a 4-point Likert scale). Academic performance data, including CGPAs and completion rates from the past three academic sessions (2022/2023–2024/2025), were obtained from college records with administrative approval. Supplementary qualitative data came from semi-structured interviews with the 10 department heads to explore planning implementation challenges.

All instruments were pre-tested for reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.87 for questionnaires), with data collection spanning four weeks to ensure high response rates (95%) and ethical compliance through informed consent. Quantitative data from questionnaires and records were analyzed using descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, percentages) and inferential techniques, including Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis via SPSS version 26, to determine the relationship between planning variables and performance outcomes. Qualitative interview transcripts underwent thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns in barriers and successes. Integration of findings occurred through joint displays, enabling a holistic interpretation of how constructive planning drives performance improvements.

Presentation of Results

Table 1: *Demographic Characteristics of Participants*

Characteristic	Category	Students (n=200)	Staff (n=30)	Total (%)
Gender	Male	84 (42%)	20 (67%)	104 (45%)
	Female	116 (58%)	10 (33%)	126 (55%)
Age Group	18–19	42 (21%)	-	42 (18%)
	20–24	108 (54%)	8 (27%)	116 (50%)
	25+	50 (25%)	22 (73%)	72 (31%)
Year/Experience	Year 1/≤5 years	100 (50%)	12 (40%)	112 (49%)
	Year 2/>5 years	100 (50%)	18 (60%)	118 (51%)
Department	Education	60 (30%)	10 (33%)	70 (30%)
	Arts	50 (25%)	8 (27%)	58 (25%)
	Sciences	50 (25%)	7 (23%)	57 (25%)
	Vocational	40 (20%)	5 (17%)	45 (20%)

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 230 participants (200 students and 30 staff). Among students, 58% were female, with the majority (54%) aged 20–24 years. Year Two students constituted 50% of the sample, and representation was balanced across departments. Staff participants were predominantly male (67%) with over 5 years of experience in academic planning roles.

Table 2: *Multiple Regression Analysis: Planning Factors Predicting Academic Performance*

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Timetable Stability	0.28	0.06	0.25	4.67	<.01
Resource Availability	0.31	0.07	0.27	4.43	<.01
Curriculum Alignment	0.45	0.08	0.39	5.63	<.01
(Constant)	1.12	0.15	-	7.47	<.01

Descriptive statistics indicated moderate to high perceptions of planning effectiveness (overall mean = 3.12 on a 4-point scale), with timetable stability scoring lowest ($M = 2.68$). CGPA data showed an institutional average of 2.85 across the three sessions, with retention rates averaging 78%. Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between key planning variables and performance. Timetable stability correlated strongly with CGPA ($r = .68, p < .01$), resource availability with retention ($r = .62, p < .01$), and curriculum alignment with overall achievement ($r = .71, p < .01$). Multiple regression results (Table 2) demonstrated that planning factors collectively explained 48% of the variance in academic performance ($R^2 = .48, F = 42.36, p < .001$), with curriculum alignment emerging as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .39, p < .01$).

Discussion

The findings confirm that constructive academic planning significantly enhances students' performance at BUSCED, consistent with prior research in Nigerian colleges of education (Adeyemi, 2014; Oyeniran, 2021). The strong correlations and regression results align with Okoedion et al. (2019), who highlighted institutional factors as key drivers of achievement.



Barriers such as timetable instability and resource deficits mirrored national challenges in teacher education (Akinsolu, 2016), yet the study's integration of quantitative and qualitative data revealed that targeted planning interventions—particularly curriculum alignment—can mitigate these issues effectively. These outcomes extend the literature by providing institution-specific evidence from a rural Imo State college, where planning directly influenced teacher trainee competencies. The 48% variance explained by planning variables underscores the transformative potential of proactive strategies, echoing calls for enhanced monitoring and resource projection (Oyeniran, 2021). Limitations include the single-institution focus, though the sample's representativeness strengthens generalizability to similar state-owned colleges.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study revealed significant positive correlations between robust planning practices and enhanced student performance at Benjamin Uwajumogu State College of Education. As anticipated, streamlined timetabling, resource optimization, and staff training emerged as critical levers for improvement. The research delivered a framework for constructive planning tailored to resource-constrained colleges, contributing to a projected 15%+ increase in retention and supporting national educational goals. Recommendations include institutional adoption of digital planning tools for timetable management, increased budgetary allocation for instructional resources, and regular capacity-building workshops for academic staff. A policy brief submitted to Imo State education authorities advocates for these measures to empower BUSCED in producing more competent teachers. Future research should explore longitudinal effects across multiple colleges to further validate these strategies. Ultimately, prioritizing constructive academic planning will foster sustainable institutional growth and elevate teacher education standards in Nigeria.

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