



Early Identification and Quality Educational Investment on Rural Dwellers: Emohua Local Government Area as a Case Study

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Abstract

Education is widely recognized as an instrument for National Development, Psychological stability and socio-economic transformation. However, rural communities in Nigeria continue to experience educational neglect, poor infrastructure, poverty, inadequate psychological support systems and shortage of qualified teachers. This study examines the importance of early identification and quality educational investment among rural dwellers in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The study was anchored on Human Capital Theory which emphasizes on the investment in education as a means of improving productivity and societal growth. The study adopts qualitative analytical approach through the review of recent local and international literatures. It argues that early identification of learners' psychological, emotional, developmental and academic needs promotes effective intervention and educational achievement. The study further highlights that quality educational guidance and counselling, technological integrated and community participation can reduce educational inequality and improve rural development. the study concluded that educational investment remains essential for sustainable development in rural communities such as Emohua Local Government Area. Recommendations were made for government, stake holders, educational psychologists and community leaders.

Keywords: Early Identification, Emohua Local Government Area., Quality Education, Rural Dwellers

Introduction

Education plays a significant role in the Social, Economic and Psychological Development of individuals and communities. According to Schultz (1961), Education is an important investment capable of improving human productivity and national growth. Becker (1964) further argued that investment in education enhances the quality of human capital and contributes positively to societal advancement. In Nigeria, despite several educational reforms, rural communities continue to experience unequal access to quality education. Rural dwellers in many parts of Nigeria, including Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State, face serious educational challenges, such as inadequate school facilities, Poverty, Poor teacher

quality, insecurity and limited access to technological resources. Reginald-Ihedike and Inoma (2022) observed that difficult learning environments in Emohua Local Government Area negatively influence students' academic performance, particularly in Mathematics. Similarly, Obilor, (2026) reported that poor educational access and socio-economic conditions contribute significantly to school dropout rates among rural children in Rivers State.

The Psychological wellbeing learners is also greatly affected by poor educational conditions. Ogenetega and Egbuchu (2024) revealed that poor welfare conditions and Emotional labour negatively affect teachers' psychological wellbeing in Emohua Local Government Area. Consequently, learners in such environments may experience low motivation, anxiety, frustration, self esteem and academic under achievement, among others.

Early identification of learners' developmental and educational challenges remains an effective strategy for improving educational outcomes. Early identification helps teachers, counsellors, psychologists and parents to recognize learners' difficulties before they become severe. According to Elenwo nd Ebom-Jebose (2025), early childhood educational intervention enhances innovation, cognitive development and educational participation among children in Rivers State.

This therefore examines early identification and quality educational investment on rural dwellers using Emohua Local Government Area as a case study. The study further explores the psychological implications of educational neglect and recommendations of educational neglect and recommends strategies for sustainable rural educational development.

Conceptual Clarification

1. Early Identification

Early identification according to the researcher, detection of learners' educational, behavioural, emotional, psychological and developmental challenges in order to provide appropriate interventions. According to Elenwo et al. (2025), early educational intervention assist in improving children's learning abilities, creativity and social adjustment.

Psychologically, early identification helps to reduce emotional stress, anxiety, frustration and low self-esteem among learners. Children who receive early intervention often demonstrate improved academic performance and better social interaction.

2. Quality Educational Investment

Quality Educational Investment involves deliberate efforts by government, organizations and stakeholders to improve educational standards through adequate funding, provision of infrastructure, Teacher training instructional materials, Technological facilities and Psychological support services (Schultz, 1961). Schultz viewed Educational Investment as a major contributor to human development and economic productivity.

Becher (1964) In his view maintained that Educational investment increases human capital development and improves individual competence. Therefore, investment in rural education is essential for reducing educational inequality and promoting sustainable community development.

3. Rural Dwellers

Rural dwellers are individuals living in communities characterized by low population density, inadequate infrastructure, poverty and limited access to social amenities. According to Okoroafor, Ifakpo-Wokoma and Okolo (2024), many rural communities in Rivers State experience environment educational development.

Theoretical Review

This study was anchored on Human Capital Theory Development. The Theory was propounded by Theodore Schultz in 1961 and Gary Becker in 1964.

The theory explains that investment in education, skill, training and health improves human productivity and societal growth. Schutz argued that education should be treated as an investment because educated individuals contribute positively to economic and national development.

Becker (1964) further emphasized that investment in human capital increases productivity, innovation, and social transformation.

The relevance of the theory to the study lies in the emphasis on Educational investment as a tool for improving rural communities. Quality Education can improve the psychological wellbeing, Employability, Creativity, and socio-economic conditions of rural dwellers in Emohua Local Government Area.

Educational Challenges Facing Rural Dwellers in Emohua Local Government Area.

1. Poor Educational Infrastructure

Many schools in rural communities within Emohua Local Government Area lack adequate classrooms, libraries, laboratories, furniture and instructional materials. Reginald-Ihedike

and Inoma (2021) found that poor learning environments negatively affect students' academic achievement in the Local Government Area. Also inadequate infrastructure discourages effective teaching and learning and contributes to poor academic performance among rural learners.

2. Poverty and Economic Constraints

Poverty remains one of the major barriers to quality education in rural areas. Many parents/guidance are unable to provide school fees, textbooks, uniforms, and transportation for their children and wards. Obilor et al. (2026) noted that poverty and poor parental support contribute significantly to school dropout rates in Rivers State. As a result, many children engage in farming, trading and child labour instead of attending school regularly.

3. Inadequate Qualified Teachers

Rural schools often experience shortages of qualified teachers because many professionals prefer urban areas where social amenities and welfare conditions are better. Ogenetaga et al. (2024), revealed that poor remuneration and emotional stress affect teachers' effectiveness and psychological wellbeing in Emohua Local Government Area. The shortage of competent teacher reduces the quality of instruction available to rural learners.

4. Psychological and Emotional Challenges

Educational deprivation exposes learners to emotional and psychological difficulties such as anxiety frustration, depression and low self-esteem. Matthew (2023), observed that violence and food insecurity in Emohua Local Government Area contribute significantly to psychological stress among residents. Poor educational conditions also increase learners' vulnerability to social problems such as juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, and youth restiveness, they added.

5. Technological Disadvantage

Technological inequality continues to widen the educational gap between rural and urban communities, Uwelegbewe (2026) emphasized that lack of access to ICT facilities, AI and STEM education negatively affects sustainable educational development in rural communities within Rivers State. Also, the absence of technological resources limits learners exposure to digital education and innovation.

Psychological Importance of Early Identification.

Early Identification has significant psychological and educational benefits for learners in rural communities. They are:

1. Improvement of Self-Esteem

When learners receive early interventional support, they develop confidence and positive self-worth. Early assistance helps students overcome learning difficulties and emotional barriers.

2. Reduction of Emotional Trauma

Early identification minimizes frustration, anxiety, depression and emotional stress among learners. According to Wadi et al. (2024), supportive educational environment improve psychological wellbeing and emotional stability.

3. Better Academic Adjustment

Children who receive educational and psychological support at an early stage adapt better to school environments and academic demands.

4. Prevention of Delinquency and Social Deviance

Education support programmes help reduce school dropout, crime, cultism and youth restiveness. Ubulom and Buduka-Chike (2024) reported that entrepreneurship and educational empowerment programmes contribute significantly to reducing youth restiveness in Rivers State.

Importance of Quality Educational Investment

1. Promotion of Sustainable Development

Quality education contributes to national growth, innovation and economic productivity. Schultz (1961) emphasized that investment in education improves societal development and human productivity.

2. Reduction of Rural-Urban Migration

Improved educational opportunities in rural communities can reduce migration to urban areas in search of better schools and employment opportunities.

3. Enhancement of Psychological Wellbeing

A supportive educational environment promotes emotional stability, resilience and mental health among learners and teachers

4. Increased School Enrollment and Retention

Educational Incentives such as scholarships, free learning materials and feeding programmes encourage school enrolment and reduce dropout rates. Obilor et al (2026) in his contribution affirmed that educational support programmes improve learners' participation in school activities.

5. Technological and Vocational Development

Investment in ICT and vocational education equip learners with practical and entrepreneurial skills necessary for community development. Uwelegbewe (2026) advocated for the integration of AI and STEM education to improve educational outcomes in rural communities.

Strategies for Improving Rural Educational Infrastructure

Government and stakeholders should provide modern classrooms, liberates laboratories and ICT centers in rural schools.

1. Recruitment and Motivation of Teachers

Qualified teachers should be motivated through rural allowances, accommodation, promotions, and professional development programmes

2. Strengthening Guidance and Counselling Services

Professional Counsellors and Psychologists should be developed to schools to support learners; emotional and psychological needs.

3. Community Participation

Parents, Religions Organizations, Traditional Rulers and Community leaders should actively participate in Educational Development Programmes.

4. Early Childhood Education Programmes

Government should strengthen early childhood Education to facilitate early identification of developmental and educational challenges. Elenwo et al. (2025) emphasized on the importance of early childhood educational intervention in promoting innovation and learning development.

5. Integration of Technology

Rural schools should be equipped with internet facilities, digital learning tools and STEM resources to improve educational quality.

Position Statement

This study strongly maintains that early identification and quality educational investment are essential for improving the educational and psychological wellbeing of rural dwellers in Emohua Local Government Area. Educational neglect in rural communities contributes to poverty, Illiteracy, Unemployment Psychological Instability, and underdevelopment.

Government, Educational Stakeholders, Psychologists counsellors and community leaders should prioritize rural education through sustainable funding, infrastructural development, teacher training and psychological support services. Every child, irrespective of geographical location, deserves access to quality education and emotional support. Furthermore, educational investment should therefore focus on academic achievement, psychological wellbeing, creativity, social inclusion and sustainable community development.

Conclusion

Education remains one of the most effective tools for promoting social transformation and national development. Rural dwellers in Emohua Local Government Area continue to face educational, psychological and socio-economic challenges that hinder sustainable growth.

This study concluded that early identification and quality educational investment are essential strategies for improving academic achievement, psychological wellbeing and socio-economic opportunities among rural learners.

Anchored on Human Capital Theory, the study establishes that educational investment contributes significantly to human development and community transformation.

Therefore, Government and Educational Stakeholders should intensify efforts toward improving rural education through adequate funding, technology integration, teacher motivations, counselling services and early intervention programmes.

Recommendations

1. Government should increase funding for rural education in Emohua Local Government Area.
2. Early childhood screening and intervention programmes should be strengthened in rural schools
3. Qualified teachers should be motivated through incentives and improved welfare packages
4. Guidance counsellors and educational psychologists should be developed in rural schools
5. ICT and STEM education should be integrated into rural educational systems.

6. Community leaders and parents should actively support educational development programmes.
7. Scholarship schemes and financial assistance should be provided for inadequate learners.
8. Educational policies should promote inclusive and equitable quality education for rural dwellers.

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