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Strategic Planning: An Approach to Poverty Reduction in Nigeria (1980-2015)

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Abstract
The study is an empirical investigation of Strategic Planning as an Approach to Poverty Reduction in Nigeria covering the period of 1980 – 2015. Data on National Poverty Rate (proxied by Poverty Head Count), Health Development strategies (proxied by National Population Growth Rate) Human Development strategies (proxied by National Literacy Rate), Energy production strategies (proxied by electricity production index), Employment Generation strategies (proxied by rate of employment generation) and Agricultural Support strategies (proxied by Agricultural Credit to farmers) were sourced from World Development Report, Index mundi Statistical Bulletin, Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin and UNESCO Bulletin. The data were tested for stationarity and were found to be integrated with mixed order of integration. The data were then analyzed using the Autoregressive Distributive Lag (ARDL) Bounds test technique. The result showed a long run relationship amongst the variables. The result also revealed that Health Promotion and Energy production strategies were significant and properly signed indicating that these two strategic planning tools are significant determinants of poverty reduction in Nigeria, both in the long run and in the short run. All the five explanatory variables, except Agricultural Support Strategies, were rightly signed in the long run and thus each contributed to poverty reduction within the period of study. In conclusion, the study recommends that government should offer strong support in the areas of skill acquisition, on the job training and entrepreneurial development as more practical ways of reducing poverty, particularly in the short run. Government should urgently expand the power sector infrastructure to boost economic activities across all sectors and hence improve the quality of life of the citizenry. Also, government should discourage polygamy, promote birth control measures and discourage large family syndrome and devise a means to identify and support genuine and real farmers.
Keywords: Auto-Regressive Distributive Lag, Poverty Reduction, Poverty Head Count, Strategic Planning.

1. Background of the Study

Nigeria engaged in several planning regimes and applied various strategies to improve the living standard of the citizens since 1946 with the introduction of the ten-year development plan by the colonial administration. After independence, Nigeria formulated and launched other development plans. Between 1962 and 1985 Nigeria had four development plans referred to as the first, second, third, and fourth National Development Plans (Gumede: 2012).

Prior to Nigeria's independence in 1960, problems of inequality, inflation, population growth, credit facilities to farmers, school enrolment were not seen as major issues and as such efforts were not made before 1960 to tackle and reduce poverty.

However, after the Nigerian civil war, the issue of poverty reduction became evident due to the devastation caused by the war. Clear cases of inequality, drop in school enrolment, loss of job, decline in industrialization due to poor power generation, hunger, etc. were witnessed. The Nigerian government started mapping out and incorporating strategies in her national development plans to reduce poverty (Ajulor: 2013).

These strategies were multidimensional in nature. They include the following:

i. National Accelerated Food Production Programme: This strategy was launched by the Gowon administration in 1973, three years after the civil war. It was a strategy to increase food production in Nigeria. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) sponsored the programme. The strategy provided both research extension and agro-services components to farmers. This strategy, according to analysts led to short term increases in crop Production (Aziza: 2012).

ii. Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme: The Federal Government established the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund (AGCSF) by Decree No. 20 of 1977. Its original share capital and paid capital were ₦100 million and ₦85.6 million respectively. The mandate of the scheme was to increase support to agriculture by providing loan to farmers.

iii. Agricultural Credit Support Scheme (ACSS): The Scheme was established by the Federal Government, Central Bank and Banker's Committee with the sole aim to disburse funds to farmers and agro-allied entrepreneurs. The loan attracted only 8.0% interest rate. It had an initial capital of ₦50 billion.

iv. Commercial Agricultural Credit Scheme (CACS): The Central Bank and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture established this scheme in 2009 with the aim of fast-tracking development of the agricultural sector and enhancing national food security by increasing food supply and effectively lower agricultural produce and product prices, thereby reducing the cost of food items.

v. Operation Feed the Nation (OFN): This strategy was launched in 1976 and it lasted till 1980. The strategy sought to increase local food production in order to reduce imports. UNDP (2010) reported that through this strategy Food Production in Nigeria grew by 5.2%. The government spent about N13.6 billion to finance this programme.

vi. The Green Revolution: The administration of Shehu Shagari reviewed the Operation Feed the Nation Strategy. The strategy was launched in April, 1980. Its major aims/objectives were to ensure self-sufficiency in food production and to introduce modern technology into the Nigerian agricultural sector largely through the introduction of modern inputs such as high yielding varieties of seeds, fertilizers and tractors.

Other strategies included the River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA), Back to Land Programmes, Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Agricultural Development Scheme (ADS), New Improved National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP), the Strategic Grain Reserves Programme (SGRP), etc.

The Federal government equally channeled attention to the energy sector; this sector was seen as a driving force for the economy. This led to the establishment of Rural Electrification schemes at the federal and state levels.

In order to tackle the problem of unemployment, the government in 1986 launched the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SME) funding, Family Support Programme, etc. In the education sector, the Nomadic Education Programme which developed curriculum for Nomadic education, trained nomadic teachers and provided infrastructures for the nomad schools. Other programmes were targeted towards Girl Child Education. The recently introduced Universal Free Basic Education and Free Meal Systems were some of the strategies introduced to increase Nigerian Literacy Standard.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Since after the Nigerian Civil War in 1970, significant efforts had been made by various governments to reduce the level of poverty and increase the rate of economic development. Nigeria has embarked on many Strategic Planning Programmes targeted towards poverty reduction. Yet, despite these efforts that have lasted for severall years, poverty rather than reduce, has continued to increase.

Growth and development require a long term planning to frame shorter term trade-offs. A long term plan helps to focus the attention of government to deal with the inevitable short-term turbulences.

World Bank (2011) is of the view that poverty reduction processes in Nigeria over the past four decades have not been successful. Poverty incidence got worse during the SAP years between 1985 and 1992, resulting in a rise from 0.42 to 0.51 using Multidimensional Deprivation Index (MDI) by 1996 inequality had become wider for rural dwellers (0.501) than urban dwellers (0.423) (UNDP 2010). Available Statistics indicate that headcount of poverty using the rate of US$2 per day increased from 28.1% in 1980 to 46.3% in 1985; it declined to 42.79 in 1992 before increasing again to 65.0% in 1996. The poverty headcount in Nigeria continued to worsen as it increased to 72.1% in 2014 (World bank, 2011).

Nigeria slipped from a position of buoyant and up-coming economy to rank among the poorest 20 countries in the world; this happened despite the country's vast oil wealth. World Bank (2009) recorded that 60% of Nigerians live in poverty. The UNDP (2012) stated that all the development indices portrayed Nigeria in a bad shape showing that the country has not fared well. Over the last two decades, the UNDP Human Development Index (an index that measures on annual bases, comparative national socio-economic development) has continuously ranked Nigeria in the low human development group. This is worrisome and indicates that Nigeria has not been able to make any significant progress in her human development, hence the prevalent high level of poverty in the land.

The menace of poverty, though global, is most devastating in Africa and Nigeria in particular; human conditions in Nigeria have greatly deteriorated, particularly during the last decade. Biyi and Ogwumike (2003), observed that real disposable incomes have declined sharply, malnutrition rates risen greatly, food production has hardly kept pace with population growth and the quantity and quality of health and education services have also declined.

The major reason for planning is to improve the living conditions of the citizens; this makes strategic planning a national objective. The question and major issue here is why has poverty incidence refused to decline despite several strategies employed by the government? Why is unemployment still high, erratic power supply still being experienced and inequality still growing in Nigeria despite these efforts? This paper addresses the problem of poverty reduction by examining strategic planning as an approach to its reduction.

2. LITERARURE REVIEW

2.1 Strategic Planning

Taylor et al (2009) defined strategic planning as a concept in management science that deals with identification and isolation of certain objectives and principles that would be applied in order to achieve the goal of the organization. They stated that strategic statement of a firm sets the firm's long term direction and broad policy directions. They opined that such a statement gives the firm a clear sense of direction for the firm's activities for the upcoming years.

The National Universities Commission (NUC, 2005) defined strategic planning as a process of setting measurable medium - to - long term goals for an organization, and designing strategies based on its internal strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats in its environment to achieve the goals.

Abbel et al (1979) defined strategic planning as that part of an on-going continuous activity which addresses where an organization should go. At a level, a plan may simply describe the activities and tasks that must be carried out in the next year or years to come in order to meet specific targets. At a much higher level, the plan may seek to define the mission and objectives and established guidelines.

Ohmae in Nwosu (2000) defined Strategic Planning as the task of discovering, isolating and treatment of specific variables that directly affect or may assist the organization in actualizing her goals and objectives. He equally applied this to economic planning and concluded that for economic planning to be strategic, it must discover, isolate and treat some variables that affect particular aspect of the economy especially the aspect that maximizes welfare. He emphasized that poverty reduction should be a major concern of the government.

2.2 Poverty Incidence

Johnson (1972) defined poverty incidence as a situation when the resources of individuals or families are inadequate to provide a socially acceptable standard of living, the individuals live below the conventional poverty line distinguishing the poor from the non-poor.

The German government (2013), described poor people as those who are unable to live a decent life. Poor people have been described as not having enough to eat, a high rate of infant mortality, a low life expectancy, low educational opportunities, inadequate health care, unfit housing and lacking active participation in the decision making process.

World Bank Development Report (WBDR) (2010) described poverty incidence as inability of certain persons to attain a minimum standard of living. Similarly Deng (1996), Aloloye (1997) and Englama and Bamidele (1997) defined it as lack of basic necessities of life.

Anyanwu (2015) described the poor especially in Nigeria as:

- ❖ Households or individuals below the poverty line and whose incomes are insufficient to provide for their basic needs. People whose income are below $1 per day.
- ❖ Households or individuals lacking access to basic services, political contracts and other forms of support.
- ❖ People living in isolated rural areas who lack essential infrastructures.
- ❖ Female – headed households whose nutritional needs are not being met adequately.
- ❖ Persons who have lost their jobs and those who are unable to find employment as a result of economic reforms under the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) and those who are in danger of becoming poor (New poor).
- ❖ Ethnic minorities, who are marginalized, deprived and persecuted economically, socially, culturally and politically.

From the foregoing, it means that poverty has everything to do with the poor ones inability to meet their basic needs. The prevalence of these indicators of poverty is what is summarized as incidence of poverty.

2.3 Poverty Reduction

This study defines poverty reduction as a set of measures, both economic and humanitarian that are intended towards permanently ending the suffering of the people.

Aigbokhan (2012) defined Poverty reduction as those government programmes meant to reduce incidence of poverty, both for Urban and rural dwellers. In Nigeria and other Less Developed Countries (LDCs}, development policy has three fundamental objectives: 1) economic growth and development; 2) price stability, and 3) social equity. These objectives were to be achieved through National Development Plans (NDPs) which were designed to alleviate poverty by achieving an improvement in real income of the average citizen, equitable distribution of income and reduction in the level of unemployment and underemployment. It is therefore, within different theoretical models for development that past policies aimed at bringing development to the rural areas of Nigeria were designed.

Ogwumike (2010) defined poverty reduction measures as those instruments put together by authorities to eradicate or at least reduce poverty among the populace. They are programmes and policy instruments put together by government to end poverty incidence.

2.4 Developmental (and Strategic) Planning in Nigeria (1981 - 2015)

In 1981, the Shagari administration (1979-1983) launched the fourth National Development Plan (1980-1985). This was the first Development Plan to be formulated by a democratically elected government under a new constitution based on the presidential system of government. The fourth National Development Plan was intended to further the process of establishing a solid base for long term economic and social development of Nigeria. Unlike the previous plans, the fourth national development plan was the first plan that involved the grass root by involving the local governments in two areas (Ogunjimi, 1997):

i. by participating in formulating the plan.
ii. by having their own separate programmes under the plan.

The estimated capital investment target of about N82.2 billion was shared between the public and private sectors, the public sector contributed N70.5 billion while the private sector contributed N11.7billion.

Some strategic plans were introduced during this plan period to reduce poverty. Prominent among them was the rural electrification scheme to generate electricity in the rural areas. The change of government in 1983 and again in 1985 adversely affected the implementation of the fourth National Development Plan. The consequence of this abrupt change was a general poor performance of the economy.

The fourth National Development Plan was succeeded by an economic emergency programme known as the Integrated Development Initiatives, otherwise known as Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The period witnessed the introduction of series of Integrated Development Initiatives which Okoli and Onah (2002) referred to as rural development strategies. These strategic plans include the Agricultural Development Scheme, National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP), Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), and the National Directorate of Employment (NDE). They noted that these programmes increased Nigeria's food production index from 0.75 – 2.5 while Onah (2008) noted that poverty incidence decreased from 67.5% to 54.3% by the end of 1986.

The adoption of SAP in 1986 represented a paradigm shift from project-based planning approach to policy-based planning which emphasized private-sector led growth strategy as opposed to public-sector led growth of the fixed-medium term plans (Obadan and Ogioglo, 1994; Marcellus, 2009). Dantata and Yelwa (2011) observed that from 2004-2010, several attempts were made by successive Nigerian governments to transform the Nigerian economy through a medium-term development plan known as National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). The broad reform areas of the blue-print focused on strategic plans of poverty reduction, sustainable economic development and good governance.

Dantata and Yelwa (2011) also stated that the 2008-2009 global financial and economic crises led to the resuscitation of national development planning with the formulation of economic transformation blue-print known as National vision 20:2020. Consequently, the Federal government embarked on the vision 20:2020 with the objective of placing Nigeria among the top 20 developed economies in the world by the year 2020. Despite these lofty economic plans, Nigeria's growth continued to be driven by consumption and high oil prices. As observed by (), the structure of the economy remained highly import dependent, consumption driven and undiversified. Despite the high growth recorded during 2011-2015 period which was mainly driven by higher oil prices, it was non-inclusive growth.

Majority of Nigerian remained under the burden of poverty, inequality and unemployment. This high oil price-driven growth led to an economy with a positive but jobless growth trajectory. Hence the sharp and continued decline in crude oil prices from mid 2014 to date led to the near collapse of the Nigerian economy and worsened the poverty incidence in the country.

2.5 Theoretical Framework: The Gap Theory

A number of models of strategic planning have been developed by researchers such as Argent, (1980), Hussey (1976), Cohen and Cyert (1973), Glueck and Jauch (1984) and Daniel (2011). These models utilized the theory of Gap Analysis which relates very closely to issues which border on planning objectives. It addresses the questions:

1. Where do we want to go?
2. What actually do we want to achieve?
3. How can we realistically achieve that?

When considering where and how an organization might develop in the future, both the desired and realistic objectives are essential considerations. Desired objectives relates to where the strategic policy makers and other relevant authorities would like to take the country or the organization to if it is possible.

Their study was extended and used in the study of economic planning in Canada where some specific variables were isolated and treated. The variables were isolated because they have direct relationship or impact to peoples' standard of living, and well-being. The variables which were isolated include: Human Development, Agricultural activities, Energy, Inflation, and Population Growth. These variables have direct impact on people's standard of living. This theory is used to appraise the effectiveness of strategic planning on poverty reduction in

Nigeria.

2.6 Empirical Review

Klassen (2008) examined the link between population growth and poverty reduction in Uganda using a combination of macro and micro econometric technique. Using panel data, he established a link between population growth and poverty reduction. Population growth reduces resources available for effective planning. He discovered a negative relationship between population growth and all the macro and micro-econometric variables that reduce poverty incidence.

In another study, Godoy and Dewbre (2010) in their study examined the economic importance of Agriculture for poverty reduction. The study selected 25 countries that have extraordinary success in reducing extreme poverty over the past 25 years. The countries were compared using indicators of their macroeconomic characteristics and especially, their agricultural and economic characteristics. Result of the regression analysis revealed that while economic growth generally was an important contributor to poverty reduction, the sectoral mix of growth mattered substantially, with growth in agricultural income being highly significant.

Shukla and Mishra (2013) studied "Employment Generation and Poverty Reduction Programmes in Developing Countries using India as a case study. They found that the influence of macroeconomic environment on the industry speeds ahead of the economy; generates more job and higher levels of wages and income through increasing productivity. They recommended series of outward-oriented policy changes which include: Industrial reforms, Fiscal reforms, monetary reforms and trade policy reforms.

Oyewale (2015) investigated the effect of Agricultural Support Programme on Poverty Reduction in Nigeria using time series data spanning 1999 through 2014. Findings from the study show that Economic Growth Rate (EGR), Gross National Income Rate (GNIR), Agriculture Growth Rate (AGR), and Export of Goods and Services Growth Rate (EGSGR) have significant impact in reducing poverty rate in Nigeria.

Onyedikachi and Chinweoke (2013) examined the impact of human development on Poverty Reduction in Nigeria from 1990 to 2011. Their findings indicated that there is a zero correlation between poverty, discomfort index and economic growth in Nigeria. Also, all the estimates of the Human Development Indices were statistically insignificant. They submitted that investment in human capital development should be a priority of the government and that entrepreneurship development that will spring up small and medium enterprises should be encouraged by the government among Nigerians.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study makes use of secondary data sourced from World Development Report Bulletin, Index Mundi Bulletin and UNESCO Bulletin for various years. The data were tested for stationarity using the Augmented Dickey Fuller Unit Root test and the long run relationship was ascertained using the Bounds test for cointegration. The study employed the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) technique to estimate both the short-run and long-run coefficients of the variables. The use of the ARDL bounds test methodology was necessitated by the fact that the unit root test gave a mixed order of integration i.e. I(0) and I(1) as specified in Pesaran et al (2001).

3.1 Model Specification

The model specification we adopted was based on the Gap theory and the empirical work of Aziza (2009). The latter was modified/adapted to suit our work. Consequently, our model specification is as follows:

NPR = F(APS, HPS, HDS, EPS, EGS)

Where:

NPR = National Poverty Rate (Poverty Head Count)

ASS = Agricultural Support Strategies (Agricultural Credit Supply to farms)

HDS = Human Development Strategies (National Literacy Rate)

EPS = Energy Production Strategies

EGS = Employment Generation Strategies (Rate of Employment Generation in the Economy)

HPS = Health Promotion Strategies (National Population Growth Rate)

The econometric format of the above functional form, taking logarithm of both sides of the model to linearise the relationship among the variables is stated thus:

$LnNPR_t = b_0 + b_1 LnASS_t + b_2 LnHDS_t + b_3 LnEPS_t + b_4 LnEGS_t + b_5 LnHPS_t + U_t$

3.2 Analyses and Interpretation of Results

Table 1: Unit root test

Variables	I(0) critical values	I(1) critical values	Order of Integration
Health Promotion Strategy	-2.334506	-4.003102***	I(1)
Human Development Strategy	-1.783253	-5.064934***	I(1)
Electricity Production Strategy	-0.802722	-5.605831***	I(1)
Employment Generation Strategy	-0.995520	-12.39228***	I(1)
Agricultural Support Strategy	-2.450497	-7.355722***	I(1)
National Poverty Reduction	-5.260572***	-	I(0)
Test critical values:			
1% level	-4.252879	-4.262735	
5% level	-3.548490	-3.552973	
10% level	-3.207094	-3.209642	

Source: Extracted from Eviews9 Output

Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) test statistic in absolute term was compared with the critical values of the test statistic at the 5% level of significance. The test results showed that National Poverty Reduction is Stationary at level, whereas all the variables namely health promotion strategy, human development strategy, electricity production strategy, employment generation strategy and agricultural support strategies are stationary at first difference, I(1).

The heterogeneity in the order of integration of the variables used in the study implies that Johansen co-integration test and vector error correction model are not appropriate test of co-integration and estimation of the coefficients of the variables respectively. Hence, we test for cointegration using the bounds test.

Table 2: Bounds Test for Cointegration

Null Hypothesis: No long-run relationships exist

Test Statistic	Value	K
F-statistic	10.62728	5
Critical Value Bounds		
Significance	I(0) Bound	I(1) Bound
10%	2.26	3.35
5%	2.62	3.79
2.5%	2.96	4.18
1%	3.41	4.68

Source: Extracted from Eviews9.5 Output

Pesaran, Shin and Smith (2001) provided critical values for the cases were all regressors are I(0) and the cases where all regressors are I(1), and suggested using these critical values as bounds for the more typical cases where the regressors are a mixture of I(0) and I(1). F-statistic value (10.62728) at 5% level of significance, serves as a measurement parameter for acceptance or rejection of the critical values at lower I(0) bound level and upper I(1) bound level at the same level of significance. This study rejects the null hypothesis that there is no long run relationship between the dependent and independent variables under study, since the value of the calculated F-statistic is greater than the upper bound critical value, we therefore conclude that a long-run co-integrating relationship exists amongst the variables.

The short run regression estimate of the model is shown in table 3 below:

Table 3: Short-run Regression Result of the Effect of Strategic Planning on Poverty Reduction in Nigeria (1980 -2015)

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
D(LN_HPS)	-1.715686	0.694990	-2.468647**	0.0222
D(LN_HPS(-1))	1.197174	0.510254	2.346230**	0.0289
D(LN_HDS)	-0.139771	0.126411	-1.105682	0.2814
D(LN_EPS)	-0.103998	0.036863	-2.821224**	0.0102
D(LN_EPS(-1))	-0.088886	0.042384	-2.097143**	0.0483
D(LN_EGS)	0.050015	0.027499	1.818776	0.0832
D(LN_ASS)	0.037613	0.019177	1.961376	0.0632
Constant	3.138478	0.118746	26.43018	0.0000
CointEq(-1)	-0.325720	0.098364	-3.311362**	0.0033
R-squared	0.945990			
Adjusted R-squared	0.917698			
S.E. of regression	0.025282			
Sum squared reside	0.013422			
Log likelihood	81.99600			
F-statistic	33.43761**			
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			
Durbin-Watson stat	2.106565			

Source: Extracted from E-views9 Output

The estimated short run equation of the model is given by:

NPR_t = 3.138478 – 1.7157D(LnHPS) – 0.3977D(LnHDS) – 0.1040D(LnEPS) + 0.0500D(LnEGS) + 0.0377D(LnASS) – 0.3257*CointEq

The short run result in Table 3 above shows that Health Promotion strategy is significant and negatively correlated with National Poverty Rate (Poverty Head Count) in the short run with a coefficient of -1.7157. This means that a unit increase in Health Promotion strategy will lead to a decrease in National Poverty rate by 1.7157 units. Similarly, energy production strategy is significant and inversely correlated with National Poverty rate in the short run, with a coefficient of -0.1040, implying that a unit increase in energy production strategy will lead to a reduction in poverty rate by 0.1040 units.

Both employment generation strategies and agricultural support strategies are positive and insignificant in the short run meaning that these two poverty reduction strategies do not meaningfully contribute to reducing poverty in the short run.

The adjusted coefficient of determination of 0.9177 implies that 91.8% of the variations in national poverty rate are explained by the explanatory variables included in our model which shows a very good fit. The joint test of significance has a probability value of 0.0000 implying that all the explanatory variables are significantly contributors to poverty reduction in Nigeria.

The result shows that the cointEq(-1) is negative and significant. The value of the cointEq(-1) estimated at -0.3257 shows the speed of adjustment from the short-run equilibrium to the long run equilibrium. This means that only about 32.6% of the error is corrected in each time period. The Durbin Watson value of 2.1066 indicates the absence of autocorrelation in the error term.

The long run estimates of the model are summarized in the Table 4 below:

Table 4: Long-run Estimate Of Poverty Reduction Model in Nigeria

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
APS	-2.461077	0.934380	-2.633915**	0.0155
HDS	-0.429112	0.328287	-1.307124	0.2053
EPS	-0.178239	0.107223	-1.662311	0.1113
EGS	-0.254727	0.105400	-2.416757**	0.0248
ASS	0.115475	0.086039	1.342129	0.1939
Constant	9.635498	1.989399	4.843422**	0.0001

Source: Extracted from Eviews9 Output.

The long run estimates of Poverty reduction strategies in Nigeria shows that strategic planning for health promotion and employment generation are the only strategic planning variables that significantly influenced poverty reduction in Nigeria within the period under investigation. The coefficient of health promotion strategy (-2.461077) is also negative and statistically significant while the coefficient of employment generation (-0.254727) is also negative and statistically significant. This implies that in the long-run, increased adoption of health promotion strategies and employment generation strategies would serve as the most important instruments for poverty reduction in Nigeria.

In addition, all the strategic planning variables, except agricultural support strategy have negative coefficients. This means that Health promotion, Human development, Energy production and Employment Generation strategies all contribute to poverty reduction in Nigeria, with only two of them being significant.

4. Summary of the Findings

From our study of strategic planning as an approach to poverty reduction in Nigeria, it was revealed that strategic planning has played a major role in poverty reduction in Nigeria. The study shows that for the 35 years period of study (1980-2015), the cumulative performance of Strategic Planning Variables, Health Promotion Strategies, Agricultural Support Strategies, Energy Generation Strategies, Employment Generation Strategies and Human Development Strategies were 3.14%, 1.72%, 0.14%, 0.10%, 0.05% and 0.03% respectively.

The long-run regression shows that the explanatory variables accounted for 91.5% of the variations in poverty reduction. In the long-run, all the explanatory variables included in the model were positively related to poverty reduction (the dependent variable) except Human Development Strategies which is not statistically significant with the dependent variable (poverty reduction). The study observed that population control strategies such as energy generation scheme, employment generation strategies and Agricultural Support Strategies significantly served as an instrument to reduce poverty. Also, the human development strategies in Nigeria have not been improved to significantly influence poverty reduction in Nigeria. This implies that there is evidence of future improvements.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study investigated strategic planning as an approach to poverty reduction in Nigeria over the period 1980-2015. Employing the Gap theory and the empirical work of Aziza (2009), we specified a model which established the relationship between strategic planning and poverty reduction. Using ARDL bounds testing approach, we established a long run relationship between poverty rate, agricultural support strategies, Human development strategies, Energy production strategies and Employment generation strategies. The short run results revealed that Health promotion strategies and Energy production strategies are significant and rightly signed, implying that these two strategic planning variables are significant contributors to poverty reduction in Nigeria.

In the long run, all the strategic planning variables, except Agricultural support strategies, are rightly signed, meaning that they all contribute to poverty reduction in Nigeria. however, only the contributions of Health promotion strategies and Employment generation strategies are significant in reducing poverty in Nigeria.

The study concludes with the following recommendations:

1. Since human development efforts of government, as the study shows contributed to poverty reduction, the contribution was generally insignificant. In addition to acquiring certificates and degrees, we recommend government intervention and strong support in the areas of skill acquisition, on the job training and entrepreneurial development. These are more practical and effective ways of reducing poverty, particularly in the short run.
2. Government should not relent in her Energy generation (Electricity production) efforts. Increased power supply will raise capacity utilization potentials of small scale industries. This in turn leads to more employment and hence poverty reduction. Government should urgently expand power sector infrastructure to boost economic activities across all sectors and hence improve the quality of life of the citizenry.
3. The study also revealed that health promotion strategies are significant determinants of poverty reduction in Nigeria. a reduction in population growth is an effective way of reducing poverty. People born in large families find it difficult to access education, feed well and obtain basic health care. Government and other relevant stakeholders should discourage polygamy, promote birth control measures and discourage large family syndrome (by imposing higher taxation, removal of subsidies and tax reliefs as well as removal of maternity leaves for parents who have more than the required number of children).
4. Finally, Agricultural support strategies did not contribute to poverty reduction, despite the huge credit supply extended to farmers, at subsidized rates. This may be due to the fact that these credit facilities do not reach the "genuine" farmers, rather the credit facilities are hijacked by the "political farmers" (who have no interest in farming) who divert such funds for other uses. Government must devise a means to identify and support genuine and real farmers.

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