

WHO WILL PLAN OUR CITIES? TOWN PLANNING EDUCATION AND THE MANPOWER CRISIS IN THE EASTERN REGION OF NIGERIA

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Abstract
Nigeria's rapid urbanisation is increasing demand for professional planning capacity, yet the sustainability and distribution of the town-planning workforce remain poorly understood. This study examines professional growth, demographic composition and spatial distribution of registered town planners while assessing emerging pressures within the educational pipeline. Data were obtained from the Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria (TOPREC), planning schools and selected institutional records. National registration and induction trends from 2020–2026, professional distribution across nine eastern Nigerian states, and current student cohort sizes in selected planning programmes were analysed using descriptive statistics, compound annual growth rate, chi-square, Cramér's V, Friedman and exact Mann–Whitney tests. The TOPREC register increased from an end-of-2020 stock of approximately 4,963 planners to 6,926 in 2026, representing a compound annual growth rate of 5.71%. Substantial spatial concentration persisted across the nine states. Of 2,175 planners inducted during 2020–2026, 80.1% were male; a pearson chi-square test showed a significant association between induction year and sex, and sex composition varied significantly across the years, $\chi^2(6) = 18.26$, $p = 0.006$, although the association was small (Cramér's $V = 0.092$). Differences in current university cohort sizes across academic levels were not statistically significant, $\chi^2(4) = 6.89$, $p = 0.142$. An exploratory Geography-admission comparison across only six active university programmes (two Geography-flexible and four Geography-compulsory) showed complete descriptive rank separation in mean cohort size, but the inferential test was not statistically significant ($U = 8$, $p = 0.133$); causal attribution to Geography is therefore not supported. The findings suggest that Nigeria's planning manpower challenge extends beyond professional numbers to encompass educational-pipeline sustainability, spatial inequality, gender imbalance and competition from increasingly attractive professional programmes. The study recommends integrated workforce monitoring, evidence-based review of admission pathways, stronger professional repositioning and closer linkage between planning education and professional registration.

Keywords: Planning education; Professional manpower; Planning workforce; Professional capacity; Town Planning Profession; Town planning workforce.

1.0 Introduction.

Nigeria's contemporary urban transition is driving a growing demand for professional capacity in spatial planning, development control, infrastructure coordination, environmental management, and urban resilience. The challenge is not simply that Nigerian cities are growing, but that the speed and complexity of that growth increasingly exceed the institutional and technical capacities available to manage it. UN-Habitat (2025) reports an urban population growth rate of about 4.7% annually in Nigeria and identifies deficits in housing, land administration, basic services and urban management as major features of the country's urban transformation. These pressures are evident in the eastern part of the country, where expanding urban systems such as Port Harcourt, Enugu, Owerri, Abakaliki, Onitsha, Aba, Umuahia, Awka, Uyo, Calabar and Yenagoa confront flooding, informal development, infrastructure deficits, environmental degradation and weak



development control. Evidence from Port Harcourt shows that weaknesses in urban planning and infrastructure governance materially shape exposure to flooding and the capacity to respond to environmental risk (Echendu, 2021). In this context, the numerical strength and spatial distribution of professionally registered town planners constitute a key dimension of planning capacity.

Professional planning in Nigeria is regulated by the Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria (TOPREC), which maintains the official register of qualified town planners, accredits planning programmes and regulates professional standards and practice (TOPREC, 2026). The register represents a measurable stock of certified professional human capital available to institutions shaping settlements. Administrative data assembled for this study indicate that the national TOPREC register reached 6,926 town planners at the end of 2026. Across 2020–2026, 2,175 planners were newly inducted, with annual additions of 212, 296, 417, 288, 346, 297 and 319 respectively. The reconstructed series uses an end-of-year convention: the approximately 4,963 planners reported for 2020 already include the 212 inducted during 2020, while the 2021–2026 inductions total 1,963 and increase the register from 4,963 to 6,926. This corresponds to an estimated compound annual growth rate of about 5.7%. Although the cumulative register shows sustained expansion, its adequacy and geographical balance, and the distinction between registered stock and active practice, require separate consideration.

Existing studies reveal weaknesses at both the educational and professional stages of this pipeline. Osiyi and Jiburum (2023), in a survey of 550 Urban and Regional Planning students across nine Nigerian universities, found that only 46% had originally applied to study planning, while limited awareness of the discipline constrained career choice. More recently, Eze and Chukwunweme (2025) reported generally poor enrolment in Urban and Regional Planning programmes in Enugu State and found that the requirement for Geography as a compulsory admission subject was the most highly rated factor affecting enrolment, with 88% of respondents in agreement. This concern is significant because the revised senior secondary curriculum identifies English Language, General Mathematics, a Trade subject, Citizenship and Heritage Studies, and Digital Technologies as the five core and compulsory subjects, while Geography is located within the Science field rather than the compulsory core; it is further aggravated by being an elective for science students (NERDC, 2025). Yet the JAMB Integrated Brochure and Syllabus System continues to specify Geography within the general O'Level and UTME requirements for Urban and Regional Planning, without institution-specific waivers (JAMB, 2024). This creates a potential curriculum–admission mismatch: many pupils may complete senior secondary school without Geography, while access to a programme that supplies Nigeria's planning workforce may still depend on it.

The study is conceptually situated within a workforce-planning perspective, which treats professional capacity as a relationship between the supply of appropriately educated and certified personnel and the present and future demand for their skills. Contemporary skills-planning scholarship cautions that workforce adequacy cannot be reduced to aggregate headcounts; it must also consider how education systems,



labour-market structures, institutions and spatial inequalities shape the production and deployment of specialised skills (Powell, 2021). Applied to town planning, this perspective suggests that growth in the TOPREC register should be understood as the outcome of a pipeline beginning with exposure to secondary-school subjects, proceeding through admission and accredited planning education, and culminating in professional registration and geographical deployment. National growth does not automatically translate into adequate capacity in individual states. Research on Nigerian planning consultancy further indicates that professional development is mediated by regulatory conditions, employment opportunities and the strength of the planning market (Dagogo & Akue, 2023).

Despite these contributions, an important empirical gap remains. Nigerian scholarship has examined students' choice of planning education, enrolment constraints, professional practice and urban-management challenges, but far less attention has been given to the temporal growth and subnational distribution of the registered planning workforce, particularly across states in eastern Nigeria. Existing enrolment studies do not demonstrate how educational constraints may translate into the future stock of registered planners, while studies of professional practice rarely quantify the pace at which the profession is expanding relative to its state-level base. National register growth may therefore conceal substantial territorial disparities. In 2020, the nine states examined in this study—Abia, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bayelsa, Cross River, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo and Rivers—accounted for 562 registered town planners in the state-level data, but their individual stocks varied markedly, from 27 in Ebonyi and 31 in Bayelsa to 98 in Enugu. Without analysing these baselines against national growth trends, it is difficult to judge whether the regional workforce is expanding commensurately with planning demand.

Accordingly, the study examines the growth, composition and spatial distribution of the registered town-planning workforce and relates these patterns to selected indicators of the educational supply pipeline in eastern Nigeria. The study is guided by the following objectives:

i. to examine the growth of the national TOPREC register and the annual inflow of newly inducted town planners between 2020 and 2026.

ii. to assess the sex composition of new professional entrants and the spatial distribution of registered town planners across the nine selected eastern Nigerian states.

iii. to describe current university and polytechnic planning cohorts and to explore, within the participating university programmes, whether cohort patterns differ between Geography-compulsory and Geography-flexible admission configurations.

iv. to interpret the implications of professional inflow, educational access, institutional variation and changing programme preferences for the sustainability of the planning-workforce pipeline.

The study's significance lies in linking professional registration, planning-education access and regional workforce capacity within a single stock-and-flow perspective. It evaluates whether professional supply is expanding and how that stock is distributed, while identifying educational conditions that may warrant closer policy attention. Because the institutional enrolment component is based on a small,



purposive set of participating schools, the Geography comparison is treated as exploratory and association-based rather than as evidence that a particular admission rule causes low enrolment. The findings are relevant to TOPREC, the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP), JAMB, universities, curriculum authorities and state planning institutions in reconsidering workforce monitoring, admission pathways and the availability of planning expertise.

2.0 Literature Review

Planning Education, Geography and the Professional Supply Pipeline

The implications of this potential mismatch extend beyond immediate university enrolment because professional registration represents the final stage of a longer educational progression. Where fewer secondary-school students offer Geography, the pool of candidates satisfying traditional planning admission requirements may become smaller; where eligibility narrows, enrolment may also be affected; and sustained lower enrolment could reduce the future pool of graduates available for professional qualification. The effect is therefore potentially cumulative rather than instantaneous, but the strength of each link depends on institutional admissions practices, applicant preferences, programme capacity and student progression. This is especially important in a planning profession required to respond to rapidly increasing urban and environmental challenges. Eze and Chukwunweme's (2025) evidence consequently raises a policy question about whether existing admission requirements remain appropriate in light of the changing structure of Nigeria's secondary-school curriculum; it does not, by itself, establish the size of any subsequent effect on enrolment or professional registration.

A further pressure on the planning-education pipeline arises from competition among professional programmes. Health occupations have acquired heightened visibility because their qualifications are tightly linked to licensed practice and increasingly to international labour mobility. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2024) notes that international migration and mobility of health workers have increased in scale and complexity, while Nigeria has itself adopted a national policy response to health-workforce migration. At the educational level, the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria (NMCN, 2025) records a dense and expanding network of approved nursing and midwifery institutions. For planning education, the significance is competitive rather than merely demographic: potential university entrants are choosing among professional pathways with different perceived labour-market returns, visibility and mobility. Accordingly, low enrolment in Urban and Regional Planning may reflect not only weak awareness or restrictive subject requirements, but also intensifying competition from professional programmes that applicants perceive to offer clearer occupational identities and wider employment pathways.

However, expanding access to planning education should not be interpreted as a justification for weakening academic or professional standards. Wahab and Agbola (2017) argue that planning education in Nigeria must remain responsive to contemporary urban realities, particularly the pervasive conditions of informality, illegality and institutional complexity that characterise many Nigerian settlements. Their argument points to the need to produce critically reflective planners who can engage with changing socio-spatial conditions,



rather than merely increasing student numbers. Similarly, Ogunkan (2025) identifies growing diversification in Nigerian planning scholarship across housing, transportation, environmental management, governance, land-use planning and emerging technological fields. These developments show that future planners require increasingly sophisticated and interdisciplinary competencies. The central policy challenge is therefore to widen access to planning education while preserving the knowledge and professional competencies necessary for effective contemporary planning practice.

University capacity also affects the conversion of eligible applicants into competent planning graduates. The National Universities Commission's assessments demonstrate that planning programmes may face challenges related to staffing, funding, library resources, studios, laboratories, and curriculum implementation, even when they retain accreditation. For instance, the NUC (2024) assessment of Urban and Regional Planning at Obafemi Awolowo University identified areas requiring improvement in staffing composition, funding and learning resources. Such findings demonstrate that the professional supply pipeline is not determined by admission alone. It comprises an interconnected sequence of secondary-school preparation, university eligibility, admission, institutional capacity, curriculum quality, graduation, professional training and eventual registration. Any weakness at one stage may affect the volume and quality of future professional supply.

Spatial Distribution, Workforce Adequacy and the Research Gap

The geographical distribution of registered planners is as important as the overall size of the national register because planning services are fundamentally place-based. Land-use regulation, development control, preparation of physical plans, infrastructure coordination and environmental management occur within identifiable state and local jurisdictions. A national increase in professional registration may therefore coexist with local shortages if planners remain disproportionately concentrated in particular metropolitan areas, states or institutional centres. This distinction is especially relevant in Nigeria where the intensity of urbanisation and planning challenges varies considerably across regions. An adequate national register does not automatically guarantee that there are sufficient professionals available in each state to meet local planning responsibilities.

Available evidence suggests that the selected states in eastern Nigeria possess markedly different professional planning bases. The state-level figures assembled for this study indicate that, in 2020, Enugu had 98 registered planners, Imo 83, Anambra 76, Rivers 76, Abia 72, Akwa Ibom 67, Cross River 32, Bayelsa 31 and Ebonyi 27. Collectively, the nine states accounted for 562 planners. The difference between Enugu and Ebonyi, for example, represents more than a threefold variation in registered professional stock. Such disparities may reflect differences in the location of planning schools, state institutional structures, labour-market opportunities, urban populations, professional migration, or the historical development of the planning profession. However, because comparable annual state-level register data are not consistently available for the entire 2020–2026 period, the precise growth trajectory within each state is difficult to establish.



This empirical limitation exposes a significant gap in the existing literature. Nigerian planning scholarship has examined professional practice, planning education, student enrolment, public participation, gender representation and specialist planning knowledge, but comparatively little attention has been devoted to the temporal and geographical growth of the registered planning workforce. Echendu (2021, 2023) focuses largely on planning effectiveness and institutional implementation; Dagogo and Akue (2023) examine professional consultancy; Osiyi and Jiburum (2023) investigate students' entry into planning programmes; Eze and Chukwunweme (2025) analyse barriers to enrolment; and Ogunkan (2025) considers academic specialisation. These studies provide important insights into different parts of the professional system, yet they do not integrate educational access, annual professional inflow, register growth and state-level distribution within a single analytical framework.

The gap is particularly significant because educational constraints may have delayed rather than immediate effects on professional registration. A reduction in the number of secondary-school students eligible for Urban and Regional Planning will not immediately reduce the TOPREC register, because several years separate secondary-school completion, university education, graduation, and professional registration. Consequently, current register growth may partly reflect educational decisions made several years earlier, while present changes in secondary-school subject structures may influence the profession only in subsequent registration cycles. This temporal relationship means that professional workforce analysis should consider not only existing registration trends but also the sustainability of the educational pipeline producing future entrants. The present study addresses this gap by linking current professional stock with historical registration patterns, educational access and potential future workforce implications.

Human Capital and Workforce Planning Perspectives

This study is anchored in an integrated application of Human Capital Theory and the skills supply–demand perspective of workforce planning. Human Capital Theory provides a useful basis for understanding how education, training and professional development contribute to the creation of specialised occupational capacity. Contemporary applications of the theory conceptualise education and skills acquisition as investments through which individuals develop productive knowledge and competencies that enhance their capacity to participate in specialised labour markets (Suleman, 2021). In the context of town planning, secondary-school preparation, university education, professional training, and TOPREC registration can be interpreted as successive stages of human capital formation. The theory therefore explains why restrictions on access to education can ultimately affect the supply of professionals.

Applied to the present study, Human Capital Theory suggests that the professional register is not generated independently of the educational system but represents the accumulated outcome of earlier investments in education and training. Students who gain access to Urban and Regional Planning programmes acquire technical, analytical, environmental, spatial and institutional competencies that form the professional knowledge base required for subsequent practice.



Conversely, students who are excluded at the admission stage cannot proceed through this specialised human-capital formation process. The requirement for Geography therefore becomes theoretically relevant because it can function as a gatekeeping variable within the professional production system. Were subject availability limits eligibility, the potential stock of future professional human capital may also be reduced.

Human Capital Theory alone, however, is insufficient to explain the adequacy of the professional workforce, as the presence of qualified individuals does not necessarily mean their skills are appropriately distributed or utilised. Suleman (2021) demonstrates that graduate outcomes are shaped not only by individual competencies but also by labour-market and institutional conditions. Powell (2021) similarly challenges narrow approaches that assume that the expansion of education automatically produces developmental outcomes, emphasising the need to consider the structures through which skills are generated, distributed, and used. In the Nigerian planning context, increasing the number of graduates will not necessarily strengthen planning capacity if professionals are geographically concentrated, underemployed, excluded from planning institutions, or unable to exercise their professional responsibilities effectively. For this reason, the human-capital perspective is complemented by workforce planning.

The skills supply–demand approach conceptualises workforce adequacy as the relationship between the quantity and characteristics of available professional skills and the societal demand for those skills. Powell, Reddy and Juan (2016) argue that effective skills planning requires systematic consideration of both supply and demand rather than concentrating exclusively on training output. In town planning, professional demand is driven by urbanisation, housing development, infrastructure expansion, environmental degradation, development control, climate adaptation, and regional planning responsibilities. Professional supply is generated through secondary-school preparation, university admission, accredited planning education, graduation, professional qualification and TOPREC registration. The central theoretical question is therefore not merely whether the number of registered planners is increasing, but whether that growth is sufficiently rapid and geographically appropriate relative to the expansion of planning responsibilities.

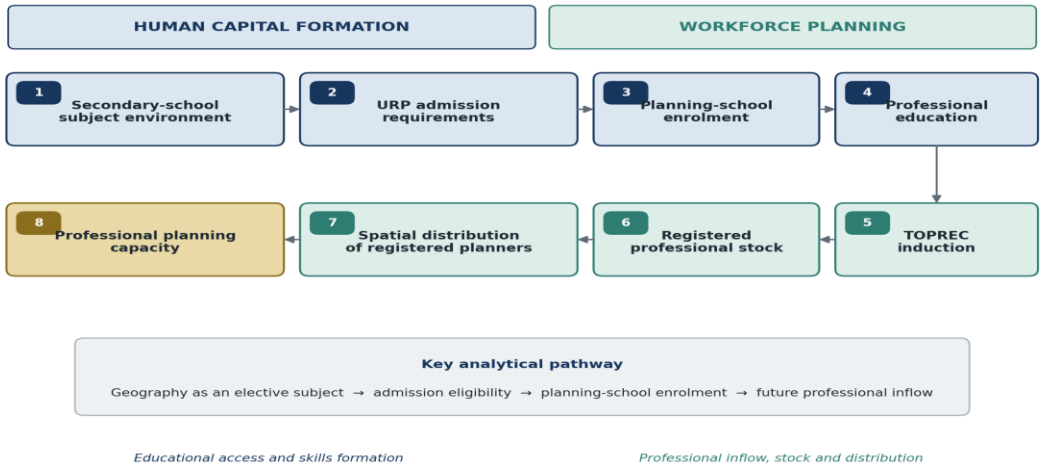
A stock-and-flow interpretation further strengthens the framework. Workforce systems can be understood in terms of an existing professional stock, inflows that increase that stock and outflows that reduce it. Peck (2025) identifies recruitment, training, retention, retirement and attrition as important components of workforce-planning analysis. Within the present study, the TOPREC register represents the accumulated professional stock, while annual inductions represent a major measurable inflow. Retirement, death, migration and occupational exit represent potential outflows, although comprehensive data on these processes are presently unavailable. This limitation means that cumulative registration should be interpreted as an indicator of professional stock rather than a precise measure of the number of actively practising planners.

The integration of Human Capital Theory and workforce planning therefore permits the study to conceptualise the profession as a continuous

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educational and occupational pipeline rather than a static register. The process begins with secondary-school subject availability and career awareness, proceeds through university eligibility and professional education, and culminates in registration and geographical deployment. The framework also recognises that this progression is influenced by intervening factors including university capacity, gender participation, professional awareness, employment opportunities, migration, retirement, institutional demand and the regulatory environment. Consequently, the theoretical expectation of the study is that constraints occurring at the early stages of the educational pipeline can progressively influence future professional inflows, while unequal geographical deployment can produce regional workforce disparities even where the national register continues to grow. The framework thus provides the analytical basis for examining whether the observed growth and distribution of registered town planners are consistent with the expanding professional requirements created by Nigeria's urban transformation.

Figure 1: Integrated Human Capital–Workforce Planning Framework



Source: Authors' conceptualisation based on Human Capital Theory and workforce-planning perspectives.

Table 1: Analytical Application of the Theoretical Framework

Theoretical concept	Application to the study	Indicative measure
Human-capital formation	Development of specialised planning knowledge and competencies	Planning education and qualification
Educational access	Entry into the professional training pipeline	Subject availability and admission requirements
Professional inflow	New entrants into the profession	Annual TOPREC inductions
Professional stock	Accumulated formally registered planners	TOPREC register
Spatial distribution	Geographical allocation of professional capacity	Registered planners by state
Workforce growth	Change in professional stock over time	Annual growth rate



Theoretical concept	Application to the study	Indicative measure
Professional demand	Need for planning expertise	Urbanisation and planning responsibilities

3.0 Methodology

Research Design and Data Sources

The study adopted a quantitative, retrospective, longitudinal, and cross-sectional design to examine the growth, spatial distribution, and educational supply pipeline of the town planning profession in Nigeria. The longitudinal component examined changes in the national professional register and annual induction of town planners between 2020 and 2026, while the cross-sectional component examined the distribution of registered planners across selected eastern Nigerian states and differences in enrolment between planning schools with different Geography admission requirements. This design aligns the analysis with the study's central concern: the relationship among the existing professional stock, the inflow of newly registered planners, and the educational system that produces future professional entrants.

Two administrative datasets formed the empirical basis of the study. The first was obtained directly from the Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria (TOPREC) and comprised the national register of town planners, annual induction records for 2020–2026, sex-disaggregated induction figures and the 2020 state distribution of registered planners. The national register contained 6,926 registered town planners in 2026. Annual inductions were 212 in 2020, 296 in 2021, 417 in 2022, 288 in 2023, 346 in 2024, 297 in 2025 and 319 in 2026.

For the reconstructed register series, all stock figures are defined as end-of-year registered stock. The 2020 value of approximately 4,963 therefore represents the register after the 2020 induction of 212 planners; it is not a pre-induction opening balance. The 2021 stock of 5,259 is likewise an end-of-2021 figure, obtained by adding the 296 planners inducted in 2021 to the end-of-2020 stock. Consistently, the inductions from 2021 through 2026 total 1,963, and 4,963 + 1,963 = 6,926. Comprehensive annual data on retirement, death, migration, occupational exit or deregistration were not available; consequently, the reconstructed series is interpreted as cumulative registered stock under the administrative register convention, not as a measured net balance of the actively practising workforce.

The second dataset comprised student-enrolment records obtained directly from selected planning schools in eastern Nigeria. For the university programmes, the available records reported the number of students currently enrolled at each academic level (100–500 level). Because Urban and Regional Planning is structured as a five-year programme in the universities examined, academic level was used as a retrospective proxy for approximately five successive admission cohorts: 500 level represents the oldest observed cohort and 100 level the most recent. The figures are current cohort sizes rather than original admission-register counts and may therefore incorporate attrition, repetition, transfers or temporary interruption of study. Polytechnic records were analysed separately because ND and HND are distinct qualification streams and are not directly comparable with the five-year university progression structure.



The institutional component adopted a disproportionate stratified random sampling technique. The sampling frame comprised 23 institutions offering Urban and Regional Planning programmes within the Eastern Region covered by the study, consisting of 15 universities and eight polytechnics. The universities were Imo State University (IMSU), Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO), Abia State University (ABSU), Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU), Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UNIZIK), Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), Caritas University, Ebonyi State University (EBSU), Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike (FUNAI), University of Calabar (UNICAL), University of Cross River State (UNICROSS), University of Uyo (UNIUYO), Rivers State University (RSU) and Niger Delta University (NDU). The polytechnics comprised Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Abia State Polytechnic, Federal Polytechnic Oko, Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic Uwana, Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic and Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic, Bori.

The institutions were first stratified into universities and polytechnics to ensure that the two principal institutional pathways through which planning manpower is produced were represented in the study. Within each stratum, each eligible institution was assigned a unique identification number, after which a computer-generated random-number procedure was used to select the participating institutions without replacement. This procedure was adopted to minimise investigator selection bias and to give every eligible institution within each stratum a known opportunity of selection. Eight universities were selected from the 15 eligible universities, while three polytechnics were selected from the eight eligible polytechnics, producing a total institutional sample of 11 out of 23 planning schools, equivalent to 47.8% of the identified population. A disproportionate allocation was adopted because the university component was required to support the study's analysis of five-year cohort structures and differences in Geography admission requirements, while the polytechnic component was analysed separately because the ND and HND systems constitute distinct educational streams.

The universities selected were IMSU, FUTO, COOU, ABSU, RSU, UNN, FUNAI and EBSU, while the selected polytechnics were Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Federal Polytechnic Oko and Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic Uwana. Following selection, programme-level administrative records were obtained from the sampled institutions. FUNAI and EBSU reported nil current enrolment and were retained in the descriptive analysis because they formed part of the probability-selected sample. Consequently, six universities had active cohort structures available for the inferential analyses.

Although the probability-sampling procedure strengthens the basis for institutional selection and reduces the likelihood of investigator selection bias, the inferential analysis remains subject to an important limitation. In particular, the comparison of Geography admission requirements is based on only six active university programmes two Geography-flexible and four Geography-compulsory programmes. The Geography analysis is therefore treated as



exploratory rather than definitive, and the observed differences are interpreted as associations rather than evidence that Geography requirements independently cause variations in student enrolment.

For the regional component, the study examined Imo, Anambra, Abia, Enugu, Ebonyi, Rivers, Bayelsa, Cross River and Akwa Ibom States. TOPREC's 2020 register included 83 planners in Imo, 72 in Abia, 76 in Anambra, 98 in Enugu, 27 in Ebonyi, 76 in Rivers, 31 in Bayelsa, 32 in Cross River and 67 in Akwa Ibom, giving a combined total of 562 registered planners across nine states.

Three sets of variables were analysed. The first measured professional growth through the cumulative TOPREC register, annual professional inflow and sex composition of inductees. The second measured spatial distribution through state-level professional stock and percentage share. The third measured the educational supply pipeline. For universities, the principal outcome was current cohort size at the 500, 400, 300, 200 and 100 levels, ordered from older to more recent cohorts. Institutions were classified according to whether Geography remained an absolute admission requirement or whether alternative relevant subjects were accepted. FUNAI and EBSU, for which nil current enrolment was reported, were retained descriptively but excluded from the geography-group comparison because no active cohort structure was available. The polytechnic analysis used ND I, ND II, HND I and HND II count as separate descriptive streams.

The study was guided by four null hypotheses. H_{01} states that there is no statistically significant difference in current university cohort sizes across the five academic levels. H_{02} posits that the mean cohort size does not differ significantly between Geography-compulsory and Geography-flexible university planning programmes. H_{03} states that the direction of cohort change does not differ significantly between Geography-compulsory and Geography-flexible university planning programmes. Finally, H_{04} posits that the sex composition of newly inducted town planners does not vary significantly between 2020 and 2026.

Analysis proceeded in four stages. First, the national TOPREC register and annual induction series were analysed using frequencies, percentages and annual growth rates. Second, the 2020 state-level register was analysed using absolute frequencies, percentage shares and rankings. Third, university planning-school data were analysed as ordered cohort profiles. School totals, mean cohort size, level-specific totals and linear cohort slopes were calculated. A Friedman test was used to assess whether cohort sizes differed systematically across the five academic levels, with university as the blocking factor, and Kendall's W was reported as an effect-size measure. The Geography comparison was conducted at school level using an exact Mann–Whitney U test on mean cohort size; a parallel exact Mann–Whitney comparison of school-specific cohort slopes was used only as an exploratory assessment of direction of change. These comparisons involved only six active university programmes: two Geography-flexible and four Geography-compulsory. Exact p-values and effect sizes are reported, but the tests are treated as exploratory and hypothesis-generating rather than as a basis for causal or region-wide inference. Fourth, polytechnic ND and HND cohort counts were examined descriptively.



Three focused inferential tests were undertaken. First, the Friedman test assessed whether current cohort size differed across 500–100 level among the six active university programmes; statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha = 0.05$ and Kendall's W quantified the magnitude of the within-school level effect. Second, the exact Mann–Whitney U test compared school-level mean cohort sizes of Geography-flexible and Geography-compulsory programmes, with rank-biserial correlation reported as an effect size; a parallel exploratory test compared linear cohort slopes. Given the extremely small and unbalanced institutional groups (n = 2 flexible; n = 4 compulsory), non-significant p-values are not overridden by large descriptive effect sizes, and the results are interpreted cautiously. Third, a chi-square test of independence and Cramér's V assessed whether the sex composition of TOPREC inductees varied across 2020–2026. The educational tests identify sample-specific associations and cohort structures; they do not establish that admission rules caused enrolment outcomes.

Data preparation involved standardising institutional and state names, checking records for duplicate entries and verifying the internal consistency of annual TOPREC induction totals against their male and female components. Institutional enrolment and admission-requirement records were checked for consistency before classification and analysis. All calculations were based on the verified administrative records, and derived measures, such as percentages and growth rates, were retained separately from the original values. The study analysed administrative information at national, state, institutional and annual aggregate levels. No personally identifiable information relating to individual students or registered town planners was required for the analysis. TOPREC and planning-school records were used solely for scholarly analysis, and results were reported in aggregate form.

A further methodological limitation concerns the Geography-group comparison. Although the institutional sample was selected through a disproportionate stratified random sampling procedure from the identified population of planning schools in the study area, only six sampled universities had active cohort structures suitable for the Geography analysis. The relatively small number of active programmes, together with the absence of statistical controls for institutional reputation, location, programme capacity, staffing, admission practices, programme visibility and other demand-side factors, limits the statistical power and precision of the comparison. Nevertheless, the complete rank separation observed between the Geography-flexible and Geography-compulsory programmes, together with the large rank-biserial effect size, constitutes a substantively important empirical pattern. The exact Mann–Whitney p-value is used to determine whether this observed difference reaches the specified level of statistical significance. Accordingly, the findings are interpreted as evidence of an association between admission configuration and enrolment patterns rather than as proof that Geography requirements independently cause differences in enrolment. Generalisation is therefore made cautiously within the identified institutional population, particularly for the Geography comparison.

4.0 Result and Discussion

The results are presented in the sequence of the study's analytical framework: national professional growth, gender composition of

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professional inflow, spatial distribution of registered planners, planning-school enrolment in relation to Geography admission requirements, and the wider educational-choice environment within eastern Nigeria. The central argument is that the manpower problem is not reducible to the absolute number of registered planners. It is produced through the interaction of professional replenishment, geographical distribution, admission rules and changing applicant preferences.

Growth of the Registered Town Planning Profession, 2020–2026

TOPREC records show a sustained but uneven expansion of the registered town planning profession. Applying the end-of-year convention specified in the Methodology, the reconstructed cumulative series begins with approximately 4,963 registered planners at the end of 2020, a figure that already includes the 212 planners inducted during 2020. The subsequent 2021–2026 inductions total 1,963 and bring the end-of-2026 register to 6,926. The end-of-year register therefore increased by 1,963 planners, or 39.6%, over the six-year interval from end-2020 to end-2026; the full 2020–2026 induction total of 2,175 is not added to the 2020 stock because doing so would double-count the 2020 induction.

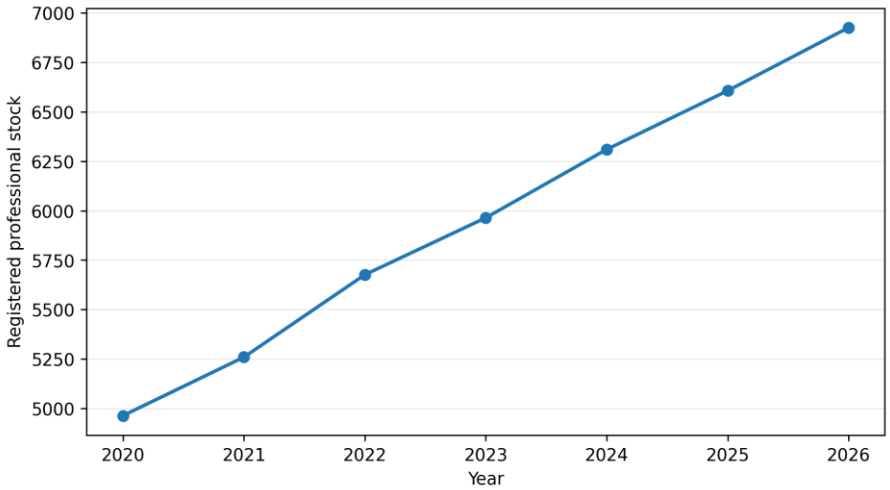


Figure 2: Growth of the Registered Town Planning Profession, 2020–2026

The compound annual growth rate of end-year registered stock was 5.71%. The strongest annual expansion occurred in 2022 (7.93%), after which growth moderated to 5.07% in 2023, 5.80% in 2024, 4.71% in 2025 and 4.83% in 2026. The registered profession is therefore expanding, but the proportional rate of growth has not accelerated with the increasing size of the register. Peck (2025) treats workforce development as a stock-and-flow process in which capacity depends on continuing inflows and outflows, while Powell (2021) cautions against equating aggregate headcounts with workforce adequacy. Because annual outflow and active-practice data are unavailable here, the TOPREC series demonstrates growth in cumulative registration rather than growth in the number of currently practising planners.

The finding gives quantitative support to Dagogo and Akue's (2023) observation that Nigerian

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planning practice is expanding despite institutional and market constraints. However, a 5.71% professional-register CAGR must be read against the scale of urban change. UN-Habitat (2025) places Nigeria's annual urban population growth at about 4.7%. These indicators are not directly interchangeable, but their proximity is analytically important: professional growth only marginally exceeds the pace of urban population growth and may therefore have limited capacity to correct pre-existing planning deficits while simultaneously responding to additional demands for development control, infrastructure coordination, climate adaptation and urban management.

Gender Composition of Professional Inflow

The 2,175 planners inducted between 2020 and 2026 were strongly male dominated. Males constituted 1,742 entrants (80.09%), compared with 433 females (19.91%), producing an approximate male-to-female ratio of four to one.

Table 2: Gender Composition of Newly Inducted Town Planners, 2020–2026

Year\	Total	Male	Male (%)	Female	Female (%)
2020	212	174	82.08	38	17.92
2021	296	222	75.00	74	25.00
2022	417	335	80.34	82	19.66
2023	288	234	81.25	54	18.75
2024	346	283	81.79	63	18.21
2025	297	221	74.41	76	25.59
2026	319	273	85.58	46	14.42
Total	2,175	1,742	80.09	433	19.91

Source: Authors' analysis of TOPREC administrative records.

Test	Statistic	df	p-value	Effect size	Interpretation
Pearson Chi-square	$\chi^2 = 18.26$	6	0.006	Cramér's V = 0.092	Significant association; small effect

Decision: Reject H_0 at $p < 0.05$.

The sex-disaggregated data reveal a persistent male dominance in professional entry. Of the 2,175 planners inducted between 2020 and 2026, 1,742 (80.1%) were male and 433 (19.9%) were female, representing an approximate male-to-female ratio of 4:1. Female representation nevertheless varied across the period, increasing from 17.9% in 2020 to 25.0% in 2021 and reaching 25.6% in 2025 before declining sharply to 14.4% in 2026. The Pearson chi-square test indicates that this variation is statistically significant, $\chi^2(6) = 18.26$, $p = 0.006$. Thus, the null hypothesis of independence between induction year and sex is rejected. However, the associated Cramér's V of 0.092 indicates a small effect, suggesting that although the distribution of male and female entrants differs significantly across years, the magnitude of this temporal association is limited. The statistical significance should therefore not be interpreted as evidence of a substantial transformation in the gender structure of professional entry. Rather, the dominant pattern remains one of persistent male representation with intermittent improvements in female participation.

This finding is consistent with Jiyah, Olufemi and Adeleye (2023), who identified continuing gender disparities within Nigerian Urban and

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Regional Planning. The present evidence extends that observation by demonstrating that gender imbalance is reproduced among recent professional entrants, rather than being solely a legacy characteristic of the existing professional stock. From a human-capital perspective, the result is significant because a profession that draws disproportionately from one segment of the potential graduate population may not be fully utilising the available pool of professional talent (Suleman, 2021). Nevertheless, the relatively small effect size indicates that the year-to-year fluctuations should not be overstated; the more important finding is the persistent structural imbalance, rather than the relatively modest temporal variation around that pattern.

Spatial Distribution of Registered Town Planners in the Nine Eastern States

The 2020 TOPREC state register recorded 562 planners across Abia, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bayelsa, Cross River, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo and Rivers. The distribution was markedly uneven.

Table 3: Distribution of Registered Town Planners across the Nine Selected States, 2020

Rank	State	Registered planners	Share (%)
1	Enugu	98	17.44
2	Imo	83	14.77
3	Anambra	76	13.52
3	Rivers	76	13.52
5	Abia	72	12.81
6	Akwa Ibom	67	11.92
7	Cross River	32	5.69
8	Bayelsa	31	5.52
9	Ebonyi	27	4.80
	Total	562	100.00

Source: Authors analysis of TOPREC 2020 state-level register.

Enugu had the largest share (17.44%), followed by Imo (14.77%), while Anambra and Rivers each accounted for 13.52%. By contrast, Cross River, Bayelsa and Ebonyi together contained only 16.01% of the nine-state professional stock. The four leading states—Enugu, Imo, Anambra and Rivers—accounted for 59.25% of the total. Enugu's stock was about 3.6 times that of Ebonyi. The result therefore demonstrates a substantial territorial concentration of registered planning capacity.

This finding extends Ogunkan's (2025) evidence of geographical differentiation in Nigerian planning expertise from academic specialisation to the professional register itself. The unevenness matters because planning functions are territorially exercised. Development control, land-use regulation, physical-plan preparation and environmental management cannot be supplied abstractly at national level; they require professional presence within state and local institutions. The result is also consistent with Echendu's (2021, 2023) demonstration that planning effectiveness in Rivers State depends on local institutional and professional capacity. National register growth can therefore coexist with significant subnational shortages.

Planning-School Enrolment and Geography as an Admission Gate

The institutional data provide a direct view of the educational pipeline feeding the planning profession. Importantly, the figures supplied by the schools are current student counts by academic level rather than original admission-register counts. They are therefore interpreted as



reconstructed cohort sizes. In a five-year university programme, 500 level approximates the oldest cohort presently retained in the system and 100 level the most recent, but differences between levels may also reflect attrition, repetition, transfers and interruptions. This distinction is necessary to avoid presenting current level counts as exact historical admissions.

Table 4: Current Cohort Sizes in Selected Universities in the Eastern Region for Urban and Regional Planning Programmes

Institution	Geography status	500L	400L	300L	200L	100L	Total	Mean
IMSU	Compulsory	2	12	8	11	20	53	10.6
FUTO	Flexible	29	25	23	51	59	187	37.4
COOU	Compulsory	1	9	3	4	5	22	4.4
ABSU	Compulsory	3	3	1	0	2	9	1.8
RSU	Compulsory	10	25	22	11	5	73	14.6
UNN	Flexible	9	22	18	35	27	111	22.2
FUNAI	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
EBSU	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Total	—	54	96	75	112	118	455	—

Source: Authors' tabulation of planning-school administrative records. Geography status follows the admission configuration compiled for the study. Nil means no currently enrolled students were reported. Current level counts are used as cohort proxies, not exact historical admission counts.

Across the eight university programmes, 455 students were recorded. FUTO alone accounted for 187 students (41.1%), followed by UNN with 111 (24.4%), RSU with 73 (16.0%) and IMSU with 53 (11.6%). COOU recorded 22 students and ABSU only nine, while FUNAI and EBSU reported nil current enrolment. The distribution therefore shows that the university planning pipeline is not merely small; it is highly concentrated in a few institutions. The six active programmes together contained 54 students at 500 level, 96 at 400 level, 75 at 300 level, 112 at 200 level and 118 at 100 level. Although the combined 100-level cohort was more than twice the 500-level cohort, the pattern was far from uniform across schools.

Table 5. Current Cohort Size by Academic Level across Selected Universities

University	100 Level	200 Level	300 Level	400 Level	500 Level	Total Students
IMSU	20	11	8	12	2	53
FUTO	59	51	23	25	29	187
COOU	5	4	3	9	1	22
ABSU	2	0	1	3	3	9
RSU	5	11	22	25	10	73
UNN	27	35	18	22	9	111
Total	118	112	75	96	54	455
Mean	19.67	18.67	12.50	16.00	9.00	—

Source: Authors' analysis of institutional enrolment records.

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Table 7: Friedman test results

Academic level	Mean rank
100 Level	3.50
200 Level	3.00
300 Level	2.00
400 Level	3.00
500 Level	1.50

Statistical test	Value
Friedman χ^2	6.89
Degrees of freedom	4
p-value	0.142
Kendall's W	0.287
Decision at $\alpha = 0.05$	Do not reject H_0

The Friedman test indicates that the five level-specific distributions do not differ statistically significantly across the six active universities, $\chi^2(4) = 6.89$, $p = 0.142$, with Kendall's $W = 0.287$, indicating a modest degree of concordance in the ranking of cohort sizes. H_{01} is therefore not rejected at $\alpha = 0.05$. This does not mean that cohort sizes are identical across levels; rather, the observed differences are not sufficiently consistent across these six institutions to establish a statistically significant common pattern. The larger aggregate size of some lower-level cohorts is driven principally by institution-specific trajectories, particularly at FUTO, and should not be generalised as a uniform enrolment increase across planning schools in the Eastern Region.

Descriptive evidence. Within the six active university programmes, the two programmes classified as Geography-flexible, FUTO and UNN, contained 298 of the 455 students (65.5%), despite representing only one-third of the institutions. Their mean cohort size was 29.8 students, compared with 7.85 among the four Geography-compulsory programmes, a descriptive ratio of approximately 3.8:1. Both Geography-flexible programmes also ranked above every Geography-compulsory programme on mean cohort size. These differences are substantial within the observed sample, but they are descriptive and do not by themselves establish a population-level or causal Geography effect.

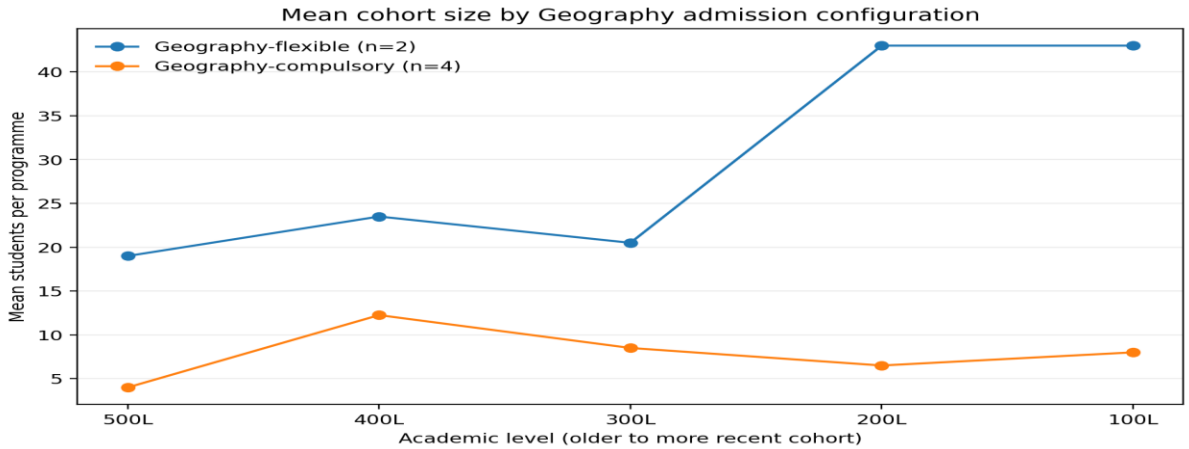


Figure 3: Mean cohort size by Geography admission configuration

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Inferential evidence. The exact Mann–Whitney U test yielded U = 8, p = 0.133, with rank-biserial correlation = 1.00. Because p = 0.133 exceeds the 0.05 significance threshold, H_{02} is not rejected. The rank-biserial correlation reflects the complete rank separation observed in this very small sample, but with only two flexible and four compulsory programmes it should be interpreted as an unstable descriptive effect and does not override the non-significant inferential result. The same caution applies to cohort direction: FUTO and UNN recorded positive slopes of +8.6 and +4.9 students per ordered level, while the four compulsory programmes ranged from +3.5 in IMSU to −2.4 in RSU. The exploratory slope comparison again yielded U = 8, p = 0.133, rank-biserial correlation = 1.00; H_{03} is therefore not rejected. Taken together, these tests identify a sample-specific pattern that warrants further investigation, not statistical evidence that Geography requirements cause lower enrolment.

The descriptive pattern is consistent with the concern raised by Eze and Chukwunweme (2025), who identified compulsory Geography as an enrolment constraint, and with Osiyi and Jiburum's (2023) evidence of weak first-choice demand for planning. In the present study, however, the non-significant Mann–Whitney result and the six-programme sample mean that the pattern should be treated as hypothesis-generating rather than confirmatory. FUTO and UNN may differ from the compulsory programmes in reputation, location, programme capacity, admissions practice, visibility and other unmeasured characteristics. Theoretically, Geography requirements may represent one possible source of friction at the educational-access stage of the Human Capital–Workforce Planning pipeline, but the evidence does not isolate that mechanism from competing institutional explanations. Practically, the result supports a broader multi-institutional audit of admission rules and entrant preparedness before any region-wide policy change. Such a review should preserve spatial and geographical competence while examining whether equivalent subject combinations and first-year spatial-foundation courses can widen access without lowering professional standards.

Polytechnic Planning Cohorts and the Technical-Education Pipeline

The polytechnic data reveal a parallel contraction in the technical planning pipeline. Because ND and HND are distinct qualification streams, they were not combined with the five-year university cohort test. They are presented separately to show the scale of current planning enrolment in technical institutions.

Table 6: Current Urban and Regional Planning Enrolment in Selected Polytechnics

Institution	ND I	ND II	HND I	HND II	Observed total
Federal Polytechnic Nekede	7	8	26	48	89
Federal Polytechnic Oko	4	8	10	15	37
Federal Polytechnic Uwana	1	8	—	—	9
Total	12	24	36	63	135

Source: Authors tabulation of institutional records. HND figures were not reported for Federal Polytechnic Uwana; its observed total therefore refers to ND I and ND II only.

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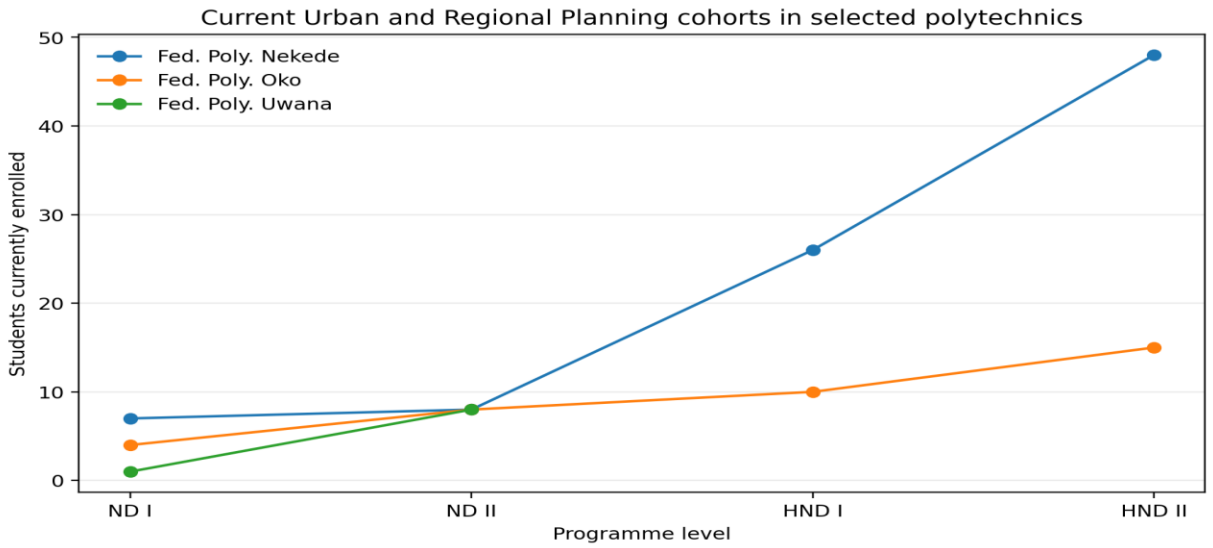


Figure 4: Current Urban and Regional Planning cohorts in selected polytechnics

Federal Polytechnic Nekede recorded 89 students across the reported ND and HND cohorts, Federal Polytechnic Oko 37, and Federal Polytechnic Uwana nine students in the two reported ND cohorts. The most immediate entry signal is the ND comparison: ND I enrolment across the three institutions totalled 12 students, only half of the 24 students currently in ND II. Among Nekede and Oko, where HND data were available, HND I totalled 36 compared with 63 in HND II, a 42.9% lower current HND I cohort. These figures cannot be read as a simple progression series because HND admission is a separate entry process and Uwana's HND data were unavailable. They nevertheless indicate that weak planning recruitment is not confined to university programmes; it is also visible within the technical education route that historically supplies planning technicians and later professional entrants.

Changing Educational Preferences and the Health-Sciences Pull

The institutional comparison does not establish a Geography effect, and the wider higher-education market may also shape planning enrolment. Administrative application records from Imo State University for the four most recent admission cycles examined in this study indicate that approximately 88% of applications were concentrated in four health-related programmes; Medicine and Surgery, Nursing Science, Medical Laboratory Science and Optometry (IMSU, 2026). As evidence from one university, this pattern is illustrative rather than representative of all Eastern Nigerian applicants, but it suggests that programme attractiveness and perceived occupational returns should be considered alongside admission eligibility.

The findings are particularly important when interpreted alongside Osiyi and Jiburum (2023). Their national study identified weak awareness and low first-choice preference for Urban and Regional Planning. The eastern evidence suggests

that the problem is not simply an absence of educational aspiration. Rather, planning competes in a market in which applicants increasingly differentiate among professions and appear to attach higher value to qualifications perceived to offer clearer employment pathways and international portability. The WHO (2024) documents the increasing scale and complexity of international health-worker mobility, and Nigeria's own policy response to health-workforce migration demonstrates the visibility of this pathway. Health-profession education therefore carries a labour-market signal that planning education must increasingly compete against.

Table 7: NMCN-Listed Nursing and Midwifery Training Capacity in the Nine Eastern States, December 2025

State	Active NMCN-listed institutions*	General Nursing / BNSc institutions**
Abia	12	11
Akwa Ibom	8	7
Anambra	13	13
Bayelsa	3	3
Cross River	10	8
Ebonyi	11	10
Enugu	16	12
Imo	15	13
Rivers	9	9
Total	97	86

Source: Authors' tabulation of the NMCN December 2025 approved-schools list. *Includes active Full, Provisional or Interim-accredited Nursing, Midwifery and specialist/post-basic institutions; withdrawn/embargoed entries and obvious duplicates excluded. **Includes institutions offering General Nursing and/or BNSc pathways; specialist-only or midwifery-only institutions excluded.

The NMCN list shows a dense alternative professional-training ecosystem across the same nine states: 97 active listed nursing, midwifery and specialist institutions, of which approximately 86 provide mainstream General Nursing and/or BNSc pathways. Anambra and Imo each have 13 mainstream Nursing/BNSc institutions, Enugu has 12, Abia 11 and Ebonyi 10. This density matters because it creates multiple entry points into a profession with a highly visible occupational identity. Applicants who do not obtain limited university places in high-demand health programmes therefore face a substantially wider set of alternative nursing-training pathways than exist for any other professional fields.

Taken together, the IMSU application profile and the NMCN institutional landscape are consistent with increasing competition from health-science pathways in parts of eastern Nigeria. The evidence remains bounded: the 88% application figure is drawn from one university, while the NMCN count measures the availability of training institutions rather than individual applicant motivation. These data therefore do not establish that health programmes caused low planning enrolment across the region. Their practical significance is that planning programmes compete within a higher-education market in which some professional pathways have highly visible occupational identities and numerous training entry points. Career visibility, labour-market signalling and programme positioning consequently warrant attention alongside admission requirements when planning schools and professional bodies design



recruitment strategies.;*4.7 Synthesis: A Manpower Pipeline under Multiple Pressures*

The combined evidence points to a multi-stage workforce risk rather than a single-cause enrolment problem. Growth in the cumulative professional register shows that new planners continue to enter the profession, but uneven state distribution means that aggregate growth does not ensure locally available capacity. At the upstream end of the pipeline, the participating planning schools display markedly uneven cohort structures, while the small-sample Geography comparison and the IMSU application profile identify possible access and attractiveness pressures that require broader verification. The practical implication is that workforce planning should monitor several linked stages; entry to planning education, retention and graduation, professional induction, active practice and geographical deployment, rather than treating any one indicator as sufficient evidence of future workforce adequacy.

The findings are consistent with, rather than a validation of, the integrated Human Capital–Workforce Planning framework. Human Capital Theory helps explain why access to education and the acquisition of specialised competencies matter for future professional supply, while workforce planning directs attention to the stock, inflows, outflows and spatial deployment of those skills (Suleman, 2021; Powell, 2021; Peck, 2025). The present data most strongly support the stock-and-distribution elements of that framework. The educational determinants remain provisional because current level counts are cohort proxies, the institutional sample is not a regional census and the Geography comparison contains only six active programmes. A stronger test of the framework would require longitudinal admissions, retention, graduation, registration, active-practice and mobility data across a larger and clearly enumerated set of planning schools.

5.0 Conclusion

The spatial findings demonstrate that this question cannot be answered at national level alone. The nine-state distribution shows that professional human capital is concentrated unevenly, meaning that national growth can coexist with local scarcity. This supports Ogunkan's (2025) argument that planning capacity is geographically differentiated and reinforces the workforce-planning principle that skills supply must be considered in relation to where those skills are required (Powell, Reddy & Juan, 2016).

TOPREC and NITP should establish an annual Planning Workforce Observatory that reports active professional status, state of practice, employment sector, gender, age profile, new registrations and, where feasible, professional exits. This would permit workforce planning to move beyond cumulative register totals. TOPREC, NITP, JAMB, NUC and NERDC should also undertake a broader evidence-based review of admission requirements for Urban and Regional Planning. The present six-programme comparison does not establish that compulsory Geography causes low enrolment, so the recommendation is not to remove Geography on the basis of this study. Rather, the review should test whether alternative relevant subject combinations can widen eligibility while maintaining measurable spatial competence. Where entrants have not studied Geography at senior-secondary level, planning schools could evaluate a standard first-year Spatial and Geographical Foundations module as a bridging mechanism. Any change should be assessed



against student preparedness, progression and professional competency outcomes.

NITP, TOPREC and planning schools should reposition planning in the secondary-school and university career market. Recruitment campaigns should emphasise visible occupational pathways in GIS, geospatial analytics, transport, land and property development, climate adaptation, urban infrastructure, environmental planning and development management rather than presenting planning as an abstract academic discipline. Professional bodies should respond to the growing attractiveness of internationally mobile health qualifications by making the transferability and modern labour-market value of planning skills more visible. International planning practice, GIS certification, climate-resilience expertise and digital urban analytics should feature prominently in professional advocacy and curricula.

States with comparatively small professional stocks should be targeted for recruitment, professional retention and stronger staffing of planning authorities. A uniform national strategy is unlikely to correct geographically uneven capacity. Planning schools and professional bodies should implement targeted female recruitment, mentoring and progression initiatives. Annual sex-disaggregated registration data should be monitored publicly so that progress toward a more inclusive profession can be measured. Planning-school enrolment, graduation and TOPREC induction data should be linked periodically. A shared education-to-registration monitoring system would allow emerging weaknesses in the pipeline to be identified before they become professional manpower shortages.

The study therefore concludes that Nigeria's planning manpower challenge cannot be addressed at the point of professional registration alone. A sustainable response must consider the earlier stages of the pipeline, including access, programme visibility and the quality of spatial preparation, while also addressing gender participation and unequal geographical deployment. The institutional evidence does not demonstrate that any single admission rule is responsible for regional enrolment patterns; it instead identifies questions that should be tested with broader and longitudinal data. The policy case is therefore for coordinated monitoring and carefully evaluated interventions across the education-to-practice pathway rather than for a single-factor remedy.

Overall, the evidence is most consistent with a multi-stage planning-workforce challenge rather than a demonstrated single-cause Geography effect. Professional registration is growing, but registered capacity remains geographically concentrated, professional inflow is persistently gender-imbalanced, and the participating education programmes show uneven cohort structures. The school-level findings are exploratory and are not representative estimates for every planning programme in Eastern Nigeria. Professional registration alone therefore cannot secure the future of the profession: stronger evidence and coordinated action are needed across secondary-school preparation, university admission, professional education, career visibility, gender inclusion, active-practice monitoring, geographical deployment and registration. The critical question is not simply how many planners Nigeria has, but whether it is producing and retaining enough planners, in the



right places and with the right skills, to plan the cities of its future.

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