

Assessment of the Implementation of Educational Policies in Universities in Enugu State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the implementation of educational policies in universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 440 staff comprised of 80 staff from Enugu State University of Science and Technology; 70 from Cool City University; 90 from Caritas University; and 200 from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The population of the study was manageable; therefore, there was no need for sampling. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled: "Assessment of Implementation of Educational Policies Questionnaire (AIEPQ)" was validated by three experts, two from Department of Educational Foundations and one from the Department of Science Education, all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The internal consistency of the instrument was ensured using Cronbach Alpha technique which yielded reliability coefficient of 0.86. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. A mean score of 2.50 was used as a decision rule. The findings of the study revealed among others that, government's effort towards implementation of educational policy yielded little or no dividend result due to improper implementation of policies caused by lack of basic amenities for practical teaching as well as lack of instructional materials to facilitate effective learning process. The findings of the study also revealed the problem of poor planning as a result of political instability and poor remuneration of lecturers, among others are harmful to implementation of educational policy. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that proper planning should be taken to make provisions for instructional materials needed for effective learning and proper implementation of educational policy in Nigeria.

Keywords: Assessment, Implementation, Education, Educational Policies

INTRODUCTION

Education can be defined as former system of education which includes acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and training of people's mind in a particular direction to bring about desired changes. The importance of education cannot be over-emphasized; as nations who prioritize education progress by leaps and bounds. Global educational policy as the United Nations Human Rights declared access and participation of education as a fundamental human right for all global citizens of the world (Okafor, 2002). To this effect, the greatest investment a nation can make for the development of its economic, sociological and human resources is that of education (Okafor, 2002). Furthermore, one of the founding fathers of Nigeria's educational policy framework defines education as the "aggregate of all the processes by which a child or an adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society in which they lives, that is to say, it is a process of disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of the society or both" (Fafunwa, 1987). However, that is to say that every child regardless of tribe, race or family background has a right to sound and quality education in the society where they lives; as education contributes to the growth and development of societies in Nigeria (FRN, 2007)

Also in a study carried out by Okoroma (2006) observes education to be the bedrock of any society. The author further opines that, the issue of falling standard of education and the inability of Nigerian higher education to meet its desired goals becomes a great concern to every reasonable citizen. Over the years, the gap between educational policies and goal attainment is due to inadequate implementation of these policies which has become of great concern to many observers. Okoroma (2003) also comments that education is a distinctive way in which the society inducts its young ones into full membership. Every society needs some educational policies to guide it in the process of such initiation. Nigerian's education has passed through different stages with various goals and objectives. The early missionaries and Portuguese traders introduced education in Nigeria with a view to get convert into their religions and making Nigerian understand their language to facilitate their trades respectively. The colonial government later developed interest in the education of the people out of the need to train interpreters, clerical officers, messengers, cooks, stewards, servants, typists, law enforcement agents and invariably refined slaves (Oke & Odetokun, 2000) .

Educational policies are the principles and government policy-making in educational sphere, as well as the collection of laws and rules that govern the operation of education systems. Education occurs in many forms for many purposes through many institutions. Therefore, education policy can directly affect the education of people engage at all

levels of education. Examples of areas subject to debate in education policy, specifically from the field of schools, include school size, class size, school choice, school privatization, tracking, teacher education and certification, teacher payment of salaries, wages, allowances, teaching methods, curricular contents, graduation requirements, school infrastructure investment, and the values that schools are expected to uphold and model. According to Thomas, Emilie and Wayne (2018) sees education policy analysis is the scholarly study of education policy which seeks to answer questions about the purpose of education, the objectives that is designed to attain, the methods for attaining them and the tools for measuring their success or failure. To Okoroma (2000) educational policies are initiatives mostly by governments that determine the direction of an educational system. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2015) education policy consists of the principles and government policies in the educational sphere as well as the collection of laws and rules that govern the operation of education systems. From the above definitions, the researchers are of the view that every modern society needs some educational policies to guide it in the process of such initiation towards achieving the purpose and objectives for which educational institutions were established.

Implementation is the act of executing a plan, a policy or an assignment. Ogbonnaya (2003) views implementation as the process of carrying out objectives or a plan. It is the process of performing a task, an activity or objective. Nweke (2015) defined implementation as the ability to put law or policy. It is also a tool or means of making something that has been officially decided to start to happen or be used. According to Ibiam (2012), implementation means putting into use or practices the policy that has been made by the government or organization as applicable. It is the realization of an application, plan, ideas, model, design, specification, standard, or policy (Rouse, 2007). The action must follow any preliminary thinking in order for something to actually happen. Hrebiniak (2006) asserted that the failure of many implementation processes often stems from the lack of accurate planning, and coordination in the beginning stages of the project due to inadequate resources or unforeseen problems that may arise. Implementation therefore, connotes the activities of transforming ideas and policy into an identified objective.

Efforts have been made to develop education in Nigeria since independence in 1960. Various policies in the interest of education have been formulated, some of which have been presented in this paper. Unfortunately, these efforts have not produced the desired effect. The state of education in Nigeria is still deplorable. It is so bad that some resourceful Nigerians prefer to send their children to Europe, America and even small African countries such as Ghana and Uganda. Apart from the general problems of policy implementation common to most countries, especially those of the third world, some factors have been identified as peculiar to Nigeria and inhibiting her educational growth. It is no longer news that Nigeria is the giant of Africa in terms of resourcefulness as a major oil and gas producer. Mockingly, most Nigerians live below the poverty line of one dollar per day. However, the following reasons, among others as highlighted by Okoroma (2006) account for these deplorable factors which are responsible for non-implementation of the educational policies in Nigerian Universities

Lack of political will: Generally, Nigerian leaders would want the country to stand out as the best in everything, including in a education. However, political will has been lacking. Perhaps this is as a result of instability of governments or lack of continuity. For example, between 1960 and 2005, the country has had several governments led by late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, late General Aguiyi Ironsi, General (Dr.) Yakubu Gowon, late General Murtala Mohammed, General Olusegun Obasanjo, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, General Mohammadu Buhari, General Ibrahim Babangida, Chief Earnest Shonekon, late General Sani Abacha, General Abdusalam Abubakar, General Olusegun Obasanjo, late Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan and President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR (Current President). In 59 years, Nigeria has had fifteen heads of state out of which only six were democratically elected. This shows that most Nigerian leaders have never had time to draw-up plans of action before they drafted themselves or were drafted into leadership and therefore have been ill-prepared for any development efforts whether in education or other spheres. Most of their actions were not patriotic but for personal aggrandizement.

Corruption: If anything has contributed greatly to the stagnation of corporate development of Nigeria, it is this virus called 'corruption'. It is found in all aspects of human endeavour in Nigeria. Its prominence in Nigeria has earned our nation a place of negative prominence in the world. Adesina (2004:16) noted: The 2004 Corruption Perceptions Index, released by Transparency International (TI), the watchdog on global corruption, ranks Nigeria as the third most corrupt country in the world. In 2003, the organization ranked Nigeria second, a one-step improvement from the previous position as the most corrupt country in the world. Although President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria was uncomfortable and disputed the rating, many Nigerians agreed that it was correct.

This is because corruption pervades all segments of Nigeria's national life. Despite enormous oil and gas wealth at the disposal of the country, basic things of life such as food, shelter, portable water, electricity, good roads and education have become luxuries to the citizens. However, people at the various levels of governments and their agents wallow in enormous financial and material wealth. Corruption has contributed to stagnate the development of education in Nigeria. Some good educational policies have been put in place. An example is the National Policy on Education.

Poor Supervision and Monitoring: Government officials from the Ministry and Boards are always in the habit of sitting in their offices to do inspection because of brown envelops" or 'Kola' they received from schools administrators. To this end, quality assurance in the education system is eroded (Ukpong, 2017).

Politics and non motivating Teachers: In every level of education, teachers are said to be the implementers of educational policies through their interaction with students in the classroom. Politics affected education negatively when politicians withhold teachers' benefits/ salaries which always result in labour unrest promoted by Government insensitivity to teachers' welfare. The problem of inadequate teaching staff in the schools to teach important subjects in the sciences and arts came up as a result of Government ban on employment for the selfish motives of the party in power (Ukpong, 2017).

Another problem plaguing the Nigerian education policy is corruption (Etuk, Ering & Ajoke, 2006). A number of public office holders in Nigeria are more minded about amassing wealth to themselves than carefully doing their jobs. Government has taken giant strides in certain key areas of the educational system, including the UBE sector; however, a lot of mismanagement is observed particularly in the area of funds allocated to the program (Etuk et al., 2006). Instead of judiciously using such funds to execute the projects they are meant for, public office holders would prefer to divert some of such funds into private use. Like others in public offices across the country some officials in the educational sector hold up and even deny a teacher access to services if the teacher fails to offer them a token. For example, they often claim that the teachers file is missing, but they get the file as soon as they receive the tip. This corrupt attitude on the part of such office holders discourage these teachers and create unnecessary bottlenecks and even outright hindrances to the furtherance of issues that will make for the success of the policies. The problem of general corruption poses a major threat to the present educational policy (Etuk et al., 2006).

Also in a study carried out by Okoroma (2001) on the evaluation of the Nigerian universities aspect of the National Policy on Education in Rivers State revealed that effective implementation of the policy has been hindered by the following factors, such as: inadequate teaching staff, lack of adequate workshops, inadequate laboratories and libraries, insufficient funds, and non-availability of guidance and counselling services. However, all these factors are similar to those that also presently handicap the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Scheme in Nigeria. The same factors constrain the effective implementation of policies in other forms of education including tertiary education. Other factors that hindered effective implementations of educational policies as posited by Arubayi (2005) include: inadequate funding of education, poor planning/ineffective implementation of educational plans and objectives, poor school mapping as pupils travel more than five kilometers to get to school daily, poor supervision and monitoring, inadequate vehicles for monitoring, inadequate number of qualified monitoring officers, inadequate office accommodation, and office equipment (e.g computers and ICT facilities) militated against effective supervision of educational programme in Nigerian universities. The picture painted by Arubayi on poor supervision was supported by Ezenkwensili (2007) that there has been no inspection and supervision of schools in the decades”, whereas, supervision of schools is the heart of quality assurance in education (Ukpong, 2017).

After factors responsible for non-implementation of educational policies has been discussed, now the implementation strategies. The best-formulated strategy is useless or rather worthless if it cannot be implemented effectively. If the educational industry is to achieve the best result for which it was established through its strategic planning efforts, it must make sure that its implementation strategy is put into action. The underlying idea here is ascertaining how the education system can get to where it wants to be. The strategic planning process is the critical stage in the history of Nigerian education: implementation has been inconsistent and statistical deficiencies as well as inadequately skilled personnel inhibit the planning process in most cases. However, if a choice has been made on the strategy to use, according to International Contract Management Benchmarking Association (ICMBA, 2004) opined that the strategy likely will be expressed in high-level terms and priorities. For effective implementation, it needs to be translated into more detailed policies that can be understood at the functional level of an educational system. The expression of the strategy in terms of functional policies also serves to highlight any practical issues that might not have been visible at a higher level. For effective implementation of a strategic plan, the policies should be translated as much as possible into specific policies for the functional level line staffs in the school system (academic and non-academic) to understand the purpose for which the plan is carried out.

However, for effective implementation of educational policy in Nigerian universities can be adopted as cited by Oviawe (2017), which include: provision of enabling facilities and equipment such as classrooms, laboratories, workshops, equipment and tools which can facilitate the effective implementation of prevocational education curriculum. The author also mentioned in his study that the absence of tools, equipment, facilities, laboratories and workshop hinders the implementation of prevocational education curriculum. Hence, the need arises for these facilities, tools, equipment and workshop to be put in place. The government and the society owe the students the responsibility of providing an adequate environment necessary to promote teaching and learning in Nigerian universities (Oviawe, 2015).

Interestingly, study carried out by Akpan (2018) posited while 2011-2015 strategic plans for the development of the education sector was aimed at assisting the Federal Government to achieve her transformation agenda, the 2016-2019 plan aimed at repositioning the Nigeria’s education system to play a central role in the Federal Government’s philosophy of change. The plan which was tagged “Education for Change” is focused on strengthening institutional structures and creating innovative strategies aimed at revamping the education sector. It is believed that the plan will rescue the education sector as highlighted by Abdulsalam (2016), which included: to provide the needed direction to chart a course towards ensuring the provision of inclusive and equitable education; to provide life-long learning opportunities for all; to promote technical and vocational education and training (TVET); to promote accountability and transparency in government; to promote public-private partnership and collaboration with donors to fill funding gaps; to provide the type of education Nigeria needs to meet the target of the sustainable development goals; and to provide functional education as a leeway out of youth unemployment (Akpan, 2018).

However, the strategic education plan recognizes lack of funds as a major challenge for the development of the education sector. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons the plan is aimed at promoting public-private partnership and collaboration with donor agencies to fill the funding gaps. In order to effectively implement educational policies plan, the federal government put the following strategies on ground: education will be all inclusive with the view to strengthening the education sector. This will help to meet the targets of the sustainable development goals (SDGs); educational institutions will be provided with quality infrastructural facilities to make school environments learners-friendly for all learners including girls, the vulnerable and those with special needs; quality teachers in adequate quantity will be recruited; opportunities for re-training and development of existing teachers will be provided. This is necessary to ensure quality delivery; and provision

will be made for effective collaboration and coordination of educational inputs and activities in order to build and sustain adequate human capital for national development. Interestingly, educational planning in Nigeria is compounded by numerous problems notably, poor funding and administrative lapses of institutional administrators who are implementers of the plans. Other challenges include political influence, which involves premature termination of existing plan by the government in power in order to project its political ideology; inadequate statistical data for effective educational planning and inadequate planning manpower (Akpan, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

The gaps that often exist between policy formulation and implementation provoke inquiry to identify factors that constrain the effective implementation of educational policies. The problem of policy implementation is traceable to the planning stage which comes immediately after policy formulation. However, every good planning will ensure effective implementation and positive outcome. Good planning that can facilitate effective implementation ought to consider factors such as the planning environment, social environment, and political environment, financial and statistical problems. The plan must take into consideration the needs of the society; the political, socio-cultural, economic, military, scientific, and technological realities of the environments are also very important to its survival. Similarly, government also declared that in spite of the laudable objectives and structure of secondary education, all indications point to the fact that the rate of education failures in Nigerian system of education is on the increase. Meanwhile, the level of implementation of educational policies goes a long way in determining the achievement of educational goals and objectives. Therefore, this study was carried out to find out how the educational policies being implemented in selected Nigerian universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. Also, based on the following, a clarification of the causes and effects of the problem of poor policy implementation, the research paper will advance the remedial measures.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to examine the implementation of educational policies in universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examined factors responsible for non-implementation of educational policies in Universities.
2. suggested strategies for effective implementation of educational policies in Universities.

Research Questions

The following research question has been posed to guide the study;

1. What are the factors responsible for non-implementation of the educational policies in Universities?
2. What are the strategies for effective implementation of educational policies in Universities in?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 440 staff comprised of 80 staff from Enugu State University of Science and Technology; 70 from Cool City University; 90 from Caritas University; and 200 from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled: “*Assessment of Implementation of Educational Policies Questionnaire (AIEPQ)*”. The instrument was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Foundations and one from the Department of Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation), all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their opinions and recommendations were used to modify and produce the final draft of the instrument. The internal consistency of the instrument was ensured using Cronbach Alpha technique of analysis which yielded reliability coefficient of 0.86. A four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) – 4 points; Agree (A) – 3 points; Disagree (D) – 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1 point, was used for responses. 2.50 was the criterion mean. The decision rule was that any item with mean score from 2.50 and above would be accepted while items with mean scores below 2.50 would be rejected. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What are the factors responsible for non-implementation of the educational policies in Universities?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the ratings on factors responsible for non-implementation of the educational policies in Universities

S/N	Item statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Lack of basic amenities for practical teaching	2.66	1.39	Agree
2	Lack of instructional learning materials to facilitate effective learning process	2.58	1.53	Agree
3	Inadequate teaching staff	2.55	1.58	Agree
4	Lack of adequate workshops	2.52	1.63	Agree
5	inadequate laboratories and libraries	2.60	1.50	Agree
6	Non-availability of guidance and counselling services.	2.67	1.37	Agree

7	Lack of political will and poor remuneration of lecturers	2.50	1.66	Agree
8	Insufficient funds	2.59	1.51	Agree
9	Corruption	2.50	1.66	Agree
10	Poor supervision and monitoring	2.51	1.64	Agree
Grand Mean		2.57	1.55	Agree

Data presented in table 1 revealed that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 had a mean score ranging from 2.50 to 2.67 which exceeded the upper limit of 2.50. This implied that the respondents accepted that all the items statement above is factors responsible for non-implementation of educational policies in Nigerian Universities. Also, the standard deviation of items 1 to 10 ranged from 1.37 to 1.66. This range in the responses of the respondents was not too far from each other which implied that the items statement were relevant and factors responsible for non-implementation of educational policies in Nigerian universities.

Research Question Two: What are the strategies for effective implementation of educational policies in Universities?

Table 2: Mean and Standard deviation of the ratings on strategies for effective implementation of educational policies in Universities

S/N	Item statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
11	Provision of enabling learning facilities and equipments	2.50	1.67	Agree
12	Provision of conducive learning environment	2.58	1.54	Agree
13	Adjustment organizational structure with strategy	2.61	1.49	Agree
14	Exposure of students to field trips/work-visit	2.62	1.47	Agree
15	Operationalize the strategy	2.53	1.62	Agree
16	Provision of education to meet the target of the sustainable development goals.	2.54	1.60	Agree
17	Provision of functional education as a leeway out of youth unemployment	2.60	1.51	Agree
18	Provision of quality infrastructural facilities to make school environments learners-friendly for all learners	2.55	1.59	Agree
19	Development of organizational capacity and human resource capacity	2.51	1.65	Agree
20	Promote technical and vocational education and training (TVET)	2.62	1.47	Agree
Grand Mean		2.57	1.56	Agree

Data presented in table 2 revealed that items 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 had a mean score that ranged from 2.50 to 2.62, which exceeded the upper limit of 2.50. This implied that the respondents accepted that the above item statements are the strategies for effective implementation of educational policies in Nigerian universities. The standard deviation of item numbers 11 to 20 ranged from 1.47 to 1.67. The range was not too far from each other which implied that the statements were relevant and that they are the strategies for effective implementation of educational policies in Nigerian universities.

DISCUSSION

The respondents expressed concerns that key constraints included in the Nigerian education policy such as lack of basic amenities for practical teaching, lack of instructional learning materials to facilitate effective learning process, inadequate teaching staff, lack of adequate workshops, inadequate laboratories and libraries, non-availability of guidance and counselling services., lack of political will and poor remuneration of lecturers, insufficient funds, corruption and poor supervision and monitoring. This is in agreement with Okoroma (2006) that enumerated the problems of non-implementation of education policies in Nigerian Universities thus: lack of political will, corruption, poor supervision and monitoring, lack of political will and non-motivating lecturers. However, the findings of the result is also in line with the earlier work of Arubayi (2005) who found out that some of the factors responsible for non-implementation of educational policies include: inadequate funding of education, poor planning/ineffective implementation of educational plans and objectives, poor school mapping as pupils travel more than five kilometers to get to school daily, poor supervision and monitoring, inadequate vehicles for monitoring, inadequate number of qualified monitoring officers, inadequate office accommodation, and office equipment (e.g computers and ICT facilities) militated against effective supervision of educational programme in Nigerian universities.

The findings of the study from the respondents revealed that the provision of enabling learning facilities and equipments, provision of conducive learning environment, use of unprepared instructional materials, exposure of students to field trips/work-visit, Provision of education to meet the target of the sustainable development goals, provision of functional

education as a leeway out of youth unemployment, provision of quality infrastructural facilities to make school environments learners-friendly for all learners, provision of life-long learning opportunities for all and promoting technical and vocational education and training (TVET) are major strategies for effective implementation of the education policy in Nigeria universities. This is in line with the view of Oviawe (2017) who affirmed that for effective implementation of educational policy in Nigerian universities can adopt the following strategies which include: provision of enabling facilities and equipment such as classrooms, laboratories, workshops, equipment and tools will go a long way to facilitate the effective implementation of education policies in Nigerian universities. The findings of the study is also in line with Kelly (2011) and Akpan (2018) who postulated the use of improvised instructional materials, exposure of students to field trips/work-visit, provision of inclusive and equitable education; the provision of life-long learning opportunities for all; and the means to promote technical and vocational education and training (TVET) will also foster the implementation of educational policies in Nigerian universities.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, it can be confirmed that some universities are yet to implement the educational policy in their institutions as a result of lack of planning, insufficient fund, political instability and poor attitude of stakeholders and policy makers in education. However, lack of implementation of educational policy in universities in Nigeria has led to the failure of the education policy to meet its desirable goals and objectives in the society and unless a necessary actions are taken for effective implementation of the educational policies in Nigeria and the society at large. Also, The good intension of the Federal Government to making education functional has not been achieved. Effective implementation of prevocational education curriculum will lay a solid foundation for the training of future engineers, technologist, business men and women, accountants, and entrepreneur

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Proper planning should be taken to make provisions for instructional materials needed for effective learning and proper implementation of educational policy in Nigeria.
2. Government should make provision for basic education amenities and laboratory equipment for effective implementation of education set objectives.
3. There is need to encourage both academic and non-academic staff through motivation on performance of duties, payment of salaries and allowances as at when due.
4. Government should take responsibilities and make adequate provision for facilities to enhance teaching and learning quality control.
5. There should be proper monitoring and evaluation for effective implementation of educational policies in Nigerian university.
6. Education should be removed from the sphere of politics. It should be made purely a constitutional matter, but not as provided by the 1999 constitution which allows escape routes for political leaders. When the constitution states that "Government shall as and when practicable provide free education at different levels", the right to education has been denied the citizens and political leaders may be non-committal as the provision of education becomes a discretionary matter.
7. Nigerian governments and leaders should develop the necessary political will for education to grow and for political instability.

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