

Implementation of Educational Policies for Socio-Economic and Political Development

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ABSTRACT

Lack of effective in respect to serious implementation of educational policy has hampered Nigeria's socioeconomic and political progress. The impetus or driving force behind implementing the policies created for efficient management of educational institutions is proper and sincere policy execution. It is thought that Nigeria's socioeconomic and political development suffers greatly from the way that policymakers and those that implement handle educational initiatives. The paper thus provided a description of the application of educational policies, discussed some previously developed policies, identified the main reasons for pitiable application of educational policies, and discussed the detrimental effects of poor application of educational policies on Nigeria's socioeconomic and political development. The study found that political inconsistencies were a significant hindrance to the socioeconomic and political development of Nigeria, and it stressed that the political elite in charge of implementing educational programs were mostly to blame for these issues. In order to achieve this, the study recommended appropriateness when making appointments, that poor educational policy implementation be sanctioned, and that all interested parties work together to ensure that viable and good educational policies are developed and that the necessary funds and resources are made available for proper implementation of educational policies so as to improve socioeconomic and political development.

Keywords: Educational policies, Socio-economic development, Political development, Implementation

INTRODUCTION

Every official action of an organization has a justification in education as in other fields of human endeavor, which every policy strives to accomplish. A policy outlines or describes the areas where decisions must be made, but it does not actually make the choice. In other words, a policy typically offers a roadmap that makes decision-making easier. As a result, educational policy sets the direction for educational activity. According to Ajayi and Ayodele (2011), policies are declarations of intention that direct people's behavior towards accomplishing the organization's aims and objectives. In order to prevent members of an organization from working against one another and achieving the goals and objectives of the organization, all members' activities must be coordinated.

The criteria for a policy's implementation are established during its formulation. According to Ukeje (1990), the creation of policy is the most crucial component of planning. Planning is said to mean an action that comes after policy formulation but before execution, according to Okoroma (2006). Okoroma (2006) argued further that due to implementation challenges, educational policy and goal achievement have been incompatible.

Governmental measures that set the course of an educational system are known as educational policies (Okoroma, 2000). In the technical phase of the policy-making process, administrators and teachers employed throughout the system implement the decisions made by those in charge of making those decisions (Romane & Pont, 2017). Implementing education policies is a deliberate, multifaceted change process with the goal of running a specific policy and has the potential to have multiple degrees of impact on the education system (Odukoya, 2009). Implementation is deliberate because it seeks to adjust education in line with specified policy goals, and this is multi-directional given that it can be carried out by different actors at different levels of the educational system (Ogunsaju, 1989).

Romane and Pont (2017) state that there are four variables that must be taken into account while implementing education policies. These are as follows:

1. The policy design—which relates to the policy issue, the solution it suggests, and the viability of the latter—determines, in large part, whether and how a policy may be implemented.
2. The stakeholder and the engagement: Due to the characteristics of education policies and how they interact with other determinants, individuals and organizations are responsible for putting them into effect.
3. Institutional settings are the official and informal social limitations that influence the implementation process within a particular educational system. The institutional settings also include policy and societal backdrop.
4. The plan for putting the policy into action and making it work is called the “implementation strategy.” Several of the frameworks that were chosen agreed on five parts of the implementation plan: task assignment and accountability, goals and tools, resources, timing and communication, and a plan for getting education stakeholders involved.

Past Educational Policies in Nigeria

The colonial and post-independence eras in Nigeria were two critical turning points in educational policy. Prior to the British invasion and subsequent installation of colonial control in the region, the majority of the territory to the north and west was made up of empires, emirates, and kingdoms. Islam was strongly ingrained in the Northern provinces, where Qur’anic education was the only authorised mode of instruction for all students (Ocho, 2005). Each ethnic group in the southern parts has a traditional educational system based on its own culture and tradition, with comparable goals and purposes (Imam, 2012).

The curriculum of southern education, according to Fafunwa (2004), was informal and focused on developing the child’s physical skill, character, intellectual skill, and sense of community belonging. Respect for elders was also taught, specific vocational training was provided, and a knowledge of the community’s cultural history was promoted. This was the situation when the first Christian missionaries arrived in 1842 to bring western education to the coastal region of southern Nigeria. The missionaries’ educational goals included teaching people how to read the Bible in English and their native languages, developing and practising agriculture, and becoming local schoolteachers, catechists, and clergy.

However, the merger of Nigeria’s Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914 brought together people of many ethnic backgrounds and religious beliefs as one nation, resulting in a multicultural culture that prompted the development of a federal government in Nigeria. According to Fabunmi (2005), the large educational disparity between Northern and Southern Nigeria is the legacy of British indirect rule policies during the merger that curtailed missionaries’ capacity to work in the protectorate’s mostly Muslim north.

As a result of their peculiar curriculum, Qua’anic schools were particularly overlooked when donations to missions and volunteer organisations schools were made (Imam, 2003).

Ogunsola (1982) asserts that the colonial authority assumed responsibility for providing Western education in Northern Nigeria because it required critical employees from the native population. Three types of education—Qur’anic, traditional, and western—coexisted in this system, with the North and South developing at varying rates in terms of western educational achievement.

In order to properly assess a country’s educational policy, political, economic, and sociocultural variables must be taken into consideration, according to Green (2000). According to Imam (2012), from the time of colonialism’s educational policies in 1944 to the year of independence in 1960, the following occurred:

1. The roles of the state and missionaries in the education of leaders were delineated
2. Recipients of a Western education were instantly shunned by their rural community but were prepared for both blue collar and white collar work in the city, as the education system was structured to generate the workforce requirements of the government.
3. The policy did not take into account how to combine all the different traditions, which led to distrust, animosity, and suspicion between people from different parts of the country and led to religious intolerance.
4. In the 1950s, primary school was made available to everyone in the country’s Western and Eastern regions significantly increased the already existent educational divide between the country’s Northern and Southern regions; and
5. Western, Qur’anic, and traditional education all grew at the same time, but rural people in the mostly Muslim North preferred Qur’anic education.

The National Educational Policy from 1960 – 1977

According to Woolman (2001), the goal of Nigeria’s educational policy at the time of independence was to Africanize the public service and use education to create a workforce for economic growth. The Federal Republic of Nigeria has faced numerous nation-building challenges since gaining independence in 1960, and these colonial legacies highlight these issues. As a result of this weak democratic foundation, the first military coup occurred in 1966, and there were three countercoups throughout the considered time period. Education policy also fell short of the high standards set by Nigerians. Outdated curricula, ineffective teaching methods, high dropout and re-enrollment rates, and a lack of independence and initiative on the part of many graduates have all been pointed to as problems with the current educational system (Rwomire, 2012).

According to the Nigeria Educational Research Council (1972), the educational system in Nigeria was assessed, its goals reevaluated, and new national objectives established at the 1969 National Curriculum Conference. The goal of this conference was to promote student individuality and independence in the face of Nigeria’s colonial educational system.

To expand on the 1973 curriculum conference, the Federal Government of Nigeria held a seminar of distinguished professionals to establish a truly Nigerian national educational policy. The alliance included Nigerian Muslim and Christian groups. The Federation’s states and other interest groups carefully reviewed the seminar’s draught National Policy on Education. The Federal Government took over mission schools during this time because education was become a government business.

After nationalising the schools previously run by missionaries, a standardised curriculum based on the 7-5-2-3 educational strategy was implemented, with students required to attend school for a total of 13 years (7 for elementary, 5 for secondary, 2 for the HSC, and 3 for university). This policy replaces the previous 8-5-2-3

educational structure (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2002). Imam (2012) states the following while discussing the nation's educational policy during its first thirteen years of independence:

1. How political change affects educational policy
2. The federal and state governments' functions in regulating and overseeing education
3. The expansion of educational access to increase enrollment and ostensibly close the achievement gap. This would elevate education to the status of a major government undertaking.
4. The failure to interact with local communities regarding children's education better suited to their individual circumstances resulted in the continuance of two parallel educational programmes in the largely Muslim north, and
5. The general approach taken by the government in developing a plan for educational policy that took Nigerians' aspirations into account.

The National Policy on Education Since 1977

The 1977 National Policy on Education promoted national unity and integration by making education relevant to Nigerian needs and goals. Due to the country's underdevelopment, the plan sought self-sufficiency. The concept centralised Nigerian education control and funding under the Federal Government to achieve the goals (Imam, 2012). The policy follows the US 6-3-3-4 educational system: 6 years of elementary school, 3 years of junior secondary, 3 years of senior secondary, and 4 years of university (Nwagwu, 2007). The goal was to make UPE mandatory for all children as soon as possible, that is, free primary education.

Nigeria's second democratic attempt began in 1979 with the adoption of a new constitution that included education as a concurrent legislative item (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979). In terms of secondary, professional, technological, and university education, the federal government has greater authority than the states under the constitution of 1979. States and municipalities paid instructors in elementary schools.

The 1981 constitution revision made UPE compulsory as soon as possible (Imam, 2012). In the amended strategy, the Federal Government transferred primary education funding to state and municipal governments, ending the UPE in September 1981.

Nwagwu (2011) described an issue with educational funding caused by an oil glut in the early 1980s, which resulted in a sharp drop in Nigeria's earnings from petroleum products, which accounted for 80% of her exports. As a result of unpaid teacher salary, failing education facilities at all levels, and school and college strike action, the country's literacy rate fell (Odukoya, 2009). According to Osili (2005), primary enrollment has declined or halted in several states as a result of reduced funding and the restoration of school fees.

Instead of the UPE's system of automatic promotion, a system of continuous assessment and exams was set up to evaluate students' performance and give them certification. But getting certified was more important than getting skills. Language was valued because it helped keep culture alive and brought people together. In 1981, the policy was changed so that children were encouraged to learn one of Nigeria's three main languages, Yoruba, Ibo, or Hausa, in addition to their own language (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981). In 1998 and 2004, the National Policy on Education was changed to meet the needs of national development. Because education is a way to pass on and change culture, Woolman's (2001) idea that education should also reflect a dynamic, always-changing process of building a nation gives weight to Nigeria's current effort to change its National Policy on Education.

It is mandated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria's updated National Policy on Instruction from 1998 that all children in the country attend primary and junior secondary school for a total of nine years. This is known as the Universal Basic Instruction (UBI) curriculum. In 1999, the Federal Government established

the UBE to combat illiteracy and advance equal access to education. The minimum teaching qualification was raised from Teacher Grade II Certificate to National Certificate of Education in the third edition (NCE). Nomadic education programmes for Fulani livestock herders and Ijaw fishermen were formed as a result. The policy also reaffirmed the government's commitment to secular education alongside religious teaching for students' parents.

The government doesn't handle nomadic Qur'anic school kids' basic education. The north succeeded because this education honored local culture and religion (Imam, 2001). According to Nwagwu, education technology impacted the National Policy on Education (2007). The guideline advised 60% science admissions and 40% humanities. Universities failed to meet the science and humanities admissions ratio because social needs continue to draw more students to the humanities.

The poor implementation of the national education policy and financial shortages has led to Nigeria's poor education system. Igbuzor (2006) reported a national literacy rate of 57%, 49% unqualified instructors, and a severe dearth of infrastructure and equipment at all levels (Imam, 2012).

After the passage of the Constitution of 1999, the 1998 National Policy on Education was again revised. Section 18 of chapter two of the Constitution underlines the education objectives of the Constitution of 1979 and the National Policy on Education.

The Constitution (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, p. 29) encouraged:

1. There are equitable and adequate educational opportunities at all levels of the school system.
2. Encouraging the study of science and technology
3. Elimination of illiteracy by providing:
 - Free and compulsory universal primary education
 - Free university education, and
 - Free adult literacy programme

The National Policy on Education was updated in 2004 (4th edition). The following features of the policy apply:

1. It establishes clear goals for the country's education.
2. It addressed the issue of unity and established the framework for national reunification.
3. It intended to create an independent, self-sufficient country to suit the needs of the nation's development.
4. It provided a thorough framework for the educational system and established the 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria.
5. It centralised management and funding of education, making it the government's responsibility in Nigeria.
6. It had a board curriculum that aspired to provide every child the chance to study, regardless of their gender, unusual background, or ability, and
7. It outlined the roles of open and online learning, adult education, non-formal education, special education, and other types of education (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1977 revised 1981, 1998 and 2004).

According to Imam (2012), the 4th edition mandates inclusive education for special needs pupils. It advised nomad pupils to participate in an integrated Qur'anic education programme and other extra-curricula. The policy reiterates government support for UBE and 9-3-4 education. The policy turned junior and senior secondary schools into basic education schools.

States and local governments handle basic education with federal funding and policy direction. State Universal Basic Education Board manages elementary and junior secondary schools (SUBEB). Local governments hire primary school teachers.

The age bracket of 15–18-year-olds attend three-year senior secondary school. The Ministry of Education's Secondary Education Management Board funds and manages it. The Federal Ministry of Education sponsors and supervises many Unity Secondary Schools.

The Nigerian Educational Research Development Council, according to Nwagwu (2011), develops primary and secondary school curricula for the federal government (NERDC). English, math, religious studies (depending on parents' religious beliefs), basic science and technology, and social studies are all compulsory. Arts, computing, agriculture, home economics, and physical health are examples of prevocational disciplines. Fourteen themes are made up of one major Nigerian language—Hausa, Yoruba, or Igbo—and French or Arabic, if lecturers are available.

Imam says all junior secondary school seniors take an external exam and receive a certificate. 40% constant assessment, 60% exam performance. Based on JSSCE scores and interests, seniors are placed in Arts and Social Science, Sciences, or Vocational and Technical Education. English Language and Mathematics, one vocational subject, and three additional subjects from Arts and Social Sciences, Sciences, Vocational Studies, or Technical Education are required at this level. This level of certification is 40% ongoing assessment and 60% examination. Certification still matters (WASSCE).

Nigerians learn and communicate in English. However, the education policy recommends teaching primary school students in their home tongue. Nigeria has over 250 indigenous languages that may be used in primary schools, making this impossible. Many minor languages lack written orthography, making material production problematic.

The National Degree Policy offers adult and open and distance education to people who cannot finish or benefit from education. The 2004 National Policy on Education must be amended to keep youngsters in school until senior secondary school and eighteen. The 1944 Education Act mandates free, interest-based secondary education in Britain (Gillard, 2011). Nigeria adopted US education.

No matter how attractive and intriguing the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) is on paper, if the political, economic, and socio-cultural aspects don't meet citizens' and the country's needs, implementation will be tough.

Causes of Poor Implementation of Educational Policies in Nigeria

Adeniyi (2015) noted that education policies in Nigeria were meant to provide residents with the knowledge they needed to adapt to society, but certain issues hindered their implementation. Below are Nigeria's main educational policy implementation issues:

1. **Poor funding of education:** Changes require cash. UNICEF advised countries to allocate 26% of their budgets to education. However, Nigerian states allocate 8.4% of their budgets to education. Office equipment and stationeries are not readily available in some schools due to paucity of funds in the name of free education (Oyewole, 2016).
2. **Poor management:** Emenike (2004) posited that fund management is concerned with ensuring that the funds in an organization are effectively and efficiently utilised through proper planning and control of available funds. One element that might be a major hindrance to any transformation is poor management. Nigeria's educational system experiences bad management. Poor financing may be the

cause, but people, not money, make up the management teams of the schools (Ekundayo, 2019). No amount of money can help these folks if they lack the basic understanding necessary to improve schooling or lack enthusiasm in doing so.

3. **Corruption:** They claim that corruption hinders progress. Nigeria's entire national life is permeated with corruption. The vast majority of government officials continue to amass enormous money, which has mostly prevented Nigeria from developing its educational system (Okoroafor, 2016). The local authorities, particularly school authorities who are tasked with monitoring and preventing acts of corruption, are capable of stealing the cash allocated for education.
4. **Lack of infrastructure:** In Nigeria, there are a lot of schools that are in terrible shape. The majority of the structures are too old to be replaced, and there are no funds available. According to Ekundayo (2019), a typical scene at primary schools is overcrowded, dilapidated, or half-completed classrooms without basic amenities and services, as well as toilets that are unattractive and unclean. Students are therefore destined to learn in outdated, decaying structures with no prospect of reform.
5. **Poor salaries for education workers:** Without adequate finance, educational initiatives in Nigeria cannot be efficiently implemented. The same is true for professors who are disinterested in offering their services since they are paid inadequately. According to Shafiwu and Salakpi (2013), teachers are spending less and less time on extracurricular activities, planning lessons, and carrying them out. In order to better prepare the next generation of leaders for the country, it is vital to raise the pay of those who do so.
6. **Frequent changes in policies:** Political instability causes frequent changes to education policies, which causes a lag between their creation and execution (Yaro, 2018). This is due to the fact that every government that assumes office will try to alter the educational policies to serve its own ends. According to Oni (2009), since independence, the political system has not been quite good. The military government has been on the political stage for years through incessant coup. Even for over twenty years of civil rule, the political scene has been cloudy. The same thing happened at the state level.
7. **Bureaucratic structure/politicisation of education:** Politics is an integral part of the Nigerian lifestyle. The bureaucratic setup of policy execution is crucial to getting the desired result. Politics has had a negative effect on the education sector since it has made it more difficult to execute educational initiatives. The political class controls the financial appropriation, therefore when they slow down or refuse to provide the necessary resources, the education sector is doomed to fail (Okoroafor, 2016).
8. **Lack of political will:** It is disheartening that majority of our political actors/leaders are only interested in formulating cosmetic educational policies, but lack the political will of putting the theory into practice through implementation. Okoroafor (2016) came to the conclusion that the absence of legislative commitment to enact budgets and release the funding necessary for the process is the reason why implementation of the national education policy continues to be delayed.

Negative Effects of Poor Implementation of Educational Policies on Socio-Economic and Political Development

Poor policy and project implementation is not a new occurrence in Nigeria. The educational sector is one that has suffered poor implementation of various policies and projects. Below are some of the negative effects of poor implementation of educational policies:

1. **Waste of public funds:** Imam (2012) asserted that it has been discovered that some policy formulators embark on white elephant projects that are outside people's needs because of their selfish interest. At the end of the day, the fund that could have been used for another project becomes a waste and such projects are abandoned
2. **Loss of confidence in policy formulators:** Ukomadu & Mohammed (2018) concluded that the real beneficiaries or the segment of the population that will benefit from the policies were not carried

along in the formulation and implementation processes. The citizens may start losing confidence in the ability and integrity of the political leaders.

3. **Political apathy:** with the effect of poor policy implementation, the electorates begin to turn their backs at the electioneering processes by making up their minds not to participate in future voting exercises (Okoroafor, 2016)
4. **Breeding of poor leaders:** As a result of people losing confidence and interest in their leaders, they decide not to participate in electioneering processes, this may result in imposition of leaders without vision and mission into power (Imam, 2012).
5. **Breeding of unemployable graduates:** Since some of the educational policies are not properly and sincerely implemented, this has been having its toll on the quality of the graduates being produced for the labor market. The system collapses into a mess where institutional assumptions determine student evaluation, creating graduates who are unproductive to themselves, their immediate social milieu, and society.
6. **Poor economic policies:** There is no gain saying that ‘who fails to plan, plans to fail’. Educational policies go a long way in making or marring economic policies. Therefore, poor implementation of educational policies could adversely affect the economic policies. Because, the products of poor educational policies implementation will end up being in the position of economic policies formulation in the nearest future (Okoroafor, 2016).

SUMMARY

Governmental initiatives called “educational policies” set a system’s direction for education. Policy implementation in education is a national challenge that has become a source of concern in Nigeria. Based on the discussions in this paper, it is no longer a news that educational policies implementation is poor in Nigeria. The major causes of poor implementation of educational policies are conspicuous in the areas of poor funding, poor management, lack of infrastructures, poor salaries for education workers, frequent changes in policies, bureaucratic structure, lack of political will among others.

CONCLUSION

In view of the discussions above, it is no longer a story that implementation of educational policies is poor in Nigeria:

- Most educational policies are well thought out, but poor planning makes them hard to put into place.
- Because most educational programmes are first planned, studies have revealed that the costs of implementing these plans have been underestimated. Most education plans are in planning.
- Reliable data have not been used much in Nigeria to plan education. This hasn’t made it easier for educational policies to be put into place well.
- The interaction of policies, which can sometimes hide the truth, makes it hard to put educational policies into place.
- The government doesn’t have the political will for effective implementation.
- Corruption at every level makes it harder to put educational policies and programmes into place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To combat the country’s constant policy reversals and summersaults, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government at all levels should adhere strictly to the budgetary recommendation of UNESCO on education for a better implementation of education policies.

2. Policy formulation should be backed up by appointment of people with high commitment and basic knowledge of improving education in the country.
3. To eradicate corruption in the educational system, corrupt officials should be made to face the wrath of law to serve as deterrent to other prospective corrupt minded officials.
4. Government at all levels should come to the aid of the students by providing the necessary infrastructures that could enhance teaching and learning processes in citadels of learning across the country.
5. Since no educational system can grow beyond its teachers, salaries and other allowances of the education workers should be improved upon in order to arouse their interest toward their job.
6. In order to attract more people into the teaching profession, better incentives should be made for the profession in order to make it more attractive and lucrative.
7. Stability should be inculcated into our political system in order to bring sanitary into our policy implementation at all levels of government.
8. There should be less bureaucratic bottlenecks in policy formulation in order to ease and hasten implementation of educational policies.
9. Policy makers should understand that policy making is a process and not an event and at that, due diligence and commitment must be displayed to ensure that no time is wasted in releasing budgeted funds towards timely implementation of education policies.

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