

CONSTRAINTS OF EDUCATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION REFORM AMONG PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

BY

Lebari Michael & Olokooba, Issa Nasiru

Department of Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin

Email: Gabriel.I@unilorin.edu.ng / olokooba.in@unilorin.edu.ng

Abstract

This study examines the constraints of education policy implementation reform among public secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria. It specifically focuses on the challenges hindering the successful implementation of educational reforms and policies at the secondary school level. The objectives of this study include analyzing the current state of education policy implementation in public secondary schools, assessing the effectiveness of these implementations, and identifying the major constraints faced during the process. To achieve these objectives, a descriptive research approach was employed. A sample of public secondary schools within Ilorin Metropolis was selected, and data were gathered through questionnaires administered to school administrators, teachers, and policy implementers. Interviews were also conducted with relevant stakeholders to gain deeper insights into the challenges. The findings reveal that while efforts are made to implement education policies, several factors hinder their effectiveness. These constraints include inadequate funding, insufficient teacher training, a lack of infrastructure, poor monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and limited community involvement. Additionally, policy inconsistencies and bureaucratic bottlenecks were identified as significant obstacles to effective implementation. The study concluded that for education policy reforms to be successful, there is a need for increased financial investment, capacity building for educators, better infrastructure, and a more collaborative approach involving all stakeholders. The findings provided recommendations aimed at improving the policy implementation framework to enhance the overall quality of education in public secondary schools in Kwara State.

Keywords: Constraints, Education policy, Public secondary schools, Policy implementation, Educational reforms.

Introduction

The tool to develop, improve and harness any society is hinged on the level of education adopted by that society. The Nigerian society over the years has experienced serious set-back and inconsistency in the implementation of her Educational Policy. Education is a process of acquiring knowledge skills, values, beliefs and habits that enable an individual to develop and grow through out for the betterment of himself/herself or for the society (Doharey et al; 2023). It is the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially in a school or college. It is any act or experience that has a formative effect, character or physical ability of an individual. Education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another. It is an essential process in human development. It deals with the total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted and faculties are trained, and different skills are developed (Olufumilayo & Adesanemoyo, 2022). Daramola (2012) viewed education as a process of cultural transmission and renewal; the process whereby the adult members of the society carefully guide the development of the younger ones, initiating them into the culture of that society.

Bassey, Ekpo and Edet (2008) asserted that education is a great investment in an economy. It increases the quality of the individuals in a nation and this helps to speed up the race for economic development. Educational systems and institutions all over the world are on constant strive to develop and implement reforms that will bring about effective transformation in their economy (Demboh & Susanti, 2021). This transformation is expected to come through the

quality of education which they are able to attain. This can also be achieved through the implementation of educational policies which would help the nation to build a stronger capacity in all sectors.

Policy is a course or the principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individual. It is a prudent or expedient conduct or action. Policy is asset of ideas or a plan of what to do in a particular situation that has been agreed to officially by a group of people, business organization, a government or a political party (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org>). A policy defines the area in which decisions are to be made but it does not make the decision. A policy brings about a meaningful relationship between business objectives and organizational functions as it discourages deviation from planned courses of action. A policy ensures consistency of action because an organization is governed by approved principles. It does not have to be rigid, as there should be room for adjustment, if necessary, after its formulation. A good policy is one that can be reviewed as the need may arise. Regardless of how good a policy may be, its implementation may introduce some element of imperfection. A policy that is well justified offers a logical and feasible solution to the policy problem. Ogunode and Ahaotu (2020) viewed that implementation is the systematic ways of executing program, policies and projects. Implementation is the act of carrying out a planned action and program or assigned task. Manafa (2011) stressed that policy implementation is carrying out the formulated policy in a concrete term. Implementation becomes possible when resources have been committed to it. Implementation stage is the stage where the preparations made earlier, the plans, the designs and analyses proposed are tested to see how really, they are (Manafa, 2011)

Educational policies are initiatives mostly by a government that determines the direction of an educational system (Okoroma, 2000). Ogunode (2020) opined that educational policy is determined by the following factors; the capacity of the implementer, the numbers of infrastructural facilities available, the funds available, the political will and the level of monitoring and evaluation system available. In the same vein, Franca (2022) viewed educational policies as the principles or formulated laws that rule or govern the operation of every education system at all levels. Education occurs in different forms for many purposes and through many institutions. Thus, an educational policy can directly affect the education of the people engaged at all levels of education. Education policy analysis is the scholarly study of educational policy that seeks to answer questions about the purpose of education, the objectives that are designed to be attained, the methods for attaining them and the tools for measuring their success or failure (Emile and Wayne, 2018). According to UNESCO (2015) educational policy consists of the principles of government policies in the educational sphere and the collection of laws and rules that govern the operation of education systems. Education is a distinctive way in which the society inducts its young ones into full membership, so every modern society needs some educational policies to guide it in the process of such initiation (Osokoya, 1987). Based on this premise Osokoya shared the same view with the National Policy on education as an entity. National policy on education prior to 1977, Nigeria operated an educational policy inherited from the Britain at Independence. The inability of this policy to satisfy the national aspirations of the country rendered it unpopular. In 1969, a National Curriculum Conference was organized which reviewed the inherited curriculum and identified new national goals for Nigeria's education. A National Seminar was organized by the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) in 1973 under the chairmanship of Chief S.O. Adebayo. This gave rise to the National Policy on education in 1977 (Akangbou, 1985; Bello, 1986; Okoroma, 2000).

The National Policy on Education is anchored on Nigeria's philosophy on education as enunciation through the nation's objectives. Nigeria has five main national objectives as provided by the second National Development plan and accepted as the necessary foundation for the National policy on Education. They are the building of a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, united strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy and a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens. Implementation of the secondary aspect of the National Policy on Education is an analysis of the implementation efforts of secondary aspect of the Nigeria's education policy will give an insight into the relationship between policies and attainments through implementation. The implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria started in 1976 under the name Universal Primary Education (UPE). The policy was short supply. The scheme therefore did not fully achieve its goal. Then the Universal Basic Education (UBE) came into existence in September 1999. So far available records have not shown

any departure from the UPE trend. The situation appears even worse due to the entrenched corruption in the society today. A recent study conducted by Okoroma (2003) to assess the effective implementation of the UPE program revealed significant inadequacy in the implementation efforts. Among the constraints that impede effective implementation Okoroma (2003) noted the following inadequate qualified teachers, insufficient funds, inadequate teaching and learning facilities, poor motivation of teachers and lack of guidance and counselling services. In line with the above, it is a common phenomenon that of political will contribute immensely to the ineffective implementation of educational policy. According to Okoroma (2001) these problems are the same as those that handicapped the implementation of the UPE. This indicates that the re-launching of the UPE with new nomenclature of UBE did not result from any lesson that was learned from the failure of the UPE. He stressed that the quality of education at the primary level today is worse than the pre-1976 era. The implementation of the 3 – 3 aspects of the National Education Policy has equally been very contentious. Some states of the Federation started implementing the policy in 1982 while others followed gradually.

Most Nigerians expected that democratic rule would improve key growth indicators including poverty reduction, low mortality, good governance and high-quality education (Suraj and Olusola, 2011). This notion was thwarted when almost 24 years there are cries of poor standard of secondary education in Nigeria. The policy which has initiated to guarantee functional education after the American model has become even worse than British system that was adjudged non-developmental. Studies, Seminars, Conferences and individuals have confirmed that the goals of the secondary education policy have not been achieved due to the inconsistency in the implementation of the educational policy. There are evidences of incessant industrial actions all over the federation, it has been of great concern to many observers. This has necessitated most stakeholders in the education industry to enrol their wards in private institutions, at the extreme getting their wards enrolled in schools outside the shores of Nigeria. Due to failure in the educational system teachers now lose their values by resorting to collecting bribe in aiding students to pass their certificate examination because the time that they were expected to cover their scheme in school were affected by industrial action, also in order for them to meet up the demanding economic situation in Nigeria. Students spent longer years in school than the required stipulated years according to the educational policy.

The educational policy also lack implementation in the area of fund/budget allocation. The Nigerian Government has fallen short of its policy in terms of fund released for education, in 2001 only 8% allocation was earmarked to education. In 2006, 10.4% in 2021, only 5% was released (policy implementation framework, OECD, 2017). The present administration is not making any lead-way, the budget allocation to education was 6.39% which is below 15% recommended by the UNESCO (premiumtime .ng .com, 2023). Oshodeke in a press statement on Monday 12th December, 2023 also disclosed his displeasure that much progress would not be made in the educational sector because it was the same figure during the Buhari government (Punch Monday 12th December, 2023). Similarly, organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries adopted no fewer than 450 education reforms between 2008 and 2014 (OECD, 2015). Considering the fast – paced economic, social and demographic environments that surround education efforts for education systems to adjust, improve and drive the future appear warranted there is little evidence of whether education reforms have an effect, however because educational inputs are challenging to assess and seldom evaluated. Even when reforms do have an impact, stakeholders are easily dissatisfied with the outcomes and they tend to hold policy makers accountable for them (Gallup, 2017).

However, political will has been lacking perhaps this is as a result of the instability of the government or lack of continuity. Nigeria's development failure has sprung from lack of success in achieving an effective governance model. Therefore, various governments formulated educational policies but political instability discouraged the political will to implement such policies. As new government came in succession, continuity in policy implementation is not guaranteed, this has hindered educational policy implementation in Nigeria. In 64 years Nigeria has had sixteen heads of state which have not made any difference in the aspect of policy implementation.

Purpose of the Study

The study tends to investigate the constraints of education policy implementation reform among public secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria. Other Specific Purposes of the study were to investigate:

1. the implementation of education policy among public secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.
2. effectiveness of the implementation of education policy among public secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.
3. constraints of the implementation of the education policy among public secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent are the education policies implemented among public secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State?
2. To what extent are the education policies implementation effective among public secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State?
3. What are the constraints in the implementation of education policies among public secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State?

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was used for this study. This design is used to gather information and describe the characteristics, behaviours or attitudes of a particular population or group of interest. Therefore, embarking on this approach, the researcher collected data on various situations relating to the constraints of education policy implementation and reforms among public secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State to describe and analyse in order to proffer solutions to the research problems. The study was carried out on education policy implementation reform among 504 public secondary schools in Kwara State. The population of this study comprised of all 504 public secondary schools in Kwara State. The target population consist of 102 public secondary schools which is 20% of the used public secondary schools within Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. The schools were selected using simple random technique method. The public secondary schools were represented in course of the sampling. An instrument that was titled 'Secondary School Education Policy Implementation Reform Questionnaire (SSEPIRQ)' was used. The questionnaire contained closed ended questions regarding secondary school students and teachers on education policy implementation. It was divided into two sections, 'A' which was used to collect bio-data from the respondent while 'B' was on education policy implementation which was sub-divided into four sub-sections using a Likert scale format, each section contained at least 5 items

Construct validity of the instrument was determined for the research questionnaire. The instrument was vetted by experts in the Department of Social Science Education, University of Ilorin. The corrections and suggestions were incorporated in the construction of the final copy of the instrument while, Cronbach Alpha method was adopted to ascertain the reliability of the instrument by administering them to 20 respondents outside the selected sample to determine its reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability Coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1 and the closer the Coefficient is for 1, the greater is the interval consistency of the items. The researcher paid a visit to the selected schools personally with a letter of introduction from the department to administer copies of the approved questionnaire in each school with the aid of a research assistant in each of the school visited. The researcher used the assistance in order to make the administration of questionnaire easier and to be able to reach all the population from which the sample is to be drawn. After collecting the filled questionnaire, the researcher assessed the returned questionnaire in order to determine those that were unable for the study. This exercise lasted for two weeks.

The data collected was scored on a 4-points scale as 4 for Very high extent, 3 High extent, 2 Low extent and 1 Very Low extent. The questionnaire was analysed using frequency count percentage mean, standard deviation and independence t-test. The percentage was used to describe the characteristics of the respondent, mean and standard deviation were used to answer all the research questions while, independent t-test were used to test the null hypotheses postulated in the study. The decision to either accept or reject any hypothesis depends on the calculated t-value and the t-critical value.

Results

Three research questions were raised and answered using mean and standard deviation.

Research Question 1: To what extent are the education policies implemented among public secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State?

Table 1:
Mean Responses on education policies implemented among public secondary schools

S/N	Education Policies Implementation	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Schools adhering to national and state-level education policies, such as the curriculum guidelines and instructional hours	3.98	.140	Accepted
2.	The necessary resources (teachers, textbooks, classroom infrastructure) provided to ensure policy implementation	3.92	.272	Accepted
3.	Teachers trained to implement the prescribed education policies effectively	3.91	.314	Accepted
4.	There are mechanisms in place to regularly monitor the implementation of education policies across the schools	3.80	.518	Accepted
5.	involvement of parents, community members, and local authorities in the implementation of education policies in schools	3.75	.533	Accepted
	Grand Mean	3.76		

Results in Table 1 shows that public secondary school teachers accepted that education policies implemented among public secondary schools with mean value ranging from 3.75 to 3.98.

Research Question 2: To what extent are the education policies implementation effective among public secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State?

Table 2:
Mean Response on education policies implementation effective among public secondary schools

S/N	Effectiveness of education policies implementation	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Implementation of education policies have Impacts on student academic performance and learning outcomes	3.79	.457	Accepted
2.	Teachers are able to effectively translate policy guidelines into classroom instruction and management	3.67	.587	Accepted
3.	Implemented policies are relevant to the specific challenges and needs of public secondary schools	3.65	.569	Accepted
4.	Available resources are being used efficiently to meet the goals set out by the education policies	3.53	.564	Accepted
5.	effective feedback systems in place to measure the success of policy implementation and make necessary adjustments	3.63	.561	Accepted
	Grand Mean	3.64		

Table 2 shows the education policies implementation effective among public secondary schools which include that; Teachers are able to effectively translate policy guidelines into classroom instruction and management, helps effective feedback systems in place to measure the success of policy implementation and make necessary adjustments, and Teachers are able to effectively translate policy guidelines into classroom instruction and management.

Research Question 3: What are the constraints in the implementation of education policies among public secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State?

Table 3:

Mean, Standard Deviation and Rank Order of constraints in the implementation of education policies among public secondary schools

S/N	Constraints in the implementation of education policies	Mean	SD	Rank
1.	Lack of financial resources to support the full implementation of education policies, particularly in areas of infrastructure and teaching materials	3.88	.383	3 rd
2.	A shortage of qualified teachers and insufficient training to adequately implement education policies	3.91	.346	1 st
3.	Slow or inefficient decision-making processes within the education administration that hinder timely implementation	3.89	.310	2 nd
4.	Limited capacity for effective monitoring and assessment of policy implementation by school inspectors and authorities	3.49	.515	7 th
5.	Challenges stemming from cultural, religious, or political influences that affect the enforcement of certain education policies	3.67	.471	5 th

Table 3 indicated that are the constraints in the implementation of education policies among public secondary schools because of the means which is above 2.5 benchmark. The challenges include; A shortage of qualified teachers and insufficient training to adequately implement education policies, Lack of financial resources to support the full implementation of education policies, particularly in areas of infrastructure and teaching materials and Challenges stemming from cultural, religious, or political influences that affect the enforcement of certain education policies.

Discussion

Education policies in Ilorin Metropolis are generally based on national guidelines, which cover curriculum standards, teacher recruitment, infrastructure development, and student welfare. In practice, the extent of implementation can vary significantly between schools due to differences in resource availability, administrative capabilities, and local leadership. Some schools, especially in urban areas, may adhere closely to these policies, benefiting from better funding and closer oversight by education authorities. On the other hand, schools in more disadvantaged or rural parts of the metropolis often struggle to meet policy requirements. Additionally, inconsistencies in the provision of textbooks, training, and basic facilities hinder effective implementation. Research such as Adesemowo and Olufunmilayo (2022) has shown that public secondary schools in Nigeria face challenges with resource allocation and teacher recruitment, impacting how well they can implement education policies. In Ilorin, some schools may have better access to funding and support, while others may lack basic infrastructure, making it difficult to meet national and state education standards.

While some policies are implemented, their effectiveness in driving educational outcomes is mixed. For instance, policies related to teacher-to-student ratios, curriculum delivery, and student performance monitoring are not always effectively executed. One of the main reasons for this inefficacy is inadequate teacher training and supervision. Policies such as continuous assessment and inclusive education often encounter challenges due to lack of proper monitoring and insufficient teacher support. Additionally, the implementation process may be hampered by bureaucratic inefficiencies, with many schools struggling to meet policy objectives due to administrative bottlenecks or lack of local government intervention. Thus, while some policies are in place, their effectiveness in terms of improving educational quality is often limited. A number of studies in Nigeria's education sector such as Primus and Susanti (2021) have highlighted that while policies are being rolled out, their impact is limited by inadequate infrastructure, lack of professional development for teachers, and weak evaluation frameworks. In Ilorin, these issues are compounded by overcrowded classrooms and insufficient teaching aids, which affect the quality of education delivered.

Several constraints affect the successful implementation of education policies in Ilorin Metropolis. One major issue is insufficient funding, which limits schools' ability to acquire teaching materials, improve infrastructure, and pay for professional development programs for teachers. Additionally, a shortage of qualified teachers and an over-reliance on unqualified or undertrained staff make it difficult to implement policies effectively. Bureaucratic delays in the release of funds and approvals further hinder timely policy execution. Existing literature points to the persistent underfunding of public education in Nigeria, especially in secondary schools like Ogunnode and Ahaotu (2002) which restricts their capacity to fully implement government policies. Teacher shortages and inadequate training are also well-documented issues that contribute to the constraints in policy implementation. The added dimension of socio-cultural challenges, including parental attitudes toward education, especially in rural and semi-urban areas of Ilorin, is a critical factor limiting policy impact.

Conclusion

The implementation of education policies in public secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, is incomplete and varies significantly across different schools. While there are frameworks in place to improve the quality of education, inadequate funding, teacher shortages, lack of proper training, and infrastructural deficiencies hinder successful implementation. The effectiveness of policy execution is also compromised by bureaucratic delays, insufficient monitoring, and cultural factors that affect school attendance and participation. Overall, while progress has been made, much more needs to be done to ensure that education policies translate into tangible improvements in the educational system in the region.

Recommendations

The following were recommended based on the findings of the study.

1. There is a need for more substantial financial investment in the public secondary school system.
2. The state government should prioritize education funding to ensure that schools have adequate infrastructure, learning materials, and well-paid staff.
3. Continuous professional development should be mandatory for all teachers.
4. Special attention should be given to training teachers on new education policies and classroom management strategies to improve policy implementation.

References

Adepoju, A. A., & Fabiyi, A. K. (2007). *Perspectives and Issues in Educational Management*. University of Lagos Press.

- Adesemowo P.O. & Olufunmilayo A. J. Basic of Education; the Meaning and Scope of Education. July 2022. Researchgate.net/p
- Adeyemi, T. O. (2008). Teachers' Teaching Experience and Students' Learning Outcomes in Secondary Schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. *Educational Research and Review*, 3(6), 204-212.
- Akinyemi, S., & Basse, O. (2012). Planning and Funding of Higher Education in Nigeria: The Challenges. *International Education Studies*, 5(4), 86-95.
- Alabi, A. T. (2014). Administrative Challenges of Implementing Universal Basic Education in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Foundations and Management*, 2(1), 23-33.
- Ayeni, A. J. (2012). Improving School and Community Partnership for Sustainable Quality Assurance in Secondary Schools in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research Studies in Education*, 1(2), 95-102.
- Call, K. (2018) Professional teaching standards. A comparative analysis of the history, implementation, and efficacy. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(3), 93-108. <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2018v43n3.6>
- Daramola, C. O. (2012) Introduction to the Sociology of Education. Published and Bound in Nigeria by: Glory-Land Publishing Company, Ibadan
- Doharty, R. K., Aman, K., Kapil, V. & Vishal, R. Y. (2013). Education: meaning, definition & types. Researchgate.net/p. publisher: SR Scientific Publication
- Ekundayo, H. T. (2010). Administering Secondary Schools in Nigeria for Quality Output in the 21st Century: The Principals' Challenge. *European Journal of Educational Studies*, 2(3), 187-192.
- Eru, Joe, Jemimah O and Jones, I. (2019). Educational policy implementation in Nigeria: challenges and strategies (*BSUJEM Vol. No. 2, 2019*) article 26(1)
- Fafunwa, A. B. (2004). History of Education in Nigeria. NPS Educational Publishers.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN). (2013). National Policy on Education. Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) Press.
- Lemchi, S. N. (2013). An Evaluation of the Role of Public Policy in Educational Reform in Nigeria. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 3(9), 51-57.
- Manafa, I. F. (2011). The administrative constraints to policy implementation in Federal Government Colleges in South East Nigeria. Thesis, university of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Nwosu, B. O., & Aja-Okorie, U. (2014). Teacher Education in Nigeria: Meeting the Challenges of Teacher Quality. *Educational Research International*, 3(1), 18-25.
- Obanya, P. (2010). Bringing Back the Teacher to the African School. UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa.

- Ogbonnaya, N. O. (2003). Principles and Applications of Educational Policies in Nigeria. University Trust Publishers.
- Ogunnode, N. J and Ahaotu G. N (2002). Educational strategic plans in Nigeria: challenges of implantation and ways forwards, *International Journal on Integrated Education*, volume 3 issue 14
- Okoroma N. S (2006). The perspectives of educational management, planning and policy analysis, PortHarcourt: Minsol Publishers
- Ololube, N. P., & Egbezor, D. E. (2012). A Critical Assessment of the Role of Public Administration in Education and National Development in Nigeria. *Journal of International Education Research*, 8(3), 189-198.
- Osokoya, O. L. (1987) 6-3-3-4 education in Nigeria: history, strategies, issues and problems, Lagos. Bininaike Educational Publishers
- Owolabi, O. A., & Adedeji, S. O. (2011). School Community Relations in Rural Secondary Schools in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Education*, 3(2), 36-42.
- Primus D and Susanti D (2021) Global trends in educational policy implementation and th complexity of quality in education: a Cameroonian perspective. INSECTA, *Integrated Science Education and Teaching Activity Journal* 2(1), 31-42. Doi:10.21154/insect.v2i1.2671
- Saka, M. O., & Oni, J. A. (2016). Factors Hindering Effective Implementation of Educational Policies in Nigeria. *African Journal of Educational Research*, 20(1), 79-93.
- Suraj, M. & Olusola A. (2011) The Nigerian economy under Obasanjo development policy management network bulletin 8, 10-13
- Uko, E. S., & Umosen, J. E. (2020). Teacher Training and Professional Development in Nigeria: Issues and Prospects. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 14(2), 45-60.
- Umaru, Y. A., & Tsafe, A. K. (2017). Educational Reforms in Nigeria: How Feasible are the Goals of Access and Quality? *African Journal of Public Administration and Management*, 28(3), 112-128.