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ISSUES OF POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIAN EDUCATION SECTOR

Kelechi Ulunma CHIGBU

Department of Educational Management
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria
Kelechigbu20@gmail.com

Woyengikuro KOLUBOWEI

Department of Educational Management
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria
koluboweiwoyengikuro@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Institutional management begins with policy formulation for proper direction of goals and objective of the organization. The deficiency in policy implementation in the institutional management setting has created a huge effect on the organizational performance in the global context. Policy is the determinant factor for the improvement on quality and productivity of the available human resources towards actualizing the objective of the institution. This has become an issue of concern in Nigerian institution especially in the 21st century. This paper seeks to examine the issues affecting proper implementation of educational policies. The paper concludes amongst others that political interference, lack of continuity in governance, corruption, poor supervision and inadequate funding are trending issues militating against proper implementation of policies in Nigerian education sector. Educational planning strategies, understanding the relevance of educational policies, delegating professionals without interference, creating avenue for continuity, proper allocation of resources and delegating monitoring team are some of the remedies to the problems of policy implementation in the society. It is suggested that adequate funds should be made available and more so, the regulatory bodies responsible for policy implementation should be empowered with immunity to supervise the policy process from the formulation stage to the implementation stage to make sure there is no interference from political juggernauts.

Keywords: Policy, Formulation, Implementation, Education, Impact.

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INTRODUCTION

Education as a fundamental human right of every healthy citizen for national development should be made open and accessible for all as stated on the national policy on education. It is believed that promoting education by eliminating illiteracy in Nigeria will to an extent

foster and accelerated national development. National policy on education has its stated objectives as to provide free and compulsory basic education for primary and secondary education as well as providing a functional literacy program for adults. Regardless of the written evidence that education is very crucial for national development and should be made free and compulsory, yet thousands of Nigerian citizens find it difficult to access education because of poverty. The National Policy on Education (2014) stated its five national objectives as the foundation for national development to include:

- A free and democratic society;
- A just and egalitarian society;
- A united strong and self-reliant nation;
- A great and dynamic economy;
- A land full of bright opportunities for all the citizens.

When these objectives are used as the basis for educational planning, values, equality in educational opportunities for citizens and the good of the society will be achieved (Agreen, 2018). Our society is still backward and poverty is ravaging the citizens due to poor policy implementation. Policy formulation is the basis for educational planning which furnishes the planner with the necessary operational guide towards understanding the extreme importance of educational policies and its implementation. Moreover, policies are guiding principles that facilitate decision making, direction of educational operations which begins with policy formulation. The poor implementation of educational policies contributed to the challenges of educational development in the society. The unfortunate and challenging issues like political instability, corruption, inadequate planning process, insufficient funding, and political interferences have hindered the effective implementation of educational policies. Certain policies formulated as regards education are unattainable such as free and compulsory education for all citizens and also the privatization of education is another great challenge to the education sector which has turned education to be for the rich and middle class citizens, it's no longer a fundamental human right for every citizen. These noticeable problems are of great concern to the education sector in Nigeria. Hence, this paper explores the issues of policy implementation, possible implications for national development and proposed remedies to a successful policy implementation.

Concept of Policy

Policy is the guiding statement or document that ensures the action of institutional management. According to Terry (1989) policies are the basis to the administrative functions and limit to the direction of operations. This document can be either written for future reference purposes or unwritten when the policy is pronounced verbally such as a statement made by the authorities in political power which may be a campaign strategy. The written document provides the organizational manager with the mode of operation stating the clear knowledge on the extent they can go on decision making. Relationship between the objectives and organizational function is established through the policy process which aids the organization to avoid deviation from the set goal and ensure consistency.

Educational Policy

Educational policies are the government's initiative plan of action towards the attainment of educational objectives. According to Osokoya (1987) educational policy improves people's quality of life and the objectives are directed towards providing the needs of the individuals,

community pressure and the level of education necessary for the personnel to meet with the social demand of the society. Considering the trend of change, policy making brings improvement and innovative change in the education sector. The process of formulating educational policies requires political attention to avoid clash of interest. It exhibits certain characteristics that guide the institutional management to achieve the stated goals and objectives of education. These policies are enforceable document by the society that formulated it and are part of educational institution and it should be purposefully designed for posterity. Aleyideino (1992) opined that educational policy is composed to guide experts on the operations of educational sector. According to Ololube (2017), education policies are without value if it cannot be implemented. It take a clear understanding of polices especially at the functional level of education system but it must be detailed (Ololube, 2018). In the education system, policy serves as a tool for correcting faults recorded by the initial issues in education. According to Ukaje, Okorie and Nwagbara (1992), educational policy depends immensely on the planning, formulation and the implementation of stated programmes. The progress of the education system depends largely on the formulation of sound policies and its effective implementation

Constraints to Policy Implementation in Nigerian Education Sector

Series of attempt have been made towards developing and formulating several policies in Nigerian education system. The problem is the implementation which has placed education in Nigeria in a pathetic situation. National policy on education has gone through series of review (first published in 1977, reviewed in 1981,1998 and 2014) to achieve sated goals and objectives of education, but lack of implementation affects the desired result from been achieved. Factors posing a great challenge to the realization of policy implementation in Nigeria education sector include the following:

- Lack of political stability;
- Corrupt practices;
- Inadequate funding;
- Political interference;
- Insufficient human and materials resources;
- Lack of continuity.

Lack of Political Stability

Regular change in government leadership hinders the implementation of educational policies. An abrupt termination of power affects every plan to implement any educational policy that is already formulated for national development, even though the process had already began. In order words, the planner may be forced to drop the initial decision on the policy and pick up a fresh plan just to satisfy the political demands of the present political party in authority. For instance, the National Curriculum Conference held in 1969 which gave rise to 6-3-3-4 system of education geared towards developing the nation technologically and technically could not be implemented to the later because of instability of the government. Another example is the universal primary education under Olusegun Obasanjo in 1976. This scheme supported the free and compulsory education in line with national policy on education, the change of government affected the scheme and fees were re-introduced to education. According to Hogdes (2001) Nigerian development failure sprung up as a result of lack of effective (model of governance). The instability in government has generated competition for resource.

Control over oil well emanating from states using political powers for their personal gain rather than promoting education for national development as stated in national policy on education.

The quick succession of new government with various uncertainties drifts their attention from education to area of personal interest thereby making educational policy implementation extremely difficult. Military interruption of government does not give room for quality and effective policy implementation (Adiele, Obasi & Ohia, 2017)

Corruption

The corrupt political leaders who are incompetent in education tend to jeopardize policy implementation process even from the formulation stage. Some policies are formulated for selfish reason to attract public attention .when a commissioner for education lobbies his way to office, corrupt practices are bound to occur which creates adverse effect on some policies that will benefit the individual and the society at large. Adesina (2004) has it that Nigeria ranks the third most corrupt nation by the transparency international (TI). Educational development is stagnated just because of level of corruption in the society. Funds required to promote education are been embezzled by the authorities in charge (Aghenta, 1984). Attention is on loafing funds meant for education rather than investing it appropriately. Ejiogu (2015) has it that the disease of corruption and the obvious mismanagement of resources have been blamed for the shocking state of the education system in Nigeria.

Political Interference

Politics is a social mechanism for exercising authorities and power with respect to resource allocation and distribution. It shapes and directs different societal class with education inclusive. In as much as government funds education, the political activities definitely interfere with the policy formulation and its implementation process. For instance, personal interest of the political leaders attracts imposing a practitioner instead of a planner in education process .Education planner is a technical planner who knows the principles of planning education with the appropriate ingredient for effective policy formula. Interference lays its hold on placing a lawyer as the education commissioner. The political activities affect the supervision of educational implementation process which has to be done according to the political interest as against the national interest for development.

Lack of Continuity

Incessant change in power disarrays the implementation program strategy documented by the outgoing office despite the sound policy formulated .Some policies that ended abruptly as a result of lack continuity includes: Better life programs in 1983 initiated by the first lady of Nigeria (Maryam Babangida). The program was geared towards the betterment of the less privileged and disadvantaged to benefit from government. Family support program initiated by Maryam Abacha could not see the light of the day after the end of their tenure .That is lack of continuity leading to policy implementation gap and encourage waste of resources. Gap is the distance between formulated policy and its realization.

Inadequate Funding

The success of implementing any educational programs depends largely on allocation of funds. In education sector, many compartments that make up the administrative system requires financial resources to function effectively .for instance, the teaching and

nonteaching staff of an institution should be paid for effective functionality, capital project, instructional materials and other services that facilitates education needs funds. Unfortunately, the inadequate funding to education poses a great challenge to the realization of the objectives of education. Scarcities of resources as put by Milner (1987) simply imply financial resources. Without funds, the authority in education won't carry out their statutory responsibilities fervently. Adesina (1977) stipulated that over estimation of available resources and underestimating the educational programs are among the factors playing out in the proper implementation of education policies. Also depending on foreign investors for assistance is another constraining factor to education funding. The budget allocation to education according to UNESCO standard is that 26% of the total national budget should go to education in other to meet the Millennium Development Goal target (MDG). The deplorable issue is that government of the day has no interest in education. Table below shows the allocation of funds by federal government to education from the total national budget as retrieved from central bank of Nigeria. Statistical bulletin from 1989-2010.

Table 1: Educational budget by FGN from 1989-2010.

Year	Total National Budget (billion=₦)	Total allocation to Education	Percentage of allocation to education
1989	30,107.0	1,941.7	6.45
1990	40,660.7	2,204.7	5.45
1991	38,665.9	1,787.6	4.62
1992	52,036.4	2,392.9	4.60
1993	111,66.5	7,999.1	7.20
1994	69,200.0	10,283.8	14.86
1995	111,457.5	12,816.4	11.50
1996	121,221.9	15,351.7	10.81
1997	188,089.3	6,841.2	11.53
1998	246,142.4	23,668.1	9.61
1999	249,000.0	27,713.5	11.13
2000	677,511,714,733	56,668,169,766	8.36
2001	894,214,805,186	62,567,055,443	7.00
2002	1,064,801,253,520	73,435,499,300	6.90
2003	765,100,000,000	13,900,000,000	1.82
2004	1,849,400,000,000	93,770,000,000	5.07
2005	1,849,000,000,000	92,000,000,000	4.98
2006	1,900,000,000,000	92,000,000,000	4.84
2007	2,300,000,000,000	186,000,000,000	3.09
2008	2,740,000,000,000	210,450,000,000	3.09
2009	3,101,813,750,629	168,460,000,000	5.44
2010	4,634,000,000,000	295,000,000,000	6.38

Source: CBN statistical bulletin cited in Adiele, Obasi and Ohia (2017)

The poor funding creates great disparity between lectures in Nigerian institution and their counterparts in the neighboring African countries. Unfortunately, the government of the day preferred diverting funds to insurgency and chibouk girls rather than investing into education for national development as stated in national policy on education (2014)

POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Education is a tool for national development and also an instrument par excellence is a channel for eradicating poverty in the society (Ukeje, 2000). On this premise, Federal government of Nigeria came up with 1999 constitution portraying education at the lime

light. Section 18 of the constitution stated. Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring equal and adequate education opportunities at all levels:

- Government shall promote science and technology;
- Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy In other to achieve these, Government shall Practicably provide Free and compulsory universal primary education;
- Free secondary education;
- Free adult literacy programs (FRG, 1999. P. 18).

This gave rise to the provision of national policy on education. The agitation is the poor implementation of educational policies that could necessitate national development. Ake (1998) defined education as a process of emerging the best in life. The structure of 6-3-3-4 system of education that was designed with a new orientation for building a fresh and better individual for a brighter future was back stabbed by the poor implementation process (Ukeje,1998). The switch from 6-3-3-4 to 9-3-4 system of education (UBE) if not properly handled will suffer greater impediments under the umbrella of national policy on education.

Remedies to Policy Implementation Problems

Formulation of educational policies and its implementation process involves unavoidable factors greater than the physical structures and knowledge building (Odia & Onoforimwan, 2007). It takes the active involvement of stakeholders such as education planners, teachers and federal government to ensure quality and successful policy implementation in education sector. Certain activities required to achieve effective policy implementation include:

- **Educational Planning Strategies**

Planning as described by Agabi (1999) is a decision making process toward actualizing a specific goal of education while systematic process of realizing future educational development need and goals of the society is termed educational planning. Educational policies as stated in national policy on education need careful planning process. In developing country like Nigeria, practitioners are hired in place of professionals without good knowledge of politics of education, curriculum planning and educational statistic (Agabi, 1999 in Adiele et al., 2017). In order to avoid reversing the original proposals of educational policies for national development, planners who understand the ingredients in planning should be directly involved in the formulation process.

- **Understanding the Relevance of Educational Policies**

Many a times, authorities in charge of educational policies find it very cumbersome decoding the strategic process involved. Therefore, it requires services of core stakeholders that understand educational policies and its objective in order to translate it to reality. For instance, universal primary education (UPE) scheme of 6-3-3-4 failed as a result of lack of understanding and proper interpretation of the scheme. Schools were not equipped with facilities that could enhance the program and also facilitators were insufficient.

- **Delegating Professional without Interference**

Professionals in this context refer to the skilled personnel in education system. Political interface hinders the effectiveness of policy implementation. There are three categories in policy process. Government officials issuing selfish direction, civil servant in the ministry who are interested in the resources and the approval of the designed policy by the government. All these are interference that should be avoided for smooth policy implementation.

- **Create avenue for continuity**

In most cases, healthy policy formulated gets terminated either at the formulation stage or implementation stage due to lack of continuity. The end of a political tenure should not be end of existing policies. Example better life programme initiated by Maryam Barbangida to reduce poverty level should not have gone with them regime. The successor should have continued where she stopped. Another example is in the capital projects that get abandoned after successive government.

- **Allocation of Resources**

Resources here involve both human and material. Policy process required funds to achieve the objectives. UNESCO stated that the minimum of 26% of total budget of a nation should be allocated to education. Conscientiously, the stakeholders co-operate bodies and other key players in education should also contribute to education. Personnel capable of executing educational programmes should be recruited. For instance, the introduction of languages in national policy on education involves employing relevant personnel in such field. Example, French, Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba, when adequately provided for, the gap will be bridged.

- **Delegating Supervisory Team**

Autonomy or free hands should be given to the supervisors and monitoring team of the policy process to carry out their statutory responsibilities without imposing negative intuition by political juggernauts.

CONCLUSION

Educational formulation process starts with strategic planning geared towards achieving the set goals and objectives for national development. However, educational system in Nigeria requires the support of the relevant stakeholders to ensure full implementation of education policies. One of the impediments is lack of understanding to the relevance of education. It is equally important for personnel with the responsibilities of formulating and supervising policy implementation process to perform their civic duties without political interference. In order to progress educationally and economically, there should be provision for continuity in Nigeria especially in the education sector.

Suggestions

To remedy the implementation process in education sector in Nigeria, the following suggestions were made:

- When policies are implemented for the good of the society, there should be continuity irrespective of who succeed the government.
- Adequate funds should be made available for effective policy implementation.
- Educational policy process should be void of political interference.
- Stakeholders in education are vital key players in education and should be involved in the process from planning stage to the implementation stage.
- Professionals should be involved in the process and not mere practitioners.

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