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EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF ORGANISATIONAL POLICY THROUGH QUALITY ASSURANCE TECHNIQUES IN UNIVERSITY POLICY MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Policy is a priority in every organizational setting like the university institution. It remains the tool that determines and drives the process and activities of an organisation. It therefore, deserves serious attention and effective implementation. The paper examines how quality assurance techniques can be exploited for effective implementation of organisational policy in terms of policy management in university institution. The paper is of the view that essential quality assurance techniques such as formulation of policy implementation quality plan; adequate policy implementation quality control mechanism; consistent policy implementation quality audit; and regular policy implementation process analysis should be employ in policy implementation process. In respect to policy management in the university institution, the paper concludes that policy implementation quality assurance techniques (PIQAT) are fundamental measures for effective implementation of organisational policy and the attainment of policy goals and objectives. Finally, the paper suggests among others that there should be prompt reporting of deviation from policy implementation standard, effective communication system, and regular provisions of desired human and material resources.

Keywords: Effective, Management, Policy, Policy implementation, Quality assurance, Techniques, University.

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INTRODUCTION

Policy is a priority in every well-meaning organization. This is because it remains an instrument that determines and drives the process and activities of an organization such as the university institutions. Every organization, be it government or non-governmental, is set up to accomplish predetermined goals and objectives. In order to actualize the goals and objectives, policy must be formulated to guides effective management, administration and

implementation of the organizations vision. In other words, policy must be formulated before anything could be done. That is why human conduct in every organization is generally governed by defined policy statement that regulates its member's behaviour or action.

Organizational policy refers to a process which helps any system to solve organizational problems. A policy represents a statement of intent and is implemented as a procedure or protocol in an organization. Policy is not only vital for effective management of institution but also for ensuring sustainability for all the systems. Policy in university institution defines roles and responsibilities in the functioning and management of the institution and faculties for effective teaching and learning activities. They also define effective and transparent ways and process for the appointment, promotions and reward of staff (Abdulrahman & Ogbondah, 2004). It is necessary that policies should support and ensure timely delivery of management of institutions that can improve the institution (Srivannabon & Milosevic, 2006). The term "policy" may apply to government as public sector policy or private sector policy. For example the presidential executive orders, corporate personnel policies, and parliamentary rules of order are all examples of organizational policy.

Policy implementation is broadly defined as what happens between the establishment of an apparent intention on the part of the government or organization to do something or to stop doing something and the ultimate impact in the world of action (O'Toole, 2000). Policy implementation is the active stage of policy and it is critical to the success of government and organization. It is putting into action all the decisions taken towards the actualization of the goals and objectives of the organization. It involves the translation of goals into actions that should result in viable results. Organisational policy implementation then is a reflection of a complex change process where organisation decisions are transformed into programmes, procedures, regulations or practices aimed at the improvement of the organisation. It can be liken to a compass which directs the university management in the day to day affairs of the institutions.

Organisational policy implementation is a continuous process and it's important in the policy cycle to the individuals, private and public enterprises cannot be over-emphasized. But unfortunately, the nature and complexities involved in policy implementation process are such that the policy implementer often finds himself in a state of dilemma, not knowing what specific policy measures and method to adopt in the implementation, having regard as to the consequence and uncertainties in terms of achieving the goals and objectives of any given policy. This is aggravated by the fact that certain unforeseen factors likes economics, administrative, socio-cultural and political factors, etc. may suddenly bring implementation and substantially influence the outcomes thereby creating a gap between policy goals and achievement. This portends the fact that one of the major handicaps to development of university institutions is the inability to translate policies into reality.

Policies are formulated and often with good intentions, but at the implementation stage, the policies tend to be rendered less effective (Okoroma, 2016). To this extent, policy implementation efforts are often inadequate and consequently objectives are difficult to realize. In spite of the great importance of translating policy statements into practice, policy implementation in Nigeria is still bedeviled with "implementation gap", that is the inability to implement a policy effectively is a huge problem. Weaver (2010, p.1) position support this view, when he argues that "problems that arise in the implementation process make it less likely that policy objectives will be achieved in many government programmes". Therefore since every organization is set forth to achieve certain goals and objectives through policy statement. The policy itself needs to be put into practice through adequate implementation by employing certain techniques. It is on the basis of this and in order to strengthening effective

implementation of organizational policy in the 21st century in university institutions that this paper seeks to explore.

Concept of Organizational Policy

Several scholars have defined policy differently. For instance, policies "are standing decisions intended to serve as overall guideline to thinking and decision making" (Urieto, 1999, p.10). Adebayo (2000, p.4) believe that organizational policy is concerned with decision as to what to do; it is the laying down of the broad objectives of what is to be done. Policy as define by Adepoju (2000) is a guiding principle or a course of action considered expedient, prudent or advantageous. It is a statement that guides the action of a substantial position of the organization. From the above definitions, it is apparent that policy is a framework that guides the planning and administration of activities of organization.

In another definitional perspective, Lemay (2002, p.11) described a policy as "a purposive course of action followed by an actor's or set of actors in dealing with a problem". In modification of his earlier definition, Anderson (2003, p.2) states that "a policy is a relatively stable, purposive course of action followed with a problem or matter of concern". While, Sapru (2004) refers policy as a guide, informing action which may take any of the following forms: statement of goals, assertion of course of action, announcement of broad purpose, and statement of authoritative decision. In the same way, Obikeze and Anthony (2004) define policy as the guiding principle toward the realization of organizational objectives. Also adding voice to the definition of policy is Wehrich and Koontz (2004). They contend that policy is general statement or understanding that guides managers thinking in decision-making. The implication of this is that, decisions which is key in policy making requires actions that are intended to guides university management to their commitment to the decision they ultimately make. On his own part, Eminue (2005, p.72) has eloquently defined policy as "a statement of the goals and objectives of an organization in relation to a particular subject and the description of the strategies by which the goals and objectives are to be achieved".

More recent definition has also been given by Ikelegbe (2006, p.1) who noted that "policy is the object, tool and means of governance". Accesses to basic social service or social infrastructure by citizens, as well as cost of doing so are largely affected by policy. This clearly points to the role that policy plays in society and development. He added that it is a statement of what an organization wants to do, what it is doing, what it is not doing and would not be done. Okeke (2006, p. 6) describe policy as "a description or expression of the organization's official attitude. It is a guide to the action or decisions of people". He further that policy reflects management thinking on basic matters and informs those interested in the activities of the enterprise about the organization's intention regarding them. In this way, policies are things which can be formulated, decided upon, adopted, implemented, evaluated, revised and repealed. Consequent upon this Nwokocha (2007) avow that policy is the decision that defines goals, set precedents and lay down courses of action to implement the decision. He added that policy is the official guidelines for intentions, goals and actions of an organization in carrying out known and defined objectives. It is a well-defined course or method of action chosen among alternatives to guide future action, he concludes. In the same vein, Wikipedia (2015) posited that a policy is a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions in order to achieve rational outcomes. This means that policy is a guide or plan of action. For this to be possible mean that policy must have legal backing that specify broad outlines and guidance for decision making on specific issues. Policies therefore, are the vehicles through which organization goals are achieved. Simply put, a policy is a proposed coursed of action which government or organizations intend to implement in response to a

given problem or situation confronting it. The implications of the above definitions are that government or organizations are guided to facilitate the achievement of their set goals by policies. That is to say that policy is a statement of what government or organization or individual wants to do or what it will not do.

The above definitions show that all aspects of an organisational life is obviously ruled, guided or influenced by policy. A policy is usually written and ought to contain both a principle and a rule of action. In this regard policy may be seen to encompass rules or decisions made which are unintentionally or intentionally followed. Further implicit in the definitions is the impression that a policy differs from a decision in the sense that while a policy has larger complexities and larger time perspective for its attainment, a decision is simply a choice made among competing alternatives. Thus it may be safe to say that policy establishes a broad framework within which discrete organisational decisions are taken. Put differently, a policy is an aggregate of smaller decisions to the solution of practical organisational or societal problems. Since policies are only guide to administrators or managers, they are neither prescriptive nor specific in nature, but provide ample room for discretion. However, poorly framed policies will appear like directives. Therefore, policy starts with formulated decisions and can only be implemented through planning.

Consequently, the word “policy” is both the means and ends of getting set objectives of an organization realized. Policy then, is the thinking of a high level of abstraction which expresses organisational goals and the means or procedures of achieving them. It is the basis of day-to-day administration and serves as a guide to organizational administrative management when deciding the lines along which the organisation system or programme should be conducted. Since organizations, like the university institutions, are controlled in the main by management. It is therefore expected that policy must originate from management as the controllers of the university institution. However, the need to carry the university staff along and to also take care of the external environment makes it imperative that university management should not be the sole policy source. Policy sources therefore, should include management, subordinate executives, customs and tradition, and external environment (Obikeze & Anthony, 2004).

Generally, policies are non-scientific and thus can be interpreted from a normative point of view (Okeke, 2006). Policy is a problem solving activity. Policy specifies and set a limit to a course of action. It is a projected programmer of goal, values and practices. In an organization, policy provides the strategic roadmap that specifies the objectives to be pursued. More importantly, policy assists management in the job of planning by supporting a meaningful relationship between organizational objectives on one hand and organizational functions, physical factors, and personnel on the other. Obikeze and Anthony (2004) advanced four importance of policy to organizations such as building efficient decentralization in an organization, helping in fostering an intelligent exercise of initiative, providing a good basis for evaluating performance, and promoting of cooperation and facilitating coordination. In addition policies can assist in both subjective and objective decision making.

In university policy management, policy plays a vital role in an institutional management. For instance, it provides the principles which states how the members of any higher education institution will act (Rahim & Noruzi, 2011). Consequently, the following are the roles of policy in the management of university institution: policy interprets values into operation, policy give room for agreement with legal and statutory responsibilities, policy directs the university institutions towards the achievement of its strategic plan, policy set standard, and policy improves the management of risk (Vargas-Hernandez, Noruzi & Irani, 2013). To this end, a policy consists of a number of general or specific goals which policy formulators hope to achieve including the general course of action or procedures to be

followed and the specific means by which the goal is to be pursued. It follows that through excellent policy, management of an organization determine how the organization is run and how the activities of such organization will meet the desire of individual and that of the society. Therefore, effective policy determines the condition and intention of organizational leaders towards its citizenry or human personnel. So a well and properly articulated organizational policy gives rise to a well-planned organizational structure or setting.

Obikeze and Anthony (2004) argues that for a policy to be quite effective, it must be based on the organizations objectives; it must be specific and clear; it must conform to ethical standards; it should be stable and flexible; and it should be sufficiently comprehensive. Hence, Omale and Ibietan (2013, p.83) assert that "policy is a relatively stable, purposive or matter of concern". It involves formulation stage, implementation stage and evaluation stage. Policies are written, produced and published by various organizations to suit the purpose for which such organizations are established. Then, good policy according to Okoromah (2016) require time to formulate; are usually broad, leave room for judgment but do not require complex interpretation; are usually consistent and enable administrators to have direction with enhanced confidence.

Literature review shows different kinds of policies. Thus, policies may be classified on the basis of nature and sources of societal problems. It may be domestic or international, or may be public or private. For instance, public policies can be classified based on the different sectors to which the policy applies. In Nigeria for example, public policies includes National Policy on Education (education sector), Privatization Policy (economic sector), Agricultural Policy of Nigeria (agricultural sector), Health for All Policy (health sector) etc. On a general term, studies in policy science have led to the classification of certain policies as prescriptive and descriptive on one hand, and macro or micro policies on the other, depending on their goals and method of arriving at conclusions made. More specifically, another way of classifying policies is on the basis of intent, operating processes, issues and clientele. Such parameter of classification finds expression in the following types: regulatory policy, distributive policy, redistributive policy, extractive policy, and symbolic policy. Besides the above classifications, Torjman (2005) outlined four types of policy which include substantive and administrative policy, vertical and horizontal policy, reactive and proactive policy, current and future policy.

Concept of Policy Implementation

The implementation stage is the most important stage in policy management process. It is at this stage that we can ascertain "whether a particular organisational policy is going to be actualized or not" (Adigun, 1997, p. 135). It is one thing to formulate policies and another to have them implemented to achieve the purposes of the policies. The purpose of policies is achieved when they are effectively implemented. Policy implementation is therefore important to the success of any organisation such as the university institutions. No policy can succeed if the implementation does not bear any relationship with the intention of the policy makers (Rahmat, 2015).

Implementation refers to the process of converting inputs-financial, information, materials, technical, human, demands, support, etc. into output (Egonmwan, 2000). According to him it is the stage where the earlier preparation and designs, plans and analyses are tested in the harsh light of reality and where policy content and the impact of people could be substantially altered or even negated by the political and administrative process. Similarly, Eminue (2005, p.296) assert that "implementation" involves "the process of converting human and material inputs including informational, technical, human, demand and support inputs etc, into outputs in the form of goods and services". According to him, there is

the imperative need on the part of the policy implementers to exhibit the highest analytical form of clarity and specificity of these policies and also to pay particular attention for the critical issues of policy, organization, target and environment whose clarity and specificity are necessary prerequisites and preconditions for effective and successful policy implementation. It follows that for any policy, the clarity and its specificity is necessary in following a rational and logical process towards the implementation of such policy. It is then suggested that in planning implementation of any policy, it is essential at the beginning of its formulation to set the goals for the policy programme taking into consideration the tensions that must necessarily arise, the issues of institutionalization and feedback.

Policy implementation is an administrative procedure that depends widely on the evaluative measures incorporated to enhance its workability (Imam, 2012). This implies that policy implementation stage involves administrative actions which entails the implementation of a well-planned funded programmes or projects. Policy implementation further implies discretion and enthusiasm. It therefore, requires cooperation, coordination, understanding and commitment at all levels of implementing machinery starting with the ministers or top management through the various agencies, department and subordinate. So the success of any organisational policy and its implementation depends to a very large extent on the support it receives not only from policy formulators but also from those that are expected to implement and consume it. Policy is implemented through structures and processes and usually administered through ministries, departments, agencies and concerned institutions. Policy implementation involves the creation of a policy delivery system in which specific mechanisms are designed and pursued to achieve desired goals.

Policy implementation therefore, is defined as those actions, process or activities that are directed towards the achievement of predetermined goals and objectives of a policy decisions. It is about making efforts to transform policy decisions into operational term in order to accomplish organizational objectives. This definition suggests that implementation is the linkage between formulated policy with its objectives on one hand and a concrete and tangible executed policy on the other hand. Essentially, policy implementation is therefore very sensitive because it is at the policy implementation stage that policy statements are translated into workable blueprints as well as monitoring the progress of the implementation process. It is perhaps in this context that Ikelegbe (2005) argued that implementation is the major explanation for the failure or successes of public policies. Thus, the quality of a policy is determined by its implementation and not on how good it looks on paper (Obikeze & Anthony, 2004). They contend that, in implementation of organizational policy, four vital factors should be taken into consideration. This is clarity and specificity of policy, implementation organization, identification/assessment of the target group, and the environment.

Literature shows existence of two dominant approaches of organisational policy implementation. The top-down and bottom-up approaches are seen as providing the most effective methods for studying and describing policy implementation. From the perspective of the top-down model, the proponents of this model see policy makers as the central players and concentrate on factors that can be controlled at the central point. The top-down approach takes a macro view of implementation of policy by examining the process from the standpoint of the initial policy maker or the policy itself. This model sees policy makers as the central players and concentrates on factors that can be controlled at the central point. In contrast to the top-down approach, is the bottom-up approach. The proponents focus on the participants and service providers, contending that organisational policy is made at the local level. The aim of this model was to introduce allegiance between policymaking and delivery. In this approach, policy implementers execute policy objectives rather than policymakers.

In an effort to reconcile the two major approaches of policy implementation, different groups of researchers such as Colebatch (2002) and Sabatier (2005), have proposed different ways of combining the two approaches. Colebatch (2002) proposed two intersecting dimensions model. He suggest that a policy process should be perceived as a product of two intersecting dimensions: vertical (top-down) and horizontal (bottom-up) sets of activities. The vertical dimension in this model covers authorised decision-makers and their decisions. The horizontal dimension covers the activities of many actors in the policy process, both inside government and in non-governmental organisations. This dimension emphasises the importance of negotiations and consensus. Colebatch's model, involves both approaches simultaneously. In the same way, Sabatier (2005), have proposed different ways of combining the two approaches referred to as Advocacy Coalition Framework. This framework draws from both top-down and bottom-up models. It starts from the premise that the most useful unit of analysis for understanding policy change is a policy subsystem-those actors from a variety of public and private organisations who are involved with the policy. This framework assumes that these subsystems can be grouped into a number of coalitions, which consists of interest groups, politicians, agency, officials and intellectuals who share common beliefs. It argues that actors perceive the world through a set of beliefs that filters information consistent with pre-existing beliefs.

A successful policy implementation requires that the policy is well formulated and its process of implementation duly and diligently followed. This is so because any policy that is not well-articulated at the formulation stage is not likely to achieve the desired goals. Therefore, every implementer of policy must understand those to be affected by the policy and ensure that they are part of the process. Brynard and De Coning (2006, p182) have identify some interrelated variables that help to impact on the policy implementation process. They refer to them as the 5C protocol's critical variables which include "policy content, policy context, commitment, capacity and clients and coalitions". These variables unravel the complexity of following policy as it moves through a dynamic maze of implementation and they also help to understand how policy changes its surroundings and pertinently to understand how it is influenced to attain the goals that are set to be achieved (Brynard, 2005).

Scholar like Eminue (2005), has suggested that policy implementation process is incessantly linked by the key concepts of tension, institutionalization and feedback. According to him, a new policy, which aims at transforming an unpalatable situation into a desired or qualitatively superior state of affairs, necessarily generates tension with and between administrative implementing organizations, the target groups and environment. Hence the relationships between these key concepts or elements go a long way to determine the degree of success or otherwise of policy implementation. This is so because implementation like Ikelegbe (1996, p.78) declares involves "the committal of funds, the establishment of structures and methods, the hiring of personnel, the administering or executing of activities, and the securing of policy goods, services and other intended outcomes" is likely to fail in situations of tensions if the managerial capabilities of the administrative implementing organization are either weak or non-existent. Furthermore, tensions generated in the course of implementing a new policy are often fed back to the implementation process in the form of new demands which are subsequently processed and transformed into some policies that, in turn have to be implemented (Eminue, 2005).

Policy experts have shown that an ideal process of policy implementation would include the following core elements:

- Specification of program details (i.e. how and by which agencies/organization showed the programme be executed? How should the law/programme be interpreted?).

- Allocation of resources (i.e. how are budget distribute?, which personnel will execute the programme ?, which units of an organizaionn will be in charge for the execution?).
- Decisions (i.e. how will decision of simple cases be carried?).

The process of policy implementation begins with a policy decision expressed in statutory or other official forms. These statutes are often in skeleton form and require further development in order to be able to implement the policy. The statues/policies are then handed over to the appropriate administrative ministry, department or agency to issue rules and directives that will make the policy more specific for implementation. Thus, it is imperatively essential if success of any public policy is to be ensured to consider those actions and activities that will accomplish the objectives of the policy. This consideration according to Amadi (2011) is not made in isolation but is rather to be made in relation to the components of the implementation process. These components of the implementation process include: the implementing organization, the socio-political and economic environment, and the policy target group the policy objectives, the method of implementation and the policy resources

Most time the issue of policy is not usually the formulation of the organisational policy but the implementation of it. There is usually a huge gap between the policy document and the implementation. Implementation of organizational policies is confronted with a lot of constraints or problems. This has resulted in the inability of the policy to achieve its goals. For instance, in Nigeria it has often been said that a number of problems not only characterize the public policy process but has indeed been the bane of implementation. In the context of this, Olaniyi (1998) outlined three basic impediment of policy implementation as duplication of implementation agencies, lack of coordination between them, and communication gap. While Egnomwan (2000) states that the common problems of policy implementation includes inadequate definition of goals, over ambitious policy goals, lack of well-defined programmes for attainment of goals, choice of inappropriate organizational structure in implementation of policies, lack of continuity in commitment to policy, lack of clear definition of responsibility, political opposition during implementation, compromises during implementation capable of defeating policy factor of timing in implementation and corruption. To him, these problems has accounted for the implementation gap plaguing the developing countries.

Again for most scholars such as Allen (2004), Eminue (2005), and Ikelegbe (2005), these problems account for the reason why policies fail in most developing counties. Allen (2004) for instance, itemized the following problems: external shock, lack of adequate consultation, undemocratic character of the policy process, corruption, inadequate training of bureaucrats and lack of information systems. Among the various problems identified by Eminue (2005) include: inadequate data, vague or misunderstood goals, overambitious and unrealizable policy goals, self-contradictory policies, policy inconsistency and instability, inaccurate identification of social problems, indecision among political leaders, absence of political will, etc. In a like manner, Epelle (2011) opines that factors that impede effectively policies implementation in Nigeria include: non product of a rational-comprehensive model of decision-making, inadequacy or even lack of planning, setting unrealistic goals by the leaders, presence of multiple cause-and-effect relationships situation, administrative incompetence, inadequate funding, and political and bureaucratic corruption. The above review indicates that the effective implementation of organizational policies in Nigeria are hamper with numerous constraints ranging from internal to external variables.

Egonmwan (2000, p.140) took the position that “an analysis of policy implementation process is therefore a precondition for successful policy implementation. Ikelegbe (2005, p. 87) also adds that "the degree of consensus among those implementing, participating in and affected by a policy affects the level of joint efforts and activities in favour of a policy

implementing success. The level of change is also related to the potential for successful implementation". Again, to achieve successful implementation, policy objectives have to be informed by sound theoretical underpinnings (Amadi, 2011). The above positions point to the facts that a good university administrator who understands policy management, the intent of the policy, applies the appropriate strategies and the possible factors that can mitigate against its fulfillment and plans to address the issues that may arise, is bound to achieve success.

Concept of Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is one of the key concepts of Total Quality Management (TQM) and aimed at continuous quality improvement. However, to properly understand the meaning of quality assurance, it is essential to understand what is meant by quality itself. Historically, quality in education analysis could be traced to the quality movement which emerged in response to economic crisis in the 1970s, spawning management approaches such as Total Quality Management (Sayed, 2007). Quality according to Liston (1999) is related more to the relevance and value of each institution's mission, purpose and objectives, and the achievement of identified outcomes. While Hellriegel, Jackson and Shocum (2002) defined it as how well a product or service does what it is supposed to do. Meanwhile, quality of education is "an output of education usually means such things as contributions to rational thinking, problem solving skills, good judgment and creativity" McMahan (1993, p.23). This view of quality of education implies that quality cannot be measured by mere assessment of examination results. Rather it should take into account the effectiveness of the school system, which is justify by the greatest number of the output (i.e. the learner) being able to think rationally; creativity oriented; and having good judgment, analytical and problem solving skills. The above definitions implies that whichever way quality is used for analyzing management of education is a matter of degree rather than absoluteness as it occurs in a low-high standard continuum.

Review of literature indicates that quality assurance has its origin in the industrial sector, where production of goods and services where trail for high quality delivery. As remarked by Allais (2009) the concern of the industrial factories was to ensure that the items they were producing did not have defects and so, there was need for inspectors, whom duty was to check samples of comparison to expected quality of the product. Quality assurance relates to the process of preventing faults or deviations from occurring in the first place outside a stipulated standard of practice. This assertion is corroborated by Oakland (1995, p.13) who submits that quality assurance is "broadly prevention of quality problems through planned systematic activities (including documentation)". This is mainly done by designing quality into the process so as to ensure that what is produced conforms to predetermined specifications (Okorie & Uche, 2005).

Quality assurance according to Wikipedia (2012) refers to the planned and systematic activities implemented in a quality system so that quality requirements for a product or service will be fulfilled. It is the systematic measurement, comparison with a standard, monitoring of processes and an associated feedback loop that confers error prevention. To this end, Stebbing (1993) clearly agrees with the above views by arguing that Quality Assurances (QA) comprises both administrative and procedural activities implemented in a system in a way that all the requirement and goals for a product, service or activity will be fulfilled. The above definitions clearly agree that the hub of quality assurance is the prevention of defects rather than the detection of the defects when they have already occurred. In addition, there are two fundamental principles of quality assurance viz: first is fit for purpose, that is the product must be fit for the planned purpose; and second is right first time, that is mistakes must be stamp out. To achieve this, Abraham (2019) maintains that

quality assurance should ensure management of the quality of raw materials, quality of process of production/production line, quality of managers of production process, quality of all services related to production, etc.

Informed by the above, quality assurance is thus a planned systematic activity of managing quality by ensuring that quality is designed and built into the process of production by preventing faults, rather than identifying faults belatedly in the product or service. This is so because a built in quality process will translate to high quality product or service, all things being equal. This view is similar to the view held by Oakland (1995) that quality assurance is built into the production process and focuses on preventing, rather than merely identifying faults very late. That quality assurance is about preventing faults is also supported by Whitaker (1998). He argues that quality assurance is the determination of standards, appropriate methods and quality requirements by an expert body, accompanied by a process of inspection or evaluation that examines the extent to which the practice meets the standards.

In policy management, quality assurance concerned with setting standard procedures for the various processes and activities concerning effective policy implementation that lead to the achievement of goals and objectives. Quality assurance in policy implementation process is an error free technique that identifies errors before they occur. Blake (1994) avows that quality in education depends primarily upon the commitment of the academic community to the maintenance and improvement of standard. It is not an externally imposed thing but an internally determined focus on which the system or the institution itself builds the necessary framework to pursue and achieve. According to Agih and Jonah-Eteli (2010), this internally expressed commitment of academic standards, which is backed up by relevant framework to promote and give practical effect, is quality assurance in education. Therefore, it can be argued that, to actualize quality assurance in organisational policy implementation, will require following an already established standard procedures.

Various scholars have buttressed the importance of quality assurance in the management of education system. For instance, Danks (1996) argues that quality assurance ensures that customers receive goods and/or services that give them satisfaction. The importance of quality assurance in production process and on customer's satisfaction was further supported by Stephens (2003, p. 1), who asserts that quality assurance "is necessary in the wake of shrinking public funding, growing stakeholder participation in education, and a growing demand for accountability and efficiency by customers". Abraham (2019) concedes a compromise to the above views when he reiterated that quality assurance is necessary in education because defect in its production line brings tremendous consequences to the socio-economic well-being of nations. What emerges from this review is a general agreement among scholars that the quality assurance system in the management of education especially in the attainment of policy objectives, laid-down procedure on how production/ policy implementation should be carried out at specific standards, prevention of faults and ensuring quality client satisfaction.

Policy Implementation Quality Assurance Techniques

The illustrated figure below is tagged policy implementation quality assurance techniques (PIQAT) model. As indicated in the figure the source and enforcement of these techniques will emanate from the institutional policy implementation quality assurance unit. It is our belief that if the following four fundamental techniques are followed religiously and judiciously it will to a great extent ensure effective implementation of organisational policy.

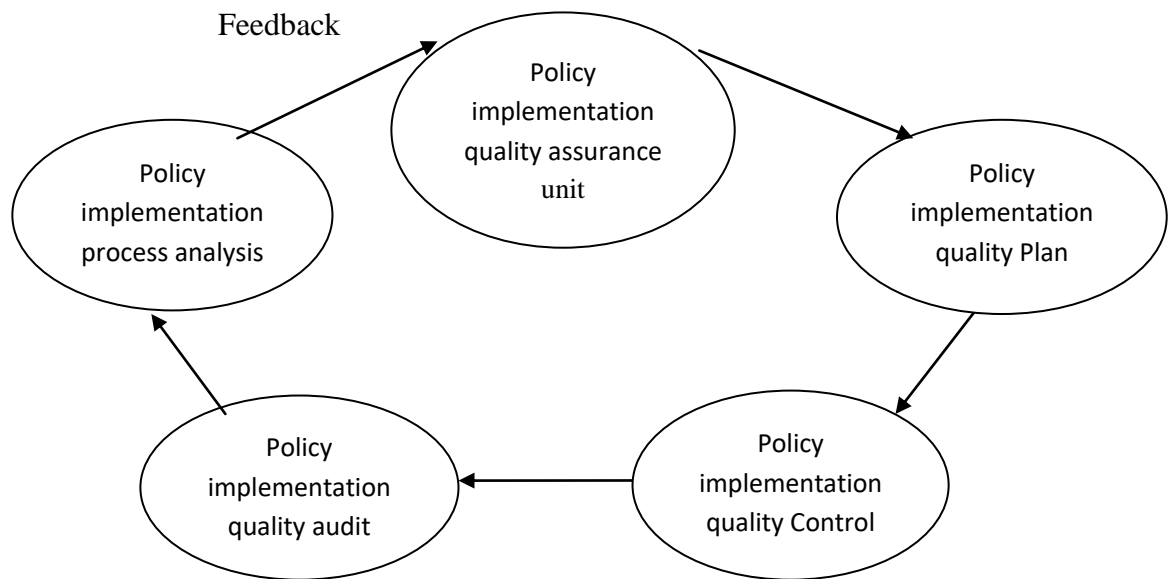


Figure 1: Policy implementation quality assurance techniques (PIQAT).

Formulation and Adoption of Policy Implementation Quality Plan

From the PIQAT model above, the first step of policy implementation quality assurance techniques is formulation of a policy implementation quality plan. Steyn (1999) remarked that the need to conceptualize what to do is the first step towards quality. This first step towards quality is quality planning. Planning aims at deciding upon future courses of action. It involves deciding in advance what is to be done, how, when, where and in what order it is to be done in order to achieve predetermine objectives. Thus, a policy implementation quality plan shows the committed course of action towards ensuring quality assurance in effective implementation of organizational policy in university education enterprises. It is at the quality planning stage that the guiding rules, standard and procedures regarding policy implementation process are explicitly stated. That is the quality requirement of the policy implementation process and the quality standards, the process and its output shall follow are identified and stated. It should also state the procedure (i.e. action plan) on how the policy implementation process will comply with the quality requirements and the stipulated quality standard. Cost-Benefit analysis is also considered at this stage. That is the benefit of meeting quality requirements of a given organizational policy and costs of meeting such quality requirements are analyzed. The plan should be able to specify the control and auditing measures including the process analysis of the organizational policy implementation process based on the stated quality standard.

Adequate Policy Implementation Quality Control Mechanism

As indicated in the PIQAT model above the second step of policy implementation quality assurance techniques is adequate policy implementation quality control mechanism. Quality control is define by Wadsworth, Stephens, and Godfrey (2002, p. 27) as “...the regulatory process through which we measure actual quality performance, compare it with standards, and act on the difference.” In managing organizational policy implementation therefore, the role of university management or its regulatory policy implementation quality assurance unit in ensuring that systems are in place to promote and give effect to that commitment and to

monitor the results of policy implementation process is what constitutes the policy implementation quality control mechanism. In its generic sense and nature, quality control entails the determination and exclusion of work process or final products that do not meet predetermined standard specifications. A view shared by Sallis (1996) when he argued that quality control as an after-the-event process concerned with detecting and rejecting defective items. Quality control involves detection and weeding out parts of or the final product that are below standard (Okorie & Uche, 2005). It is as an after the event process of detecting deviations from the set standards and eliminating such defective products. This implies making sure that defective products do not reach the final consumer.

Quality control begins with assessment and includes actions taken to eliminate unacceptable quality. Therefore, policy implementation quality control should involves monitoring specific university institution policy outcomes to determine first whether they comply with relevant quality standards and secondly identifying ways to eliminate causes of unsatisfactory result. Policy implementation quality control should be performed constantly throughout the life span of a university institution policy. Regular policy implementation inspection strategy is essential in this case. This primarily aimed at determining whether the policy implementation is effectively carried out as it ought to be carried out and whether standards of its procedures are being met. It also seeks to ascertain whether strange events occur in the policy implementation quality plan so as to enable appropriate corrective action to be effected. In university institution, the responsibility for policy implementation quality control should rests on the policy implementation quality assurance unit which engages in detecting quality and defects during policy implementation and taking appropriate decision and recommendation.

Consistent Policy Implementation Quality Audit

From the PIQAT model above the third step of policy implementation quality assurance techniques is policy implementation quality audit. Auditing refer to an objective systematic review and evaluation of a giving process or activities. In this context, policy implementation quality audit is independent review to determine whether organisational policy implementation activities are complying with the stated standard plans and procedures. Auditing is very important in the management of policy implementation process. Auditing have to be carried out to verify that policy implementation process and its management in university institution is in conformity with the expected quality process and output. In this case the actual performance or output of the policy is examined in comparison with the stipulated intention that it is supposed to achieve. The standards of performance acts as the bench mark against which the actual performance is to be compared. Therefore performance policy implementation is the process of auditing the quality requirements and results via quality control measure to ensure that appropriate quality procedures and the policy purpose are met. This might have prompted Danks (1996) to holds the notion that audits are carried out to ensure that quality control procedures are followed.

The purpose of auditing in respect to policy implementation towards the achievement of goals and objectives of the policy is to detect error and provide corrective measures through constructive advice to the concerned management. Continuous policy implementation quality audit will provide more detailed issues, concerns and problems of the policy in respect to quality assurance and goal attainment. The auditing process should be able to objectively reveal what could be responsible for the non-realization of a given organizational policy goals and objectives as required and also what are responsible for the achievement of certain goals and objectives in order to strengthen such. The audit report of such must adopt the principle of “true and fair view”. This can only be possible if the policy

implementation quality assurance unit in objective, exercise analytical skill and good sense of judgment.

Regular Policy Implementation Process Analysis

Regular policy implementation process analysis is the last step of the policy implementation quality assurance techniques model. Process analysis is critical in a system because the main goal of quality assurance is continuous quality improvement. In policy implementation activities, process analysis should examine problems experienced, constraint experienced and non-value added activities identified during a particular policy implementation process. It also includes root cause analysis to construct preventive action for similar problems in the future. For this reason it is required to assuring quality in the policy implementation process rather than merely scrutiny for it in the end result. The process analysis also concern comprehensive organisational policy implementation diagnostic evaluation which should cover all aspect of the policy and aimed at improving the general policy management of the university institution. Process analysis in this regard should be systematically, carefully and thoughtfully conducted in order to meet the purpose for which it is intended.

However, evaluating the entire policy implementation system should take the form of inventory to ensure that good quality practice/procedure can be nurtured and continued while the practice that can or deterring the smooth survival of effective policy implementation could be discontinued. This is very necessary if the policy is to achieve its objectives. The guidelines of such process analysis should include evaluation based on clearly stated policy goals and objectives; effective communication to all concerned; and matching evaluation with prior established standard and objectives. In view of this, it could be safely affirm that the objectives of process analysis in terms of quality assurance in policy management is to detect or predict defects in the procedural design policy implementation; to provide valid information for decision-making; and to maintain authenticated documentation of the procedures as it occurs. Consequently, process analysis is desired to provide periodic feedback to organisational managers, institutional leadership, policy implementation quality assurance unit personnel and others responsible for implementation of the policy. Process analysis is also needed to provide a sound basis for quality assurance in every aspect of policy implementation process.

It is only when proper process analysis of the validity or otherwise of policy goals, implementation procedures, progress made towards achieving these goals and objectives, the factors and conditions that have facilitated or retorted progress and ways of effecting improvements that we can ascertain the extent of quality assurance in policy implementation process. To enhance the goals and objectives attainment, process analysis in policy improvements and management should involves holistic evaluation of the policy in terms of goals and objectives, procedures and strategies adopted.

CONCLUSION

From the discussions in this paper, it has been revealed that policy is a priority in every organizational setting like the university institution. The paper held the view that essential quality assurance techniques such as formulation of policy implementation quality plan; adequate policy implementation quality control mechanism; consistent policy implementation quality audit; and regular policy implementation process analysis should be employ in policy implementation process. Indeed, the successful implementation of organizational policy (such as university institution policy management) depends on the support given to it by the implementers and other stakeholders in the organization. It involved ensuring that every

policy spelt in the university institution policy plan is implemented to the entirety. To make this possible, it is important that policy makers state policy statements in plain and unambiguous language to ensure that the policy implementers do not experience difficulty in their interpretation of the policy intention. Moreover, to effectively implement the policies and avoid unintended consequences, the institutional leadership in the universities in terms of policy management needs to understand the intrigues of effective policy implementation process, the possible techniques such as policy implementation quality assurance techniques (PIQAT). It is also expedient to understand the changing environment in which the policy will be implemented. Hence, in policy management of university institution, the paper concludes that policy implementation quality assurance techniques (PIQAT) are fundamental measures for effective implementation of organisational policy and the attainment of policy goals and objectives.

Suggestions

The following suggestions are made for improvement:

- There should be prompt reporting of deviation from policy implementation standard. If deviation reports are timely it will enable adjustments and corrections to be made promptly in order to ensuring and maintaining quality assurance in organisational policy implementation. To attain this, close and effective supervision and monitoring of the policy implementation process is crucial.
- There should be effective communication system and good institutional leadership. This will ensure free discussion of issues, problems and plans of action towards ensuring and maintaining quality assurance in policy management and implementation. This will also enable the implementers of policy to know and understand what they are supposed to do at any point in time. This is so because misunderstanding and misinterpretations of policy statements could lead to ineffective implementation.
- The quality assurance person/unit must be objective. That is in assessing policy implementation quality assurance in the system; the assessor should try as much as possible to eliminate subjectivity and personality interferences in his sense of judgment.
- Assessment must reflect the quality standard of performance of the policy and the expected standard of performance of the policy. Therefore, all aspect and activities of organisational policy implementation should be guided by quality assurance mechanism.
- There should be regular provisions of desired human and material resources in the system in order to enhance effective and quality organisational policy implementation. Funds and requisite material resources must be made available by the concerned management or authority for effective organisational policies implementation. This also requires training and retraining the policy implementers on the required knowledge, skills and intent of the policy.
- There should be harmonious coexistence and stable ideology. The effective implementation of policy should be anchored on uniform and stable ideas among the policy maker and the policy implementer. This is because effective policy implementation does not require clash of ideas and functions. Such situation will create unwanted drawback towards successful organizational policy implementation. This implies that in any organization system, no effective implementation of organization policy can strive under disordered and catastrophe situation.

Accordingly, effective implementation of organizational policy requires peaceful atmosphere and harmonious coexistence among the organizational staff.

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