

Managing Education Policy Implementation at the Secondary Education Level For Effective Practice in Aguata Local Government of Anambra State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The paper which examined managing education policy implementation at the secondary education level for effective practice was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consists of twenty-one (21) public secondary schools in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State. The study utilized simple random sampling technique to select eleven (11) public secondary schools, from the selected schools, eleven (11) principals and thirty-five (35) teachers were picked for the study making a total of three hundred and ninety-six (396). Self-designed instrument entitled "Managing Education Policy Implementation for Effective Practice Questionnaire" (MEPIEPQ) was used to elicit information from the respondents. Validity of the instrument was ensured using expert reviews while Cronbach Alpha was used to compute its reliability which yielded an index of 0.82. Frequency counts and mean ratings were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed among others that managing education policy implementation at the secondary education level is challenged first by educational resources deficiency and concludes that one of the determinants of educational policy implementation is the provision of quality educational resources in sufficient quantity which is totally lacking in managing education policy implementation in Aguata, LGA of Anambra State. The researcher therefore recommended that the policy blue-print should be backed up with the sufficient educational resources for its implementation to enhance effective practice and functional educational delivery process.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nigerian educational system just like other nations of the world has under gone sequence of educational restoration in line with the dynamism which is closely linked with education and the society. In all honesty, change is the only thing that is constant, this change and innovation which education spearheads is embedded in the policy formulation and eventual implementation. Educational policy mirrors and guides educational curriculum and its implementation. Simply put, educational policy is the road map through which the curriculum is drawn and implemented. More often than not, this educational policy suffers at the implementation stage (Achuonye, 2008) as a result of lack or scarcity of required instruments for its implementation. Sequel to this rubbishing the noble ideals contained in the policy blue-print. This has been a source of worry to the stakeholders in education industry. Many have wondered why this is so; Could it be that the government in power hastily carried out the formulation

and execution process without much consideration to the resources involved in the introduction of the new phenomena which the policy carries? Could it also be that the policy makers and the planners as well as the policy analysts are not experts in the field but got to the position based on political affiliation or through other means except on merit? Could it also be as a result of poor management of resources by the school administrators at the implementation stage? These questions yearning for answers prompted this study.

In his own submission, Ezenwagu (2022) identified three factors among others that are critical in educational policy implementation; time, energy and resources. Provision of educational resources in public secondary schools is the prerogative of the government or her agency responsible for educational matters like the ministry of education. The school administrator is left with proposing for the needed resources and awaits its supply. In reaction to above view point, Mbara (2012) argued that despite the fact that administrative effectiveness of the basic education school has been enhanced severally yet, some educational reforms like Universal Primary Education (UPE) and the 6:3:3:4 system of education have collapsed on arrival. The scholar is aware that the school administrator's prowess is quite different from the provision of this educational mover thus reaffirmed that the problem of poor policy implementation has remains enigmatic.

Management in an educational system is the ability to manage the human and material resources using management or administrative principles to ensure accomplishment of educational objectives. This implies that education policy implementation management must work with resources which could be material and non-material amidst managerial skills and principles. According to Omosidi, Aloa & Omiyale (2020) school management is the heartthrob of the school as an institution; its goals, policies and implementation of these policies are engineered through that process. This is what impelled Tijani &Abdullahi (2020) to champion that all the administrative and management tasks in the school which leads to excellent teaching and learning behaviours and production of quality graduates rests on the shoulders of the school principal. Sequel to this is accountable to the success or failure of the system. It is in line with this assumption that Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) while defining educational policy as the plans which are expected to cushion the effect of national problems on national growth and development, meticulously enshrined in the educational policy accepted national agenda and precondition for victorious administration, management and implementation of education at all tiers of government. This is to make for easy progression of the implementation stage "ceteris paribus".

The onus of the management of what the policy states therefore lies with the school administrator. The school head cannot perform all the school's functions in seclusion thus require other human and non-human elements to assist. It is very crucial to assert that no matter the level of management principles and/or skills acquisition, no meaningful achievement would be made in the absence of human and non-human resources when it comes to policy implementation. It then follows that when adequate resources are not set aside for the full implementation of educational policy, the management becomes cumbersome, tiresome, boring and unfruitful. Consequently, resources are paramount if educational policy implementation must be manageable and goal oriented.

Resources in education are those essential assets used in the achievement of educational objectives. They are all the elements that serve to fulfil the purpose for which schools are established. These include all the school's human elements, school facilities, time and finance. It is the human resources that the management plans, organizes, directs, coordinates and commands along with the non-human resources to ensure effective policy implementation leading to effective practice which is goal driven (Uzoechina, (2016) . In corroboration with Uzoechina, Udofot (2009) posited that teachers are major assets when it comes to education policy implementation as they deal directly with the students

during teaching/learning encounter. Teachers are therefore part and parcel of managing education policy implementation. They should be equipped with relevant material resources for practical lessons thereby make learned material unforgettable thus easy recall.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is the theory of learning to learn which is also referred to as transfer of learning or teaching to transfer. This theory is accredited to Harlow (1949). The theory stated that human beings improve on their capability to learn tasks or skills based on constant practice on a series of similar or related tasks. For instance, if the individual is learning to play a music instrument say a flute; the individual learns faster through series of practise, the continuous practise imbues with the individual progressive perfection in the aptitude of the individual to carry out the task more competently within a record time. This theory has some educational implication as observed by Nwankwo (2007) that teachers should make teaching highly practical among others. In the scholar's perspective, learning should be more of practices than theorizing while emphasizing that practical lessons are easily recalled than the theoretical ones.

To be practical in the teaching and learning encounter implies the use of teaching aids and other relevant school facilities. This theory is related to the present study in the sense that managing policy implementation at the secondary education level for effective practice is highly dependent on the amount of resources invested into the system. These resources form the hardware with which the education policy which is likened to software is relayed to the students through various implementation phases which teaching and learning experience is one. The educational resources are the channels through which the education policy is transmitted to the beneficiaries in the classroom for effective practice. In the absence of these needed resources, the channel is blocked leading to epileptic implementation of the policy statement which in turn results to ineffective practice. It is premised on this that the theory is deemed appropriate for the study.

Managing Education Policy Implementation

Management is closely associated with organizational set up. It is the process through which the administrator or manager effectively and efficiently utilizes the available resources to perform functions leading to accomplishment of organization's predetermined goals. Managing education is the application of principles of management and skills in utilizing human elements in the school as well as the material resources to realize educational objectives. This assertion corroborated with Mbara (2012) when the scholar replicated Ogunu (2000) that management is the effective organization and exploitation of the human and material resources in a particular establishment for the attainment of specified goals. Managing education therefore boils down to planning, organization, equitable distributing to areas of need and judicious use of the human and non-human resources for the operation of the school. Managing education policy implementation is synonymous with educational management since the head teacher deals with what the educational policy states and ensures its full implementation.

The school principal as the man at the helm of affairs manages the school resources which include, time, school curriculum, finance, facilities, the students, teachers, non-teachers and even the parents/other school visitors within the community. In agreement with above expressing, Ebong & Agabi (2004) elaborated on the school management, thus identified the following as what the principal manages:

1. The school human elements: These are the teachers, non-teacher, students, visitors, parents and even the school community members. All these people in one way or the other has link with what transpires in the teaching and learning experiences. The teachers in particular remain the fulcrum of teaching and learning efficacy.

2. Physical facilities: These are the educational or school facilities that bear direct relevance to encouraging teaching/learning delivery process. These are the entire school building, classroom, furniture, ventilation, class size, school and classroom designs, laboratories, libraries, playground, toilets and many others (Kpee, 2013).
3. School curriculum: this lends itself the subject or course content to be learned in school which is scooped from the national policy on education in line with the achievement of the national objectives. There is also the co-curricular activity like clubs and societies, games etc. which promotes the attainment of the curriculum objectives so to say.
4. Finance: School fund is the money allotted for school operation which the school manager manages with prudence for efficient use.
5. Issue of curriculum: the curriculum for basic education schools as developed by Nigerian Educational Research Development Council (NERDC) aimed at inculcating literacy and numeracy as manual dexterity which lays foundation for diversion to entrepreneurship for self-employment in due course or further education as the case may be. Implementation of this curriculum demands professional competency and eclectic strategies which the present teachers lack. The teacher may require career development in that regard for expertise knowledge so as to effectively deliver (Danmole, 2011).

Achionye (2008) argued that all these elements being managed by the principal are part of what hindered the implementation of educational policy such as lack of planning, inadequate fund, shortage of personnel, insufficient facilities etc. Similarly, Tijani & Abdullahi (2020) on their own admitted that low staff morale, lack of adequate supervision, constant change of policy among others are reasons for poor quality assurance which is an indicator of poor policy implementation. Towing the same lane, Ezekiel-Heart & Adiele (2010) citing Mbanefo (1997) and Zuofa (2007) admitted that the failure of this present 9:3:4 system of education into which UBE is converged and its concomitant policy was due to; staff shortages, absence of career guidance, lack of workshops and laboratories for practical subjects and shortage of laboratory equipment. These are practical facilitators for effective teaching and learning delivery process that extol transfer of learning for objectives attainment.

Statement of Problem

So many lofty educational policies have been made in the past but to no avail and are still at present being made. Yet the Nigerian educational system has failed to provide answers to the enormous educational issues in the labour market. The alarming rate of graduate unemployment resulting from job miss-march and inability to put to effective practice what is learnt in school after schooling speaks volume. The researcher is therefore suspicious of the implementation phase as the root cause of the ineffective practice and upturn of the educational objectives at the long run. This is because the implementation phase demands the application of educational resources in terms of material and non-material. The researcher is bothered whether these educational resources are adequately provided at the implementation stage specifically at the wake of new policy review hence the study.

Objectives of the Study

This study diagnosed managing education policy implementation at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata Local Government of Anambra State, Nigeria. Precisely, the study is set to achieve the following objectives;

1. Investigate adequacy of human resources for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State.

2. Determine the availability of the non-human resources for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. What are the level of adequacy of human resources for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State?
2. What are the availability of non-human resources for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the principals and teachers responses on the level of adequacy of the human resources for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the principals and teachers responses on the availability of the non-human resources for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State.

2. METHODS

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consists of twenty-one (21) public secondary schools in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State. The study utilized simple random sampling technique to select eleven (11) public secondary schools, from the selected schools, eleven (11) principals and thirty-five (35) teachers were picked for the study making a total of three hundred and ninety-six (396). Self-designed instrument entitled "Managing Education Policy Implementation for Effective Practice Questionnaire" (MEPIEPQ) was used to elicit information from the respondents. Validity of the instrument was ensured while Cronbach Alpha was used to compute its reliability which yielded an index of 0.82. Frequency counts based on Likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA=4), Agreed (A=3), Disagreed (D=2) and Strongly Disagreed (SD=1) and mean rating were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The criterion mean is 2.5 which is derived by adding $4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5$. This implies that any mean rating score that is 2.5 and above is regarded as agree while any mean rating score that falls below 2.5 is taken as disagree. Distribution of the instrument of data collection was carried out by the researcher and two research assistants. Out of 396 copies of questionnaire distributed, 390 were retrieved due to stringent measure applied during the distribution and collection of data. The collected data were thus used for the analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question

1. What are the level of adequacy human resources for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State?

Table 1. Frequency counts and Mean scores of the respondents on the level of adequacy of human resources for managing education policy implementation at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State.

S/ N	Item statement:	Frequency Counts				Mean	Frequency Counts				Mean	Remark
		N=35					N=355					
		SA	A	D	SD	SA	A	D	SD			
1.	There is adequate number of teachers.	5	2	20	8	2.1	D	30	50	170	105	2.0
2.	Teachers are assigned subjects based on their areas of specialization.	18	6	5	6	3.0	A	40	55	120	140	1.98
3.	Lateness to duty is checked and adequate disciplinary measure taken.	20	4	6	10	3.2	A	60	60	130	105	2.2
4.	Teachers are encouraged to go for career development	8	6	3	18	2.1	D	30	40	140	145	1.87
5.	Teachers lesson notes are checked and marked on weekly basis	16	10	3	6	3.0	A	50	78	110	117	2.1
6.	Classroom supervision is done intermittently.	77	58	130	90	2.3	D	30	40	90	187	1.8
7.	Missing of classes by the teachers is checked	13	16	3	3	2.6	A	120	140	55	40	2.9
8.	Students are well informed of the implication of the inclusion of the technical subjects	4	2	19	10	2.0	D	60	55	140	100	2.2
9.	Students are educated on the essence of vocational subjects	3	4	18	10	2.0	D	65	50	135	105	2.2
10	Guidance counsellor gives students career guidance in school.	10	2	18	5	2.4	D	45	30	143	137	1.95
Cluster mean				3.0				2.12				

Table 1 shows that the principals agreed on the adequacy of human resources in managing education policy implementation at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State on items with serial numbers 2, 3, 5 and 7 since their mean scores are above the criterion mean. The principals disagreed on items with serial numbers 1, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 10 on the adequacy of human resources in managing education policy implementation at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State with their criterion mean below 2.5. On the other hand, the teachers disagreed on all the items except on item with serial number 7 that teachers missing classes are checked with the mean score of 2.9. The cluster mean are 3.0 for principals and 2.12 for the teachers.

Research Question 2:

What are the availability of non-human resources available for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State?

Table 2. Frequency counts and Mean scores of the respondents on the availability of non-human resources for managing education policy implementation at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State.

S/ N	Item statement: State the level of your agreement on the availability of the following non- human resources in your school.	Frequency Counts				N=35 Mean	Frequency				N=355 Mean	Remark	
		SA	A	D	SD		SA	A	D	SD			
1.	Fund is readily provided for recurrent expenditure.	5	4	12	14	2.3	D	50	45	135	125	2.1	D
2.	There is adequate time for execution of all the school programmes	7	7	10	11	2.1	D	72	55	110	120	2.2	D
3.	There are adequate laboratories for all practical-demanding subjects	5	7	11	12	2.1	D	59	50	125	122	2.1	D
4.	The classrooms are enough for all the classes	6	5	10	14	2.1	D	60	56	130	109	2.2	D
5.	There is adequate chairs and desks in the classrooms	8	51	11	1	2.3	D	40	48	142	125	2.0	D
6.	There is adequate offices for the administrative staff	8	8	10	9	2.4	D	60	40	125	130	2.4	D
7.	There is adequate tables and chairs for the teachers	6	7	10	12	2.2	D	65	70	120	100	2.3	D
8.	There is functional library with relevant books.	5	4	13	13	2.0	D	45	62	130	118	2.1	D
9.	The students have access to the computers during practical	6	6	10	13	2.1	D	45	50	120	140	2.0	D
10	Instructional facilities are provided for teaching/learning encounter in sufficient quantity.	5	8	13	9	2.3	D	65	78	102	110	2.3	D
		Cluster mean				2.42					2.17		

Table 2 shows that all the respondents disagreed on the availability of the non-human resources for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State with their mean scores in all the items below 2.5 which served as the criterion mean. The cluster mean gave rise to 2.42 and 2.17 for both principals and teachers accordingly.

H0₁ There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the principals and teachers responses on the human resources for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State.

Table 3. t-test of difference between the mean scores of the principals and teachers responses on the human resources for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	D/F	t-cal.	t-crit.	Level of sig.	Decision
Principals	35	3.0	0.26		389	2.04	1.96	0.05
Teachers	355	2.12	2.01					Significant

Table 3 above shows the t-test of difference of the respondents with the mean scores of 3.0 and SD of 0.26 for principals as well as mean score of 2.12 and SD of 2.01 for teachers, degree of freedom of 389 with t-calculated of 2.04 against 1.96 at 0.05 level of significant. Since the t-cal. is greater than the z-crit., the hypothesis testing is rejected and declared that there is significant difference between the mean scores of the principals and teachers on the adequacy of human resources in managing education policy implementation at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State

HO₂ There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the principals and teachers responses on the non-human resources for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State.

Table 4. t-test of difference between the mean scores of the principals and teachers responses on the non-human resources for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	D/F	t-cal.	t-crit.	Level of sig.	Decision
Principals	35	2.42	0.43	389	1.53	1.96	0.05	Not sig.
Teachers	355	2.17	0.42					

Table 4 shows the mean scores of the principals and teachers as 2.42 with SD of 0.43 and 2.17 with SD of 0.42 respectively, degree of freedom of 389, t-calculated of 1.53, t-critical of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significant. Since the t-critical is greater than the z-calculated, the null hypothesis is not rejected but ascertained that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the respondents on the non-human resources available for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State.

Discussion

The first finding of this study revealed that the principals agreed on the adequacy of human resources for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State while the teachers disagreed. The opposing views of the principals and teachers could be premised on the fact that teachers who carry the workload are in a better position to state if there is adequate number of teachers as against the principals who are the boss. They allocate duties while the teachers execute the duties. This could be the reason why Udofot (2009) maintained that teachers are crucial in educational policy implementation. The corresponding hypothesis on table 3 indicates that there is significant difference between the mean ratings of the principals and teachers on the adequacy human resources for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State. Managing education policy implementation involves adequate provision of professional teachers, monitoring and supervision of teaching/learning process for quality assurance and effective practice. This finding synchronized with Mbara (2012); Amaele (2010); Tijani & Abdulahi (2020) that the issues bordering on the faulty education policy implementation is hinged on the shortage competent personnel, monitoring and supervision as well as low staff morale occasioned by meagre salary and lack of career advancement. These scholars are not oblivious of the educational implication of these deficiencies as transfer of learning is deeply obstructed leading to epileptic policy implementation.

This is what propelled Danmole (2011) to amplify that human resources are of essence in achieving educational policy implementation.

The second finding revealed that all the respondents disagreed on the non-human resources available for managing education policy implementation by principals' and teachers' at the secondary education level for effective practice in Aguata LGA of Anambra State. The matching hypothesis on table 4 showed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the respondents on the non-human resources available for managing education policy implementation. Shortage or lack of non-human educational resources is exceptionally imperative in achieving functional and qualitative education. This has resulted to unrealistic educational goals thus make the new educational policy impracticable. This confirmed what Achuonye (2008) and Ezekiel-Heart & Adiele (2010) observed that lack of school facilities has crippled smooth implementation of educational policy leading to ineffective practice. For transfer of learning to be effectual, it is necessary to avail the implementer with required tools to efficiently carry out this essential duty. When the tools needed to execute a give policy, it impacts negatively on the learners while the instructors pass through stress in the process. It is against this backdrop that Tijani & Abdullahi (2020) emphasized that procurement of these essential school faculties should be one of the core roles of the school administrator so as to cushion the effect of effective transfer of learning which policy implementation is all about.

4. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that quality educational resources made available in sufficient quantity are the hall mark in achieving educational policy implementation. This is even as the resources propel teaching and learning encounter for practical learning that foster retention and retrieval of learned materials.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations stand: (1) The government or relevant agency should ensure adequacy of human element in policy implementation for the attainment of set goals; and (2) The appropriate body or agency should expedite action in supplying required resources to schools as that promotes goal attainment and effective practice

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