

## **Implementation of Education Policy in Secondary Schools in Delta State: Challenges and Future Directions**

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### **Abstract**

*Unqualified teachers, a lack of financing, and the absence of or limited availability of some essential educational facilities are issues encountered in the implementation of education policy. A descriptive research method was used. The purpose of this research is to investigate the challenges and opportunities of educational policy implementation in Delta State public secondary schools. The population consisted of all principals and teachers. The sample size was 62 principals and 260 teachers. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study, and the tool for data collection was a questionnaire. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using the Z-test. Findings showed that challenges in implementing education policies include underfunding, irregular classroom supervision, and so on. Among others, it recommended that the government should increase annual budget allocations to education and regular visits to schools by inspectors and supervisors.*

**Keywords:** *Education Policy, Implementation, Secondary School, Issues.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria is aiming to join the League of Developed Nations. This vision can only be realized if well-designed education policies are properly implemented to stabilize and strengthen the education system. Education policy is the cornerstone of every country's education system. The educational policy determines the direction of educational activities. According to Ukeje (2006), education policy formulation is the basis for implementation. Unfortunately, due to implementation restrictions, it was not possible to achieve both the educational policy and the goal.

Secondary schools in Nigeria face major challenges stemming from educational policies and their implementation (Agba et al., 2006; Agba, et al., 2007). Poor performance in the secondary education system, especially in the Delta State, was a problem. This unfortunate situation can be the result of distortions in the education system and ineffective implementation caused by lack of political will, lack of program continuity and corruption.

Problems faced in implementing education policy include unqualified teachers, lack of funding and lack/availability of some basic educational facilities. These include frequent changes in government, constant strikes, unmotivated political leadership, and underfunding for education. All of this hinders the growth and sustainable development of the nation and leaves the nation's goals in jeopardy until urgent action is taken to overhaul Nigeria's education system. Therefore, the core of this study is to examine the challenges and prospects of educational policy implementation in public secondary schools in the Delta State.

### **Education Policy Concepts**

Education Policy is the practical and operational guide that forms the basis for realizing the vision, actions, intentions and goals of the education system. This is an authoritative statement or practical guide for school administration, produced by a legitimate authority. Ocho (2003) states that education policy is the operational guideline that provides the foundation that enables administrators, staff and professionals to meet the government's expectations of the school system. This means that politics has a dual purpose. It is about visualizing or defining what the government is trying to do and how it is trying to do what it is trying to do (Oriaifo, 2006; Ushie, et al., 2022; Ushie & Odey, 2022). Therefore, the primary task of education policy is to regulate and improve educational resources, programs and outcomes.

### **Education Policy Implementation Concepts**

Education Policy Implementation deals with the process of implementing education policy measures in concrete ways. It is the daily implementation of policy documents. All education policies are expected to achieve their goals, and this is the ultimate job of policy implementation. The implementation of educational policies should be evaluated accordingly during the implementation process or at the end of the process. This is to ensure that it achieves what such a policy seeks to achieve.

### **Concepts of Education Policy Implementation in Nigeria**

Key stakeholders and interest groups are involved. the Universal Basic Education Commission, the Local Government Education Office, and the National Business and Technical Education Commission (Ogbonnaya, 2014). According to Oriaifo (2016), the implementation of education policy in Nigeria depends on stakeholders including students, teachers, parents, administrative staff (academic and non-academic), all curriculum staff, and various ministries and subnational staff. Various commissions, organizations, interest groups, and ministries are empowered to implement educational policies determined by the government.

Therefore, those involved in the implementation of education policy must translate the policy into a workable blueprint. They need to develop programs to implement their policies. Policy implementation includes discovering weaknesses or limitations of the current policy, making suggestions for improving the policy, and making adjustments. This is important because, as Oriaifo (2006) pointed out, the planning and implementation of education policy is unlikely to be problematic. Such corrections, criticisms and recommendations may also lead to guidelines.

### **Challenges in Implementing Education Policy in Nigeria**

According to Sanda (2006), problems encountered in the implementation process make many government programs, including education, less likely to achieve their policy goals. Implementation problems can also damage the morale and reputation of implementing agencies. Many issues facing the education sector in Nigeria, especially in the Delta State, are either ignored or ignored and mostly relegated to different administrations. These make up the entire Nigerian education system. Below are some of the issues/challenges facing education policy and implementation in public secondary schools in the Delta State:

1. **Lack of Resources:** Lack of resources limits the quality of technical and industrial exposure trainees get in the course of their studies. The Nigerian education system is

challenged by poor infrastructure due to lack of funding, inadequate classrooms and teaching materials, lack of qualified teachers and an unfavorable learning environment. Education policy cannot therefore be implemented in such a learning environment, but the school system continues to be plagued with numerous social vices, such as failed exams, sectarianism, student riots, and strike behavior (Aiyamenkhue 2011).

2. **Poor Service Conditions:** Poor service conditions demoralise teachers, who may decide to enter private commercial enterprise to supplement their meagre salaries, diverting their time to private enterprise and spending on when this happens, teaching and learning are underdelivered, making effective education policies difficult to implement. As a result, teachers will be less devoted to their work, and it will be more difficult to achieve their educational goals (Ugwu, 2008).
3. **Corruption:** This practice permeates all areas of the Nigerian government and has a significant impact on the Nigerian education system (Okoroma, 2010). Most policy goals in Nigeria are often derailed during implementation for a number of reasons. Budgets for policy implementation are often conditionally passed by legislators even when the budget is passed. Executive branches are often reluctant to release funds to facilitate implementation. The inadequate funds provided to the operators of the education system are not honestly and truly used to promote education. Many people misappropriate many of their available resources for personal gain.
4. **Lack and unavailability of resources:** One of the obstacles to the implementation of education policy is the lack of quality learning resources to support classroom instruction and the lack of time to prepare study guides. Teaching and learning resources, such as textbooks, student guides, libraries, and other resources, are scarce or inadequate in Nigerian schools. Many schools do not have science laboratories; classrooms are inadequate and ill-equipped; and class seating is unremarkable. Enrollment rates increase as more schoolchildren compete for facilities that are in short supply, which exacerbates the problem (Abdullahi, 2012).
5. **Change of government:** This leads to a change of management as the new officials may not be interested in education and may have problems implementing educational policies (Chimezie, 2010). In a situation where the old government takes an interest in education and puts enough money into it to run it effectively, the new government may not pick up where the previous government left off because of lack of interest. I have. Moreover, poor government policies can lead to constant strikes, student riots, and/or civil unrest, disrupting continuity and balance in the implementation of educational policies (Mbakwe, 2004).
6. **Ethnicity:** This tends to affect the implementation of education policy, as governments take into account the people in their own geographical area by allocating resources and ignore other areas (Ukeje, 2008).
7. **Lack of Staff as Department Heads:** When a staff member who is incompetent and lacks knowledge in the field of education is appointed as the head of the education department, he/she may 2011).
8. **Hiring Incompetent Teachers:** Governments tend to hire untrained teachers, regardless of their qualifications. Effective implementation of educational policies likewise requires

a sufficient number and a wide range of teachers. Teacher quality should not be sacrificed on the altar of quantity (Abdullahi, 2012).

### **Description of the Problem**

Secondary education in Nigeria provides students with the opportunity to achieve tertiary level education, provides a skilled workforce at the semi-professional level, and provides entrepreneurial, technical, and entrepreneurial skills for self-employment after graduation and to provide professional skills. Unfortunately, most high school graduates in the Delta fail to do this. Some high school graduates can fiercely defend their certificates or contribute to their financial well-being after graduation. This focuses on the fact that education policies have not been implemented effectively and efficiently enough to meet the aspirations of Nigeria. There are clear challenges to the implementation of educational policies; in response to these concerns, this study investigates principals' and teachers' perceptions of educational policy implementation in Delta State public secondary schools.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to explore the implementation of educational policies - challenges and prospects - in secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, the research is desired to

- 1) Examine the extent to which educational policies are being implemented in public secondary schools in the Delta State.
- 2) Identify actions to be taken to update the implementation of education policy in public secondary schools in the Delta State.

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses guided this study:

1. There is no significant difference between principals and teachers regarding the extent of educational policy implementation in the public secondary school system.
2. There is no significant difference between principals and teachers regarding actions taken to update the implementation of educational policies in the Delta public secondary school system.

### **METHOD**

This study used a descriptive survey design. Attempts were made to obtain responses from principals and teachers regarding the implementation of educational policy in Delta State secondary schools. The population for this study consisted of her 473 principals and her 14,482 public secondary school teachers in Delta State. The survey sample consisted of her 372 employees, with her 62 principals and her 310 teachers from Delta State specifically selected. Data collection was an 18-item structured questionnaire. The Respondent used her 4-point Likert scale modified with a response mode of “strongly agree” (SA) = 4. Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; Completely Disagree (SD) = 1. The tool has been face and content verified by two experts from the Educational Foundations and Measurement and Evaluation, University of Delta and Agbor. Cronbach's alpha was used to calculate the index, yielding a confidence factor of 0.84. This

demonstrates the high internal consistency and reliability of the equipment we use. Therefore, the instrument gained high reliability and could be used for research samples.

Researchers personally maintained and obtained the instrument within a week with the help of three assistants. However, of the 372 copies of the tool managed, only 322 copies were accessed. Of these, 62 were accessed by school leaders and 260 by teachers. Data analysis used the mean and standard deviation to answer the study question that guided the study with a benchmark of 2.50, and the Z-test to answer the null hypothesis that led the study with a benchmark of 0.05 significance.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

**Research Question 1:** To what extent are education policies implemented in public secondary school system in Delta State.?

**Table 1:** Responses on education policies implementation in secondary school system in Delta State.

| S/N | Items   | Principal = 62; Teacher = 260 |      |          |      |      |          |
|-----|---|-------------------------------|------|----------|------|------|----------|
|     |   | x                             | SD   | Decision | x    | SD   | Decision |
| 1   | Provision of infrastructure and instructional materials                             | 1.58                          | 0.20 | Disagree | 1.81 | 0.11 | Disagree |
| 2   | Continuous assessment of the students twice in a week of all the subjects           | 2.09                          | 0.27 | Disagree | 2.04 | 0.13 | Disagree |
| 3   | Provision of one teacher (each) for technical and vocational subjects               | 1.81                          | 0.23 | Disagree | 1.79 | 0.11 | Disagree |
| 4   | Availability of qualified and experienced principals and teachers                   | 1.70                          |      | Disagree | 0.22 | 1.77 | Disagree |
| 5   | Provision of free books to students in the school.                                  | 1.62                          | 0.21 | Disagree | 1.95 | 0.12 | Disagree |
| 6   | Instilling of discipline and hardwork among teachers and students.                  | 1.59                          | 0.20 | Disagree | 2.10 | 0.13 | Disagree |
| 7   | Non-involvement of teachers and students in examination malpractice.                | 1.48                          | 0.19 | Disagree | 1.78 | 0.11 | Disagree |
| 8   | Regular supervision and evaluation of teaching and learning in schools              | 1.94                          | 0.25 | Disagree | 1.75 | 0.11 | Disagree |
| 9   | Provision of opportunities for all secondary school graduands for higher education. | 1.81                          | 0.23 | Disagree | 1.49 | 0.9  | Disagree |
| 10  | Coverage of syllabus/scheme of work in all subjects by teachers.                    | 2.01                          | 0.26 | Disagree | 2.12 | 0.13 | Disagree |
|     | Grand mean and SD   | 1.76                          | 0.23 |          | 1.86 | 0.11 |          |

Table 1 above shows the responses of principals and teachers on the extent education policies are being implemented in public secondary schools in Delta State. Both the principals and teachers disagreed on all the items with mean scores lower than the benchmark of 2.50. The grand mean score of 1.76 and 1.86 for principals and teachers respectively showed that education policies are not being implemented in line with the planned guideline in secondary schools in Delta State. This implies that there is no provision of facilities for teaching and learning; no provision of books for students; no discipline and hardwork among teachers and students; no provision of teacher with technical and vocational subjects; non availability of qualified and experienced teachers and principals; non coverage of syllabus and scheme of work; involvement of teachers and students in exam malpractice; and no regular supervision of instruction.

**Research Question 2:** What are the measures to be taken for the actualization of education policies implementation in public secondary schools in Delta State?

**Table 2:** Responses of principals and teachers on the measures to be taken for the actualization of education policies implementation in Delta State

| S/N               | Items   | Principal = 62; Teacher = 260 |      |          |      |      |          |
|-------------------|---|-------------------------------|------|----------|------|------|----------|
|                   |   | x                             | SD   | Decision | X    | SD   | Decision |
| 11                | Adequate funding of education                               | 3.42                          | 0.43 | Agree    | 3.19 | 0.20 | Agree    |
| 12                | Eradication of corruption in governance                     | 3.27                          | 0.42 | Agree    | 3.38 | 0.21 | Agree    |
| 13                | Regular supervision and evaluation of teaching and learning | 3.75                          | 0.48 | Agree    | 3.34 | 0.21 | Agree    |
| 14                | Employment of qualified and dedicated teachers.             | 2.83                          | 0.36 | Agree    | 3.20 | 0.20 | Agree    |
| 15                | Instilling discipline in teachers and students.             | 2.96                          | 0.36 | Agree    | 3.10 | 0.20 | Agree    |
| 16                | Provision of facilities for teaching and learning           | 3.12                          | 0.39 | Agree    | 2.98 | 0.18 | Agree    |
| 17                | Good condition of service for principals and teachers       | 3.14                          | 0.40 | Agree    | 3.20 | 0,20 | Agree    |
| 18                | Provision of free textbooks and notebooks for students      | 3.09                          | 0.39 | Agree    | 2.99 | 0.15 | Agree    |
| Grand mean and SD |   | 3.20                          | 0.40 |          | 3.17 | 0.19 |          |

Table 2 above, showed the mean and standard deviation responses of principals and teachers on measures to be taken for the actualization of education policies implementation in secondary schools in Delta State. Both the principals and teachers agreed on all the items with mean scores greater that the benchmark of 2.50. The grand mean scores of 3.20 and 3.17 for principals and teachers respectively reveal that they are aware of the measures to be taken for proper implementation of education policies in Delta State. These include provision of adequate funding; eradication of corruption in governance; regular supervision of teaching and learning;

employment of qualified, dedicated and experienced teachers; instilling discipline in teachers and students; provision of facilities for teaching and learning; provision of free textbooks and exercise books for students; and provision of good condition of services for principals and teachers.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between principals and teachers on the extent of the implementation of education policies in public secondary schools in Delta State.

**Table 3:** Z-test of significant difference between the perception of principals and teachers on the extent of the implementation of education policies in public secondary schools in Delta State.

| Group      | N   | x    | SD   | Z-calculated | Z-critical | Decision |
|------------|-----|------|------|--------------|------------|----------|
| Principals | 62  | 1.76 | 0.22 | 1.29         | 1.96       | Accept   |
| Teachers   | 260 | 1.86 | 0.11 |              |            |          |

0.05 level of Significance

Table 3 reveals the Z-test analysis of the difference between the perceptions of principals and teachers on the extent of the implementation of education policies in public secondary schools in Delta State. The result denotes that the calculated value of 1.29 is lower than the critical value of 1.96. This implies that both principals and teachers do not differ in their perceptions that the education policies are poorly implemented in Delta State. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference between principals and teachers on the extent of the implementation of education policies in public secondary school system in Delta State is hereby accepted.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between principals and teachers on measures to be taken for the actualization of education policies implementation in public secondary school in Delta State.

**Table 4:** Z-test of significant difference on measures to be taken for the actualization of education policies implementation in Delta State.

| Group      | N   | x    | SD   | Z-calculated | Z-critical | Decision |
|------------|-----|------|------|--------------|------------|----------|
| Principals | 62  | 3.20 | 0.40 | 0.19         | 1.96       | Accept   |
| Teachers   | 260 | 3.17 | 0.19 |              |            |          |

0.05 level of Significance

Table 4 above indicates the Z-test analysis of the significant difference between the perception of principals and teachers on the measures to be taken for the actualization of education policies implementation in public secondary schools in Delta State. The result denotes that the Z-calculated value of 0.19 is lower than the critical value of 1.96 at a 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference between principals and teachers on measures to be taken for the actualization of education policies implementation in Delta State is hereby accepted.

## Discussion

The results of the Hypothesis 1 study showed no significant difference between principals and teachers' perceptions of the extent of educational policy implementation in the Delta State secondary school system. This means that both principals and teachers agree that education

policies are poorly implemented in Delta. provision of infrastructure and teaching materials, provision of teachers for technical and vocational studies, continuous assessment of students, provision of free books, regular supervision and provision of opportunities for all secondary graduates of higher education. There is none. All of these may fall short of educational goals. This is consistent with Sanda's (2006) assertion that many government programs, including education, are more likely to fail to meet their policy objectives if problems arise in the implementation process. Implementation problems can also damage the morale and reputation of these implementing agencies. Again, the results for Hypothesis 2 indicated that there was no significant difference between school leaders and teachers regarding actions that should be taken to update educational policy implementation. This means they agreed that certain actions should be taken to ensure an overall update of the implementation of education policy in the Delta State school system. These include adequate funding for education, combating corruption, regular monitoring of education, provision of good service conditions, qualified teachers, and provision of facilities and educational resources. This is consistent with Aiyamenkhue (2011), Ugwu (2008), and Abdullahi (2012)'s assertion that adequate funding, learning environments, good service availability, and availability of educational resources facilitate the implementation of educational policies. Abdullahi (2012) also argued that just as a sufficient number and diversity of teachers are necessary to effectively implement educational policy, the quality of teachers should be sacrificed on the altar of quantity.

## CONCLUSIONS

Good management and implementation of education policy in the secondary education system appears to be the answer to economic and sustainable educational development. It is a catalyst that promotes the efficiency and effectiveness of the school system. A goal-oriented administration/government must ensure that educational policies are implemented in line with policy. Key challenges in implementing Delta State University policies include inadequate funding, irregular supervision of instruction, and poor service conditions. To avoid these challenges, governments need to formulate realistic educational directions for students and improve strategies for effectively implementing educational policies in the secondary education system.

## Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made.

1. The government should increase the annual budget allocation to the education sector in Nigeria. This allows the sector to overcome some of its financial limitations in achieving its educational goals.
2. Schools should be visited regularly by inspectors and supervisors to ensure effective and efficient teaching.
3. The necessary equipment/facilities, teaching materials, infrastructure and everything necessary for effective learning must be adequately provided to achieve the objectives of the educational policy.
- 4 Qualitative education should be essential to promote result-oriented implementation.

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