

Managing Policy Implementation in Secondary Education in Nigeria: The Implication for Effective Practice

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Abstract: *This paper is titled managing policy implementation in secondary school education in Nigeria. Keywords such as management, secondary schools, management of secondary education, policy, educational policy, and policy implementation were defined. Objectives of secondary education such as fostering national unity with emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity, to equip the students with relevant scientific and technical knowledge to effectively survive in the modern age among others were listed. Also, functions of secondary education management were stated and they include; to influence and stimulate human resources available, to evaluate secondary school activities by the plans made. An analysis of secondary education in Nigeria was as well made. Problems of secondary education management in Nigeria were listed to include; unfocused curriculum and instruction programmes, and poor training of manpower to effectively manage the problems of a changing society. Problems of policy implementation listed in the paper are; lack of funds, change in government, corruption and problems of policy implementation in management of secondary schools mentioned in this paper are; misappropriation of the finance available, lack of trained personnel to carry out the plans made and plans of the policies made are sometimes not followed to mention a few. However, based on the highlighted problems, some suggestions were made and they include; The finance made available, no matter how little it is should be used for what it is meant for in the policy implementation and not for personal uses, trained personnel should be provided and the old staffs should be retrained from time to time so they can be updated about the whole policy-making process*

Keywords: *secondary education, management, management of secondary education, policy, educational policy, policy implementation.*

Introduction

Educational policy is directed towards improving the standard of education in Nigeria. Educational policy is important to help guide the process of education. Basey, Ekpo, and Edet as stated by Eru, Jemimah, and Jones (2019), education is a great investment in an economy. It increases the quality of the individuals in a nation and this helps to speed up the race for economic development. For this reason, the federal government of Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument of excellence for affecting national development (FRN 2013). Because of this, the government has reviewed the national policy severally to make it more functional and to meet up with the changes in the world of technology.

One of Nigeria's national goals is to build a great and dynamic economy. The federal government came up with these policies that aim at transforming the economic standing of citizens and would want to use education to actualize these objectives. For these goals to be actualized, there is a need for proper planning, staffing, funding, and management of policies. Management in this context is concerned with planning, funding, monitoring, and Evaluation.

The importance of secondary education in the educational system cannot be overemphasized. Apart from serving as the link between primary and tertiary education, it provides an opportunity for a child to acquire additional knowledge, skills, and traits beyond the primary level. Secondary education is needed because primary education is not enough in a child's life to acquire permanent literacy, communication, and numeracy skills expected from him/her at the end of the training (Ige 2013). Again, tertiary education cannot be gotten without secondary education. Such education which is provided can be owned by either government (federal or state) or by private individuals and it's divided into two phases that is; the junior secondary school and the senior secondary school.

Efforts have been made to develop education in Nigeria. Various policies have been formulated but not well implemented and evaluation is not done on the implemented aspect of the policies. This is in line with Constance (2016) who states that; Educational policies are made but their implementations are often thwarted or sabotaged. This disheartening situation may be a result of distortions in the educational system or the ineffective implementation engendered primarily by a lack of political will, a lack of continuity of programs, and corruption. This has also hindered national growth and development and until urgent action is taken to review Nigeria's educational policy system, its national aspirations will continue to be compromised. Some of the problems encountered in the implementation of educational policies include non-payment of teachers' salaries, unqualified teachers, under-funding, and shortage or unavailability of some needed resources. Furthermore, the problems in educational policy implementation include frequent changes in government, constant strike actions, uninspiring political leadership, and poor funding of education to mention but a few. As a result, educational policies are made that usually provide a general guide that does not facilitate decision-making.

The Concept of Secondary Education

To assess the present state of secondary education in Nigeria, it is good to begin by identifying some of the cardinal objectives for which secondary education was established in Nigeria. Among the objectives of secondary education in Nigeria according to James (2020) are:

1. The provision of smooth opportunities for primary school leavers to further acquire higher quality education irrespective of their sex, religion, social and ethnic backgrounds.
2. To diversify its curriculum to cater to the variety of talents that are latent in the students to come to light productively.

3. To equip the students with the relevant scientific and technical knowledge to effectively survive in the modern age.
4. To foster national unity with emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity.
5. To inspire students with a high desire for achievement and self-improvement both at school and in later life.
6. To raise a generation of people who should be self-reliant and can think for themselves as well as respect the worldviews of others.
7. To inspire a deep sense of appreciation of the dignity of labour among citizens as well as create a great sense of national consciousness.

Management of Secondary Education in Nigeria

Secondary school management is the bringing together of human, financial, time, and other material resources to achieve the aims and objectives of that school. This is in line with Obi as stated by Peter and Bernadette (2018) who defined school management as the process of achieving educational objectives through the efficient utilization of available human resources. It is believed that educational management focuses on the development and formulation of policies guiding the provision of education to society (Okorji and Unachukwu 2014). Thus, Nikam (2010) also identifies the various functions of secondary education management including:

1. Ensuring that sound policies, goals, and objectives are formulated in a given school and that methods are determined for the achievement of these objectives.
2. It ensures that necessary resources are procured for the achievement of the goals.
3. It organizes and coordinates the activities of the school to achieve the objectives of the secondary school system with maximum efficiency and effectiveness
4. To influence and stimulate the human resources available
5. To integrate the school activities into the set-up of the society
6. To evaluate the school activities by plans made

An Analysis of Secondary Education in Nigeria: A Philosophical Perspective

With the prevailing pictures of how the Secondary education sector has become bedridden by so many problems and challenges, it is only appropriate that a critical analysis of this sector of education be carried out. A look at the above discrepancies as evidenced in the state-to-state administration of the secondary sectors shows that, if the said objectives are to be achieved, we need to tow a different line of approach in addressing the problems. There should first of all be a stiffer organ established at the Federal level to harmonize all the activities of the sector across the country and not to leave the running of its affairs in the hands of state governments. At the moment, the

federal government is only directly involved with Unity Schools. And even these schools are poorly funded and managed. Thus, in like manner to its counterparts, Primary Education and Tertiary Education, Secondary Education should also have what should be termed National Secondary Education Commission as against the mere Boards of Governance (James 2020). It is not enough that heads of secondary schools only meet at the state level. This does not allow for innovation and novelty of ideas. If there are interstate or interregional seminars and symposia, there will be room for comparative analysis of the effects of style of management which will result in the overall improvement of this sector. The ages for enrollment into and completion of Secondary School (12-18) are very volatile stages in the life of a student and such can easily be influenced. At this stage, the students are malleable and can easily be swayed. Therefore there is a need for extra attention to be given to this sector since it is the midwife for potential professionals or otherwise half-baked intellectuals. It is at this stage that the mental curiosity of the child is being developed. The three domains of learning, the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains are at their most receptive stage. This is why those who are either dropouts or who barely managed to graduate from this sector often turn out to be societal disasters and miscreants, causing mayhem here and there at the expense of our national security. It is in light of this that strong advocacy for our national budget should be made to reflect that we are not paying lip services to this sector. To minimize the threat that failure to manage this sector can cause a reappraisal of the system must be carried out such that students would be motivated across the board at the national level without having to allow only the state governments to grapple with its management. (James 2020) emphasize that, all children of public servants should as a matter of policy, be made to only enroll their children in public schools. People tend to protect their interests wherever. Thus if the wards and children of public servants and all stakeholders are banned from enrolling in privately owned schools, it is apparent that all the stakeholders would stop paying lip services but would spring into action to revive the almost decayed secondary sector. On this, the government must exhibit a strong will to remain resolute toward ensuring that the implementation of this policy is carried out asymmetrically. As a country, Nigeria has always tended to praise the academic achievements of its founding fathers by making references to how much they achieved in the past without making an effort to surpass such in our present era. The yardstick should be about breaking new frontiers rather than reveling in past glories. Today, the rate of productivity of secondary graduates of nowadays in the open market, even after having sat for different external examinations (WAEC, SSCE, NECO, JAMB, BECE), is hard to be compared with the performances of those who sat for only the GCE examination. Thus, instead of making progressive steps, we are rather retrogressing. In light of this, government and all stakeholders in this sector of education should discourage making references to the achievements made in the past and explore newer levels of progress. We are to challenge teachers and students alike to be at their best to excel beyond their predecessors. Even as one is concerned about the declining productivity of secondary students, it is equally important to trace part of this poor performance to the either poor motivation of teachers by the government or students by teachers. The aspect of teachers' poor motivation shows itself in the intermittent payment of emoluments by the government to the teachers (James 2020).

Problems of Secondary Education Management in Nigeria

In Nigerian society, secondary education management suffers a lot of set back as a result of the development through human resource development in the following factors:

1. Unfocused curriculum and instructional programmes.
2. Poor training of manpower to effectively manage the problems of a changing society. Thus, the knowledge operations of secondary school activities.
3. Inadequate provision of physical facilities.
4. Students are not provided with inventories or properly organize and place in classes as well as poor provision of guidance and counseling services to enable the students to tackle career choice and maladjustment problems.
5. Poor revenue generation.

The Concept of Educational Policy

The policy is a fundamental process through which an institution attains stability and undertakes other changes as part of its ultimate goal (Uchendu 2000). The educational policy of Nigeria is a general statement containing principles, regulations, and rules that govern many of the decisions, on how to educate the citizens. It seeks to answer questions about the purpose of education, the objectives that it is designed to attain, the methods for attaining them, and the tools for measuring their success or failure (Eru, Ogi, and Jones 2019). According to Babalola (2013), educational policies are the principle and government policy in the educational sphere, as well as the collection of laws and rules that govern the operation of the education system. According to Okoroma (2010), educational policies are also general statements containing principles, regulations, and rules which govern, influence, and determine the decisions on how to educate children, where to get them educated, when to get them employed, who to teach them and how to finance their education.

Policy Implementation

Policy implementation is the execution of plans made based on the plans made by all stakeholders to achieve the organizational goals be it educational or non-educational organizations. This is in line with Ogunode and Ahaotu (2020) who stated that Implementation is the systematic way of executing programme, policies, and projects. Ogonnanya as stated by Ogunode and Ada (2020) defines policy implementation is said to be carrying out of the policy formulated in concrete terms. Policy implementation is the second stage in the policy-making process. That is after plans are made, the next is to go about how to implement, execute or carry out action to achieve the goals of the plans. In implementing secondary educational plans, attention should be given to how the plans were made (plans should execute step by step according to the plan), and financial and other resources should not be diverted to other means.

Problems of Policy Implementation

Problems of policy implementation are those factors that hinder the successful execution of laid down policies. Just like Weaver as stated by Constance (2016) posits that problems that arise in the implementation process make it less likely that policy objectives are achieved in many government programs including education. Implementation problems may also damage the morale and external reputations of the agencies in charge of implementation. Although many implementation problems occur repeatedly across programs and can be predicted in advance. The numerous issues that confront the educational sector in Nigeria are either left unattended or neglected and most often transferred to another administration compound inadvertently the whole system of education in Nigeria. Citing some of the issues, Oluwatobi (2006), noted that indiscipline seemingly is one of the problems militating against the implementation of educational policies in the secondary school education system. The crisis in Nigeria's educational system has led to an academic economy in search of greener pastures. Other problems as stated by Nzeako (2016) include;

1. Lack of funding
2. Shortage and availability of resources
3. Non-payment of teachers' salaries and poor service condition
4. Change in government
5. Corruption
6. Inadequate personnel as head of the ministry
7. Ethnicity
8. Employment of incompetent teachers. Also, Adesina (2012) noted that planned implementation is constrained by the following factors.
 1. Overestimation of resources
 2. Under the implementation of cost of implementing a plan
 3. Overreliance upon external assistance and
 4. Inaccurate statistical data

Problems of Policy Implementation in the Management of Secondary Education

Because of all the problems listed above, the following are the problems of policy implantation in secondary schools;

1. Inadequate finance to implement the policy
2. Misappropriation of the little finance available

3. Lack of trained personnel to carry out plans for the policy
4. Policy implemented are not evaluated to check the success or the failure of the policy
5. Plans made for the implementation of educational policies in secondary schools are sometimes not followed.
6. Non-involvement of the stakeholders in the policy formulation process
7. Lack of proper strategy or methods for implementation

Solutions

1. Adequate finance should be made available for the implementation of educational policies
2. The finance made available, no matter how little it is should be used for what its meant for in the policy implementation and not for personal uses.
3. Trained personnel should be provided and the old staff should be retrained from time to time so they can be updated about the whole policy-making process
4. Implemented policies should be evaluated thoroughly so management can know whether to improve, modify or stop the policy to make a new one that will suit the current educational situation
5. Activities in the policies should be executed as planned to get the desired result
6. Stakeholders like the teachers, should be involved in the policy making and implementation process
7. Laid-down rules should be stated on how to implement the strategies

Conclusion

The implementation of educational policies in secondary education in Nigeria, a very vital tier in the education sector, has undergone a turn for the worst in recent times partly due to a lack of social and political will on the part of all stakeholders in this sector. Even though the government has tried a little bit in its policies and programmes to improve the educational attainment of its citizens, unfortunately, the political and economic instability, coupled with misplaced priority has robbed the nation of the policies. When policies that guide a school, educational institution, or even a nation are not implemented, they will not develop and move forward and most of its dream toward transformation will remain a mirage. For this reason, stakeholders in education and government should reassess their input in education to move the nation to have proper and lasting development.

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