

PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATION POLICIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract - The study investigated principals' administrative roles in the implementation of education policies in the secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 222 principals in secondary schools in Abia state made up 176 males and 76 females while the sample size was 212 principals obtained through simple random sampling technique. A researcher-designed instrument titled 'Principals' Administrative Roles in the Implementation of Education Policies Questionnaire' (ARIEPQ) was used for data collection. It was validated by three experts with a reliability coefficient value of 0.87 obtained through Cronbach Alpha method. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while t-test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study identified aligning school goals with education policies; monitoring teachers' job performance; interpreting policies to teachers; and serving as mediators between policy makers and educators among others as principals' policy implementation roles. The study also identified preparing adequate budget for school; allocating adequate fund for purchase of recommended textbooks; ensuring availability of instructional materials; and providing adequate laboratory equipment in schools among others as principals' resources allocation implementation policies. The hypotheses showed no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on principals' administrative roles in policy implementation in secondary schools in the area. The study recommended among others that principals should embrace effective education policy implementation as a tool for improving standard of education in the country.

Keywords: Education, policy, implementation, roles, administration, principals

Introduction

Policies in education serve as framework for the principals in the implementation of educational goals and objectives. Principals are the appointed chief executives of secondary schools by the ministry of education charged with the responsibility of interpreting, monitoring and implementation of educational policies towards attaining the goals and objectives of schools. The principals carry out these functions through their administrative roles by guiding, directing and supervising teachers as instructional leaders. Agwu (2015) asserts that principals through their strategic planning initiatives in the performance of the administrative roles mobilize human and material resources available in schools towards implementing policies.

Administrative roles are perceived differently by different scholars. Administrative roles refer to different techniques used by the principals in secondary schools in helping the teachers to ensure curriculum implementation in school (Dorneyi, 2017). The author further opines that principals also provide visionary leadership by integrating school goals with national education policies through setting clear objectives in their various schools. In this regards principals develop strategic plans and create an enabling environment for

policy implementation. On the other hand, Agwu (2015) explains administrative roles as the principals' blueprint in carrying out day-to-day administration of secondary schools with the efforts of the teachers. In another vein, Okezue (2014) asserts that, principals' administrative roles are those planned activities by the principals to influence the teachers in the execution of teaching and learning in their instructional delivery in schools. This implies that administrative roles are road-map used by the school principals in ensuring effective job performance by the teachers. As applied in this study, principals' administrative roles refer to principals' use of various techniques in implementation of education policies in schools using available human and material resources.

Effective policy implementation requires adequate resources. As such, in the secondary school system, Okafor and Enemuo (2023) observe that principals are not only human resources managers but also financial managers who through the administrative roles support educational programmes and activities towards goal achievement. The principals allocate resources equitably in schools for effective school administration. Thus principals are concerned with the dimension of ideas that are specifically targeted towards motivation of teachers for achieving effective teaching and learning in schools. There are many such roles used by the principals in enhancing the job performance of the teachers. Dele and Beach (2014) posit that principals help to interpret policies and communicate same to teachers in schools for effective education policy implementation. Dele and Beach enumerate principals' administrative roles to include effective supervision of instruction, motivation, carrying teachers along in decision making, delegation of duties. Other roles according to the authors include providing for staff welfare, communication, inter-personal relations, students' personnel administration among others. These areas are considered the core administrative roles through which the principals actualize education policy implementation in secondary schools. This implies that the principals act as mediators between policy makers and educators, helping to interpret policies for teachers, students and other stakeholders ensuring clear understanding and proper application.

Furthermore, principals through their supervising roles contribute in overseeing curriculum implementation providing teachers with enabling environment to enhance their job performance and proper monitoring of school activities. Igwe (2015) asserts that principals not only monitor or supervise teachers in schools but also help to provide professional development of teachers by helping them to update their teaching effectiveness in schools. Teachers being the most needed resource in the school system because of their role in curriculum implementation are also motivated by principals to promote their job performance. Ikegbusi and Eziamaka (2016) assert that supervision seeks to achieve the maximum development of the teacher into the most professionally efficient and effective person. Most often, some principals ignore this very important function in the system thereby making the teachers to exhibit poor attitude towards their work. Hence, supervision of instruction is one of the critical roles of the principals in ensuring effective teaching and learning. The principals' application of this role encourages teachers to be up and doing in their job performance towards education policy implementation.

Effective education policy implementation involves proper maintenance of students' welfare as well as discipline. Okeke (2015) reinstates that education policies related to students' conduct and welfare are enforced by principals. The principals also provides support services that provide conducive learning environment in school system and also implement disciplinary measures while promoting students academic and individual growth. Ajayi (2017) maintains that high level of students' academic

performance and implementation of school programmes are made possible where instructional space such as classrooms, libraries, technical workshops and laboratories are ensured by principals for the students' welfare in policy implementation in schools. Accordingly, Onyegbula (2018) opines that principals are responsible for creating such atmosphere that will ensure students' discipline needed as part and parcel of education policy implementation in secondary schools.

Moreover, the principal carry out education policies through collaboration with parents, the community and government agencies to ensure policy success in schools. Chen (2016) also maintains that principals are responsible for fostering partnership with different stakeholders to ensure shared responsibility in education administration. According to the author, the community agencies in partnership with the principal collaborate in ensuring the success of education policies in schools within their localities. The various applications of administrative roles of principals in schools are therefore imperative in implementation of education policies in secondary schools through the involvement of stakeholder engagement. Apart from the above, the principals through administrative functions monitor and evaluate school policies in schools. They assess the impact of policies through regular evaluation processes. As insiders in the school system, the principals through effective feedback provide the government valuable data from make a fund decision regarding education policies and their implementation problems (Onyejiaku, 2014). Through the above processes, the principals recommend necessary policy adjustment as feedback to the government. From the foregoing, the success or failure of education policies to some extent depends on the principals' effective utilization of administrative roles in secondary school. Hence the principal play critical roles in policy interpretation, implementation and also ensure proper monitoring of these policies to ensure compliance and effectiveness. However, in spite of the principals' administrative roles in the implementation of educational policies, they are faced with a lot of challenges. Some of these challenges, according to Okafor and Enemuo (2023) include: resistance to change, portraying of principals and policies matters, inadequate funding and other administrative constraints by the government.

The attainment of educational goals depends on motivation of teachers in the performance of their duties. Unfortunately, in most schools in Abia State, there appears to be poor implementation of education policies in schools. This to some extent seems to be occasioned by the principals' inadequate knowledge and application of their administrative functions or roles. In some schools, there are inadequate teaching aids, poor reward system, work overload, irregular promotion and also poor capacity building of the principals (Obineli, 2013). Some principals remain in one position for years without promotion, attendance to conferences or in-service training (Nwanneka, 2019). Also worrisome include poor working environment as some schools are dilapidated. Some principals are also over-loaded in their work schedules which also impede on their administrative functions. This poor motivation of principals' affects their moral and attitude to work in schools. Hence, some of the principals find it difficult to carry the teachers along through appropriate motivational strategies for the teachers in their job performance.

Teachers' job performance is the outcome of the effort of an individual in accomplishing a given task. On the other hand, performance is defined in various ways by different authors. Jay (2014) defines performance as an act of accomplishing or executing a given task and the ability to combine ideas skillfully in right behaviour towards the achievement of set goals and objectives. Also, Adeyemi (2014) defines performance as the

effective use of skills in achieving objectives. In another vein, Adeyem further explains performance as one attaining success in his/her area operation. In the context of this study, performance is the teachers' use of his/her professional knowledge and skills to enhance his job performance in schools. Without the teachers' job performance, implementation of educational goals or policies is impeded in the school system.

Teachers are indispensable in schools as the success or failure of most school programmes and policies is dependent on the teachers through their job performance activities in schools. The quality of education provided for citizens in different nations in their educational systems is hinged on the quality of teachers available in schools. Hence no nation educationally can rise above the quality of its teaching teachers and the performance of their assigned teaching responsibilities. Teacher's job performance is an important variable in the system that requires critical handling. It is a concept explained in various ways by different authors. Akinfolarin (2017) defines teachers' job performance as the performance of teaching task and rendering of expected teaching services by teachers. The author further stresses that it has to do with the ability of a teacher to fulfill teaching responsibility. Ozuroke, Ordu and Abdulkarim (2012) assert that teachers' job performance is the ability of the teachers to utilize various inputs towards improving teaching and learning processes. It involves all the efforts of the teachers in order to achieve the desired results on the students. Teachers' job performance as used in this context is all the efforts of the teachers to actualize the process of teaching and learning towards implementing education policies.

The teachers interact with the principals and students in ensuring proper policy implementation in schools. However it is a common observation that many teachers find it very difficult to teach without close monitoring in schools. Oche (2014) opines that some teachers fail to conduct their continuous assessment tests in schools. Such teachers often lack proper classroom management control and equally the ability to maintain discipline among students in classes while lessons are going on. Moreover, some of the lazy teachers find it difficult to plan their lesson notes and go to the classes to often disgrace themselves and deceive the students all in the name of teachings. All these could be as a result of poor supervision of instruction, lack of motivation and cooperation between the principals and the teachers in their administrative duties. These affect school policy implementation, thereby leading to poor execution of school programs and activities. The above ineffectiveness of the teachers in the performance of their teaching responsibility appears to be as a result of principals' poor utilization of administrative roles in schools. Getange (2016) asserts that effective school administration is one that carries teachers along by creating enabling environment for the teachers to enhance their job performance in schools. There is observed falling standard in the quality of teaching and learning in secondary schools as a result of many factors which include declining teachers' effective instructional delivery due to poor principals' supervisory practices. A cursory look at secondary schools in Abia State reveals gross inadequacies in teachers' teaching activities in schools. Most teachers demonstrate poor commitment to their teaching responsibilities. Some lack proper lesson note preparation, absent themselves from classes and pay little or no attention to students' academic problems which affect not only their teaching duty but also students' academic achievement in schools. Other observed lapses of the teachers include poor time management, poor coordination of teaching activities, as teachers seem to be under pressures in meeting up with their job challenges.

Previous studies indicated that education policies are implemented by principals through providing instructional leadership, interpreting policies to teachers and providing

professional opportunities for teachers (Okafor & Enemuo, 2023). Also, Nwadiani (2014) reports that education policies are ensured by principals in schools through proper allocation of resources to school activities. Nwanneka (2019) reports implementation of education policies by principals through partnership partnering with stakeholders as well as mediating between policy makers and educators. Furthermore, Babalola (2015) reports that policy implementation in secondary schools allows the principal to align school goals with national education policies. However, this study investigated principals' administrative roles in the implementation of education policies in secondary schools in Abia State.

Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate principals' administrative roles in the implementation of education policies in secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study:

1. determines principals' implementation of education policy roles in secondary schools in the State and
2. ascertain principals' resource allocation roles in education policy implementation in secondary schools in Abia State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the principals' implementations of education policy roles in secondary schools in Abia State?
2. What are the principals' resource allocation roles in implementation of education policies in secondary schools in Abia State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the principals' implementation of education policy roles in secondary schools in Abia State.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female principals in the principals' resource allocation roles in implementation of education policy in secondary schools in Abia State.

Methods

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Descriptive survey design according to Nworgu (2015) aims at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. The study was carried out in all the secondary schools in Abia State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population comprised 222 principals in secondary schools in Abia State, which formed the sample size. A researcher-designed instrument titled 'Principals' Administrative Roles in the Implementation of Education Policies Questionnaire (PARIEPQ)' was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument had 16 items arranged in two clusters, A and B, meant to provide answers to the research questions. All the items are structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly-Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly-Disagree (SD) with numerical value of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was subjected to face validity by three experts. A reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha method. Mean and standard

deviation were used in answering the research questions while t-test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What are the principals' implementations of education policy roles in secondary schools in Abia State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of principals on their role in implementation of education policies in schools

N = 212				
S/N	Items	X	S.D	Decision
1.	Principals aligning school goals with education policies	3.15	0.67	Agree
2.	Principals monitoring teachers' job performance	2.81	0.70	Agree
3.	Principals interpreting policies to teachers	3.03	0.68	Agree
4.	Principals serving as mediators between policy makers and educators	3.06	0.67	Agree
5.	Principals providing professional development opportunities to teachers	3.22	0.60	Agree
6.	Principals implementing disciplinary measures among students	3.16	0.66	Agree
7.	Principals providing partnership with the stakeholders	3.00	0.69	Agree
8.	Principals providing feedback on policies to the government	3.21	0.59	Agree
Grand mean		3.12	0.65	Agree

Table 1 above shows the responses of principals on the principals' implementation of education policies in secondary schools in Abia state. The table reveals that all the items 1-8 are areas of principals' implementation of education policies in secondary schools in the state and had their mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. This implies that the respondents are in agreement that all the listed items are areas of principals' implementation of education policies in Abia state. The above was supported by their grand mean score of 3.12 on the table.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the principals' implementation of education policy roles in secondary schools in Abia State.

Table 2:

S/N	Group	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	Level of sign	Dec
1	Male	136	3.10	0.69	210	.000	0.05	Accept
2	Female	76	3.12	0.67				(NS)

Table 2 shows that the calculated t-value of .000 is less than 0.05 level at 210 degree of freedom. Since the p-value of 0.05 is greater than the calculated t-value of .000, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between male and female principals on the principals' implementation of education policies in secondary schools in Abia State is accepted. This implies that both male and female principals did not differ in their opinions on the areas of implementation of education policies in secondary school in Abia state.

Research question Two: What are the principals' resource allocation roles in implementation of education policies in secondary schools in Abia State?

Table 3:

N = 212

S/N	Items	X	S.D	Decision
1.	Principals preparing adequate budget for school programmes	3.01	0.69	Agree
2.	Allocating adequate fund for purchase recommended textbooks	3.22	0.64	Agree
3.	Ensuring availability of instructional materials in schools	2.98	0.72	Agree
4.	Providing adequate laboratory equipment in schools	3.00	0.74	Agree
5.	Ensuring existence functional library in schools	3.14	0.67	Agree
6.	Ensuring provision of computer accessories in schools	2.97	0.73	Agree
7.	Supervising teachers in schools	3.11	0.66	Agree
8.	Ensuring availability of subject adequate teachers	3.16	0.64	Agree
Grand mean		3.05	0.65	Agree

Table 3 above shows the responses of principals on the principals' resource allocation roles in implementation of education policies in secondary schools in Abia State. The table reveals that all the items 1-8 are areas of principals' allocation of resources in secondary schools for the implementation of education policies in Abia state. The items had their mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. This implies that the respondents are in agreement that all the listed items are areas of principals' allocation resources for implementation of government policies in secondary schools in Abia state. The above was supported by their grand mean score of 3.05 on the table.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the principals' implementation of education policy roles in secondary schools in Abia State.

Table 4:

S/N	Group	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	Level of sign	Dec
1	Male	136	3.14	0.66	210	.000	0.05	Accept
2	Female	76	3.00	0.69				(NS)

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value of .000 is less than 0.05 level at 210 degree of freedom. Since the p-value of 0.05 is greater than the calculated t-value of .000, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between male and female principals on the principals' allocation of resources for implementation of education policies in secondary schools in Abia State is accepted. This implies that both male and female principals did not differ in their views on the areas of resources allocation for implementation of government education policies in secondary school in Abia state.

Discussions

This study identified areas of principals' implementation of education policies in secondary schools in Abia state to include: aligning school goals with education policies; monitoring teachers' job performance; interpreting policies to teachers and serving as mediators between policy makers and educators among others. Other areas are providing professional development opportunities to teachers; implementing disciplinary measures among students; providing partnership with the stakeholders and providing feedback on policies to the government. The above results are in agreement with the findings of Okafor and Enemuoh (2023) who reported that principals implement education policies through providing instructional leadership, interpreting policies to teachers. The result is also in line with the findings of Nwanneka (2019) who reported partnership with the stakeholders

and mediating role of principals as areas of principals between education policy makers and educators as principals' areas implementation of education policies in secondary school. The result also agrees with the report of Babalola (2014) who reported aligning school goals with education policies by principals as ways of implementing education policy in schools.

The findings of the study also identified the areas of resource allocation by principals in implementation of education policies to include: preparing adequate budget for school programmes; allocating adequate fund for purchase of recommended textbooks; ensuring availability of instructional materials in schools and providing adequate laboratory equipment in schools among others. Others are ensuring existence functional library in schools; ensuring provision of computer accessories in schools; supervising teachers in schools and ensuring availability of subject adequate teachers. The above findings are in consonance with the findings of Nwadiani (2014) who reported that education policies are ensured by principals in schools through proper allocation of resources to school activities. It also agrees with the result of Nwanneka (2019) who also reported principals' partnership with the stakeholder and mediating roles between policy makers and educators in the areas of providing support for policy implementation in secondary schools.

Educational Implications of the Study

The result of the study has implications for principals and the government. The implication is that principals are to be up and doing in ensuring effective education policy implementations in schools through their administrative roles. It implies that the government should provide enabling environment for the principals to effectively ensure adequate compliance to education policy implementation in secondary schools not only Abia state but throughout the country.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the study concluded that principals play pivotal roles in translating education policies through effective leadership role. They also play vital role in policy implementation through supervision of instruction. Principals also through effective resources management and stakeholders' engagement implement education policies in schools.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study the following recommendations were made

1. Principals in other states of the federation should embrace effective education policy implementation as a tool for improving standard of education in the country
2. The government should provide the principals with all the enabling support services to ensure their proper compliance to the implementation of education policies in secondary schools not only in Abia State but across the nation.

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