Challenges in Policy Formulation and Implementation for Education: Lagos State Tertiary Educational Institutions, Nigeria, Experience

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ABSTRACT

The lack of proper facilities, qualified teachers, and sufficient financing for education are the main worldwide issues Lagos State Tertiary Institutions, Nigeria, faces in developing and implementing its educational policies. This paper aims to highlight the challenges faced by Lagos State Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. These challenges have resulted in a low quality of education, limited access to education, and a high drop-out rate among students. Governmental organisations and educational establishments also don't coordinate well, which results in inefficient policies and a lack of accountability. Furthermore, there is a lack of prioritisation of education in national and regional development plans, hindering the progress and success of education policies. These global challenges require collaborative efforts from all stakeholders, including governments, education institutions, and communities, to address and overcome them and improve the education system in Lagos State University, Nigeria.

HOW TO CITE

Introduction

A policy's conversion from paper to practice or implementation is a complicated process that involves many players, a variety of challenges, and drastically diverse interpretations. The complexity of creating policies, as well as the linkages and relationships between them and their implementation, are examined and conceptualised in this paper. It accomplishes this by pointing out several hypotheses and reflections. This study focuses on the intentional process of discovery—starting and growing a change to address an issue in education. Because of the declining trend in educational advancement in most nations, especially Nigeria, the public has recently viewed activities and occurrences in the education sector with suspicion as to the formation and execution of education policy.

Without a question, education is a tool for promoting national recognition and growth. Education impacts the destiny of individuals, communities, and nations and is a crucial component of societal progress. Significant barriers stand in the way of Lagos State Tertiary Institution policy and academic accomplishments in Nigeria. There are numerous problems with education in a globalised world that transcend national borders. This paper looks at the pressing issues that Lagos State Tertiary Institution is now dealing with, including inadequate infrastructural facilities, a shortage of qualified instructors, institutional corruption, lack of political will, insecurity challenge, lack of continuity in commitment to policy implementation, political instability, poor policy formulation, poor relationship between policy designer and policy implemental, and insufficient financing. All of these issues compromise the standard of instruction, restrict access, and raise the number of student dropouts. These problems have wide-ranging consequences, such as shockingly high student dropout rates, access limitations, and subpar educational quality.

Transferring and acquiring knowledge and abilities in particular competences through instruction and learning is the core objective of education. What Nigerians see in education is "an instrument of excellence for the social and economic reconstruction of the nation". According to Mohammed (2022), postsecondary education serves as a link between the potentialities that exist inside each individual and the diverse opportunities that exist in society. Every society's quality is largely predicted by the calibre of its educational system. There is no way to overstate the importance of education. This is due to the fact that education has been called both a nation-building tool and the cornerstone of any civilization. In general, education acts as a development stimulant. Cooperation between the environment and the key players in the learning process—teachers and students—is necessary for a nation to achieve qualitative education.

One of the key factors exacerbating these challenges is the lack of effective coordination between governmental organisations and educational institutions. This disconnect results in inefficient policy implementation and a dearth of accountability. Moreover, education remains inadequately prioritised in national and regional development plans, hindering Lagos State Tertiary Institution's progress and overall success.

To address these global challenges, collaborative efforts are essential. Governments, educational establishments, and local communities must come together to devise innovative solutions. By fostering partnerships, allocating resources strategically, and promoting transparency, we can pave the way for an improved education system at Lagos State Tertiary Institution—one that empowers students, enhances learning outcomes, and contributes to the socio-economic development of Nigeria.

Policy

Policies are a system of laws, rules, or ideals that direct an organisation or government's actions, choices, and behaviour. It provides a foundation for reliable and efficient governance. Laws, rules, administrative measures, incentives, and voluntary practices are just a few examples of the different ways policies can be implemented. They often influence a number of industries, including banking, education, transportation, and health, and they also reflect how resources are allocated (National Public Health, 2024).

Policies are essential for risk management, efficient governance, and high organisational performance. Policies give an organisation or government precise guidance for actions and decision-making. Through the standardisation of practices and behaviour, they guarantee consistency. Without policies, there would be confusion, ad hoc decision-making, and potential conflicts. Policies help manage risks by identifying potential issues and outlining preventive measures. For instance, an IT security policy can safeguard against data breaches, while a financial policy can mitigate financial risks. Policies establish accountability. When roles, responsibilities, and expectations are defined, individuals can be held responsible for their actions. Transparency is enhanced when policies are accessible and well-communicated. Policies streamline processes, reducing redundancy and inefficiency. They promote effective resource allocation and goal achievement. Policies ensure adherence to legal requirements, avoiding legal repercussions. For example, employment policies comply with labour laws. Policies reflect an organisation's culture, values, and priorities. They shape behaviour and foster a positive work environment.

A policy substantively directed to improve the quality and efficiency of the education system towards sustainable development is termed education policy. Education policy reforms are aimed at the sustainability of the education system. To make the best modifications and offer a set of recommendations for education policy, it is vital to routinely review and evaluate how education policy is being implemented. Education policy must frequently be reformulated in light of various issues within the educational system.

The execution of education policies is a natural issue that has gained prominence in Lagos State and throughout Nigeria. In Nigeria, official policies tend to differ from their practical implementation. Because of the government's intense desire to enhance the tertiary education system in the nation, it is clear that Nigerian tertiary educational institutions have accepted or absorbed many policies from Western nations, including the United Kingdom through their colonial master, the United States. The grade of education appears to be declining despite the amount spent on education and educational initiatives. This is evidenced by indices such as high dropout rate, inadequate infrastructure and equipment, students' poor performance in examinations and high rate of examination malpractices (Abari, & Oyetola, 2008). Taking this position, the question could then be asked about what went wrong with the policies. Components of Policies: John Bandler, 2024 identified four components of policy as stated below.

Context: Provides background information about the organization, its goals, and objectives. This includes the mission, values, and overall purpose.

External Rules: Refers to legal requirements, such as laws and regulations that policies must align with.

External Guidance: Voluntary guides or best practices that inform policy development.

Internal Rules: Specific policies and procedures created by the organization itself.

Policy formulation

Policy formulation is considered as all the activities that occur (or are undertaken) before the

government announces a policy. Policies are formulated to address specific tasks or issues. These issues could be public or private. But these issues' or difficulties' nature is frequently ill-defined, including political as well as strictly technical components, and occasionally lacks a strong cause-and-effect knowledge basis. Furthermore, these issues may be solved, but new problems may emerge, and their solution often involves trade-offs between cost and effectiveness. Adequacy and fairness of the problem results may be hard to measure (Abari *et al*., 2021). "Identifying the policy problem, developing and analysing policy alternatives, and choosing or selecting an alternative" are the steps involved in creating a policy (Ikelegbe, 2005). Egonwam (1991) asserted that policy formulation entails:

i.   establishing objectives involving several parties with occasionally competing interests;

ii.   problem identification and delineation;

iii.   agenda setting in which individuals and groups attempt to influence policy decisions;

iv.   looking for alternate policies and assessing the effects of each one; and

v.   deciding on policies through the issuance of laws, acts, decrees, directions, and guidelines.

According to the aforementioned procedures, the ideal method for formulating policies is quite rigorous and entails turning an issue or societal problem that is widespread into a pandemic, putting it on the government's agenda, and persuading decision-makers to pass legislation. Therefore, once developed, a policy should be the product of a meticulous and early process with well-defined goals that are meant to further the common good. However, it is unlikely that government policies in the nation will fully encapsulate these attributes; instead, we see that the majority of policies are developed in accordance with the preferences, whims, and inclinations of

public officials (Epelle, 2011). The latter scenario will lead to a misalignment of objectives, feeble political institutions, and disappointing policy outcomes. This paper asserted that there is no need for any reform in Nigerian education; what is important is the implementation of the already existing policy document provisions.

Policy Implementation

The explanation of policy implementation is multifaceted. Implementing policies is one of the main issues developing countries face. It is only a declaration of purpose until a developed policy is put into practice. The link between a formulated policy and a practical outcome is known as policy implementation, and it involves enforcing and changing a policy into a tangible reality. It is also known as the process of converting directives from policy into action or objectives into reality. The hardest part of creating a policy is implementing it, which involves both those who are enforcing the law and those who are either benefiting from or suffering from the policy in question. In contrast, a number of actors may collaborate behind the scenes throughout the formulation phase to put the policy together. According to Egonmwarm (1991), other factors that impact the implementation process include (i) the implementing agency's commitment to carrying out the policy as it has been handed down to them; (ii) the policy's implementability (since public policies are typically expressed in imprecise terms); and (iii) the implementability of the change the policy is intended to address. According to Ikelegbe (2005), referenced in Goddey (2018), putting policies into practice entails establishing a framework and procedures, allocating resources, recruiting staff or using outside agencies where needed, taking into account the socio-political and economic context, and identifying the policy's target audience. Fortunately, none of the mentioned variables can be readily altered to meet policy objectives or be available in the appropriate quantity or at the

appropriate time. As a result, the outcome most often involves policy sabotage by target groups whose interests have been harmed by the policy, policy misplacement owing to ineptitude or self-interest of the implementers, or policy abandonment due to a lack of funding.

Education Policy Formulation:

Education policy is a set of rules, laws, and guidelines that direct the functioning of the educational system within a specific geographic area. In the words of Akubukwe (2009), the following characteristics ought to direct education policy: Its nature needs to be normative. This implies that it must include the standards that direct the conduct of educators in the workplace; these standards are typically man-made. This indicates that although though educational programmes have certain legal components, they are still human inventions, and for the benefit of the people and the nation as a whole, they must be persuasive rather than coercive. Education policy formulation refers to the process of creating, designing, and shaping policies that guide educational practices and systems. It involves identifying educational goals, priorities, and strategies to improve learning outcomes (Schleicher, 2018).

Key aspects of education policy formulation as recognised by Schleicher (2018) are as follows:
Stakeholders Involvement: Policymakers, educators, researchers, and community members collaborate to develop policies that address educational challenges.
Research and Evidence: Data, evidence-based procedures, and research should all be considered when developing policy.
Context Sensitivity: Policies must consider the unique context of each educational system, including cultural, social, and economic factors.
Alignment with Goals: Policies should align with broader societal goals (e.g., sustainable development, equity, and economic growth).

Sources and Functions of Education Policies

Education policy is meant to promote justice, give legal status to education and maintain order in education sector. Education policy guides the different segment in education industry of the Nation. It gives legal status to education as a product of the legislative system. It passes through the bill stage to adoption in the parliament to law and maintenance order through the application of specific rules, guidance and procedures. Education policy, according to Ogbonnaya (2009), directs school administrators and provides a framework or foundation for choices, activities, and educational initiatives. Government decisions about education can be deliberate and purposeful, drawing on past experiences, attitudes, norms, and acts, claims Okunamiri (2005). These decisions can then be enforced without taking into account the opinions of the general public or following established procedures.

Education Policy Implementation:

Ogunode, & Ahaotu (2020) implementation is the systematic ways of executing programme, policies and project. Implementation is the process of putting education policies into action. It involves translating policy intentions into practical steps, programs, and activities (Schleicher, 2018). Implementing education policies is a complicated, dynamic process with numerous stakeholders that, if not well-targeted, can lead to failure. Effective implementation can actually be hampered by a number of factors, including failing to consider implementation procedures when formulating system-level policies, failing to acknowledge that involving people is fundamental to change processes, and requiring revisions to implementation procedures in order to accommodate more intricate governance structures. Effective implementation can actually be hampered by a number of factors, including failing to consider implementation procedures when formulating system-level policies, failing to

acknowledge that involving people is fundamental to change processes, and requiring revisions to implementation procedures in order to accommodate more intricate governance structures. Education policy implementation does not only refer to the strict implementation process but needs to be seen in its broader context. This study defines education policy implementation as a deliberate, multidirectional change process that attempts to put a particular policy into reality and may have many repercussions on an education system after reviewing the variety of definitions and frameworks available on the subject:

After reviewing an array of definitions and frameworks available on the issue, this study defines education policy implementation as a deliberate multidirectional change process intended at transforming a certain policy into reality and may have numerous effects on an education system. Since actors can have an impact on it at different stages of the educational process, it is multidirectional. It is put into perspective by the ways that the education system and the formulation and implementation of policies in the education sector are impacted by institutions and societal shocks and trends, or changes in culture, demography, politics, and the economy.

However, this definition needs to be taken a step further and made more actionable by studying the variety of factors that either help or impede the implementation process in order to be more tangible and useful for policymakers. This study suggests a general framework for forming determinants around four characteristics, all of which are important to consider for the successful implementation of education policies:

A well-reasoned policy that provides a rational and workable solution to the policy problem is known as a smart policy design. This will largely influence whether and how the policy can be implemented. For instance, if a new curriculum requires the use of high technology equipment which schools cannot afford, the policy may fail to be implemented unless some budget is available at the national or local level.

Inclusive stakeholder engagement: Whether and how key stakeholders are recognised and included in the implementation process is crucial to its effectiveness. For example, engaging teacher unions in discussions early on in the policy process will have long-term benefits.

An efficient policy implementation process takes into account the current policy environment, institutional and governance frameworks for education, and the external context. This creates a favourable institutional, policy, and societal environment.

A carefully considered plan of action for schools the strategy lays out concrete activities that logically combine all the components to make the policy workable at the school level.

Challenges facing the Implementation of Educational policies:

Nigeria's educational plans are being implemented in the face of numerous obstacles. The following are the challenges encountered in formulating and implementing global policies:

Insufficient Focus: Often, policymakers prioritise policy creation over implementation, leading to gaps between policy intent and actual practice.

Change Process: Implementation requires managing change within complex education systems.

Complexity: Education systems involve multiple stakeholders (teachers, administrators, parents, students), making implementation intricate.

Cultural Diversity: Policies must respect and accommodate diverse cultural norms and practices.

Economic Disparities: Varying economic conditions across regions can affect the feasibility and effectiveness of policies.

Political Instability: Unstable political environments can hinder consistent policy implementation.

Technological Advancements: Policies need to be flexible and progressive due to the rapid advancement of technology.

Environmental Concerns: Policies must address global environmental issues while considering local impacts.

Legal Frameworks: International laws and regulations can complicate policy enforcement across different jurisdictions.

Resource Limitations: Scarcity of resources can restrict the scope of policy initiatives.

Human Rights: Ensuring policies uphold human rights standards can be challenging in different political contexts.

Dimensions for Effective Implementation:

Coherent Strategies: Develop and pursue well-defined implementation strategies.

Smart Policy Design: Create policies that are logical, feasible, context-adapted, and justified.

Engage Stakeholders: Involve all key stakeholders throughout the policy process

Successful policy implementation requires collaboration, adaptability, and a focus on achieving positive educational outcomes.

Challenges Lagos State Tertiary Institutions face when formulating and implementing policies.

The most admirable education programme in Nigeria has had implementation issues. Nigeria is reputed to having some of the best education policies in the world. However, there are significant issues that prevent these policies from being implemented effectively, including inadequate funding, contracting policies, and a lack of continuity in planning. It is crucial to stress that decision-making, consultation, and choice selection must inform the development and application of policies. Lagos State Tertiary Institution faces a variety of challenges in the creation and application of policies.

Unrealistic Goal Setting: When policies have unrealistic goals that are hard to accomplish within realistic bounds, they may fail.

Political Patronage: Political considerations sometimes override the merit-based implementation of policies, leading to inefficiencies.

Neglect of Target Beneficiaries: Suboptimal results may arise from policies that fail to sufficiently satisfy the demands of the intended beneficiaries.

Lack of Consideration of Policy Environment: Policies must align with the existing social, economic, and cultural context. Ignoring this can hinder successful implementation.

Inadequate Funding: Insufficient financial resources can impede policy execution and limit desired impacts.

Institutional Corruption: Corruption within administrative structures can undermine policy implementation.

Poor Relationship between Designers and Implementers: Effective communication and collaboration between policy designers and implementers are crucial for successful execution.

Insecurity Challenges: Security concerns can disrupt policy implementation, especially in regions facing instability.

Lack of Continuity in Commitment: Changes in leadership or priorities may lead to inconsistent commitment to policy implementation.

Poor Policy Formulation: Policies that lack clarity, specificity, or feasibility are challenging to implement effectively.

Conclusion

Lagos State Tertiary Institutions experience in developing and implementing policies is indicative of the complex environment surrounding educational reform in Nigeria. Formulating and implementing policies involves changing, reorganising, or even redesigning the current system to guarantee increased efficacy and

efficiency. Despite earnest efforts, Lagos State Tertiary Institutions have encountered challenges such as resource allocation, stakeholder engagement, and adapting to rapidly changing educational needs.

According to the paper's conclusion, quality assurance practices at tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State are strongly predicted by the correlation between policy formulation and execution. So, if tertiary institutions will be successful in gaming continuous momentum and realizing the objective for which they're formed, there are specific policies which must be hinged on rationalism, and this must suffice from what the motive of formation of such institution rests on. Only for this reason can there be adequacy, effectiveness and efficiency in lecture delivery to sharpen and remould prospective candidates.

Recommendations

To address these challenges, Lagos State Tertiary Institutions should focus on realistic goal-setting, stakeholder engagement, and ensuring policies are contextually relevant. The implementation and execution of policies formulated should be based on objectivity rather than subjectivity. Additionally, fostering transparency and accountability can enhance policy implementation outcomes.

The management of Lagos State Tertiary Institutions should:

Engage teachers, students, and the community in policy discussions to ensure policies are practical and meet the needs of all parties.

Implement transparent and efficient resource management systems to maximize the impact of limited resources.

Invest in regular training for educators to keep abreast of pedagogical advancements and policy shifts.

Make use of data analytics to track progress, make required corrections, and inform policy decisions.

Develop policies that are adaptable to change and allow for swift responses to new challenges.

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