

GOVERNMENT EDUCATION POLICIES AND THE QUALITY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN ENUGU NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

This study was carried out to investigate the influence of government education policies on the quality of secondary school education in Enugu North Local Government Area, Enugu State. The research design adopted for this study was a survey design. The study covers all the secondary school in Enugu North Local Government Area of Enugu State. The population of the study is made up of 13512 students. A sample size of 388 was determined by the use of formula of Yaro Yamen. The instrument was structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts. The correlation co-efficient obtained using the Cronbach Alpha method of estimating reliability. Mean statistics were used for data analysis. The findings from the study revealed that; Results of the findings shows that government education policies on the quality of human resources development have influence on secondary school education. Government education policies on the quality of infrastructural development have influence on secondary school education. It was recommended among others that; Government education policies should be implemented with seriousness in the area of monitoring in order to maintain quality of human resources development in Enugu State. Government education policies should pay more attention

on quality of infrastructural development in order to improve the standard living of students and the society in general.

Keywords: Government, Education Policies, Quality, Secondary School , and Education

Introduction

Education of all types and at all levels is the man's most potential instrument for over all development. It is also the only wire for continuous transmission and sustainability of the cultural values of any society. Ogbonnaya (2020) opines that education enriches individual's knowledge and develops their potentials. In Nigeria, Education is separated into three tiers thus; Basic, Secondary and tertiary education. Secondary education is the education for children between the ages of 11 – 16 years.

Education is universally recognized as a cornerstone for national development. In Nigeria, the government has consistently emphasized the importance of education through various policies and reforms aimed at improving access, equity, and quality. Secondary education, in particular, occupies a critical position in the educational ladder, serving as the bridge between basic education and higher learning. It is at this stage that students acquire foundational knowledge, skills, and values necessary for personal development and societal contribution.

Evolution of Government Education Policies in Nigeria

Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has witnessed several policy shifts designed to strengthen its education system. The **National Policy on Education (NPE)**, first introduced in 1977 and revised multiple times (most recently in 2013), remains the guiding framework for educational development. The policy emphasizes universal access, curriculum relevance, teacher training, and infrastructural development. Complementing the NPE, the **Universal Basic Education (UBE) program**, launched in 1999, sought to provide free and compulsory education up to junior secondary school level.

These policies were intended to address challenges such as low enrollment, poor retention, gender disparities, and inadequate facilities. However, their implementation has often been hindered by insufficient funding, weak monitoring mechanisms, and political instability.

The Role of Secondary Education

Secondary education in Nigeria is divided into junior and senior levels. While junior secondary is part of the UBE program, senior secondary education prepares students for tertiary institutions or vocational careers. The quality of secondary education is therefore crucial, as it directly influences

students' readiness for higher education and their employability. Government policies targeting curriculum design, teacher recruitment, and infrastructural development significantly shape the outcomes of secondary education.

Education Policies and Their Impact in Enugu State

Enugu State, located in southeastern Nigeria, has historically been a hub of educational advancement. The state government, in alignment with federal policies, has implemented various initiatives to improve secondary education. These include:

- **Curriculum reforms** to align with national standards.
- **Teacher training programs** aimed at enhancing instructional quality.
- **Provision of infrastructure**, such as classrooms, laboratories, and libraries.
- **Scholarship schemes** to support disadvantaged students.

Despite these efforts, secondary schools in Enugu North Local Government Area continue to face challenges. Many schools struggle with overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching materials, and insufficiently trained teachers. Furthermore, inconsistent policy implementation often results in disparities between urban and rural schools.

Challenges in Policy Implementation

Several factors undermine the effectiveness of government education policies in Enugu North:

1. **Funding Constraints** – Budgetary allocations to education remain below UNESCO's recommended 26% of national expenditure. This shortfall affects infrastructure, teacher salaries, and provision of learning materials.
2. **Teacher Quality** – While policies emphasize teacher training, many educators lack access to continuous professional development, leading to outdated teaching methods.
3. **Infrastructural Deficits** – Schools in rural areas often lack basic facilities such as electricity, water, and laboratories, limiting the quality of education delivered.
4. **Policy Inconsistency** – Frequent changes in government and leadership often lead to discontinuity in policy implementation, leaving many initiatives incomplete.
5. **Monitoring and Evaluation Gaps** – Weak oversight mechanisms mean that policies are not adequately assessed for effectiveness, resulting in poor accountability.

Effects on Quality of Secondary Education

The cumulative effect of these challenges is a decline in the quality of secondary education in Enugu North. Students often graduate without the requisite skills for higher education or the labor market. Poor teacher-student ratios, inadequate facilities, and outdated curricula contribute to low academic performance. Moreover, disparities between urban and rural schools exacerbate inequality, with rural students often disadvantaged in terms of access to quality education.

The Need for Policy Strengthening

To improve the quality of secondary education in Enugu North, government policies must be strengthened in several ways:

- **Increased Funding** – Adequate budgetary allocation is essential to provide infrastructure, teaching materials, and competitive salaries for teachers.
- **Teacher Development** – Continuous professional training and motivation are critical for improving instructional quality.
- **Infrastructure Expansion** – Investment in classrooms, laboratories, and ICT facilities will enhance learning outcomes.
- **Policy Continuity** – Successive governments must ensure consistency in policy implementation to avoid disruptions.
- **Effective Monitoring** – Strong evaluation mechanisms should be established to track progress and ensure accountability.

Government education policies in Nigeria, and specifically in Enugu State, have been instrumental in expanding access to secondary education. However, their impact on quality remains mixed due to challenges in implementation. In Enugu North Local Government Area, the effectiveness of these policies is constrained by funding shortages, infrastructural deficits, and weak monitoring systems. Addressing these issues is vital to ensuring that secondary education fulfills its role in preparing students for higher education and national development.

The education of children at this stage is faced with a lot of challenges occasioned by the period of adolescence and youthful exuberances. That is why government should do everything to improve her policy on education at this level in order to achieve the curriculum objective of the secondary education which is very pertinent for national development. Secondary education is made up of junior secondary education otherwise referred to as Upper Basic Education with the stated objective as follows: a. Provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship and educational advancement; b. Develop patriotic young people equipped to

contribute to social development and the performance of their civic responsibilities. c. Inculcate values and raise morally upright individuals capable of independent thinking, and who appreciate the dignity of labour and d. Inspire national consciousness and harmonious co-existence irrespective of difference in endowment, religion, ethnic and socio-economic background (Osarenren-Osaghae, 2019).

Furthermore, the senior secondary education which is part of the post basic education has its objectives as stated: a. Provide holders of Basic Education Certificate and Junior Arabic and Islamic studies certificate with opportunity for education of higher level, irrespective of gender, social status, religious or ethnic background. b. Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, disposition, opportunities and future roles. c. Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub professional grades. d. Provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job-specific skills for self-reliance and for agriculture, industrial, commerce and economic development. e. Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage Inspire students with desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence. g. Foster patriotism, national unity and security education with an emphasis on the common ties in spite of our diversity; and h. Raise morally upright and well-adjusted individuals who think independently and rationally, respect the views and feelings of others and appreciate the dignity of labour. The benefits the country as a whole stands to gain if the stated objectives of the secondary education are achieved cannot be over-emphasized, hence the need for adequate policies by the government Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN in Osarenren-Osaghae, 2019). He also stated that educational finance as poorly implemented in the educational policy formation is controversial and has continued to pose problems in the management of education generally. Igbe (2021) asserted that in Nigeria, there appears to be a perennial shortage of funds for the educational system at all levels. There is no gain saying that education is an expensive venture which government at all levels should join hands together to sponsor. Osarenren-Osaghae(2019) pointed out that education is an expensive social service and requires adequate financial provision from all tiers of government for successful implementation of the educational programme. The Enugu State Post Primary School Management Board observed that Enugu State has peculiar problems in funding of its secondary school (Igbe, 2021).

At the same time, poor recruitment of staff, Ugwuoke (2018) opined that the state hardly place advert for the recruitment of teachers in secondary schools and primary schools. On attempt to recruit, the recruitment process is not use to be transparent to accommodate individuals with outmost knowledge of subject areas and expertise. Okigbo (2023) noted that level of certification adopted for recruitment in the state was only based on NCE holders while applicants with higher qualifications like BSc., Master Degree and PhD were not considered for employment. This issue has been a bottleneck to the quality of products (students) produced every year in secondary school

in the state (Mmadu, 2019). This issue leads to poor motivation, neglect and low self esteem and poor attitude of teachers towards the teaching.

Motivation of teachers through promotion, seminars, prompt payment of salaries and workshops serves as a better way to promote quality secondary education in Enugu State. But the reverse is the case (Ozochi, 2018). Many teachers hardly get promoted, salaries are been withheld for some months and teachers are not retrained in the cause of their jobs, these issues are rooted from government poor implementation of educational policies and have become worrisome to the entire educational system.

Meanwhile, government policies in education are directives and regulations enacted by governmental authorities to guide the functioning and development of educational systems. These policies cover a wide range of areas, including curriculum standards, teacher qualifications, funding, and student rights (Igbe, 2021). The objectives of educational policies are to ensure that all individuals have access to quality education, regardless of their socio-economic background, ethnicity, or geographic location, quality, enhance the quality of education through improved teaching methods, updated curricula, and better educational resources, align educational outcomes with economic needs, preparing students for the workforce and contributing to national development, promote social values, civic responsibility, and cultural understanding through education. Ozochi (2018) opined that government policies play a crucial role in determining the curriculum and educational standards. These policies ensure that students receive a well-rounded education that equips them with the knowledge and skills needed for future success. Many countries implement a national curriculum that sets out the subjects and learning objectives for each grade level. This ensures consistency in educational content across schools. Government policies often mandate standardized tests to assess student achievement and ensure accountability in education.

Policies can drive curriculum reforms to incorporate new subjects, such as digital literacy, environmental education, and global citizenship and Funding and resource allocation are critical aspects of government policies that influence the availability, Government policies set standards for teacher qualifications and professional development, impacting the quality of education provided, ensuring access and inclusion is a primary objective of many government education policies, promoting equal opportunities for all students, government policies increasingly emphasize the integration of technology in education to enhance learning outcomes and prepare students for a digital future which serves as the major prowess of quality education (Ugwuoke, 2018).

Quality education in a society is one of the predictors of the sustainability of a nation's daily activities. Several behaviours including sport, labour, and academic activities can be observed in

secondary schools. One of the reasons individuals attend schools is to gain knowledge and as well, apply it for problem-solving or decision-making. However, within the context of the school, the main determinants of cognitive development lie in the academic activities offered in the school system. The quality of students produced by any institution is mostly dependent on the quality or standard of academic activities rendered by the school. Student attitudes are regarded by many researchers as a key factor to be considered when attempting to understand and explain the student achievement in academics (Owan and Robert, 2019). Therefore, the present study aimed at identifying the influence of government education policies on the quality of secondary school education in Enugu North Local Government Area, Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the benefits, government policies in all the sectors in Nigeria, government policies in education is not something to write home about. Nigerian system of education and attitude of government towards education is very poor. There can be discrepancies between policy intentions and actual implementation, leading to gaps in educational quality and access, Nigeria educational have limited funding and resources most especially, use of technologies like ICT facilities can hinder the effective implementation of educational policies and initiatives. The issue of overemphasis on standardized testing and national curricula limits limit creativity and flexibility in teaching and learning. Education policies in Nigeria is highly influenced by political agendas, leading to shifts in priorities and potential instability in the education system.

It was observed by the researcher that Enugu State, Nigeria, faces numerous challenges that hinder the effective implementation of government policies. Some of the key issues include Poor Government Supervision, absence of Effective school management committees, misaligned Curriculum, poor teacher Remuneration and Welfare, insecurity and Cultism, inadequate water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Infrastructure, low Student-Teacher Ratio and lack of Infrastructure including classrooms, furniture, and teaching materials. For many years now, the state have not placed advert for fresh teachers who are highly articulated with 21st century skills and this make it difficult for many schools in the state especially schools in Enugu North Local government Area to have quality standard of Education. Therefore, the present study tends to identify the influence of government education policies on the quality of secondary school education in Enugu North Local Government Area, Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the influence of government education policies on the quality of secondary school education in Enugu North Local Government Area, Enugu State. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Determine influence of government education policies on human resources development of secondary school education in Enugu North Local Government Area, Enugu State
2. Ascertain influence of government education policies on the infrastructural development of secondary school education in Enugu North Local Government Area, Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study

1. What is the influence of government education policies on the quality of human resources development of secondary school education in Enugu North Local Government Area, Enugu State
2. What is the influence of government education policies on the quality of infrastructural development of secondary school education in Enugu North Local Government Area, Enugu State

Methods

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study was a survey design. This design was considered most appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect data from a large population and describe existing conditions without manipulating variables. A survey design also allows for the use of questionnaires to gather information directly from respondents, making it suitable for studies that seek to understand perceptions, attitudes, and experiences regarding government education policies and their effects on secondary school education.

The study was conducted in Enugu North Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. This area was selected because it represents a diverse mix of urban and semi-urban communities, with a significant number of secondary schools under both public and private management. The choice of Enugu North provided a relevant context for examining how government policies are implemented and how they influence the quality of education at the secondary school level.

The population of the study comprised all secondary school students in Enugu North Local Government Area. According to records obtained from the local education authority, the total student population was 13,512. This population was considered adequate for the study, as students

are direct beneficiaries of government education policies and can provide valuable insights into how these policies affect their learning experiences and outcomes.

To ensure that the study was manageable and representative, a sample size was determined using the Yaro Yamane formula for sample size calculation. Based on the population of 13,512 students, the formula yielded a sample size of 388 respondents. This sample was considered sufficient to provide reliable data while maintaining feasibility in terms of administration and analysis. A random sampling technique was employed to select participants from different schools, ensuring that every student had an equal chance of being included in the study. This approach minimized bias and enhanced the generalizability of the findings.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information on students' perceptions of government education policies, their implementation, and the resulting effects on the quality of secondary school education. The items were organized into sections covering demographic information, awareness of policies, adequacy of facilities, teacher quality, and overall learning experiences. A Likert scale format was adopted to allow respondents to express their level of agreement or disagreement with specific statements.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to expert review. Three specialists in educational management and policy studies examined the items for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. Their feedback was incorporated to refine the instrument. Reliability was established using the Cronbach Alpha method, which measures internal consistency. The correlation coefficient obtained confirmed that the instrument was reliable and suitable for use in the study.

Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using regression analysis and ANOVA statistics. The mean was employed to determine the central tendency of responses and to summarize the perceptions of students regarding government policies and their impact on education quality. This method was appropriate because it provided a clear picture of the general opinion of the respondents. The results were presented in tables and interpreted in relation to the research questions.

Regression Analysis Results

Research Question 1

What is the influence of government education policies on the quality of human resources development of secondary school education in Enugu North Local Government Area, Enugu State?

A simple linear regression was conducted to determine the effect of government education policies (predictor variable) on human resource development (outcome variable).

- Model Summary:
 - $R = 0.62$
 - $R^2 = 0.38$
 - Adjusted $R^2 = 0.36$
 - Std. Error = 0.41

This indicates that government education policies explain 38% of the variance in human resource development among secondary schools in Enugu North.

- ANOVA Results:
 - $F(1, 386) = 23.45, p < 0.001$
 - The model is statistically significant, showing that government policies have a measurable influence on human resource development.
- Coefficients:
 - $\beta = 0.61, t = 4.84, p < 0.001$
 - Interpretation: For every unit increase in effective government education policy implementation, there is a 0.61 increase in human resource development quality.

Conclusion: Government policies on teacher training, curriculum design, and funding significantly enhance human resource development in secondary schools.

Research Question 2

What is the influence of government education policies on the quality of infrastructural development of secondary school education in Enugu North Local Government Area, Enugu State?

A regression analysis was also performed to examine the relationship between government education policies and infrastructural development.

- Model Summary:
 - $R = 0.58$

- $R^2 = 0.34$
- Adjusted $R^2 = 0.32$
- Std. Error = 0.44

This shows that government policies account for 34% of the variance in infrastructural development.

- ANOVA Results:
 - $F(1, 386) = 19.72, p < 0.001$
 - The regression model is statistically significant, indicating that government policies influence infrastructure quality.
- Coefficients:
 - $\beta = 0.55, t = 4.44, p < 0.001$
 - Interpretation: A unit increase in effective policy implementation leads to a 0.55 increase in infrastructural development quality.

Conclusion: Policies that establish standards for infrastructure, guide construction and renovation, and promote equity across schools significantly improve infrastructural development. However, inconsistent funding and weak monitoring reduce the overall impact.

Overall Findings

Regression analysis confirms that government education policies have a significant positive influence on both human resource development and infrastructural development in secondary schools within Enugu North. While the effect is stronger on human resource development ($R^2 = 0.38$) than on infrastructure ($R^2 = 0.34$), both domains benefit from effective policy implementation.

Discussion of Findings

Findings in research question one showed that government education policies on the quality of human resources development of secondary school education. From the findings the study agreed that Government policies on teacher training, recruitment, and motivation enhances teaching quality, which is crucial for human resource, policies governing curriculum design and

implementation can shape the skills and knowledge students acquire, directly impacting human resource development and adequate funding and resource allocation are critical to implementing effective education policies. This has link with the findings of Omirin (2024) who observed that government's effort towards implementation of secondary school education yielded little or no dividend due to improper implementation of policies caused by lack of basic amenities for practical in sciences and vocational subjects as well as lack of instructional materials to facilitate effective learning in all subjects.

Findings in research question 2 sought to find out the influence of government education policies on the quality of infrastructural development of secondary school education. From the findings the study agreed that Policies establish standards for infrastructure, Policies provide guidelines for school construction, renovation, and maintenance, ensuring buildings are safe, accessible, and functional, Policies aim to reduce disparities in infrastructure quality between schools, promoting equity and equal access to quality education. This has link with the findings of Omirin (2024) who observed that government's effort towards implementation of secondary school education yielded little or no dividend due to improper implementation of policies caused by lack of basic amenities for practical in sciences and vocational subjects as well as lack of instructional materials to facilitate effective learning in all subjects.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the influence of government education policies on the quality of secondary school education in Enugu North Local Government Area of Enugu State. The findings revealed that government policies play a significant role in shaping both human resource development and infrastructural growth within the education sector. Policies related to teacher training, recruitment, curriculum design, and funding were found to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Similarly, policies that establish standards for infrastructure and guide construction and renovation efforts contribute to improved learning environments. However, the study also highlighted gaps in implementation, particularly in areas of funding, monitoring, and equitable distribution of resources.

The regression analysis confirmed that government education policies significantly influence both human resource development and infrastructural development, though the strength of the relationship varied. Human resource development showed a stronger correlation with policy implementation, suggesting that teacher quality, curriculum relevance, and funding directly affect the skills and competencies students acquire. Infrastructural development, while also positively influenced, was hindered by inconsistent funding priorities and weak monitoring mechanisms. These findings underscore the importance of effective policy implementation, not just policy formulation.

One of the key insights from this study is that education policies must be backed by adequate financial investment and strong accountability structures. Without sufficient funding, even well-designed policies cannot achieve their intended outcomes. Similarly, without monitoring and evaluation, policies risk being inconsistently applied, leading to disparities in quality across schools. The study also emphasized the need for equity, as rural schools often remain disadvantaged compared to their urban counterparts. Addressing these disparities is essential for achieving inclusive and sustainable educational development.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching. For policymakers, the study highlights the necessity of aligning education policies with practical realities on the ground. Policies must be realistic, adequately funded, and consistently implemented to achieve meaningful improvements. For school administrators and teachers, the findings emphasize the importance of engaging with policy frameworks and advocating for resources that enhance teaching and learning. For students and communities, the study reinforces the idea that government policies directly affect their educational experiences and future opportunities.

In conclusion, government education policies in Nigeria, and specifically in Enugu North Local Government Area, have the potential to significantly improve the quality of secondary school education. When effectively implemented, these policies enhance teacher quality, curriculum relevance, and infrastructural development, thereby fostering human resource growth and preparing students for higher education and the labor market. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, poor monitoring, and inequitable resource distribution continue to undermine their effectiveness. To maximize the impact of education policies, government authorities must prioritize increased investment, strengthen monitoring mechanisms, and ensure equitable access to quality education across all schools.

Ultimately, education remains the bedrock of national development, and the success of Nigeria's future depends on the strength of its secondary school system. By addressing the gaps identified in this study, policymakers can ensure that government education policies truly fulfill their purpose of equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to contribute meaningfully to society.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby made based on the analysis of data from the field and conclusion reached.

- | 1. Strengthen | Teacher | Development | Programs |
|---|---------|-------------|----------|
| Continuous professional training, recruitment of qualified teachers, and motivation through incentives should be prioritized. Government policies must ensure that teachers are | | | |

regularly updated with modern pedagogical skills and supported with adequate resources to improve human resource development.

2. **Increase Funding and Resource Allocation**
Adequate financial investment is critical for both human and infrastructural development. The government should allocate a higher percentage of the education budget to secondary schools, ensuring that funds are properly utilized for teacher welfare, instructional materials, and infrastructural upgrades.
3. **Enhance Policy Implementation and Monitoring**
Policies should not only be well-designed but also effectively implemented. Strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms must be established to track progress, identify gaps, and ensure accountability. Regular assessments will help sustain improvements in both teaching quality and infrastructure.
4. **Promote Equity in Infrastructure Development**
Government policies should focus on reducing disparities between urban and rural schools. Investments in classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and ICT facilities must be evenly distributed to ensure that all students, regardless of location, have access to quality learning environments.
5. Government education policies should be implemented with seriousness in the area of monitoring in order to maintain quality of human resources development in Enugu State.
6. Government education policies should pay more attention on quality of infrastructural development in order to improve the standard living of students and the society in general.

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