

EDUCATIONAL POLICY FAILURE: ROOT CAUSE, CONSEQUENCES AND CORRECTIVE MEASURES IN NIGERIA: A GLIMPSE FROM THE MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

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Corresponding Author Dr. Obia Eniang-Essien Department of Educational Management, University of Cross River State, Nigeria Article History Received: 08 / 12 / 2024 Accepted: 25 / 12 / 2024 Published: 29 / 12 / 2024	Abstract: The study was conducted to examine educational policy failure, its root cause, consequences and corrective measures in Nigeria: A glimpse from the management perspective. The study further elucidates that the educational policy failure has been attributed to the fact that inadequate funding, lack of qualified personnel, weak planning and implementation processes, political interference, and insufficient data, leading to consequences such as a decline in education quality, unemployment, and increased social inequality has been attributed to the persistent rise in poor educational policy formulation. The study also proffers some salient corrective measures, including strengthening policy implementation through research and collaboration, ensuring adequate and sustained funding, investing in teacher training, improving data collection and analysis, promoting political stability, and tailoring policies to meet local needs and contexts. Thus, the paper concludes that the Nigerian government should invest in teacher training to improve the quality of education in the country. This can be achieved by organising training and retraining programmes, workshops, and seminars for teachers across the country. Keywords: Educational Policy, Consequences, Corrective and Management Perspective.
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1.0 Introduction

The national policy on education serves as a governmental framework to achieve national goals through education by establishing standards, goals, and guidelines for the entire education system. Its role is to align the education system with national socioeconomic and political priorities, promoting equal opportunity, fostering national unity, and ensuring the development of both individuals and the nation. It also defines the structure of education, including curriculum, teacher qualifications, and resource allocation, adapting to evolving global and local demands. According to Ogundiran and Oni (2020), in Nigeria, education plays a crucial role in individual and national development by fostering economic growth, promoting social cohesion, and strengthening democratic governance. It empowers citizens with knowledge and skills, enabling them to participate actively in society and contribute to the nation's progress. To this end, education is the single most significant tool of social control for national development, whether formal or informal. This is because education permits social and group relationships. Through education, individuals are trained to relate and interact with others in society and appreciate the importance of human

interconnectivity to enable them to accomplish common goals and achieve national unity.

Nigeria's education policy revolves around the 6-3-3-4 model, comprising six years of primary school, three years of junior secondary, three years of senior secondary, and four years of tertiary education. This is often referred to as the 9-3-4 system, with the first nine years (6 primary + 3 junior secondary) being compulsory. According to Adesola (2015), education is a process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Educational methods include storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, and directed research. Further, he stated that education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators, but learners may also educate themselves. This implies that education can take place to have a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational. This implies that education is the process of bringing desirable change into the behaviour of human beings. It can also be defined as the "Process of imparting or acquiring knowledge or habits through instruction or study". The behavioural changes must be directed towards a desirable end.

Ukpai (2020) informed that educational policies are the principles or formulated laws and rules that govern the operation of every educational system at all levels. Education occurs in many different forms for many purposes and through many institutions. Thus, an educational policy can directly affect the education of the people engaged at all levels of education. According to Thomas, Emilie and Wayne (2018) observed that educational policy analysis is the scholarly study of educational policy that seeks to answer questions about the purpose of education, the objectives that are designed to be attained, the methods for attaining them, and the tools for measuring their success or failure. Similarly, Okoroma (2021) posits that educational policies are initiatives primarily by governments that determine the direction of an educational system. According to UNESCO (2015), educational policy consists of the principles and government policies in the educational sphere and the collection of laws and rules that govern the operation of education systems. From the above definitions, the researchers believe that every modern society needs some educational policies to guide it in such an initiation towards achieving the purpose and objectives for which educational institutions were established. Each of these types is discussed below.

Education usually takes place in the premises of a school, where a person may learn basic, academic, or trade skills. Small children often attend a nursery or kindergarten, but formal education often begins in elementary school and continues with secondary school. Post-secondary education (or higher education) is usually at a college or university, which may grant an academic degree. It is associated with a specific stage and is provided under a certain set of rules and regulations. The formal education is given by specially qualified teachers who are supposed to be efficient in the art of instruction. It also observes strict discipline. The student and the teacher are both aware of the facts and engage themselves in the process of education. Examples of Education Learning in a classroom, School grading/certification, college, and university degrees. Planned education of different subjects, having a proper syllabus acquired by attending the institution (Ogundiran & Oni, 2020).

In the words of Thomas (2021), who posits that this type of education, conscious efforts are not involved. It is neither preplanned nor deliberate. It may be learned at a marketplace, a hotel or at home. Education is not given according to any fixed timetable. There is no set curriculum required. Education consists of experiences and actually living in the family or community. Teaching the child some basics, such as numeric characters. Someone learning his/her mother tongue. A spontaneous type of learning, "if a person standing in a bank learns about opening and maintaining the account at the bank from someone. Home education, individualised instruction (such as programmed learning), distance learning and computer-assisted instruction are other possibilities. Education is imparted consciously and deliberately and systematically implemented.

Thus, as the saying goes, destroying any nation does not require the use of atomic bombs or the use of long-range missiles. It only requires lowering the quality of education and allowing cheating in the examinations by the students and the consequences will be grave. The collapse of education is the collapse of the nation. One of the objectives of education, therefore, is to adequately equip the child with the necessary skills and knowledge needed for effective participation and contribution to national development (Ako & James, 2018). In other words, education

provides the intellectual feat which is required for social, economic, political and technological development of a nation. Education is intended to improve the personal life of the student in terms of the knowledge and skills which he requires and which enhance his quality of life and contribute to the well-being of his society (Ako & James, 2018). Nigeria as a nation, needs a functional educational system that can equip learners with requisite knowledge, attitudes and skills to enable them to relate and adapt successfully to the rapid socio-economic, cultural and political changes in the society. It is based on this backdrop that the study sought to examine educational policy failure: root cause, consequences and corrective measures in Nigeria.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY FAILURE

It is no gainsaying that for about two decades after independence, Nigeria maintained high qualitative educational standards and indirectly a positive development index. Teachers exerted themselves to train their pupils and were highly regarded by society. According to Afolabi and Adesope (2010), graduates of Nigerian Universities were highly sought after as they excelled in graduate studies in the best Universities in the world. But from the 1980s, the fabric of the Nigerian education system faced a significant decline in terms of its human and material resources. Human and material resources are no longer functioning well in our primary schools. Most secondary schools hardly perform experiments or practical, while tertiary institutions are poorly funded and lack infrastructure. There are no functioning laboratories, while libraries are ill-equipped with outdated books. Many are also with poor sporting facilities. The Nigerian teacher is the most important stakeholder in these educational institutions. Regrettably, his fortunes have fluctuated over time. Today, the erstwhile highly esteemed and respected teacher is treated essentially as the scum of the public. The Nigerian government in recent times has not sufficiently funded education to the extent of making a significant impact on the educational system. From 1999-2015, the percentage of budgetary allocation to education has not exceeded 12 percent which is far below the minimum UNESCO standard of 26 percent of the annual budget. Ugwu (2015) further identified the following as serious challenges facing the educational system in Nigeria;

Poor implementation of education policies such as the 6334 system, constant change of educational policies, emphasis on certificates and status, inadequate infrastructures, improper implementation of ICT program in schools, inadequate supervision of educational institutions (public and private), politicization of education in Nigeria to suit the interests of policy makers, poverty, inequity in reward system, lack of synergy between theory and practice, lack of commitment to national objectives and corruption.

ROOT CAUSE OF EDUCATIONAL FAILURE

Educational failure is a multifaceted issue with various interconnected causes, including individual student factors, inadequate teaching practices, and broader systemic issues. Understanding these underlying causes is crucial for developing effective strategies to support student success. Nweke (2015) outlined the following as the root causes of educational failure in Nigeria. Thus;

Individual Student Factors:

- Learning Difficulties: Conditions like impairment, poor reading ability and other learning disabilities can

significantly impact a student's ability to learn and succeed academically.

- **Lack of Motivation and Engagement:** A lack of interest, motivation, or confidence in learning can lead to disengagement and poor performance.
- **Poor Study Habits:** Ineffective study techniques, inadequate time management, and a lack of organisation can hinder academic progress.
- **Personal Issues:** Difficulties at home, such as family instability, low income, or lack of parental involvement, can create barriers to learning.
- **Health Issues:** Physical or mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, or chronic illnesses, can affect a student's ability to focus and learn.

Challenges of the educational policy

Several challenges are encountered in dealing with the national policy thus:

Challenges in implementing national policy include insufficient or poorly allocated resources, lack of political will and stability, ambiguous policy designs, and inadequate stakeholder engagement and coordination. Other factors contributing to implementation failure are resistance to change, corruption, lack of transparency, poor communication, unrealistic expectations, and a general mismatch between policy goals and local realities.

Inadequate Funding:

A lack of sufficient financial resources is a major barrier, often leading to underestimation of time, costs, and resources needed for projects.

Manpower Shortage:

Insufficient skilled personnel to carry out the policy's mandates can cripple implementation efforts.

Lack of Knowledge:

Insufficient knowledge or data on local needs can lead to misallocated resources and ineffective policies.

Lack of Political Will and Stability:

Frequent changes in government and political priorities disrupt policy continuity and commitment, forcing new administrations to start fresh or abandon existing plans.

Political Interference:

Interference from political figures or groups can distort policy decisions and implementation, diverting resources and undermining trust.

Corruption:

Widespread corruption can divert resources, distort decisions, and erode public trust in institutions.

Ambiguous Policy Design:

Unclear, vague, or poorly defined policies make them difficult to understand and implement effectively.

Overly Optimistic Expectations:

Policymakers sometimes set unrealistic goals for major projects, leading to underestimation of risks and costs.

Mismatch with Local Needs:

Policies may not align with the specific needs, structures, or organizational realities of local communities and organizations, hindering their effectiveness.

Poor Coordination:

A lack of coordination among different government agencies, or between public and private sectors, can lead to duplication of efforts or conflicting actions.

Stakeholder Resistance:

Resistance to change from affected organisations or communities can impede implementation, especially when policies clash with existing practices or priorities.

Inadequate Communication and Transparency:

Lack of clear communication about policy goals, processes, and progress can lead to misinformation, misunderstanding, and reduced buy-in from the public and stakeholders.

Inadequate Teaching Practices:

- **Poor Teaching Quality:** Lack of qualified teachers, ineffective teaching methods, and a failure to adapt to diverse learning needs can contribute to student failure.
- **Lack of Support and Resources:** Insufficient resources, inadequate classroom materials, and limited access to support services can hinder student learning.
- **Inconsistent Expectations:** When teachers and schools have unclear or inconsistent expectations, students may struggle to understand what is expected of them.

Systemic Issues:

- **Poverty and Inequality:** Socioeconomic factors, such as poverty and lack of access to quality education, can create significant barriers to academic success.
- **Ineffective Educational Policies:** Poorly designed or implemented educational policies can exacerbate existing inequalities and create challenges for students and teachers.
- **Lack of Funding:** Inadequate funding for schools and educational programs can limit resources and opportunities for students.
- **Social and Cultural Factors:** Cultural norms, societal expectations, and peer influence can also play a role in student success or failure.

Addressing educational failure requires a comprehensive approach that considers these interconnected factors. Interventions may include providing targeted support for students with learning difficulties, improving teacher training and resources, and addressing systemic inequalities.

CONSEQUENCES OF EDUCATIONAL FAILURE

Educational failure, encompassing both academic struggles and dropping out, has far-reaching negative consequences for individuals and society. These include decreased self-esteem, limited future opportunities, increased likelihood of poverty and unemployment, and potential involvement in crime. Chineze and Olee (2021) outlined the following individual factors to include:

Individual Consequences:

- **Reduced Self-Esteem and Mental Health:** Academic failure can lead to feelings of inadequacy, low self-worth, depression, and increased stress.
- **Limited Future Opportunities:** Poor academic performance can hinder access to higher education and limit career options, potentially leading to lower-paying jobs and economic hardship.
- **Increased Risk of Poverty and Unemployment:** Individuals with lower levels of education are more likely to experience unemployment and poverty throughout their lives.
- **Potential for Social Isolation:** Educational failure can lead to social isolation, as individuals may struggle to connect with others or participate fully in society.
- **Health Disparities:** Lack of education is linked to poorer health outcomes, including shorter life expectancy and limited access to healthcare.
- **Increased Risk of Crime and Social Vices:** Studies show a correlation between school failure and involvement in criminal activity.

Societal Consequences:

Asiyai (2017), the following societal factors as outlined below

Economic Costs: Educational failure results in a loss of human capital and productivity, impacting national economic growth.

- **Increased Strain on Social Services:** Individuals who fail to complete their education may require greater reliance on social welfare programs and public support.
- **Reduced Civic Engagement:** Lower levels of education can negatively affect participation in civic life, including voting and community involvement.
- **Erosion of Social Cohesion:** When a significant portion of the population experiences educational failure, it can contribute to social inequality and instability.
- **Waste of Resources:** Investments in education are wasted when students do not complete their studies.

Educational policy failures can lead to a cascade of negative consequences, including declining educational standards, brain drain, and hampered national development. These failures often stem from issues like inadequate funding, poorly designed or implemented policies, and lack of political will.

- **Declining Educational Standards:** When educational policies fail, it can result in a drop in the quality of teaching and learning. This can manifest as outdated curricula, lack of resources, and inadequate teacher training, ultimately affecting student outcomes.
- **Brain Drain:** Poor educational systems can drive talented individuals, including students and educators, to seek opportunities elsewhere. This "brain drain" can further weaken the education sector and hinder national development.
- **Hindered National Development:** A poorly educated populace can lead to a less productive workforce and limit a nation's ability to compete in the global economy. This can also affect social progress and overall national development.
- **Inequality and Reduced Opportunities:** Educational policy failures can exacerbate existing inequalities,

disproportionately affecting marginalised communities and limiting access to quality education for all.

- **Wastage of Resources:** When policies are poorly implemented or ineffective, resources may be wasted on programs that fail to achieve their intended goals.
- **Instability and Lack of Continuity:** Frequent changes in educational policies and leadership can disrupt the system, making it difficult to implement long-term strategies and maintain consistent standards.
- **Corruption and Lack of Accountability:** In some cases, policy failures can be linked to corruption and a lack of accountability within the education system, leading to misuse of funds and a decline in overall effectiveness.
- **Social and Economic Disparities:** Failing to provide quality education can perpetuate social and economic inequalities, hindering social mobility and creating a cycle of poverty.
- **Impact on Teacher Morale:** Poor working conditions, inadequate resources, and lack of support can negatively impact teacher morale and job satisfaction, leading to high turnover rates and further compromising the quality of education.
- **Erosion of Public Trust:** When educational policies consistently fail to deliver results, it can erode public trust in the education system and policymakers.

CORRECTIVE MEASURES FOR ENHANCED EDUCATIONAL POLICY MEASURES

To mitigate the consequences of educational policy failures, it is crucial to:

- **Prioritise Evidence-Based Policymaking:** Base educational policies on research and data to ensure they are effective and address the specific needs of the context.
- **Invest in Teacher Development:** Provide teachers with adequate training, resources, and support to enhance their effectiveness.
- **Ensure Adequate Funding:** Allocate sufficient financial resources to the education sector to support infrastructure, materials, and personnel.
- **Promote Transparency and Accountability:** Implement measures to ensure transparency and accountability in the management of educational resources.
- **Foster Collaboration:** Encourage collaboration between government, educators, and communities to develop and implement effective policies.
- **Promote Inclusive Education:** Ensure that educational policies and practices are inclusive and address the needs of all students, regardless of their background.
- By addressing these challenges, countries can strive to create a more equitable and effective education system that benefits all citizens.

GLIMPSE FROM THE MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

Considering the management viewpoint, educational policy acts as a comprehensive framework of principles, rules, and decisions that guide and regulate the overall operations of an education system to achieve its goals. It clearly defines the set standards, procedures, and expectations for management, teachers,

and stakeholders, encompassing areas like funding, curriculum, staff management, and quality control to ensure effective service delivery and institutional stability. Effective educational policies are rational, purposeful, and foster a coordinated approach to realising the system's objectives, requiring careful formulation and consistent implementation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the article agrees with the objective of education, which is to adequately equip the child with the necessary skills and knowledge needed for effective participation and contribution to national development. Effective participation and contribution to national development by youths through formal education in present-day Nigeria is yet to be achieved, considering the calibre of students turned out yearly, who find it difficult to defend their certificates when called upon to do so. Education has not been able to promote cultural and social development among the youths, nor has it been able to achieve political stability, unity or guarantee its citizens certain freedoms necessary for personal and national development. Something, therefore, needs to be done and urgently too if the objective of education is to be achieved.

Recommendations

Education is too important to be left for government, or any one set of interests alone. The model of education policy design and governance needs attention from all interested individuals.

- i. There is a need for Nigeria to adopt and adapt the Singapore and Finland examples of high rewards for all in the educational system and the selection of the best brains to go into the teaching profession. This will lead to national development.
- ii. Education is a vital instrument for national development. It must be noted that the educational system cannot grow more than the political system, which regulates the policies that affect education. A country that does not have good and quality leadership cannot tangentially have a sound educational system that is capable of contributing adequately to national development.
- iii. There is a need for a change of attitude. It must be noted that Nigeria can appreciate the impact of education if we change our attitude towards national aspirations and give selfless service to the country.
- iv. Our universities must play a central role in rebuilding Nigeria's economy and in meeting our society's most crucial needs: an educated citizenry. The present scenario, whereby each government fashions out its plan

of action, does not augur well for continuity and consistency, which development efforts in any nation demand.

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