

Impact of Nigeria's Policy Changes in the Management of Primary Education on Teachers' Job Performance in Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The thrust of this paper was to investigate the impact of Nigeria's policy changes in the management of primary education. The study seeks to look at the impact of policy changes in the management of primary education on funding and provision of instructional materials in Benue State – Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study population was 24600 teachers from the existing 380 public primary schools in the study area. Using the multi-stage sample technique, 400 teachers were selected as the respondent. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. Mean and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions, while chi-square was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significant level. Findings from the study reveal that policy changes have significant impact on the funding and provision of instructional materials in primary schools. It was recommended that primary schools in Nigeria should be adequately funded by the tripartite system. There is the need to change the pattern of funding so that provision for primary education should adequately match its needs. The provision of adequate instructional materials and motivational incentives for teachers in primary schools should be highly considered by the government and other stakeholders in the provision of education.

*Keywords: Policy Changes, Management, Teachers' Job
Performance, Funding and Instructional Materials*

Background to the Study

Education is the vital instrument for social and economic mobility at the personal level and an instrument for transformation of society at the national level. Primary education as the focus of this paper is the first level of formal education. Apart from the home as the first agent of socialization, primary school is the place that introduces formal education or literacy to the children.

According to the National Policy on Education (2013), primary education is given in formal setting for children aged normally 6-11 years plus. Basically, it aims at giving children the opportunity to develop and acquire skills within the limits of their ability and to enable them function effectively in the society. It also aims at laying a firm foundation for reflective and scientific thinking. It is thus, generally considered as the key to success or failure of the educational system.

Management according to Idaba (2000) essentially means the prudent utilization of available resources (human, material and financial) to achieve set goal. Management of primary education refers to the process of planning, organizing, directing, staffing, coordinating, budgeting for and reporting on primary education system. Teachers are arguably the most important group of professionals for our nation's future. Without Teachers, the education system will be crippled. The increased importance in teachers' job performance has made it extremely important to identify the factors that influence teachers' job performance.

Job performance refers to an act of accomplishing or executing a given task (Griffin, 2012) Teachers' job performance is defined as the duties performed by a teacher at a particular period in the school system in achieving organizational goals. Teachers' job performance could be measured through job commitment, feelings of job challenges, job meaningfulness and job responsibility (Cheg, in Selamet, Samsu and Kamalu, 2012)

The concept of policy changes in the management of primary education in Nigeria refers to the inconsistent nature in the management, financing and control of primary education between the federal, state and local governments. This phenomenon has led to frequent policy changes in the management and control of primary education between the three tiers of government. It is the duty of the inspectorate division of the ministries of education to carry out periodic assessment of teachers' performance and commitment to work with the aim of improving the quality and performance of teachers in Nigerian school system. It is however so disheartening to note that the changes in policies in the management of Nigeria's primary education has made it very difficult to measure the success or failure in the system (Uwameiye and Imeokparia, 2004). Olaniyan and Obadara (2008) assert that, the management of primary education in Nigeria was passed through different stages and different authorities exercised its control from time to time.

Over the last two decades, the management of primary education in Nigeria had been experiencing some problems as a result of policy gaps. Teachers' salaries are not paid adequately, schools were not well maintained and facilities were not adequately provided owing to the fact that management of primary education had to be oscillating among state government, local government and federal government. At a time, state government took control, later it was handled over to the local government and then to a federal commission (Durosaro, 2004).

The introduction of the universal primary education (UPE) in Nigeria, the transfer of primary education from residual to the concurrent list, the re-establishment of the National Primary Education commission (NPEC) and State Primary Education Board (SPEB) that is currently, Universal Basic Education (UBE) are the moves of the federal government of Nigeria in accepting views and its commitment to provide educational opportunities at this level of education (Olaniyan and Obadara, 2008).

The primary education level, being the bedrock of the child's basic education level is very vital aspect of the nation's educational system that deserves to be handled with great care and caution. Any error committed in the management and control of this level of education may reverberate on other levels and thus mar the lives of the people and indeed the overall development of the nation. This is why all the stakeholders must show concern for the issues of primary education in organizing and managing the system to enhance effective teachers' job performance and for the achievement of overall educational objectives in Nigeria.

Historical Background of the Management of primary Education in Nigeria

The management and control of primary education in Nigeria has passed through different stages and different authorities exercised its control from time to time. At the vital stage, the church missionaries who introduced Western or formal education to Nigeria in 1842 handled the management of primary education system. After much criticism from different quarters about the crude and lack of proper coordination of the system by these missionaries, the British government intervened through establishment of various education ordinance and codes. It is worth mentioning that the colonial government in Lagos made intermittent attempts to assist some of the missions in the management of schools between 1870 and 1876 while a bill was passed as an ordinance (first its kind) for the promotion and assistance of education and it covered the West African Territories of Lagos, Gambia, Gold Coast and Sierra Leone (Olaniyan and Obadara, 2008).

In 1887, there was the enactment of the first purely Nigerian education ordinance as a result of separation of Lagos from Gold Coast in which it became the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos. This ordinance was promulgated to increase the betterment of education administration. In one word, the British government had no clearly defined policy on education for its African colonies during this time till 1925. It was Phelps—Strokes' report that forced the British Colonial Government to demonstrate its

interest in African education. So, the principles in which the educational systems of the colonized countries should be based set out by the 1925 Memorandum on education. As from 1946, Nigerians were deeply involved in the administration of their educational system as a result of Arthur Richard's Constitution, which created Regional Government - Northern, Eastern, and Western regions. It must be stated that during this era, the colonial overlords were still supervising Nigeria's educational affairs and partly funding it. The missionaries and voluntary agencies were also with the control of staff recruitment, supervision of staff, and the funding of their own schools only with grant-in-aid as subvention from the government.

Some years prior to Nigeria's independence, the primary education started developing at different rates in different parts of Nigeria. The Universal Primary Education (UPE) was introduced as first of its kind in January 1955 at the then Western Region followed by Eastern Region in 1956 and later by Federal Government in September 1976.

This programme indicated the government dynamic policy to favour the education of the masses on the basis that every Nigerian child has an inalienable right to a minimum of six years of education if he is to function effectively as a citizen of Nigeria that is free and democratic, just and egalitarian, united and self-reliant, with full opportunities. After Nigeria has gotten independence in 1960, there was increased clamour for government take-over of schools from the missionaries and voluntary agencies, at least, to be able to reverse the old system and to tailor it to meet the needs of the new nation.

At the end of the Nigerian Civil War in 1970, a new dimension in public administration and funding of education emerged. That was the government take-over of primary and secondary schools from the voluntary agencies. The trend was started by the then East Central State in 1971 and by the end of that decade most states of the federation especially the Southern states had followed suit. This greatly increased the government burden in education finance. The government was able to expand its activities in education sector during 1970s due to increased revenue from oil. With this, the government felt capable of embarking on the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976. At that time, the government assumed full financial responsibility of the scheme. This scheme radically expanded public involvement in education financing and administration.

With the inception of the second republic in 1979, the Federal Government withdrew its direct subsidy for primary education and transferred the responsibilities to local governments. This effectively marked the end of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in most states of the federation. During this period, most states quickly introduced fees and levies at all levels of education. The military take-over in 1984 helped make this state of affairs nation-wide. The states out of party policy doggedly struck to UPE albeit in the tune of feeling free to introduce fees. In 1986, the Federal Government again abolished tuition fees in primary schools nationwide. As a result of this, it started making direct grants to local government for primary education. In 1989, this grant

included funds for part payment of salaries for primary school teachers. In 1976, the management of primary was taken over by the Federal Government while the administration and funding was transferred to the state and Local Governments in 1979. As a result, different management and funding arrangements were made by different states during this period.

In 1988, the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) was established with Decree 31 of Federal Republic of Nigeria 1988 to manage the affair of primary education. It was later scrapped by the Federal Government under the provision of Decrees 2 and 3 of 1991, which vested the full responsibility of the administration of primary education in the hand of Local Government. With the Decree No. 96 of 25th August 1993, the National Primary Education Commission was re-established with State Primary Education Board (SPEB) and Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) and they were once again in control of primary education in Nigeria. The Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) was assigned to day-to-day administration of primary schools in its area of jurisdiction. While, the State Primary Education Board (SPEB) was charged with administration of primary schools in the state. The Local Government Councils appoint Education Secretaries who then report directly to the SPEBs. These arrangements have resulted in general conflicting pressures on the Education Secretaries due to the different roles played by the SPEB's and the Local Government Councils (LGC's).

There are also areas of overlap in the functions of different levels of management, which need to be addressed. The National Primary Education Commission was the overseer to the State Primary Education Board (SPEB) of all the states of the Federation. But the Federal Government supervised this commission. From this arrangement, it is obvious that the management of primary education is no more one government affair; it involves all tiers of government. According to the provision of this decree, "the National Primary Education Commission receives the National Primary Education Fund as established by this decree from the Primary Education Board of each state and the Federal Capital Government Sponsored Special Primary Education Projects in accordance with the formula prescribed in this decree as the Transitional Council, from time-to-time prescribe".

This was the condition of primary education funding and administration since 1993 to the time when the new democratic government came into power in May 29, 1999. In replacement of Universal Primary Education (UPE) is the currently introduced Universal Basic Education (UBE), which was launched on 30 September 1999 in Sokoto. It is also free and universal in nature like before but now in addition, it is compulsorily accommodating children from primary school through Junior Secondary School. Various responsibilities are assigned to all levels of government (federal, state, and local), which is not much different from what was in existence before now.

Statement of the Problem

The management of primary education in Nigeria has passed through different stages and different authorities (Federal, State and Local) exercised its control from time to time. It is said to have generated a lot of public outcry among stakeholders in education like parents, teachers, students etc on how well these inconsistencies have impacted either positively or negatively on teachers' job performance in the areas of provision of instructional materials, funding, supervision and monitoring, staff motivation and so on. The problem of this study could therefore be passed in a question form as what is the impact of Nigeria's policy changes in the management of primary education on teachers' job performance in Benue State?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the impact of Nigeria's policy changes in the management of primary education on teachers' job performance. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. Ascertain the extent at which policy changes in funding impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools in Benue State.
2. Examine the extent at which policy changes in the provision of instructional materials impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions;

1. To what extent do policy changes in funding impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools in Benue State?
2. To what extent do policy changes in the provision of instructional materials impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 significant level;

- H₀₁. Policy changes in funding has no significant impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools in Benue State.
- H₀₂. Policy changes in the provision of instructional materials has no significant impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. It is considered the most appropriate design because it involves a clear definition of the problem, collection of relevant and adequate data, careful analysis and interpretation of the data and skillful or professional reporting of the findings (Olayiwola, 2007). The study is confined to Benue State, Nigeria. The State is made up of twenty three (23) local government areas with Makurdi Local Government area as the headquarters. The inhabitants of the state are; Tiv, Idoma, Igede, Etulo, Abakwa, Nyifong, Lyon, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba etc.

The population of the study consists of 24600 teachers from the existing 380 public primary schools in the study area. Four hundred (400) teachers were sampled from 30 primary schools using the multi-stage sampling technique to give every segment of the state representation. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. It consisted of 10 items which elicited responses from the respondents. The instrument was structured on a four-point rating scale with the response mode of Very High Extent (VHE)⁴, High Extent (HE)³, Low Extent (LE)² and Very Low Extent (VLE)¹. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument, with a coefficient of 0.76, this indicated high reliability. The research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. A cluster mean of 2.50 was used as bench mark for decision making, any mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as a positive response and accepted as having the desired impact while any mean score below 2.50 was regarded as a negative response and rejected. The chi-square was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 Alpha level.

Results and Findings

The results and findings of the study are presented as follows;

Research Question 1:

To what extent do policy changes in funding impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools in Benue State?

The data providing answers to the research question are presented on Table 1

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on Impact of Policy Changes in Funding on Teachers' Job Performance in Primary Schools in Benue State

Item Description	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	\bar{x}	ST.D	Decision
Policy changes in the provision of funds to primary education affects teachers' job performance.	185	201	11	3	3.42	0.59	Accepted
Policy changes in funding leads to incessant strikes and hinders teachers' effectiveness in teaching.	191	196	12	1	3.44	0.57	Accepted
Policy changes in the provision of infrastructure affects teachers' job performance.	212	171	12	5	3.47	0.62	Accepted
Policy changes in the welfare package of teachers affects their performance.	191	198	8	3	3.44	0.58	Accepted
The inconsistency in the sharing of funds for primary education affects teachers' job performance.	144	234	1	21	3.25	0.71	Accepted
Cluster Mean/Standard Deviation					3.40	0.61	Accepted

Key: Very High Extent (VHE) High Extent (HE) Low Extent (LE)
 Very Low Extent (VLE).

Table 1 showed that the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents for items 1-5 were 3.42, 3.44, 3.47, 3.44, and 3.25 respectively with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.59, 0.57, 0.62, 0.58 and 0.71.

All the mean ratings were above the cut-off point of 2.50. The cluster mean of 3.40 with the standard deviation of 0.61 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that work policy changes in funding has impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

Research Question 2:

To what extent do policy changes in the provision of instructional materials impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools?

The data providing answers to the research question are presented on Table 2.

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on Impact of Policy Changes in the Provision of Instructional Materials on Teachers' Job Performance in Primary Schools

Item Description	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	\bar{x}	ST.D	Decision
The inconsistency in the supply of instructional materials hinders teachers' effectiveness.	259	139	1	1	3.64	0.50	Accepted
Policy changes make primary schools to depend largely on PTA for instructional materials which causes teachers' ineffectiveness.	4	22	148	226	1.51	0.65	Accepted
Many teachers do not know which tier of government is responsible for the supply of instructional materials in primary schools.	228	164	8	0	3.55	0.58	Accepted
Policy changes affect the supply of vital instructional aids for teachers.	186	209	3	2	3.45	0.54	Accepted
Policy changes leads to irregular provision of instructional materials to primary schools which affect teachers and students academic performance.	207	188	2	3	3.50	0.55	Accepted
Cluster Mean/Standard Deviation					3.13	0.56	Accepted

Key: Very High Extent (VHE) High Extent (HE) Low Extent (LE)
 Very Low Extent (VLE).

Table 2 showed that the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents for items 6-10 were 3.64, 1.51, 3.55, 3.45, and 3.50 respectively with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.50, 0.65, 0.58, 0.54 and 0.55.

All the mean ratings were above the cut-off point of 2.50. The cluster mean of 3.13 with the standard deviation of 0.56 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that policy changes in the provision of instructional materials has impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses Testing

The null hypotheses were tested using chi-square (χ^2) test of goodness of fit as follows:

Hypotheses 1

Policy changes in funding has no significant impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools in Benue State.

Table 3: Chi-Square Test of the Impact of Policy Changes in Funding on Teachers' Job Performance in Primary Schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

Opinions	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level of sig	χ^2 -cal	χ^2 -tab	Decision
No Impact	11 (4%)	200(50%)	1	0.05	346.36	3.84	H_0
Impact	389(96%)	200(50%)					Rejected

Values in parentheses are percentages ($\chi^2 = 346.36$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.05 > 0.00$)

Table 3 shows that, the descriptive statistic of percentages and the inferential statistic of chi-square were used to test the impact of policy changes in funding on teachers' job performance in primary schools. The results showed that 96% of the respondents agreed that policy changes in funding has impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools as against 4% of the respondents who disagreed.

Table 3 also shows that the chi-square calculated value of 346.36 was greater than the chi-square table value of 3.84 checked at 0.05 level of significance and at 1 degree of freedom. The hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implies that policy changes in funding has significant impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools.

Hypotheses 2

Policy changes in the provision of instructional materials has no significant impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools.

Table 4: Chi-square Test of the Impact of Policy Changes in the Provision of Instructional Materials on Teachers' Job Performance in Primary Schools

Opinions	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level of sig	χ^2 -cal	χ^2 -tab	Decision
No Impact	5(1%)	200(50%)	1	0.05	398.86	3.84	H_0
Impact	395(99%)	200(50%)					Rejected

Values in parentheses are percentages ($\chi^2 = 398.86$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.05 > 0.00$)

Table 4 shows that the descriptive statistic of percentages and the inferential statistic of chi-square were used to test the impact of policy changes in the provision of instructional materials on teachers' job performance in primary schools. The results showed that 99% of the respondents agreed that policy changes in the provision of instructional materials has impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools as against 1% respondents who disagreed.

Table 4 also shows that the chi-square calculated value of 398.86 was greater than the chi-square table value of 3.84 checked at 0.05 level of significance and at 1 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The implication of the result is that policy changes in the provision of instructional materials has significant impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of the study showed that policy changes in funding has significant impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. The finding is supported by Ebong (2006) who stated that financial resources are made of monetary inputs into a system such as the education system. They act as a lubricant for the system (primary education) and without these financial resources programme cannot be properly planned and policies implemented.

The second finding revealed that policy changes in the provision of instructional materials has significant impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools. It agrees with Starr (2001) who maintained that teachers who teach with instructional materials create more permanent effects on the learners than those who teach without instructional materials.

Conclusion

The management of primary education in Nigeria has been assigned to various tiers of government and commissions. In order words, it has gone through different experimentations. There was a time the primary school teachers throughout the federation (Nigeria) embarked on protracted strike action of about eight (8) months, mainly because of non-payment of their salary and inability to specify where they belong, whether they are employees of Federal, States, or Local Government. Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that policy changes in funding and provision of instructional materials has significant impact on teachers' job performance in primary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings and conclusion;

1. Primary schools in Nigeria should be adequately funded by the tripartite system. There is the need to change the pattern of funding so that provision for primary education should adequately match its needs.
2. The provision of adequate instructional materials and motivational incentives for teachers in primary schools should be highly considered by the government and other stakeholders in the provision of education

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