

EXTENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY GUIDELINES ON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The study examined the extent of the implementation of the policy guidelines on school administration in public primary schools, in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study was a descriptive survey research design. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study comprised 19,153 respondents which consist of 1,064 head-teachers and 18,089 teachers in public primary schools in Anambra State. The sample size of the study was 1,118 respondents which included 213 head-teachers and 905 teachers. Stratified and simple random sampling technique was adopted for the study. A self-developed instrument titled "Policy Implementation in Primary School Questionnaire (PIPSQ)" was used. The instruments were duly validated by experts. Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yields a reliability coefficient of 0.82 and was considered adequate for the study. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Findings of the study showed that administrative, personnel and curriculum aspect of the policy guidelines has been implemented in public primary schools in Anambra State to a high extent. The study also revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of head teachers in public primary schools in the extent they implement the administrative, personnel and curriculum aspect of the policy guidelines on school administration in Anambra State. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that seminars and conferences should be organized by the ministry of education where ideas are exchanged and challenges brought up concerning the implementation of the policy guidelines.

Key words: Policy guidelines, implementation, school administration, primary schools.

Introduction

Federal Government of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) described primary education as the education given in institutions for children aged 6 to 11 years plus. It further stated that since the rest of the education system is built upon the education at this (primary) level, it is the key to success or failure of the entire educational system. Primary education lays the ground work for future learning, whether formal or informal. Students build on their learning from primary education in the succeeding years in the educational system. Thus, primary education as the foundation of other levels of education is very important that all efforts

should be geared toward making primary schools conducive for learning. One way of ensuring this, is through making of good policies for the educational system.

Policy making is one of the ways to maintain a fairly consistent standard of education in the country. Policies, according to Ocho (2013) are

“the decisions of the people in authority, which express organizational intentions for achieving the purpose of the organization. They are authoritative judgments, which establish bases for administrative action. In education they represent government’s thinking as to the lines along which the affairs of the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education should be conducted. They are practical guides to ministry and school officials on school matters.”

Policy serves as a guide to the day to day administration and a guide to administrators when deciding lines along which the educational system would be conducted. In essence, a policy is a course setting action that provides the direction, the guide and the way to the achievement of certain goals or objectives desired. Policy is central to the operation and activities of educational institutions. For any country to achieve its educational objectives; there must be a policy that guides the effective administration and management of such education system so as to achieve the desired goal. In Nigeria, the policy guiding education is popularly known as National Policy on Education which is the national guideline for the effective administration and management of education in all tiers of the educational system in Nigeria.

Primary education is the education children receive after pre-primary (nursery school) and before the secondary school (FRN, 2014). According to the National Policy on education, the broad aim of primary education in Nigeria educational system is to provide the learner with opportunities to: acquire literacy, numeracy, creativity and communication skills.

Primary education is designed to meet the basic learning needs of the pupils. In doing so, it is also intended to prepare pupils to benefit from secondary education. In keeping with this broad aim, primary education is geared towards enabling students to develop essential learning skills and providing them with basic learning content. The primary tier of the education system caters largely to students aged five to twelve (5-12). A system of automatic promotion’ sees students moving irrespective of ability from primary to secondary school upon attaining the age of twelve.

Progression through classes is automatic and on an age basis. A formal assessment strategy known as the ‘test of standards’ is administered to all students of grade three through six each year, and is written simultaneously at all primary schools and private schools. The result of this test for grade six students are used almost exclusively as the yardstick by which to measure students’ ability to perform at the secondary level and accordingly, to place students in the first form of the secondary school.

It is expected at the end of the primary phase of education that students would have acquired skills in literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving for the next

phase of their education. The level of content gained should also equip them with the requisite knowledge, values and attitudes for secondary education.

The Anambra State Ministry of Education published policy guidelines on primary and secondary schools' administration in the state. The policy guidelines publication was a response to the challenges facing the administration of the education sub-sector in the state. The policy guidelines for school administration in Anambra State is aimed at helping the school administration in the effort to attain and maintain an improved standard of education as well as a high level of discipline. These guidelines are issued by the Ministry of Education (Directorate of Primary and Secondary) to regulate activities in Public Primary and Secondary schools to the intent and purpose that tightness or wrongness of actions can be judged by them to avoid arbitrariness (Anambra State Ministry of Education, 2010). For the purpose of this study, the policy guidelines as published by the Ministry of Education, has been categorized into three groups by the researcher namely; administrative, personnel and curriculum. The extent of the implementation of the policy guidelines will be assessed under the above stated categorization.

Under the administrative aspect, the policy guidelines stated among other things that:

1. Principals and head-teachers should adhere strictly to the approved levies by the Ministry; and contravention will be dealt with in accordance with extant rules.
2. Daily attendance to schools is mandatory for all school heads and teachers. Absenteeism as a result of ill-health must be backed by a medical report from a Government hospital. Any absenteeism from school without cogent reason shall attract deduction of salary prorata. Constant absenteeism shall attract demotion.
3. Any pupil whose parents/guardians, friends/relation intimidate or threaten any school authority for having been disciplined shall be expelled and shall not be admitted into any other public school in the state.

Issues raised in the personnel aspect of the policy guidelines include:

1. No teacher will be allowed to go on any sandwich course when school is in session. If any teacher contravenes the above instruction his/her salary will be deducted accordingly.
2. No school head or teacher should engage any pupil or student in any form of personal errand, domestic work or any form of personal labour during school hours. Should a school head or teacher contravene this, he or she will face disciplinary action.

In the curriculum aspect of the policy guidelines, it is stated among other things that French language is now a compulsory subject from primary four to junior secondary school form 3 (JSS III). The principals/head-teachers should therefore ensure that the subject is taught in their schools.

The state of near anarchy in the public schools in Anambra State made the Ministry of Education to publish policy guidelines for school administration in the state. The extent, to which these policy guidelines are being implemented by the public primary schools, is yet

to be ascertained. This may account for the reason why some of the problems which the implementation of the policy guidelines on schools administration in Anambra State ought to address, such as, lateness to school, truancy among pupils; insubordination and lack of devotion to duty on the part of the teachers, collection of illegal levies among others, still persist.

These problems are pointers that something is wrong with the implementation stage. As observed by Makinde (2015) and Airasian (2017), implementation problem occurs when the desired result on target beneficiaries is not achieved. He further stated that policy implementation is one of the major problems confronting developing nations, Nigeria inclusive. Policy initiatives in Nigeria have been found to be laudable but often suffer collapse subsequently, at the implementation stage. This problem affects the education sector, where policies and programmes by the Federal Ministry of Education for the secondary and basic education have failed as a result of improper implementation (Ezewuzie, 2011).

It also appears that most times laudable policies are initiated with little or no attempt made at assessing its outcome. This could account for why even after years of supposedly implementation of good policies; problems that were supposed to be solved by such policies still persist as could be seen from the schools in Anambra State. There is no gainsaying that policy implementation should be periodically assessed for early detection of prospects and problems.

Periodic assessment ought to be an integral and indispensable component of any policy implementation process. It serves as a quality-control mechanism providing regular feedback on specific or all aspects of the policy guidelines on the basis of which necessary notifications can be effected (Ocho, 2013 and Digumarti, 2016). One way to enhance the survival of an education policy is by regularly assessing its implementation effort with a view to identifying inconsistencies and discrepancies and nipping them in the bud (Ezewuzie, 2011). In line with nipping the problems on the board, the need to assess the extent of the implementation of the policy guidelines on school administration in public primary schools in Anambra State became on the increase. Hence, the present study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent has the administrative aspect of the policy guidelines been implemented in the public primary schools in Anambra State?
2. To what extent has the personnel aspect of the policy guidelines been implemented in the public primary schools in Anambra State?
3. To what extent has the curriculum aspect of the policy guidelines been implemented in the public primary schools in Anambra State?

Method

Descriptive survey design was used in this study. According to Nworgu (2015), a survey research design is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire population. The population of the study comprised 19,153 respondents which consist of 1,064 head-teachers and 18,089 teachers from the 1064 public primary schools in Anambra State (Source: Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB), 2019). Thus, every head-teacher and teacher in the public primary school in Anambra State is a potential member of the population.

The sample size of the study is 1,118 respondents which include 213 head-teachers (representing 20% of head-teachers' population) and 905 teachers (representing 5% of teachers' population) in Anambra State. This is in accordance with the work of Borg and Gall (2008) who suggested that 5% could be used as representative sample from a population that is up to 10,000 or more; and 10% could be used as representative sample from a population that is below 10,000.

Stratified and simple random sampling technique was adopted for the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to sample 213 head-teachers while simple random sampling technique was used to sample 905 teachers in the selected primary schools in Anambra State.

A 58-item instrument titled "Policy Implementation in Primary School Questionnaire (PIPSQ)" developed by the researchers was the instrument for data collection. The instrument PIPSQ contains two sections. Section A consists of the bio-data of the respondents, while section B was grouped into three clusters A-C, Cluster A has 25-items to identify the administrative aspects of policy implementation; Cluster B has 17-items for personnel aspects of policy implementation; Cluster C has 16-items for curriculum aspect of policy implementation.

The instrument was validated by two experts in Early Childhood & Primary Education Department, Unizik Awka. Data collected from the pilot study was subjected to the use of Cronbach Alpha statistics for the computation of internal consistency of the instrument. The internal consistency yielded: 0.81 for administrative aspects of policy implementation; 0.82 for personnel aspects of policy implementation, 0.80 for curriculum aspects of policy implementation. This gave a total internal index of 0.81 for policy implementation in primary school, which is considered adequate for the study.

PIPSQ well-structured on a four-point scale of Very High Extent (VHE, 4 points) High Extent (HE, 3 points); Low Extent (LE, 2 points); Very Low Extent (VLE, 1 point). The cut-off point for acceptance is 2.50. Any item which scored 2.50 and above was regarded as High Extent (HE) while any item which scored below 2.50 was regarded as Low Extent (LE).

Result

Research Question 1: To what extent has the administrative aspect of the policy guidelines been implemented in the public schools in Anambra State?

Table 4.1: Mean rating of head teachers and teachers on the extent to which the administrative aspect of the policy guidelines has been implemented.

S/n	Item description	Head-Teachers				Teachers			
		N	X	SD	Dec.	N	X	SD	Dec.
1.	All teachers are present during assembly which start at 7.45am	193	3.06	.49	HE	898	3.01	.37	HE
2.	All teachers are honest in signing the time book (morning and close of the day 2.30pm)	193	2.25	.81	LE	898	2.29	.73	LE
3.	The head-teachers help to organize pupils for the school environmental sanitation	193	2.89	.96	HE	898	2.59	.73	LE
4.	The class teacher himself/herself, marks pupil attendance registers morning and afternoon daily.	193	3.43	.54	HE	898	3.59	.43	VHE
5.	Teachers on permission always sign the movement book before leaving the school	193	2.98	.86	HE	898	3.11	.52	HE
6.	Head teachers and teachers stay away from school without cogent reasons.	193	2.83	.74	HE	898	2.64	.74	HE
7.	Statutory records/books are well documented by the school authority	193	3.17	.61	HE	898	3.43	.61	HE
8.	The school has Parent Teachers Association (PTA)	193	2.56	.51	VHE	898	3.41	.51	HE
9.	The school PTA is functional and meets regularly	193	2.85	.92	HE	898	3.06	.93	HE
10.	The school Mentoring Committee (SMC) exists in the school	193	2.86	.72	HE	898	2.011	.74	LE
11.	The School Mentoring Committee (SMC) in the school is functional	193	2.74	.85	HE	898	1.85	.85	LE
12.	The school authority, staff, author/publisher sell books directly to pupils in the school	193	3.59	.45	VHE	898	2.64	.59	HE
13.	The registration of children for admission, which starts in July and ends in September, is free of charge	193	3.37	.41	HE	898	1.53	.42	LE
14.	Only approved levies by the Ministry are collected in the schools by the school authority	193	1.94	.97	LE	898	2.07	.72	LE
15.	A chart showing the name of every child in the class is kept in the assistant head teacher's office	193	2.61	.73	HE	898	2.62	.76	HE
16.	This chart is accessible to every teacher in the school to score the children according to their observed behaviors	193	2.29	.84	LE	898	2.47	.81	LE
17.	Pupils who cause violence in the schools are suspended accordingly	193	2.78	.82	HE	898	2.56	.83	HE

18.	The Ministry of Education is duly informed for final determination on the cases of pupils suspended for acts of violence	193	2.61	.71	HE	898	2.17	.71	LE
19.	In violent cases that pose threat to life or property, the school authority makes use of law enforcement agents to bring the situation under control	193	2.59	.65	HE	898	2.81	.63	HE
20.	The school authority expels a child from school with the authorization of the commissioner for education	193	1.42	.94	VHE	898	2.13	.91	LE
21.	The pupils whose parents/guardians/friends intimidate or threaten any school authority for having been disciplined, are expelled from school	193	1.86	.83	LE	898	1.57	.81	LE
22.	Pupils whose membership of a secret cult has been established are expelled from school	193	3.34	.58	HE	898	3.4	.58	HE
23.	The head teacher undertakes adequate and regular supervision/monitoring of teaching/learning processes in the schools	193	3.33	.74	HE	898	3.51	.47	VHE
24.	External groups make use of the schools facilities with proper approval	193	2.5	.61	HE	898	3.24	.35	HE
25.	The head teacher adheres to the examination guidelines published by the ministry	193	3.41	.53	HE	898	3.45	.45	HE
Total Mean			70.05	16.76			67.11	15.14	
Grand Mean			2.81	.64	HE		2.68	.72	HE

Analysis in table 4.1 showed the extent administrative aspect of the policy guidelines has been implemented in the public primary schools in Anambra State.

The grand mean rating also indicated that both head-teachers and teachers agreed with mean ratings of 2.81 and 2.6 respectively that administrative aspect of the policy guidelines are being implemented in the public primary schools in Anambra State to a high extent (HE).

Research Question 2: To what extent has the personnel aspect of the policy guidelines been implemented in the public primary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4.2: Mean rating of head-teachers and teachers on extent to which the personnel aspect of the policy guidelines has been implemented.

S/n	Item description	Head-Teachers				Teachers			
		N	X	SD	Dec	N	X	SD	Dec.
26.	All teachers appear neat and corporate in the dressing (females: no high heeled shoes, trousers, miniskirts. Males: no flying skirts, no bathroom slippers/unblocked sandals)	193	3.12	.56	HE	898	3.49	.42	HE
27.	Teachers go on sandwich course only during the holiday	193	1.52	.93	LE	898	1.83	.97	LE
28.	The salary of teachers who go on sandwich course when the school session is in session is deducted accordingly	193	1.94	.72	LE	898	2.04	.75	LE
29.	Teachers take alcoholic drink during school hours	193	2.88	.61	HE	898	3.08	.54	HE
30.	Teachers who take alcoholic drinks during school hours are disciplined seriously	193	3.03	.46	HE	898	3.16	.46	HE
31.	The head teachers engages pupils in a personal domestic work during school hours	193	1.53	.89	LE	898	2.11	.69	LE
32.	The head teachers engages pupils in a personal errand work during school hours	193	1.69	.82	LE	898	2.25	.73	LE
33.	Teachers engages pupils in a personal labour work during school hours	193	1.66	.91	LE	898	2.07	.81	LE
34.	Teachers engages pupils in a personal domestic work during school hours	193	1.65	.63	LE	898	2.08	.77	LE
35.	Teachers engages pupils in a personal errand work during school hours	193	1.91	.91	LE	898	2.42	.67	LE
36.	The head teacher who engages any pupil in any form of personal errand, domestic work or labour during school hours faces disciplinary action	193	3.35	.81	HE	898	2.81	.55	HE
37.	A head teacher who engages any pupil in any form of personal errand, domestic work or labour during school hours faces disciplinary action	193	3.18	.58	HE	898	2.84	.48	HE
38.	The salary of the head teacher who absents himself/herself from school without cogent reason is deducted accordingly	193	2.95	.72	HE	898	2.56	.57	HE
39.	The salary of a teacher who absents himself/herself from school without	193	3.05	.46	HE	898	2.52	.53	HE

	cogent reason is deducted accordingly								
40.	A head teacher who constantly absents himself/herself from school is demoted accordingly	193	2.98	.58	HE	898	2.68	.62	HE
41.	A teacher who constantly absents himself/herself from school is demoted accordingly	193	3.12	.53	HE	898	2.71	.52	HE
42.	A functional guidance and counseling unit exists in the school	193	2.13	.77	LE	898	2.62	.47	HE
Total Mean			43.35	9.89			43.47	9.55	
Grand Mean			2.55	.57	HE		2.56	.48	HE

Analysis in table 4.2 showed the extent personnel aspect of the policy guidelines has been implemented in public primary schools in Anambra State.

The grand mean ratings also indicated that both head-teachers and teachers agreed with mean ratings of 2.55 and 2.56 respectively that personnel aspect of the policy guidelines are being implemented in public primary schools in Anambra State to a high extent (HE).

Research Question 3: To what extent has the curriculum aspects of the policy guidelines been implemented in the public primary schools in Anambra State?

Table 4.3: Mean rating of head-teachers and teachers on the extent to which the curriculum aspect of the policy guidelines has been implemented.

S/n	Item description	Head-Teachers				Teachers			
		N	X	SD	Dec.	N	X	SD	Dec.
43.	Teachers prepare their notes of lesson according to the scheme of work weekly	193	3.65	.36	VHE	898	3.55	.37	VHE
44.	Teachers teach with marked lesson notes	193	3.22	.59	HE	898	2.92	.85	HE
45.	Lessons taught are entered in the diary on a weekly basis	193	3.39	.62	HE	898	3.38	.53	HE
46.	French language is taught in the school as a compulsory subject from primary 4-6	193	2.02	.88	LE	898	1.93	.88	LE
47.	The continuous assessment is effectively practiced in the school	193	3.49	.45	HE	898	3.13	.62	HE
48.	Teaching/learning in the school is in consonance with current curricula	193	3.43	.47	HE	898	3.38	.46	HE
49.	Approved text books are used in the school	193	3.59	.34	VHE	898	3.66	.51	VHE
50.	Teachers administer a minimum of two tests per term in addition to the normal end of term examination	193	3.59	.29	VHE	898	3.55	.45	VHE
51.	Teachers cover the scheme of work before examination	193	3.07	.43	HE	898	2.68	.69	HE

52.	All internal examination end one week before vacation date	193	3.49	.56	HE	898	2.85	.74	HE
53.	Result are released on vacation day	193	3.4	.52	HE	898	3.04	.57	HE
54.	Head teachers, staff, pupils who violate examination guidelines are sanctioned accordingly	193	3.11	.64	HE	898	3.03	.55	HE
55.	A teacher always accompanies pupils for extracurricular activities outside the school	193	3.21	.48	HE	898	2.7	.68	HE
56.	A teacher always goes to get clearance from the child inspector education (C.I.E) before the movement of the pupils to another local government for any extracurricular activities	193	2.8	.76	HE	898	2.66	.79	HE
57.	Co-curricular activities exist in the school (e.g., clubs societies, cultural dance group)	193	3.1	.51	HE	898	3.21	.46	HE
58.	HIV / AIDS club exist in the school and functions well	193	1.67	.91	LE	898	1.56	.98	LE
	Grand mean		3.14		HE		2.95		HE

Analysis in Table 4.3 showed the extent curriculum aspect of the policy guidelines has been implemented in the public primary schools in Anambra State.

The grand mean ratings indicated that both head-teachers and teachers agreed with mean ratings of 3.14 and 2.95 respectively that curriculum aspect of the policy guidelines are being implemented in the public primary schools in Anambra State to a high extent (HE).

Discussion

The findings were discussed under the following headings

Implementation of the Administrative aspect of policy guidelines in the public primary schools

Analyzing the schools’ responses on the extent of the implementation of the administrative aspect of the policy guidelines on school administration, the study revealed that administrative aspect of the policy guidelines has been implemented in the public primary schools in Anambra State to a high extent (HE). This agrees with the finding of Ezewuzie (2011) which shows that the compliance in the implementation of the teachers’ empowerment policies in Anambra State was above average but not 100%. Some items of this part of policy were implemented by the public schools only few of this part of the policy were not implemented by the schools.

Implementation of personnel aspect of policy guidelines in the public primary schools

The analyses of the schools’ responses on the extent of the implementation of the personnel aspect of the policy guidelines implementation in the public primary schools in Anambra

State indicated to a high extent (HE). This means that teachers who go contrary to the policy guidelines are disciplined hence, they are mindful of their duties.

Implementation of curriculum aspect of policy guidelines in the public primary schools

Analyzing the schools responses on the extent of the implementation of the curriculum aspect of the policy guidelines on school administration, the study revealed that curriculum aspect of the policy guidelines has been implemented in the public primary schools in Anambra State to a high extent (HE).

This shows that the teachers prepare their notes of lesson according to the scheme of work and teaching/learning are done in consonance with the current curricula hence, meaningful teaching and learning. This finding on high extent of implementation is related Omolo and Simatwa (2010) who found that some safety policies in the public secondary schools were to a large extent implemented. This is contrary to Makinde (2015) who stated that policies are rolled out regularly in the developing nations but most of the time, without achieving the desired result.

Conclusion

The aim of the policy guidelines on school administration in Anambra State primary schools was to attain and maintain an improved standard of education as well as a high level of discipline. Therefore, the aim of the policy is partially realized. In the implemented aspects of the policy, there were discrepancies and lack of uniformity amongst the schools.

Policy as a system of laws and regulatory measure promulgated by the government is expected to be fully implemented; non implementation of the policy guidelines 100% will render the law null and void and of no effect. Based on investigation carried out by this study as stated in the discussion of the result, part of the reason for the non-implementation of the policy, fully, is lack of adequate human and material resources; improper funding and the handicap of the head teachers in firmly controlling the administrative machinery of their schools, because of fear of or interference from superior officials in the government.

In the same vein, inquiry made by the study revealed that part of the reason for indiscipline among the staff and pupils is because they have connection with powerful people in the ministry and in the government. French language is not taught in most schools because there are no French teachers employed to do the job. The lack of full implementation of the policy could be blamed on the government and school authority.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made;

1. The government should consult the head-teachers and teachers in primary schools during the process of policy making, so that there will be proper implementation of such policies in schools with ease.

2. The policy should be clearly spelt out. This will enable the head-teachers and teachers to understand what the policy is all about.
3. Empowering the head-teachers and other administrative official charged with the implementation of the policy by reducing government interference in cases of erring/recalcitrant staff/pupils.
4. Seminars and conferences should be organized by the ministry of education where ideas are exchanged and challenges brought up concerning the implementation of the policy guidelines.

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