

EDUCATION POLICY PRACTICES AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Simon Osezuah¹, Monday Mogbeyiteren²

Department of Educational Studies and Management,
Faculty of Education, University of Benin,
NIGERIA.

¹osezuahosezuah@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to investigate whether education policy practice has influence on sustainable economic development in Nigeria. Two research questions were drawn to guide the investigation. Data were gathered from 4900 sample subjects through the instrument of questionnaire. The analysis of the data was carried out with the use of simple percentage and the findings were that education policy practice does not have influence on sustainable economic development in Nigeria and that government roles in education policy practice had no positive influence on acquisition of skills in Nigeria. The findings led to the conclusion that education policy practice had no influence on sustainable economic development in Nigeria. Thus, recommendation was made in line with the findings.

Keywords: Education, policy practices, economic development

INTRODUCTION

Societies and organizations are usually expected to design their policies and implementation practices in a manner to achieve sustained realization of their goals and objectives. Thus, education system also structures its activities on the frame-work of policy formulation and implementation strategies. The major reasons for policy practices are therefore to increase efficiency and effectiveness of the recipients in work situations. Hence policy matters in education are expected to be handled as major task.

Experience in Nigerian education policy practice and the general outcome seem to raise arguments and complaints. This is particularly in regard to the products' job outcomes. Thus certain individuals argue that policy formulation and implementation are not given required attention by Nigerian national leaders.

Conversely some others believe that there is no problem with policy formulation and implementation in regard to education in Nigeria. Instead, they posit that the area to look into may be the utilization of education products.

Yet there is another group of Nigerians who centre their complaint on the belief that government does not carry out its own roles fully in regard to education policy practice. They site examples in this regard with staffing, supervision, evaluation, infrastructures, etc.

OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

The objective of this investigation was to determine whether education policies are carried out in line with the national development needs and requirements on sustainable basis in Nigeria. To add strength to the finding(s) and the conclusion was also the need to ascertain whether leadership role-play has positive influence on acquisition of educational skills.

Hence, significantly the findings from the investigation are likely to be of importance to education and economic managers, consumers of products of education, etc.

The above observations, arguments, complaints which were sequel to the central objective of the investigation formed the basis of this study. To successfully carry out the investigation, some questions were raised as follows to act as a guide:

1. Does education policy practice have influence on sustainable economic development in Nigeria?
2. Do government roles in education policy practice have influence on acquisition of skills in Nigeria?

In all countries of the world, policy practice is considered and assessed on the basis of adequate provisions for human comfort and national needs and requirements. It is for these reasons education policy and implementation are supposed to be given high priority. As to whether Nigeria minds this point of view, brings to focus its response to international policy proclamation on gender contribution to national development. According to the Commonwealth (2000 p8) “we hereby adopt and commit ourselves as government to implement platform of action ensuring that a gender perspective is reflected in all our policies and programs”.

King (2000) asserts that democracy and governance are based on socio-economic development and peace which cannot be separated from issues of gender qualities. But Spence (2000 p14) instruct that *women have the most limited access to livelihood resources or to new technologies which are the key to employment in the 21st century*.

Policy development and its review is a continuous process in the determination to realize optimum efficiency and effectiveness in the pursuit of goals and objectives. Hence, Majasan (1995) posited that experts need to consider relationship with clients, the public and colleagues when developing training programmes. This is to meet organizational goals towards pursuit of national development through purpose-driven policies determination.

To achieve sustained national development in Nigeria all the organizations of productivity and educational institutions are expected to reform their operational modalities. Accordingly, Goulet (1971) believes that in the process of development pursuit through education, policy must be seen as economic and social activity that should be put together to bring about progress worthy of pursuit by society. Hence, the author categorized development in three perspectives of: life sustenance, self esteem, and individual freedom. Seers (1979) affirm this by stating that the questions to pose about a society’s level of development are what has been happening to poverty, what has happened to un-employment. What has happened to inequality? That it is when all these have become less severe consistently over a period that one can say that there has been a level of sustained development in a society.

The large population of Nigerians requires to be put in mind when articulating policy realizing that the demand for education does not operate in a vacuum. But that it is policy provision that forms the basis of organizational needs (which gives credence to manpower demand) when planning education. Thus, Metcal (1996) averred that education output for individual needs and requirements is probably sequel to organizational demand in regard to functional expansions.

Policy matters in education need to be removed from the poor posture that it is treated in Nigerian society currently. The formulation and implementation as have been advised should be based on needs by individuals and societies for expansions of physical and structural necessities in the society. In this regard Meryer, Bright, Bill and Sessions (1969) state that

education should be seen as a process to prepare individuals to use resources maximally. Driver, Brown and Peterson (1991) support these experts by affirming that such experience would lead individuals to increase effort in pursuing their physical, psychological, social and emotional satisfaction.

Science and technology seems to be the basis of increasing national development among the developed countries. And Nigeria needs to give attention to science and technology in the process of policy determination for the purpose of societal development. Hence Taylor (1988) states that the future of science and technology in every aspect of education should be a responsibility of all individuals for challenges, knowledge, personality and adventure. Yeager (1989) similarly affirms that the present approach in primary and secondary education curricula materials require to move emphasis to application processes and creativity preference that could make science and technology more attractive to scholars or learning institutions.

INVESTIGATION METHODOLOGY

Sample

A total sample of 4900 made up of 2610 males and 2290 females was drawn for the study. The technique adopted in arriving at the selection of the figure was by dividing the country into five zones as follows: The North-east, North-west, North-Central, South-east, and South-west. Four states were selected from each of the zones through random sampling technique and a number of 250 sample subjects were selected from each state through random sampling technique. The sample was pooled from teachers, students / unemployed school graduates, employers of labour, officials of ministries of Education, Labour and Productivity, officials of Office of Statistics, administrators of educational institutions, and consumers of goods and services.

Instrument of the Study

Survey method was adopted in gathering relevant data from the sample subjects. The administration and retrieval of the instrument spanned about eleven weeks and were handed by the researchers and research assistants. The mortality rate was relatively low.

Data Analysis

The data were subjected to necessary treatment of sorting and treatment. Then the appropriate and relevant statistical tool of percentage was used in the analysis as follows:

Question1: Does education policy practice have influence on sustainable economic Development in Nigeria?

Table 1. Education policy practice and sustained economic development.

Education policy / practice determination	Sustainable development rating		
	<i>High Rating</i>	<i>Low rating</i>	<i>Total</i>
Employment opportunities	1853 37.81%	3047 62.18%	4900 100%
Provisions of goods and services	2105 42.96%	2795 57.04%	4900 100%
Education for gender contributions	2003 40.88%	2897 59.12%	4900 100%

Question 2: Do government roles in education policy practice have positive influence on acquisitions of skills in Nigeria?

Table 2. Government roles on education policy practice and acquisition of skills

<i>Government roles on policy practice</i>	<i>Acquisition of skills</i>				<i>Total</i>
	<i>Highly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Highly agree</i>	
Socio-economic development goals / objectives determination	1353 27.61%	1217 24.84%	790 16.12%	1550 31.43%	4900 100%
Education goals and objectives determination	1294 26.41%	1362 27.8%	734 14.98%	1520 30.82%	4900 100%
Policy development and implementation determination	974 19.88%	1516 30.94%	1438 29.35%	982 19.84%	4900 100%
Education resources provisions	2018 41.18%	1284 26.2%	860 17.55%	748 15.06%	4900 100%
Science/ technology development determination	1994 40.69%	2127 43.41%	679 13.86%	110 2.04%	4900 100%
Skills/ functions matching in public organizations	1723 35.16%	1895 38.67%	768 15.67%	524 10.49%	4900 100%
Education funding	1834 37.43%	1216 24.82%	1835 37.45%	15 0.31%	4900 100%

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data that were drawn for this study were analyzed on table I and II above. Table I of the study revealed that educational policy practice had no influence on sustainable development in Nigeria. Table II of the study showed that government roles in education policy practice have no positive influence on acquisition of skills in Nigeria.

The findings of the study were supported by Meyer, Bright, Bill and Sesson (1969) who claimed that education that is not managed to follow properly predetermined policy cannot prepare individuals towards sustainable contributions to human progress and national development. The findings were also affirmed by (having not followed) Goulet (1971)'s advice that policy should be used to move education as a vehicle for economic and social development. Hence the questions by Seers (1979) what has been happening to unemployment, inequality, and poverty as the basis of sustained national development which are most appropriate for Nigeria in contemporary times also supported the findings.

The roles of government had no positive influence on acquisition of skills as revealed by the data analysis on table II above. Thus the advice by King (2000) that government is all about socio-economic development which Commonwealth (2000) amplified but that Nigeria has failed to adapt to also confirmed the findings.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In consideration of the findings, the conclusion was arrived at that education policy practice further asserted had no influence on sustainable economic development in Nigeria. The conclusion was asserted by the finding on table 11 which was that national leaders' roles in educational policy practice had no influence on skills acquisition in Nigeria. Thus the researchers recommended that national leaders who are in control of human resources development should adopt and maintain strategic roles in education policy development and implementation that should enhance efficiency in the mission of pursuing sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

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