



Education Policy making as correlate to Teachers' Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Taraba State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between education policy-making and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Taraba State, Nigeria. The study has two research objectives, two research questions, and two null hypotheses. The design of the study was a correlational design. The population comprised of all the four thousand four hundred and ninety-nine (4,499) teachers working in public secondary schools throughout the twelve education zones of Taraba State, Nigeria. The sample of the study comprised of four hundred and fifty (450) teachers, that is 10% of the population selected through purposive sample techniques. The teachers who constitute this study were chosen because they are directly impacted by education policy-making and their job performance is pivotal to the study. The instrument for data was a questionnaire designed by the researchers, entitled; Education Policy Making and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (EPMTJPQ). The questionnaire was validated by three experts in the department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Taraba State, University, Jalingo. A pilot testing was administered on fifty (50) teachers who were outside the research area to assess the reliability of the questionnaire. The data collected was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.91, which is considered sufficiently high and suitable for the study. All the null hypotheses were analysed using inferential statistics of mean and standard deviation at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study on hypothesis one indicates an absence of a significant positive correlation between teachers' participation in decision-making and their job performance in public schools in Taraba State. Hypothesis two demonstrated a significant positive link between teachers' involvement in education policy implementation and their job performance in public secondary schools in Taraba State. The study recommends that teachers, as transformative agents in policy implementation in schools, should consistently be afforded the opportunity to contribute ideas during the decision-making process. This will enhance their morale and lead to substantial improvement in their job performance. Similarly, Principals should permit the implementation of education policies and programmes in their schools through management by objectives (MBO) to facilitate teachers' understanding of tactics for effective policy execution.

Key words: *Principals, Policy Making, Education, Teachers' job performance*

Introduction

Education is essential for fostering economic growth and national development. Thus, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) posits that education is the essential catalyst for transformation. Transformation in any nation is clearly achieved through education and instruction provided by an educator. The teacher is an essential component of development and wields considerable influence in comprehending and implementing the school curriculum, which is vital to education. Thus, it is not unexpected that Abraham (2012) underscored the teacher component as an essential part that must remain uncompromised. Academic excellence, defined by the transmission of relevant knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to students for their effective societal integration, is predominantly achievable through committed and disciplined educators. Job performance is defined as the actions an individual demonstrates to attain organisational objectives (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). Schools are recognised as essential institutions for promoting the academic, social, and emotional development of pupils (Roeser, Eccles, and Sameroff, 2000). Teachers' work performance can be defined as the acts executed within educational institutions to achieve academic goals (Hwang, Bartlett, Greben, and Hand, 2017).

Teaching is recognised as one of the most important and challenging occupations in contemporary society (Vesely, Saklofske, and Leschied, 2013). Given the significant demands and expectations for student development, teacher performance, which correlates with student outcomes (Hwang, Bartlett, Greben, and Hand, 2017), is crucial for various stakeholders, including principals, parents, policymakers, and society at large (Alrajhi, Aldhafri, Albusaidi, Alkharusi, and Ambusaidi, 2017). The job performance of educators in Taraba State has become a significant state issue. This is due to the declining standards of public secondary schools in Taraba State. Students are no longer performing well in examinations, especially in the Senior Secondary School Certificates (SSSCE), as noted by parents and guardians. Indeed, some secondary school graduates have deficits in both academic knowledge and character, leading to inadequate performance in the School Certificate Examination in Nigeria. Nwadiani, as cited in Okunamiri and Uba-Mbibi (2011), noted that the inferior quality is apparent in the significantly low productivity and job performance of secondary school graduates in the labour market. The National Teachers' Institute (2000) defines policy as a comprehensive action plan that guides organisational members in their operational conduct, using the National Policy on Education as a pertinent example. The job performance of instructors seems deficient due to an insufficient comprehension of the often-involving educational policies within Nigeria's educational system.

This results from teachers' absence from decision-making, rendering it very difficult for them to execute educational plans or policies; in essence, teachers seem to be detached from the current transformations in Nigeria's educational policy. Decision-making is an essential process in tackling the issues faced by individuals in any community. Nigeria is now facing numerous issues. Humans face a multitude of obstacles. These concerns are manifesting throughout all sectors of life, encompassing the economy, society, politics, and education. The Federal Government of Nigeria (2017) considers education the principal means for tackling these challenges. To fulfil this duty, proper decisions must be taken and executed by pertinent stakeholders, such as teachers, who implement educational policies at all levels. Educational policy is a statement that includes the principles, standards, and rules that guide decisions pertaining to education. Educational policies

are crucial for attaining the primary objectives of the educational system and, consequently, the national goals. Education policies function as the fundamental frameworks for the efficient running of the education system. Educational policies address many difficulties within the educational system. These issues include. Access to education, equity, equality, educational opportunities, structural efficacy, and financial resources. Government of Nigeria, 2017 Educational policymakers may consist of government officials or persons possessing formal political authority, together with private sector leaders whose decisions and actions influence communities.

The involvement of educators in policy formulation is crucial, as they are integral to the teaching and learning dynamics in secondary education. The lack of teachers' involvement in educational policy development is exceedingly frustrating and may lead to reduced performance among educators. Therefore, it is essential to determine the participation of educators in the development of educational policy. Butter (2012) noted that educators are more sidelined compared to experts in other sectors concerning policy development. Educators appear to be marginalised in the decision-making process, complicating the execution of educational programs and thus affecting their work performance. Mark (2011) noted that principals unilaterally make decisions, excluding instructors, even concerning educational policies inside the school system. Perry (2011) observed that decision-making entails choosing the most appropriate option among multiple alternatives in response to a particular situation requiring a change in action. The tenure of teachers in schools exceeds that of administrators. Administrators generally serve in their positions for four to five years, although instructors may remain for a longer period. Educators often manage the institutional memory as they act as custodians of school culture. Consequently, engaging teachers in policymaking is essential, as they have a deep understanding of the school culture and can ensure the effective implementation of the policy over an extended period. The current demands for the executive position are nearly insurmountable. Modern principals are expected to be skilled and visionary managers, in addition to being instructional leaders (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu & John, 2010). Therefore, it is essential to foster a sense of purpose among employees, maintain the physical facilities, and submit budgets on time (Resnick, 2010). The principal is currently the accountable person designated by federal and state authorities, tasked with engaging various stakeholders, including staff, parents, the wider community, and the district office. The variety of sources hinders administrators' capacity to dedicate adequate time and effort to school improvement, including policy development. Given the effectiveness of educational programs, educators must partake in policy development, however administrators are unable to fully engage in school reform efforts. The principals demonstrate limited expertise. Similar to all educators, the majority of principals have specific domains of instructional expertise. An administrator specialising in science may have comprehensive expertise in research-driven pedagogical methods within that discipline, but may be deficient in mathematical instruction. Consequently, the school administrators may be deficient in all aspects of the institution. Individual educator has unique areas of competence. Nonetheless, an educator can furnish the varied professional expertise essential for the improvement of school policies. Thus, it is clear that institutional advancement cannot depend exclusively on administrators for policy formulation (Farris-Berg & Edward, 2012). Engaging teachers in the design of school policies is seen appropriate, as it furnishes them with further information and skills, enabling a comprehensive understanding of educational programs and policies when they are completely involved.

Tanfox (2010) asserts that teachers can fulfil the curriculum enhancement role of a school supervisor; however, it is troubling that these distinguished educators are reduced to mere technicians, tasked solely with the execution of developed materials, while professional decisions are made without their input. The outcome is subpar teacher performance and a significant deterioration in educational standards throughout the system. Educators appear to be marginalised from the decision-making processes within their institutions. Ako (2013) contended that the absence of educators from decision-making processes leads to resistance to directions and a decline in teacher performance. The author also noted that educators are omitted from the decision-making process in the study's region.

Current tensions and disputes in secondary schools may arise from inadequate teacher participation in policy development or a neglect of those tasked with executing such policies. Agbai, as indicated in Okunamiri and Uba-Mbibi (2011), contends that the problem with the Nigerian Educational System is not in the formulation of decisions but in their implementation. Perry (2011) observes occurrences of school principals exercising unilateral judgements or preferentially selecting favourite professors to aid in decision-making. This obviously indicates that engaging professors in issues pertaining to their own interests is disapproved. The execution of educational policy is a facet of teachers' job performance.

Zumwalt in Akwesi (2012) asserted that implementation is the practical application of theory into practice, evidenced by learners' performances both within and outside the classroom. Implementation is considered to have taken place when instructors provide both the knowledge and instructional methods as planned. Consequently, implementation refers to the execution of a collectively endorsed plan, decision, proposal, concept, or policy. In the educational context, decision-making involves providing structured support to educators to facilitate the effective implementation of newly devised solutions by school administrators at both the classroom and institutional levels. Implementation requires the involvement of both the instructor and the student. The student is the pivotal entity in the school's decision-making process. Despite the influence of numerous factors such as resource materials, facilities, the educator, the school environment, culture, ideology, instructional supervision, and evaluation on implementation, the educator is the primary implementer due to their proximity to the students. Implementation occurs when the learner attains the requisite experiences, information, abilities, concepts, and attitudes necessary for efficient societal functioning. Consequently, executing a decision necessitates an implementing agent.

Statement of the problem

Significant grievances have been expressed by concerned Tarabans regarding the deteriorating performance of educators at public secondary schools in Taraba State. The implication of the seemingly decline in standards of public secondary school system is the proliferation of private secondary schools in every nook and cranny of Taraba State. It has been observed that many parents had withdrew their children/wards from public to private schools, with the aim to access quality education. The situation is dire as the principals are alleged to have failed to engage teachers in education policy decisions-making and implementation within their institutions. The participation of teachers in decision-making process and implementations are crucial, as they are

the major drivers in teaching and learning process in secondary schools. Hence the study examined the level of participation of teachers in education policy formulation and implementation in public secondary schools within educational zones of Taraba State.

The purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between education policy making and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Taraba State. Specifically, the study sought to determine;

1. Teachers' participation in education policy making and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Taraba State.
2. Teachers' implementation of education policy and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Taraba State.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do teachers' participation in education policy-making correlate to teachers' job performance in public secondary schools?
2. To what extent do teachers' implementation of educational policy correlate to teachers' job performance in public secondary schools?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: There is no significant correlation between teachers' participation in education policy making and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools.

Ho2: There is no significant correlation between teachers' implementation of education policy and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools.

Methodology

The study employed a correlational research design. The population comprised of all the four thousand four hundred and ninety-nine (4,499) teachers working in public secondary schools throughout the twelve education zones of Taraba State, Nigeria. The sample of the study comprised of four hundred and fifty (450) teachers, that is 10% of the population which were selected through purposive sampling techniques. The instrument for data was a questionnaire designed by the researchers, entitled; Education Policy Making and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (EPMTJPQ). A pilot testing was administered on fifty (50) teachers who were outside the research

area to assess the reliability of the questionnaire The data collected was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.91, which is considered sufficiently high and suitable for the study. All the null hypotheses were analysed using inferential statistics of mean and standard deviation at 0.05 level of significance. The questionnaire has two sections, A and B. Section A requested the biographical data of the respondents, whilst Section B elicit information on the research variables. The response format of the Education Policy Making and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (EPMTJPQ) was four-point modified rating scale: Strongly Agree (SA) =4, Agree (A) =3, Disagree (D) =2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) =1. The data was analysed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis (r) through inferential statistics at a 0.05 level of significance to evaluate the hypotheses.

Outcomes

Hypothesis one: There is no correlation between teachers' involvement in education policy decision-making and teacher performance in public secondary schools in Taraba State.

The computed outcome is displayed in table one below:

Table One: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis showing relationship between teachers' participation in education policy making and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools. n=450

Variables	\bar{X}	SD	r-cal	p-value
Teachers' participation in education policy making	2.95	.570	.009	.851
Teachers' job performance	2.80	.450		

*Not Significant at .05, Critical r =.009, df =448

From the result in table 1 above, it showed that the calculated r-value of .009 was less than the critical r-value of 0.135 at .05 level of significance and 448 degrees of freedom. Also, because the p-value is greater than that stated in the decision rule, the null hypothesis was accepted and the alternate hypothesis was rejected. This means that, there is no positive significant relationship between teachers' participation in education policy making and teachers' job performance in public schools in Taraba State. Teachers' involvement in education policy making does not relate to teachers' job performance, this is because education policy is a blue print for the teachers to enable them implement the plans and programmes of education effectively

Hypothesis two:

There is no significant relationship between teachers' implementation of education policy and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools.

The calculated result is presented in table two below:

Table Two: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of relationship between teachers' implementation of educational policy and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools. n=450

Variables	\bar{X}	SD	r-cal	p-value
teachers' implementation of education policy	2.55	.557	.194	.163
teachers' job performance	2.80	.430		

*Significant at .05, Critical r = .194, df =448

The findings from Table 2 indicated that the computed r-value of 0.194 exceeded the threshold r-value of 0.124 at the 0.05 significance level with 448 degrees of freedom. The p-value of 0.163 exceeds 0.05, indicating that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The implementation of education policy by teachers is positively and significantly correlated with their job performance in public secondary schools in Taraba State. The proper execution of education policy by teachers necessitates their proficiency in their roles. To attain the aims and objectives of education, teachers' job effectiveness relies on comprehension and successful execution of its policies.

Discussion of findings

The findings of hypothesis one indicated that there is no substantial positive correlation between teachers' involvement in decision-making and their work performance in public schools in Taraba State. This contradicts Ako's (2013) perspective, which asserts that the absence of teacher involvement in education results in resistance to directives and subpar teacher performance. Moreover, the findings contradict the perspective of Farris-Berg & Edward (2012) that school improvement cannot rely solely on administrators formulating policies; rather, involving teachers in policy-making is deemed essential, as it provides additional knowledge and expertise necessary for interpreting educational plans and programs. Mark (2011) observed that principals make choices independently, excluding teachers, even regarding educational policies inside the school system.

The findings of hypothesis two indicated a substantial positive correlation between teachers' participation in decisions on educational policy implementation and their work performance in public secondary schools in Taraba State. Zumwalt, as cited in Akwesi (2012), posits that implementation constitutes the practical application of theory into practice, with the resultant outcomes indicated by learners' performances both within and beyond the classroom. We see implementation occurring when educators convey both the information and instructional practices as originally intended. The outcome aligns with Stenhouse (2017), who designates the teacher as the agent in decision-making implementation, defining it as the process by which the teacher translates the many elements of knowledge outlined in a decision-making document or policy into practice. The finding also corroborated Aja, Egwu, Aja-Okorie, Ani & Amuta (2018), who identified teachers as one of the major challenges to educational policy implementation.

Conclusion

The study indicated that there is no correlation between teachers' involvement in education decision-making and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Taraba State. It implies that the weakening job performance of teachers in public secondary schools in Taraba State Education Zones did not relate to a lack of teachers' participation in the education policy decision-making process. But in this study, the researchers aligned with Ako's (2013) perspective, which asserts that the absence of teacher involvement in education results in resistance to directives and subpar teacher performance; Farris-Berg & Edward (2012) found that school improvement cannot rely solely on administrators formulating policies; rather, involving teachers in policy-making is deemed essential as it provides additional knowledge and expertise necessary for interpreting educational plans and programmes. Contrary to the decision-making process finding in the present study, the study concludes that a significant relationship existed between education policy implementation and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Taraba State. Therefore, involving teachers in education policy implementation by the principals of secondary schools will greatly improve not only the productivity of teachers and quality education but also the conducive teaching and learning environment in all secondary schools of Taraba State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers, who are one of the transformative forces of policy implementations in schools, should be given the opportunity always to contribute ideas in the decision-making process. By doing so, it will boost their morale and significantly improve their job performance.
2. Principals are to allow education policies and programmes in their schools to be via management by objective (MBO) so as to enable the teachers to comprehend the strategies for effective policy implementation.

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