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EDUCATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND HUMAN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

Since the education system in Nigeria has become more unstable and complex, the challenges of implementing policies, and practices have unequivocally evolved. The paper investigated educational policy implementation and human capacity development in Rivers State. The objectives of the study are to investigate the challenges that influence the implementation of educational policy in Rivers State, and to determine the extent to which implementation of educational policy enhances human capacity development in Rivers State. The human capital theory was utilized. The descriptive survey design, and the purposive sampling technique were adopted in administering questionnaires to 60 respondents comprising residents in Port Harcourt. The data retrieved were analyzed in percentage and presented on tables. The findings revealed that there are challenges that influence the implementation of education policy in Rivers State, and that education enhances human capacity development in Rivers State. Based on the findings, the study recommends that government should evaluate educational policies periodically to identify the challenges to effective implementation of education policies, and carry out policy reforms by eliminating obsolete and ineffective policies in the education system as well as outlining strategic measures that can ensure full implementation of educational policies, set up policy attainment assessment committee comprising policymakers and other stakeholders in education departments in government and industrial settings, conduct human capacity development assessment or test for fresh graduates of universities, school, and industrial training centres.

Keywords: Implementation, Education, Policy, Human Capacity, Development

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Introduction

The implementation of education policy is a process that is critical, complex, evolving, and reformatory, which involves several stakeholders such as legislators, policy makers, educationists, industrialists, and human resource managers in different institutions. Education policy can become a failure when its implementation is not able to give birth to human capacity development. It is therefore, pivotal to identify the relevance of education policy implementation, clarify its contextual determinants as well as explore routes in which its drive can be actively transparent, transforming and effective. It is believed that education can enhance or improve human capacity. It is also the template for every developmental stride in society and economy. Human capacity development via education policy processes is perceived as a viable panacea to solving the problem of low productivity in key industries as well as unskillfulness of many individuals. Both individuals, groups, institutions as well as organizations capacity need to be addressed, built and boosted through education to encourage creativity, increased productivity and high financial attainment (Ekpo et. al., 2016).

Continual changes in educational policy implementation in Nigeria had made its effectiveness very challenging. Overtime, Nigeria educational policies appear sound and all-encompassing, but the implementation of such policies remain unachievable. Educational policies are vital since they show routes for responding to critical issues that are at stake in every societal or human setting. In all ramifications, educational policies are perceived to be an essential aspect in all human existence as well as in every sphere of life because it can enhance knowledge for better, efficient, effective, and satisfactory management, control, evaluation as well as administration of different activities for livelihood.

European countries adopted over 450 education reforms between 2008 and 2014 organization of economic co-operation and development (OECD, 2015). Evaluating the fast-growing demographic, social, and economic environments that is influenced by education, more consideration must be given toward efforts for education policy systems to change, improve and propel the quest for human capacity development. There is low evidence of impacts of educational policy reforms. Moreso, educational policy outcomes on human capacity development are obviously challenging to identify, assess or evaluate. Meanwhile, when educational policy become less impactful due to poor implementation, stakeholders tend to show dissatisfaction and displeasure with such outcomes, and they also hold policymakers accountable for such flop (Corbier, 2017). In addition, there is scarce knowledge concerning the ideal processes that is capable of producing, or is supposed to aid the emergence of the desired outcomes between the time of establishing and implementing education policy, and its effects within the society (O'Toole, 2000). There is a disparity between passing education policy bill as well as transforming it into daily directions and actions for teachers, administrators, and institutional leaders.

Implementation details and procedures may be assigned to administrators and educators to actually figure out, while leaving the reform route to be determined by their performance either on half-way, or to the actualization of the policy goal (Hess, 2013). Furthermore, policies oftentimes may not get full implementation, or may not produce the desired impacts, outcomes, and governments as well as experts with other international organizations have often realized and have also concluded on the need to acknowledge and focus more on strategies for the implementation processes of educational policies to accommodate human capacity development (Gurría, 2015; OECD, 2016). Thus, the ample challenges to the implementation of education policy may involve co-ordination issues, insufficient organizational resources, influential actors' capacity or reactions against perceived reforms.

Since the education system in Nigeria has become more unstable and complex, the challenges of implementing policies, and the practices have unequivocally evolved. Furthermore, education stakeholders have also become more diverse as well as engaging in more vocal and ambitious drives on what the education system should look like in the country. The inclusion of educative technologies can contribute in making the education systems more or less complex depending on the intuitive expertise. This also concerns the interactions existing between key actors and the different levels of education as well as the systems which allows national, regional and local key figures to weigh the policymaking processes. However, certain questions have emerged about the responsibilities of individuals in the systems to figure-out the main outcome of capacity development, how the individuals can be held accountable as well as how the policy implementation processes can offer enhanced education for desirable outcome (Burns, Köster & Fuster, 2016).

Education policy implementation are the realities for human capacity development for different people such as educators and administrators. Therefore, it encompasses the changes brought to daily practices of managing all spheres of life. However, national policy makers perceive policy implementation to meet the needs to which it is being enacted and executed. For state or local policymakers, it connotes making choices that changes priorities in the use of both human and natural resources. The different assertions on education policy implementation are with the specific views on policy process and effects (Datnow & Park, 2009). Moreso, policymakers view education policy implementation stages as a technical strategy of ensuring that the decisions in policy process gets full execution by the key administrators, actors and educators throughout the entire duration. However, there may appear implementation failures. Moreover, solution efforts need to gear up toward the instigation of a more rational and appropriate management practices that can be used to monitor the implementation processes very closely.

Scholars describe policy implementation as a frequent and political process involving actors influencing its outputs and outcomes as well. This defines bottom-up policymaking process as a critical political game. These perspectives are crucial in understanding the complexity of policy implementation as it is very challenging to integrate and ascertain in practical terms on advice for education policymaking and policy actors at the top level (Mason, 2016). As policymakers, stakeholders and scholars want policies to be effective and improve education, there is the need for sharing of common information and understanding as to effectively enable the process of policy implementation, and to allow a more collective approach on the process, following the bottom-up and top-down approaches to policy making and implementation. This paper seeks to investigate the factors influencing education policy implementation as well as the strategies that can surmount policy implementation challenges in education to actually have human capacity development in spite of the complexity and series of education policy implementation in Nigeria that may have witnessed failure.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study include:

1. To investigate the challenges that influence the implementation of educational policy in Rivers State.
2. To determine the extent to which implementation of educational policy enhances human capacity development in Rivers State.

Research Questions

1. What are the challenges that influence the implementation of educational policy in Nigeria?
2. To what extent does implementation of educational policy enhance human capacity development of university graduates in Rivers State?

Conceptualizing Educational Policy Implementation

Educational policy implementation describes a purposeful, multidirectional route and change process driving at putting a specific tactic through a due process and practice which duly influences an educational system at different levels. Implementation is intriguing in way that its processes is meant to aid a change in education in relation to some policy aims and objectives. It is mandatory and multidirectional because it influences and can as well be demonstrated by actors at various stages of the education system. It is conceptualized as being obvious to institutions as well as societal structures, particularly, in culture, politics, demography and economy as it affects the educational system in various ways. The policy can be shaped and transform education sector if well implemented.

Educational policy implementation is relatively having obvious constraints, which is already occupying a central aural in Nigeria. However, for national, state or local policymakers, it often refers to making choices about reforming and changing educational plights, and using resources to capture objectives of the policy processes (Datnow & Park, 2009). The importance of quality education to the well-being of peoples in society cannot be underpriced. Education signals a fundamental right of every human. The connection between education and human capacity development has been fundamental, and education is now globally perceived as a primary development index (UNDP, 2016). To this end, the importance of education has been upheld across the globe. The world governments and international community have also recognized education as being mandatory for of its citizens to gain access and remain committed to human development

The value of education has made the Nigerian government to attach great importance to making effective educational policies, and its efficient implementation across the country. Therefore, through the ministry of education and other relevant agencies, ensure that there is access to which sound knowledge is provided to the citizens for adaptation to the required routes of the larger society. In addition, the United Nations classified and categorized education as means that make good the public, and that noteven a child should be denied the access to it (Dorothy et. al., 2009). However, it is perceived that certain factors can impede or constrain the implementation of education policy as well as human capacity development which adversely can affect the society. A failure to full implementation of educational policies or subsequent non-accomplishment of educational policy goals for quality education to the citizens declines human capacity development.

Challenges of Educational Policy Development and Implementation in Nigeria

According to Adeniyi (2015) education policies were expected to produce sound knowledge and give enlightenment to citizens in Nigeria for adaptation into the wider society. Overtime, series of educational policies designed for development have been constrained by various factors that negatively affect its full implementation. The constraints have remained:

1. Poor funding and resources,
   Insufficient funding and lack of adequate resources are the critical constraint in educational system of developing countries which leads to poor implementation of

educational policies. This implies that poor funding can lead to lack of essential education materials, and it can also negatively impact on quality of education. In addition, it can lead to the overcrowding of class rooms and storage of outdated textbooks in the library.

2. Lack of qualified personnel
   Shortages of qualified teaching crew in schools can negatively affect educational policy implementation, and students' outcomes will become poor. Where teachers lack adequate training themselves, and are engaged in a poor working conditions, their participation in new educational policy can be constrained with the excuses surrounding them, and the students under tutelage may also have negative outcomes.

3. Bureaucratic weaknesses
   The bureaucratic weakness in educational system hinders it from being effective, efficient and adaptive in the implementation of educational policies. More so, these weaknesses stem from excessive rules, conflicting roles, rigid structures, and focuses on procedures over results. Furthermore, these weaknesses include addicted reliance on rules and procedures, difficulty in adapting to some changing circumstances, lack of responsiveness to issues, inflexibility, resistance to change, abuse of power and reluctance to explore new opportunities in the educational sector.

Furthermore, Adeniyi (2015) asserted that bureaucratic bottleneck and lack of institutional capacity mainly in decision making which adversely affected education policy development as well as effective education policy implementation. Moreso, there is also issues of inadequate professionalism that adversely made it difficult for the implementation of educational policy. This explains that most of policymakers and implementers lack the necessary human resource and operational skills to actualize the required outcomes. The implication of the overall effects is backwardness in education and human capacity development lapses (Ige & Fasakin, 2014).

According to Kingdom & Maekae (2013) another critical problems affecting education policy development and implementation processes, include:

1. Lack of political will and politicizing of education policy
   Political will of government is properly needed in the implementation of educational policies to ensure its full execution and impact in the education system. Hence, the lack of political will can undermine the efforts toward implementing education policies effectively. It can also hinder the prioritization as well as funding of educational policies within the school system. Therefore, the politicizing of education policy can lead to loss of focus on improving the education system through effective implementation of educational policies. Moreso, educational policies must not be politicized, but it should be seen as a necessity for the development of the society.

2. Political and government instability
   Another critical problem is the issue of political instability which has the possibility of disrupting educational policy implementation. Changes in government have the negative influence of delaying policy implementation. The instability in politics and government can also lead to policy reversals. To avert political and government instability on educational policy implementation, it becomes imperative for each government to make policies that are achievable within the period of their administration. Continues changes in government leadership usually lead to shifts in

educational policy priorities as well as the disruption of efforts toward implementing the policies.

3. Corruption
   Corruption undermines the effort to implementation of educational policy. It disrupts effective implementation of educational policies because of diversion of public resources intended for smooth implementation of policies in the education system. It can as well hinder the evaluation of policy outcomes.

4. Negligence to relevant roles and rules
   The careless attitudes of some personnel in the helms of authority that fail to stick to their roles and rules of engagement in discharge of their responsibilities in education system can undermine government efforts on the implementation of educational policies. Negligence to duty, in terms of absenteeism and improper documentation can also undermine and hamper effective policy implementation in the education system. It can lead to ineffective monitoring and inadequate evaluation of the education policies, and it makes it difficult to assess and identify the areas that may need improvement.

5. Cultural, tribal and religious constraints
   Tribal sentiments, cultural intrigues and religious beliefs often time may conflict with educational policies because of individuals involved. These factors contribute in disrupting the full implementation of education policies to the functioning of the education system. Religious beliefs, tribal solidarity and cultural inclination has the capacity to undermine policy implementation process in every society.

6. Poor communication and coordination
   Poor communication channels make it unrealistic to coordinate proper implementation of policies in the education system. In the effort to execute policies, the influence of ineffective communication and coordination between policymakers, school management, teachers and parents can ensue misunderstandings and delay most often in policy implementation in the education system. The failure of parents receiving vital information regarding the change in policy can create a disconnect between teachers and the parents of their students.

7. Insecurity and violence
   Insecurity in society can affect the smooth running of schools. Security of the school students and infrastructures remain a major concern to education system. In the situation where insecurity and violence are allowed to trend in society, the implementation of educational policies will be at standstill. In such conditions, students will be restricted to accessing the school premises until there is the restoration of peace and order.

8. Inaccurate data
   In most developing countries, the lack of accurate data of students, resources, teachers and learning materials have eroded the effective implementation of educational policies. Data in the education system remains a useful tool that can effectively guide policymakers and implementers respectively.

Putting more efforts in addressing these challenges in educational policy implementation requires multi-dimensional, multi-thronged and multifaceted approaches. There is the need to make effort for increased funding, strong leadership, improved resources allocation, strengthening the monitoring system, reviewing the evaluation system, combating corruption,

quelling of insecurity, engagement of qualified personnel, setting up good data capturing system, and ensuring of political stability.

As earlier stated, the lack of fund for the engagement of stakeholders regarding education policy development and implementation are part of challenges that impede effective educational policy implementation. In addition, Yekini (2013) asserted that ineffective policies, unchecked brain drain, persistent industrial actions, inadequate instructional templates as well as corruption, massively crippled education policy development and full implementation in Nigeria. Furthermore, other stumbling block to development of education policy in the country is the problem of inadequate funding. In support of this argument, Peter & Isaac (2013) explain that the challenges of education funding across Nigeria remains in alarming stage. As a matter of fact, the budgetary allocation to education funding has always been poor in Nigeria over the years. The UNESCO recommended 26% of budgetary allocation, but in the case of Nigeria it has been around 12% of yearly budgetary allocation.

As societies and economies keep evolving from time to time, and industrialized to up to date knowledge-based setting, education becomes a priority for individual, national, social and economic progress. More so, education systems are plunge to provide more high-quality education effects as well as strong competencies, fresh demands for value and peoples well-being, to encourage young generations to have required knowledge in contributing to the fast-growing global economy. Hence, education policies can have a shortfall in the classroom, frustrated from achieving the intended results, as a of weakened implementation processes. Therefore, education is regarded as a driver to developing high-skilled youth with the purpose of meeting the knowledge needs of the society, and this reveals a paradigm shift over decades since the 21st century as postulated by Lessard & Carpentier (2015). Furthermore, the shift prompted policymakers and certain stakeholders in education system to put more focus on schools' performance, and thereby raise their attentions on the scope and quality of the educational services being delivered to all schools. In addition, governments have seen the importance of responding to these vital expectations.

Enhancing Human Capacity Development

According to Bester (2016) the term capacity development has in the past two decades evolved from individual and human resource development, to encapsulating individuals, units, organizations as well as the general society in which they collectively function. In addition, there is a shift in recognizing that sustainable capacity development is derivative driven by individuals whose capacities needs to be developed. To this end, external assistance is required to play a critical role in developing such capacities. However, stringent external initiatives are less likely to guarantee sustainable capacities. Therefore, developing sustainable capacity, requires further demand-driven anticipation on results, instead of just technical assistance that usually depends on supply-driven focus on inputs. The term capacity development is a concept that is used synonymously with the focus on training, technical support, or policy advice, all of which are part of the approaches toward developing capacity. In the past, the term capacity development is preferably used as capacity building. However, capacity development mainly begins from the premise that truly human capacity exists.

Human capacity development is the various knowledge, skills, competencies received from education as a result of human resources demands for developing humans for the purpose of solving not just personal problems but meeting societal needs which also result to having sustainable development and environmental transformation. Assuredly, capacity development is believed to empower individuals, units and organizations within a society to strengthen their ability to contribute immensely toward the realization of collective goal and vision for

societal advancement (Michelle, 2005). According to World Customs Organization (2011), capacity development constitutes the activities by which individuals' abilities, skills, knowledge and behaviours are strengthened as well as improved through educational policy and processes in way that the institutions can efficiently attain its mission as well as goals in a more sustainable route. Therefore, meeting goals of capacity development are to solve societal problems through policies and processes of development.

The organization for economic co-operation and development (OECD) defined capacity and capacity development in the following way. Capacity is the condensed ability of individuals, organizations, groups and societies as an entity that manages their problems successfully. Capacity development on the other hand describes the way individuals, organizations, groups and the society as whole performs, create, adapt, strengthens and maintain capacity over time (OECD, 2006). United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2003) describes capacity and human capacity development respectively. According to (UNDP, 2003) capacity refers to the ability of every individual, units, organizations as well as societies to function, solve problems, or set achievable goals. Human capacity development refers to the human contribution to sustain, utilize and retain that capacity, for better performance in reduction of poverty, enhancement of self-reliance as well as improving individual's lives. Human capacity development is a continuous effort, and it is productive rather than being a replacement of indigenous capacity. In addition, it promotes learning processes, boosts empowerment, builds on social capital, creates enabling and supportive environments, uphold cultures as well as integrating personal and societal behaviour. Human capacity development is usually based on learning process and the acquiring of useful skills, resources among organizations, units and individuals.

According to Morgan (2006) human capacity development narrative have some crucial features in which some cogent principles can be explained. To this end, capacity is perceived as means of empowerment, identification, and essential properties that make a system to survive, experience growth, become complex and diversify in society. Human capacity has to do with collectiveness of individuals who are together as well as taking control of their lives. Human capacity development also deals with collective ability and attributes of individuals that enables and participates in a system that actively perform, strongly deliver values, regularly establishes and renews partnerships. More so, capacity is a condition and a systems phenomenon. It is essential property with an interactive effect. It appears in dynamic way involving a complexity of collective attitudes, skills, resources, and various strategies that may be tangible or intangible in nature. Furthermore, it can emerge from how a system is positioned within a specific context. In addition, usually concerns human activities in a complex form. Human capacity is a vivid state that is elusive, transient and latent.

Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted is the human capital theory. It originated in the mid-20th century and was proposed by Mincer (1958). The theory emphasizes that individuals can gain knowledge and skills from education which is referred to as human capital, which gives them ability to be more productive in society. It further asserts that the idea received leads to enhanced productivity, greater income and a responsible life. However, the main emphasis of human capital theory was to make this attainment sustainable, consistent and profitable to the larger society. In many ways, human capital theory was an inevitable byproduct of a century of political economic thought. The idea of the theory is that income comes from productivity and productivity is based on the knowledge and skills acquired form learning.

Materials and Method

The study relied on the use of questionnaire to obtain data from respondents. The questionnaires were structured in four Likert format of strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree and disagree respectively. The descriptive survey design was adopted. The purposive sampling technique guided the distribution of questionnaires to 60 graduates of university education comprising both males and females. The 60 copies of questionnaires that were administered were retrieved and analyzed in percentage and presented on tables.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: summary of responses that there challenges that influence the implementation of educational policy in Rivers State.

Variables	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly agree	26	43.3
Agree	22	36.7
Strongly disagree	08	13.3
Disagree	04	6.7
Total	60	100

Source: Amadi & Godson, (2025)

Table 1 shows that 26 (43.3%) and 22 (36.7%) respondents strongly agree and agree respectively that there are challenges that influence the implementation of educational policy in Rivers State, while 8 (13.3%) and 4 (6.7%) strongly disagree and disagree respectively that there are challenges that influence the implementation of educational policy in Rivers State. The study therefore, stands to accept that there are challenges that influence the implementation of educational policy in Nigeria which include poor funding, bureaucratic bottlenecks, inconsistency of policy, corruption and government instability as found by Kingdom & Maekae (2013).

Table 2: summary of responses that the implementation of educational policy enhances human capacity development in Rivers State.

Variables	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly agree28	46.7	
Agree26	43.3	
Strongly disagree	04	6.7
Disagree	02	3.3
Total	60	100

Source: Amadi & Godson, (2025)

Table 2 indicates that 28 (46.7%) and 26 (43.3%) respondents strongly agree and agree respectively that the implementation of educational policy enhances human capacity development of university graduates in Rivers State. However, 4 (6.7%) and 2 (3.3%) strongly disagree and disagree respectively to the stated opinion. Therefore, the study stands to accept that the implementation of educational policy enhances human capacity development of graduates in Rivers State. This agrees with the findings of Bester (2016) that strategic implementation of educational policy improves human capacity development of graduates.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the findings of this study have clearly shown that effective implementation of educational policy in schools, universities, industries, and other tertiary institution can improve the human capacity of individuals. This reveals that when educational policies implementation is well funded, free from bureaucratic bottleneck, and corruption is eliminated, the society stands better chance of improving in all areas of economic, social and development activities. The education system that fully implements policies that encourage individuals to broaden their knowledge can be viewed as the route for having capacity that help them attain easily societal goals.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends as follows:

1. Government should evaluate educational policies periodically to identify the challenges to effective implementation of education policies, carry out policy reforms by eliminating obsolete and ineffective policies in the education system as well as outlining strategic measures that can ensure full implementation of implementable educational policies, and set up policy attainment assessment committee.
2. Policy makers and other stakeholders in education departments in government and industrial administration should conduct human capacity development assessment or test for fresh graduates of universities, school, and industrial training centres to ascertain their level of contribution and impact made in society after graduation.

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