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## **Implementation of Basic Education Policy in Anambra State Secondary Schools for National Cohesion and Global Competitiveness**

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### **Abstract**

The study investigated the extent of implementation of basic education policy in Anambra State secondary schools: Towards national cohesion and global competitiveness. It adopted a descriptive survey design. Two research questions guided the study. The population of the study comprised 257 principals and 3,029 junior secondary school teachers in the six education zones in Anambra State. All the principals were used because of their small size while 780 teachers were selected using stratified sampling technique. An instrument constructed by researcher, titled: Basic Education Policy Questionnaire (BEPQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts, two experts from Educational Management and one expert from measurement and evaluation, all from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam campus, Anambra State, Nigeria. The reliability was established using a test re-test method which yielded 0.86 correlations, coefficient using Cronbach Alpha method. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation. The result of data analysis revealed that there is inadequate provision of instructional materials, basic education is not completely free, and there is dearth of teaching personnel. Based on these findings, It was recommended among others that there should be: adequate remuneration and motivation of primary implementers of educational policy and ensuring of adequate fund allocation for education in budget.

**Key words:** Basic Education, national cohesion, global competitiveness, policy

### **Introduction**

Education is a vital tool in the development of the learners, through the transmission of worthwhile values such as, skills, knowledge and planned activities that can develop the learners' potentials for the benefit of the society, Wilson (2016). Education therefore, helps in the development of an individual for a better adjustment in society and to be able to compete globally with his contemporaries. Education also provides for the development of the citizens through the implementation of education policy. Obanya (2004) stated that educational development is a series of inter-related processes which seeks to make educational policy consistent with national aspirations that translate educational goals into meaningful achievement on the ground activities by teachers and learners. Education is a process of transmission or socialization of the individual to prepare him for adult life in the society. Education can truly be achieved or provided to the citizens of a country through effective implementation of the educational policies which starts with basic education.

The National Policy on Education (2004) stated that basic education shall be nine years' duration, comprising six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education. It shall be free and compulsory. It shall also include adult and non-formal education programme at primary and junior secondary education levels for the adults and out of school youths. The National Policy on Education (2013) included early childhood education in basic education; it stated that basic education is the education given to children aged 0-15 years. It encompasses the early childhood education (0-4 years) and 10 years of formal schooling. It further stated that 0-4years, situated in day-care or crèches is fully in the hands of the private sector and social development services while ages 5-6 are with the formal education sector. Basic education is seen as the foundation for sustainable life-long learning which provides reading, writing and numeracy skills, it comprises a wide variety of formal education and non-formal educational activities and programmes designed to enable learners to acquire functional and quality Education and be able to compete globally.

For the federal government to coordinate and monitor basic education, Universal Basic Education (UBE) act (2004) was instituted. The objectives of Universal Basic Education are to develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for Education, the provision of free, universal basic education for every Nigeria Child of school age, to reduce the incidence of drop-out from formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency, to cater through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the promotion of basic education and to ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communicative "arid life" skills/as well as the ethical, moral, serenity and civic values needed for the laying of a solid foundation for lifelong learning. These objectives are prospective achievements of basic education which are designed to be inculcated into every child in Nigeria for national cohesion. The components of basic education in Nigeria are from I-year early childhood education, primary and adult literacy. This paper focuses on junior secondary Education.

Secondary education according to Ogbonnanya (2010) is the form of education which children receive automatically after they have received primary school education. Basic education as the grass root education that formulates and builds a child to what he/she will be in future, needs

to be implemented to the fullest in order to inculcate into a child the functional and quality education that will help him compete in future with his contemporaries globally. Global competitiveness means a country's ability to compete with other countries of the world in terms of technological, economic, political and social realities, [Onele, 2013). In this study, global competitiveness is defined as the competency of a country to strive in order to have products that are effectively and efficiently better than the other countries. This implies that basic education which has laudable objectives and as grassroot education should have smooth, undisturbed, effective and well-planned implementation strategies in order to yield products that are functional and able to compete with the world.

Muhammad and Yamta (2010) opined that the world economic forum recently underlined in its global competitiveness report that education and training have emerged as key drivers for global competitiveness. They asserted that if the labour force has access to new knowledge and is trained in new processes and the latest technologies, that it will assail in the current global market. This is understood to mean that the skills and training programme in basic education should be well implemented as education and training are the key drivers for global competitiveness, so that the students can fit into the advanced technological society. This makes a child that couldn't afford to further academically after junior secondary to practice the skills and training learnt in the school for a living and world competition.

School administrators and teachers who are the major implementers of basic education policy have roles to play, in initiating and supervising the implementation of the curricular programmes of their schools, management of physical facilities and equipment, financial management and teaching in order to achieve the objectives of the policy. Unfortunately, the implementation stage is the greatest problem standing gallantly between education policy and its realization. This could be perceived from the current pathetic conditions of our junior secondary schools today. These problems like inadequate fund which is a major factor that makes it almost impossible to achieve Education for-all (EFA) and free lunch programmes with poor maintenance of school facilities negate the objectives of basic education.

Onyechi (2014) argued that a whole lot is wrong with education in Nigeria today, it is an understatement and that a country that denies education to its people, denies them and their country a future; denies them civilization and optimum utilization of God-given human resources which is a key factor in individual entrepreneurial and national development. It is against this background that the researcher tends to investigate the extent that basic education policy is implemented for national cohesion and global competitiveness in secondary schools in Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Implementation of basic education policy in junior secondary school is a very crucial stage because with effective implementation, basic education certificate holders can be self-reliant to some extent. This can only be achieved with available resources and adequate funding of the programme.

Interactions with some secondary school administrators and teachers show that implementation of basic education is a very challenging task. This is because of lack of infrastructural facilities,

inadequate instructional materials, inadequate personnel, poor planning, poor supervision of the programme, and inadequate funding. These in essence may have same implications for skill sustainability of the students.

Observations have shown that students are not fed in the schools, yet fees are being collected. As a result, students frequently drop out of school and this negates the intention of the Education for all (EFA) policy. In view of the foregoing, the researcher investigated the extent of implementation of basic education policies in junior secondary schools in Anambra state.

### **Purpose of Study**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which Basic Education Policy is implemented in secondary schools in Anambra State. The study specifically sought to:

1. Determine the extent of implementation of basic education policy in junior secondary schools in Anambra state.
2. Suggest strategies for effective implementation of basic education policy for national cohesion and global competitiveness.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided, the study

1. To what extent is basic education policy implemented in junior secondary schools in Anambra state.?
2. What are the strategies for effective implementation of basic education policy for national cohesion and global competitiveness?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

**Ho1:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of implementation of basic education policy in junior secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Ho2:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the strategies for effective implementation of basic education policy for national cohesion and global competitiveness.

### **Methodology**

Descriptive research design was used for the study to investigate the extent of implementation of basic education policy in junior secondary school in Anambra state. The research design was considered appropriate for the study because it will help the researcher collect data directly from the respondents. The population of the study was all the 257 principals and 3,029 junior secondary school teachers in the six education zones in Anambra State (Source: Planning, Research and Statistics. Department, Post Primary School Service Commission, Awka, 2019). Simple random sampling technique was used to select five schools from each education zone making it 30 Schools, and stratified sampling technique was used to select 26 junior secondary

school teachers each from the 30 schools making a total of 780 teachers. This gave a grand total of 1037 respondents.

Researchers developed instrument titled ‘Basic Education Policy Questionnaire’ (BEPQ) was used for the study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections –A and B. Section A was on the personal data of the respondents while section B elicited information on extent of implementation. The questionnaire was made up 24 items. The instrument was validated by three experts, two from Educational Management and one from Measurement and Evaluation, all in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University. The comments of these experts led to some minor corrections before it was used. The questionnaire was structured on a four point rating scale of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and strongly Disagree (SD) were used for cluster A and C while Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (GE), low Extent (LE) and very low Extent (VLE) were used for cluster B. The responses were weighted using 4,3,2,1, respectively. The instrument was pilot tested using 10 principals and 20 teachers from Delta State secondary schools and the reliability estimate of 0.81 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha method. Five research assistants trained by the researcher helped to administer and collect the instrument. The return rate was 247 principals and 763 teachers, which is 96% return rate.

The data collected were analyzed in line with each research question and hypothesis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Benchmark as for acceptance value for research questions was 2.50 and above. This shows that any item below 2.50 has no accepted value.

## Results

The results of the study were obtained from the research questions answered. They are presented in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1 below shows that the mean respondents for principals ranged from 1.62 for items 13 and 14 to 2.88 for item 19. For teachers, the mean responses ranged from 1.93 to 2.94 for item 10 and 6. Most of the items had mean values less than 2.50 which is the criterion mean. The overall mean was 2.26 and 2.38 for principals and teachers respectively. Based on the fact that the mean scores were below the criterion mean of 2.50, implies that basic education policy is implemented at low extent in secondary schools in Anambra state.

**Table 1:** Mean ratings and standard Deviation of principals and teachers on the extent basic education policy is implemented in secondary schools in Anambra State.

S/No	Item Description	Principals = 247 Teachers = 763					
		X	SD	DEC	X	SD	DEC
1	Is basic education free and for all?	2.28	0.49	LE	2.36	0.74	LE
2	Is free lunch available in junior secondary school section?	2.42	0.76	LE	2.23	0.93	LE
3	Are adequate classrooms, laboratories and libraries provided in junior secondary school?	2.05	0.50	LE	1.93	0.76	LE
4	Are there enough teaching personnel?	2.27	0.49	LE	2.19	0.76	LE
5	Are students' data statistical records accurate?	2.15	0.99	LE	2.03	0.97	LE
6	Do ministry of education monitor and supervise schools as at when due?	1.62	0.48	LE	2.36	0.78	LE
7	Are there adequate funds provision by government for running of basic education?	1.62	0.59	LE	2.19	1.00	HE
8	Are instructional materials adequately provided by the ministry of education?	2.30	0.92	LE	2.20	0.99	LE
9	Are teachers motivated by giving them adequate training for the programme?	2.35	0.49	LE	2.94	1.67	HE
10	Are teachers committed to their duties?	2.56	0.54	HE	2.72	0.15	HE
11	Is rate of drop-out among students reduced?	2.41	0.50	LE	2.29	0.75	LE
12	Is there opportunity for children to learn manipulative skills in junior secondary schools by adequate provision of equipment in technology laboratory?	2.88	0.50	HE	2.08	0.99	LE
13	Does incessant change of minister for education causes educational policy instability?	2.52	0.84	HE	2.66	1.04	HE
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>2.26</b>	<b>0.19</b>	<b>LE</b>	<b>2.38</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>LE</b>

The data presented in table 2 below shows that the mean responses for principals ranged from 2.31 for item 32 to 3.55 for item 26 and for teachers, the mean responses ranged from 1.34 for item 32 to 3.36 for item 25. Most of the items had mean value greater than 2.50 which is the criterion mean. The mean score on strategies for implementing basic education policy was 2.76 and 2.82 for principals and teachers respectively. Based on the fact that the mean scores were above 2.50, it implies that the respondents agree that items in table 3 are strategies for effective implementation of basic education for global competitiveness.

**Table 2:** Mean rating and standard deviation of principals and teachers on the strategies for effective implementation of basic education policy for national cohesion and global competitiveness

S/No	Item description	Principal = 247			Teachers = 763		
		X	SD	DEC	X	SD	DEC
14	Basic education policy Implementation should be channelled towards national cohesion and global competitiveness	2.73	0.91	A	2.95	0.96	A
15	Continuous supervision and inspection of secondary schools should be encouraged to ensure quality education for global competition.	2.61	0.59	A	2.88	1.09	A
16	Enough fund should be channelled towards Basic education to achieve Education for All (EFA) policy.	2.59	0.88	A	2.97	0.99	A
17	All the laboratories to be properly equipped in order to graduate student with functional education for global competitiveness	2.66	0.81	A	3.07	0.96	A
18	Civic values should be ensured for national cohesion and global competitiveness	3.51	0.50	A	3.36	0.77	A
19	Adequate teachers to be provided for effective teaching and learning	3.55	0.49	A	3.48	0.67	A
20	Adequate provision of quality instructional materials should be ensured for a functional education	2.72	0.83	A	3.17	1.01	A
21	Provision of accurate data of the student's population is necessary	2.62	0.82	A	2.81	0.97	A
22	Teachers should be motivated accordingly	2.69	0.77	A	2.70	0.95	A
23	Basic education needs good planning in order to achieve its aim in national cohesion and global competitiveness	2.76	0.84	A	2.81	0.94	A
24	Government to create enough awareness and mobilization campaign for basic education in order to achieve its objectives	2.32	0.50	D	2.46	0.68	D
25	Reduction of in-take of students to avoid over population	2.31	0.50	D	1.34	0.71	D
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>2.76</b>	<b>0.22</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.82</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>A</b>

**Table 3:** z- test analysis of principals and teachers on the extent of implementing Basic Education policy in Junior secondary schools in Anambra state.

Source of Variation	N	X	SD	DF	z- Cal	Sig	Decision
Principals	247	2.26	0.19	1008	-7.02	0.00	Rejected
Teachers	763	2.38	0.34				

The result presented in table 3 revealed that a z-calculated value of  $-7.02$  is less than the z-critical value of  $1.96$  at  $1008$  degree of freedom with  $0.00$  level of significance. Since the associated probability ( $0.00$ ) was greater than  $0.05$  the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there was a significant difference between the mean rating of principals and teachers with regards to the extent basic Education policy is implemented in your secondary schools in Anambra state.

**Table 4:** z-test analysis of principals and teachers on the strategies for effective implementation of Basic Education policy for global competitiveness

Source of variance	N	X	SD	df	z-cal	sig	Decision
Principals	247	2.76	0.22	1008	-0.34	0.22	Accepted
Teachers	763	2.82	0.49				

**Table 4** showed that a z-calculated value of  $-0.34$  is less than the z- critical value of  $1.96$  at  $1008$  degree of freedom with  $0.22$  level of significance. Since the associated probability ( $0.22$ ) was greater than  $0.05$ , the null hypothesis was accepted. Thus, there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers with regards to the strategies for effective implementation of Basic Education policy in Anambra state secondary schools,

### Discussion of Results

The findings on research question one and hypotheses one revealed that principals agree that the following items are implemented at low extent in junior secondary schools. These items includes: free and for all basic education, available free lunch in junior secondary schools, adequate classrooms, laboratories and libraries, enough teaching personnel, accurate students data statistical records, adequate instructional materials, increase in rate of school drop-outs, provision of adequate fund for the programme, adequate motivation of teachers and teachers being committed to their work. Teachers agreed that provision of adequate fund, motivation of teachers, and teacher being committed to their work are implemented at high extent while all other items in table 1 are implemented at low extent. These findings confirm the observation of Moja (2000) that inadequate planning and funding as well as the inadequacies of the monitoring process constituted problems to effective implementation of educational policies in Nigeria.

The findings also confirm the view of Manafa (2011) that in Nigeria, funding problem have marred the effective implementation of educational policies.

The findings on research question two and hypotheses two revealed that both the principals and teachers agree that channeling of basic education policy implementation and monitoring of schools, releasing of enough fund for the programme, equipping of all the laboratories, ensuring of ethnical, moral, security and civic values, provision of accurate students population data, motivation of teachers and accurate planning of basic education are the strategies for effective implementation of basic education policy for global competitiveness, This finding is in line with Aluede (2006) that proper computation is considered very important in arriving at the financial implication for running the educational polices.

Also, the finding is in line with the finding of Moja (2000) that the decline in quality of education in Nigeria has been a major concern due to this rapid expansion in student numbers without comparable expansion in resources, staff and facilities. This implies that these strategies should be implemented for the benefit and actual realization of basic education policy objectives in preparing of our children for national cohesion and global competition.

### **Conclusion**

Basic education policy is a very laudable programme with good intention for any Nigeria child, but its objectives are not being achieved because of the poor implementation. Ineffectiveness in the implementation makes it difficult to give a Nigeria child grassroot education that will prepare the child for global competitiveness and national cohesion. This therefore calls for strategies that will help implement the policy effectively.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The governments should devise means of giving the primary implementers adequate remuneration and motivational attention to achieve goals of educational policies for global competitiveness.
2. Adequate provision of infrastructural facilities, instructional materials and other necessary resources should be given serious attention so as to achieve the objectives of educational policies

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