
**EDUCATIONAL POLICY CHANGE AND ITS IMPLICATION ON THE
TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HISTORY IN JOS NORTH LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA, PLATEAU STATE**

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ABSTRACT

The paper is on Policy change and its impact on the Teaching and Learning of History in Jos North Local Government of Plateau State, Nigeria. The work was informed by the continuous decline in the status of History in Nigerian schools. The survey research design was used for the study. Five research questions guided the study. A sample of ten secondary schools were randomly selected from which 100 respondents comprising ninety students and ten teachers were drawn. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. Data from the EPCITALHQ were analysed using mean scores. The result showed that Nigeria frequently changes its policies on education which has always been poorly implemented. Corruption, poor and selfish political will, inadequate trained personnel are all factors responsible for unfruitful policy formulation and implementation in education in Nigeria. It was also found that the policy which replaced History with social studies in the primary and junior secondary schools and made it an elective in the senior secondary classes is more than any other factor responsible for the decline in the status of History in Nigerian secondary schools. In view of the findings of this study, it was recommended that government should ensure the effective implementation of the recent policy which makes the study of History compulsory in Nigerian schools.

Keywords: History, Policy, Teaching, Learning, Change

INTRODUCTION

In education as in other fields of human endeavour, every official action of an organization must have a basis. A policy defines the area in which decisions are to be made but it does not make the decision. It usually provides a general guide that facilitates decision-making. Educational policies provide the direction for educational activities. The formulation

of an educational policy sets the stage for implementation which, according to Ukeje (1986), is perhaps the most important aspect of planning. Planning is usually an action which succeeds policy formulation but precedes implementation. Unfortunately, educational policies and goal attainment have been irreconcilable due to implementation constraints. The colonial education which was inherited by Nigeria was criticised for being too theoretical to be able to make meaningful impact on the life of Nigerians (Akinlua, 2007). Woolman (2001) commented on this in his remark about African education. According to him, "African school systems today still follow the rigid structure of time periods and grade-level progression found in Western education." Where there is little change in the curriculum, it is either one subject is substituted for the other or dropped outright. This is the case with the study of History which has almost lost its place to Social Studies, Civic Education and Government in the school curriculum. The National Policy on Education (2004) in the curriculum of junior secondary school in Nigeria provides the teaching of Social Studies and Civic Education. The policy makes provision for six years of primary school, three years of junior secondary school, three years of senior secondary school, and four years of university education (6-3-3-4). In the first tier of this programme, students learn Social Studies while in the senior secondary school, the second tier, students may choose either History or Government as one of their Arts subjects. Today however, government now promotes the learning of Social studies, a junior class subject, above the study of History with the notion that the study of social studies is needed for understanding of Nigerian cultures (Oyeranmi, 2010). Perhaps the reason for this action is that the cultural diversities in Nigeria will best be understood by young Nigerians when they learn these diversities in social studies. Ironically, Nigeria is currently facing the problems of ethno-religious crises, political instability, insecurity, economic strangulation, environmental degradation and many others. Many of these problems, which may be connected to past actions of average Nigerians, arise because Nigerian leaders and policy makers do not see how the past can help to make the present, and shape the future (Cole, 2006). When the first schools were founded in Nigeria by Christian missionaries, the traditional status of history as an important subject was retained and the teaching of history continued in Nigerian schools.

Longkat (2011) observes that society 'looked up to History for knowledge of the accumulated wisdom of the ancestors, the sense of values, morality and the norms upon which society was founded'. Thus History occupied a unique position in traditional African society and was prominent as a subject in the preparation and training of the citizen. Longkat adds that historical information was imparted privately by parents and grandparents, and

given adequate prominence in learning and teaching. During the colonial period, the Education Ordinance made provision for the study of History, albeit English history.

This paper examines the need for the teaching of History in schools especially now that Nigeria is bedevilled by ethno-regional crises, religious violence, political instability and insecurity. This is done through the study of the different policy shifts up to the implementation of the different policy shifts as it affects the teaching of History. The intent is that of stressing a more proactive approach to the teaching of History and to reinvigorate its teaching in schools in order to achieve nation-building.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Over the years, the gap between educational policy formulation, policy change, and national development has become a subject of great concern to many observers. The relevance of History in national development has never been contested as History remained a favourite subject on the school curriculum at independence in Nigeria until 1969 (Oyeranmi, 2010). Before this period, the Department of History of the University College, Ibadan and later of the University of Ibadan, began to review the school curriculum to introduce aspects of Nigerian and African History. Working with the newly inaugurated West African Examinations Council, the Department also began to influence the school curriculum and introduce massive dosage of Nigerian and African history. The status of history as a school subject was not called into question. However, the course of the teaching of History was adversely affected by the events which followed the convening of the 1969 National Curriculum Conference, followed by the adoption of a National Policy on Education, and the subsequent arrival of the 6-3-3-4 education system.

The 1969 Conference which was expected to bring hope to the Nigerian educational system turned out to be the beginning of the decline of History teaching in Nigerian schools. In the end, the curriculum reform which grew from that conference led to the reduction of the status of History. Eventually, History was expunged first from the primary and junior school curriculum, and later at the senior school level before its recent reintroduction as a compulsory subject in Nigerian primary and secondary schools. This study is interested in identifying the trend of educational policy formulation and changes in Nigeria and its implication on the teaching and learning of History in Nigerian schools as it affects national development. Following a clarification of the causes and effects of the problem of poor policy formulation and changes, the research will advance remedial measures towards effective implementation of the current policy which makes the study of History compulsory in all primary and secondary schools in Nigeria.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this work is to:

1. find out the trends in educational policy formulation in Nigeria
2. outline the major changes in educational policies in Nigeria and their implications for History teaching and learning
3. the extent to which policy change has affected the teaching and learning of History
4. determine the implications of these educational policy changes on the teaching and learning of History and to a larger extent, national development
5. proffer strategies that can be adopted to ensure implementation of the new policy of teaching History from primary to secondary schools

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were formulated and answered in the study:

1. What has been the trend of educational policy formulation in Nigeria?
2. What factors or constraints have informed major changes in educational policies in Nigeria?
3. To what extent has the policy change affected the teaching and learning of History?
4. To what extent has the persistence of policy formulation/changes hindered national development in Nigeria?
5. In what ways can the recent inclusion of History as a compulsory subject in all primary and secondary schools be effectively implemented to foster national development in Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

The research design employed in this study is descriptive survey research design. The target population for this study is selected secondary schools in Plateau State, Nigeria. The researchers obtained information from selected secondary schools in Jos North Local Government of Plateau State on the subject of educational policy change. Out of the many secondary schools that are offering History in Plateau State, ten (10) were randomly selected and subsequently 90 students and 10 teachers were used for the study. Thus, a total of ninety (90) students and ten (10) teachers making a total of one hundred (100) respondents constituted the sample for the study.

For the purpose of this study, the researchers used Likert 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). Mean scores were used for the analysis of data collected and the frequency distribution tables presented. Each table was

characterized by a variable and number of respondents in each case and mean of responses were calculated. Any mean score below 2.5 was rejected and above 2.5 was accepted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the result of the field work in the ten selected schools with the sole aim of finding out policy change and its implication on the study of History in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Analysis is presented in tabular form using mean scores to explain the data obtained from the field.

TABLE 1: The Sample Schools, The Distribution and Returned Questionnaires for Students, Teachers and Parents

S/N	Name of School	Respondents (teachers)	Respondents (students)	No. of Questionnaires distributed	No. of Questionnaires returned	%
1	Government College Jos	9	1	10	10	100
2	Godsway Comprehensive Secondary School, Jos	9	1	10	10	100
3	Government Secondary School, Hwolshe	9	1	10	10	100
4	ECWA Secondary School, Jos	9	1	10	10	100
5	Baptist High School, Jos	9	1	10	10	100
6	Saint Louis College, Jos	9	1	10	10	100
7	Saint Lukes College, Jos	9	1	10	10	100
8	Federal Government College, Jos	9	1	10	10	100
9	Saint John's College, Jos	9	1	10	10	100
10	Airforce Military Secondary School Jos	9	1	10	10	100

From the analysis in the table, a total of 100 questionnaires were administered to students and teachers in all the ten selected secondary schools that offer History in the local government area. The researchers used the face to face method of distribution; as a result of this, all questionnaires administered to students and teachers were retrieved.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the trend of educational policy formulation in Nigeria?

To answer research question one, items 1,2,3 ,4 and 5 of the questionnaires were employed.

The analyses are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Frequency of Responses and Calculated Mean on the Trend of Educational Policy Formulation in Nigeria Students questionnaire

S/N	Items	SA	A	DA	SD	Score FX/X	Mean X
1	Nigeria has formulated credible educational policies since independence	26	19	22	36	100	2.26
2	Nigerian educational policies were	14	11	45	30	100	2.09

	imposed by colonialists	56	33	90	30	206	
3	Nigeria constantly reviews its educational policies	48	27	15	10	100	3.13
4	The frequent review in Nigerian educational policies has always yielded positive results	192	81	30	10	313	
		40	33	106	26	205	2.05
5	The current educational policy is capable of fast tracking the needed development	17	23	41	19	100	
		68	69	82	19	238	2.38

From the analysis on table two, respondents generally disagreed that Nigeria formulates and implements credible educational policies. This was represented with a mean of 2.26. The mean score of 3.13 on item three implies that Nigeria frequently changes its educational policies. Item four however shows that the frequent changes in educational policies has not yielded any satisfactory results. This is indicated by a mean score of 2.05 which is below the criterion mean of 2.5.

Research Question Two: What factors or constraints have made the formulation of credible educational policies difficult?

Table 3: Frequency of Responses and Calculated Mean on the Constraints to the Formulation of Credible Educational Policies

S/N	Constraints to The Formulation of Credible Educational Policies	SA	A	DA	SD	Score FX/X	Mean X
6	Poor educational financing is the major factor that affects credible policy formulation in Nigeria	31	28	26	15	100	
7	Poorly trained personnel affects educational policy formulation	44	29	18	09	100	
		136	58	36	09	239	2.39
8	Poor and selfish political interest is a factor that affects education policy formulation	33	18	29	20	100	
		132	54	58	20	264	2.64
9	Corruption affects credible educational policy formulation in Nigeria	69	24	7	0	100	
		276	72	14	0	362	3.62
10	The non-implementation of stakeholders views affects credible policy formulation in education	37	28	18	13	100	
		148	84	36	13	281	2.81

Items 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the questionnaires were specifically crafted to answer research question two. The computation shows that poor and selfish political will, corruption, inadequately trained personnel and non-implementation of stakeholders views with mean scores of 2.39, 2.64, 3.62, and 2.81 respectively are the major constraints to the formulation of credible Educational policies in Nigeria.

Research Question Three: What are the implications of educational policy changes on the teaching and learning of History and national development?

Table 4: Frequency of Responses and Calculated Mean on the Implications of Educational Policy Changes on the Teaching and Learning of History

S/N	Items	SA	A	DA	SD	Score Mean	
						FX/X	X
11	History Education is an important tool for inculcating values and attitudes in individuals	57 228	39 117	04 08	0 0	100 353	3.53
12	History Education can bring about social transformation	57 228	39 117	04 08	0 0	100 353	3.53
13	The current watershed in the status of History is principally caused by its removal from the primary and junior secondary curriculum	67 268	21 63	8 16	04 04	100 351	3.51
14	The present decline in the study of History is caused by government policies	48 192	52 156	0 0	0 0	100 348	3.48
15	The decline in the status of History is caused by the ineffectiveness of History teachers	12 48	09 27	44 88	35 35	100 198	1.98
16	The absence of History textbooks and learning materials are responsible for the low enrolment in History education	17 68	23 69	41 82	19 19	100 238	2.38

The data analysed in table three indicates that History is an important tool for the inculcation of individual and national values. Mean scores of 3.53 in items 11 and 12 attest to this fact. It was however found that the current watershed in the status of History is principally caused by the change in government policies which led to its removal from primary and junior secondary schools. The mean scores of 3.51 and 3.48 of items 13 and 14 which are far above the criteria mean attest to this fact.

Research Question Four: What strategies will be adopted to make History as a subject regain its place in Nigerian schools?

Table 5: Frequency of Responses and Calculated Mean on the Strategies that can be Adopted to Ensure History Regain its Place in Nigerian Schools

S/N	Items	SA	A	DA	SD	Score Mean	
						FX/X	X
17	The current policy which makes History education compulsory in all Nigerian Schools is a right step in the right direction	88 352	12 36	0 0	0 0	100 388	3.88
18	Effective compulsory History Education at all levels can resolve most of the conflicts we now are facing and lead to national transformation	32 09	29 57	23 64	23 46	100 176	1.76
19	Reviewing the History curriculum to incorporate local History will make it more meaningful and interesting	37 148	41 123	14 28	08 08	100 307	3.07
20	The training of History teachers and provision of relevant learning materials will resuscitate the teaching of History in Nigerian schools	48 192	32 96	13 26	07 07	100 321	3.21

Items 17, 18, 19 and 20 of the questionnaire were specifically crafted to answer research question four. The computation shows that the current policy which makes History Education compulsory in all Nigerian schools, reviewing the History curriculum to incorporate local History to make it more meaningful and interesting, the training of History teachers and provision of relevant learning materials will resuscitate the teaching of History in Nigerian schools. Mean scores of 3.88, 3.07 and 3.21 in items 17, 19 and 20 of the questionnaire proved this assertion.

Research Question Five: What strategies can be adopted to ensure better policy formulation and changes?

Table 6: Frequency of Responses and Calculated Mean on the Strategies that can be Adopted to Ensure Better Policy Formulation and Implementation in Nigeria

S/N	Item	SA	A	DA	SD	Score FX/X	Mean X
21	Engaging all stakeholders in curriculum and policy planning will ensure credible educational policy formulation	46 184	29 87	18 36	07 07	100 314	3.14
22	The non-interference of political leaders in curriculum planning and policy change will reduce bias in the process	77 308	13 39	8 16	02 02	100 365	3.65
23	Employing experts in curriculum planning and policy formulation will ensure efficiency in the process	33 132	44 132	11 22	12 12	100 298	2.98

In order to answer research question five, items 21, 22 and 23 were specially designed. The computation shows mean scores of 3.14, 3.65 and 2.98 respectively. Hence, the result implies that engaging all stakeholders in curriculum and policy planning, non-interference of political leaders in curriculum planning and policy change, and employing experts in curriculum planning and policy formulation will ensure credible educational policy formulation in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

From the analyses presented, respondents generally disagreed that Nigeria formulates and implements credible educational policies. It was also found that Nigeria frequently changes its educational policies. Item four on table two however shows that the frequent changes in educational policies has not yielded desired positive results. In fact, Omolewa (2014) noted that the move for the excision of history had continued in spite of the provision in the National Policy on Education which provided for the teaching of history, stating that "At the senior secondary school, there should be no social studies but Literature in English, History and Geography".

The computation of items on research question two shows that poor and selfish political will, corruption, inadequately trained personnel and non-implementation of stakeholders' views are the major constraints to the formulation of credible educational policies in Nigeria. Ejiogu (2005) concurs by asserting that the cankerworms of corruption and gross mismanagement of resources have been blamed for the deplorable state of the country's educational system. According to Ejiogu, the capability problem – ability to implement policies may be hindered by such factors as incompetent staff, insufficient information, political support, inadequate financial resources and impossible time constraints. There are also dispositional conflicts – implementation of a policy may fail because those charged with the responsibility of implementation refuse to carry out their own assignments. Since the end of the Nigerian civil war, Nigeria has moved from one crisis to another owing to contradictory steps taken by present and past governments. Perhaps the most serious problems in Nigeria today which have made nation-building a mere construct are the issues of ethno-regional affiliation and religious crises.

The data analysed in table three indicates that History is an important tool for the inculcation of individual and national values. It was however found that the current watershed in the status of History is principally caused by the change in government policies which led to its removal from primary and junior secondary schools. According to Woolman (2001), "African school systems today still follow the rigid structure of time periods and grade-level progression found in Western education". Where there is little change in the curriculum, it is either one subject is substituted for the other or dropped outright. This is the case with the study of History which has almost lost its place to Social studies in the school curriculum. The National Policy on Education provides in the curriculum of junior secondary school in Nigeria the teaching of Social Studies. The policy makes provision for six years of primary school, three years of junior secondary school, three years of senior secondary school, and four years of university education (6-3-3-4). In the first tier of this programme, students learn Social studies while in the senior secondary school, the second tier, students may choose either History or Government as one of their Arts subjects. Government now promotes the learning of Social studies, a junior class subject, above the study of History with the notion that the study of social studies is needed for the understanding of Nigerian cultures. Perhaps the reason for this action is that the cultural diversities in Nigeria will best be understood by young Nigerians when they learn these diversities in social studies. Ironically, Nigeria is currently facing problems of ethno-religious crises, political instability, insecurity, economic strangulation, environmental degradation and many others. Many of these problems, which

may be connected to past actions of Nigerians, arise possibly because Nigerian leaders and policy makers do not see how the past can help to make the present and shape the future. According to Omotola (2010), the issue of ethnic politics in Nigeria started with the 1964 election when Nnamdi Azikiwe was denied the premiership of the Western region after his party, NCNC in alliance with UPGA and some elements of AG won the election. Subsequent political activities that followed this action were tailored towards ethnic mobilization.

Computations on table five also show that the current policy which makes History Education compulsory in all Nigerian schools, reviewing the History curriculum to incorporate local History to make it more meaningful and interesting, the training of History teachers and provision of relevant learning materials will resuscitate the teaching of History in Nigerian schools. This position has been corroborated by Sanda (2011) who advocated content adjustment as a measure in bringing History back to Nigerian schools. To further buttress the importance of History, Gambari (2006) believes that Nigeria may go beyond the present approach (use of jingles and rallies) to reconstruct its society by taking a trip to the past in order to improve the understanding of the present, examine the present with a view to gaining insights into the future, anticipate the future in order to better prepare for its many challenges. This is where the study of History becomes inevitable if the country intends to weld together the ethnic cracks in the society. Atofarati (1992) believes that Nigeria's unwillingness to promote the teaching of history in secondary school rests on the belief "that the past can be ignored, the present is what matters, that no mistakes of the present can be as serious and grievous as the mistakes of the past." Nigeria's inability to mend its cracks and weld together its numerous ethnic groups is an indication that slogans, jingles, propaganda, transformative agenda may not work. History is about memory of the past, and as Oyerami rightly puts it, history is having memory and being able to build a future from the memory. Its teaching is essential in Nigerian schools, at least if only to arrest the drift in Nigeria's political life.

Finally, the result of this study implies that engaging all stakeholders in curriculum and policy planning, the non-interference of political leaders in curriculum planning and policy change, and employing experts in curriculum planning and policy formulation will ensure credible educational policy formulation change in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The formulation and implementation of credible educational policies, and particularly, the implementation of the recent policy which makes History compulsory in Nigerian schools should be ensured. This is in view of the fact that History is a necessary tool for the

inculcation of values and norms which will promote tolerance, patriotism, and social order which are not in abundance in the nation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. To formulate and implement credible policies on education, History curriculum should be reviewed to adequately furnish students with the basic skills of handling all instructional materials that are needed for the effective teaching and learning of History
2. All stakeholders should be consulted before there are any educational policy changes
3. The body for curriculum and educational policy formulation should be allowed to operate independent of government and political leaders' interference.

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