

## Challenges Facing the Implementation of Educational Policies in Public Secondary Schools in North-West Zone, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This study examined the challenges affecting the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in North-West Zone, Nigeria. Three objectives and research questions guided the study, which adopted a correlational research design. The population comprised 24,821 teachers across the seven North-Western states, with a purposive sample of 378 secondary school teachers. Data were collected using three researcher-designed questionnaires, validated by experts. Reliability was established through a test-retest method, yielding coefficients of 0.76, 0.74, and 0.84 respectively. Data were analyzed using tables, mean, and standard deviation. Findings revealed a high level of challenges in policy implementation. The study concluded that although school administrators and teachers play vital roles, their efforts are hindered by inadequate training, unclear guidelines, and limited involvement in policy formulation. It is therefore recommended that government and relevant authorities ensure adequate funding, timely resource allocation, and regular provision of instructional materials to improve policy implementation.*

**Keywords:** Challenges, Facing, Implementation, Educational Policies, Secondary Schools

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## Introduction

Education is widely recognized as a critical instrument for national development, social transformation, and human capital formation. It equips individuals with knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for meaningful participation in society and the global economy. In Nigeria, education occupies a central position in national development planning, as reflected in various educational policies aimed at improving access, equity, quality, and relevance at all levels of the education system (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2014). Among these levels, secondary education serves as a vital bridge between basic and tertiary education, preparing students for higher learning, vocational pursuits, and responsible citizenship. Educational policies are formulated to provide clear guidelines and frameworks for achieving national educational goals. These policies encompass areas such as curriculum development, teacher recruitment and training, school administration, funding, student assessment, and quality assurance. However, the mere formulation of sound educational policies does not guarantee their success. The effectiveness of such policies largely depends on how well they are implemented at the school level (Fullan, 2016). Policy implementation is therefore a critical stage in the policy process, as it translates policy intentions into actual practice within educational institutions.

In Nigeria, the implementation of educational policies has remained a persistent challenge, particularly in public secondary schools. Despite the existence of well-articulated policies such as the National Policy on Education, the Universal Basic Education programme, and various reforms targeting curriculum and teacher development, the outcomes of these policies have often fallen short of expectations (Adewale & Oduolowu, 2019). Scholars have attributed this gap between policy formulation and outcomes to several factors, including inadequate funding, weak administrative capacity, insufficient infrastructure, teacher shortages, and poor monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (Okoroma, 2017). One of the major challenges confronting policy implementation in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone is inadequate funding. Education in Nigeria is largely financed by the government, yet budgetary allocations to the education sector have consistently fallen below international recommendations. Insufficient funding affects the provision of essential teaching and learning materials, maintenance of school facilities, teacher welfare, and capacity-building programmes (World

Bank, 2020). As a result, many public secondary schools operate under poor conditions that hinder the realization of policy objectives.

Another critical challenge is the issue of human resources, particularly the shortage of qualified teachers and school administrators. Effective policy implementation requires competent personnel who understand policy goals and possess the skills to translate them into practice. However, many public secondary schools in the North-West Zone face shortages of trained teachers, high teacher–student ratios, and limited opportunities for professional development (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020). Administrative and leadership challenges also play a significant role in shaping policy implementation outcomes. School principals and education administrators are key actors in the implementation process, as they are responsible for interpreting policies, mobilizing resources, and supervising teaching and learning activities. Weak leadership capacity, bureaucratic bottlenecks, lack of autonomy, and poor communication between policy makers and implementers often limit the effectiveness of educational policies at the school level (Babalola, 2018). In some cases, policies are implemented without adequate consultation with school stakeholders, leading to resistance or superficial compliance. Furthermore, socio-cultural and environmental factors in the North-West Zone influence the implementation of educational policies. Issues such as poverty, child labour, early marriage, and insecurity affect student attendance, retention, and academic performance, thereby constraining the achievement of policy goals (UNICEF, 2022).

Educational policies in Nigeria are formulated to enhance access to quality education, promote equity, and improve learning outcomes at all levels of the education system. In recognition of the strategic importance of secondary education in national development, the Federal Government of Nigeria has introduced several policies aimed at improving curriculum delivery, teacher quality, school management, and student achievement in public secondary schools. Despite these policy initiatives, evidence suggests that the intended objectives of many educational policies have not been fully realized, particularly at the level of implementation. In public secondary schools across the North-West Zone of Nigeria, there is a growing concern about the persistent gap between policy intentions and actual practices in schools. Many schools continue to experience challenges such as inadequate funding, insufficient instructional materials, dilapidated infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and shortages of qualified teachers. These conditions undermine

effective teaching and learning and raise questions about the extent to which educational policies are being successfully implemented. Furthermore, school administrators and teachers—who are key actors in the policy implementation process—often face difficulties in interpreting and executing policy directives due to limited training, weak administrative support, and poor communication between policy makers and implementers. In some cases, policies are introduced without adequate consideration of the socio-economic, cultural, and security realities of the North-West Zone, resulting in resistance, partial implementation, or complete failure at the school level. Although several studies have examined educational policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria, there remains a paucity of empirical research that specifically focuses on the unique challenges confronting public secondary schools in the North-West Zone. The lack of region-specific evidence makes it difficult for policy makers and education stakeholders to design targeted interventions that address the actual barriers to effective policy implementation.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of this study were:

- I. To identify the major challenges affecting the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria.
- II. To examine the extent to which administrative, financial and human resource factors influence the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria.
- III. To assess the roles of school administrators and teachers in addressing challenges associated with the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the conduct of this study:

- I. What are the major challenges affecting the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria?

- II. To what extent administrative, financial, and human resource factors influence the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria?
- III. What are the roles of school administrators and teachers in addressing challenges associated with the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria?

## **Methodology**

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study includes all the 24,821 teachers in public secondary schools in North-West, Nigeria, which includes; Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Katsina, Kano, Jigawa and Kaduna states respectively. Table 1 indicated public secondary schools in Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Katsina, Kano, Jigawa and Kaduna states:

**Table 1: Population of the Study**

S/N	States	Schools	Teachers
1	Sokoto	169	3,015
2	Kebbi	170	2,924
3	Zamfara	214	3,185
4	Katsina	122	2,856
5	Kano	363	5,109
6	Jigawa	227	3,105
7	Kaduna	260	4,627
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,668</b>	<b>24,821</b>

**Source:** Ministries of Education & Teachers Service Boards, Northwestern states, 2025

From Table 1, there are 169 secondary schools and 3,015 teachers in Sokoto state. There are 170 secondary schools and 2,924 teachers in Kebbi state. There are 214 secondary schools and 3,185 teachers in Zamfara state. There are 122 secondary schools and 2,856 teachers in Katsina state. There are 363 secondary schools and 5,109 teachers in Kano state. There are 227 secondary schools and 3,105 teachers in Jigawa state. There are 260 secondary schools and 4,627 teachers in Kaduna state. Thus, there are 1,668 secondary schools in the seven North-West Zone States with 24,821 teachers as per Table 1.

Research Advisor (2006) table was used to determine 400 teachers out of the population of 24,821 teachers across the North-West Zone, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 3 states as a result of insecurity in the country. Proportionate sampling technique was also used to select teachers from various states as these 4 states were not having the same number of schools and teachers.

**Table 2:** Sample for the Study

S/N	States	Schools	Teachers
1	Kaduna	6	80
2	Kano	12	120
3	Zamfara	6	80
4	Sokoto	8	98
	Total	32	378

Source: Field Survey 2025

In Table 2, in Kaduna state, 6 schools and 102 teachers were selected from a population of 4627 teachers and 260 secondary schools. In Kano state 12 schools and 188 teachers were selected from a population of 5109 teachers and 363 schools. In Zamfara state 6 schools and 110 teachers were selected from a population of 3155 teachers and 214 secondary schools. In Sokoto state 8 schools and 98 teachers were selected from a population of 3,015 teachers and 169 secondary schools.

Three instruments were designed and used by the researcher to collect data from the respondents. The instruments were titled, Challenges Affecting the Implementation of Educational Policies Questionnaire (CAIEPQ), Extent to which Administrative, Financial, and Human Resource Factors Influence the Implementation of Educational Policies Questionnaire (EAFHRFIIEPQ) and Roles of School Administrators and Teachers in Addressing Challenges Associated with the Implementation of Educational Policies Questionnaire (RSATACAIEPQ). All the instruments were validated by a team of experts in the field of Educational Administration and Planning, and other experts in the Faculty of Education and Extension Services, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, who validated the instruments. The experts scrutinized the content of the instruments in terms of items relevance, clarity and coverage of the subject matter. Based on the expert’s scrutiny, observations, suggestions, and corrections were made on the instruments before final copy was produced.

In order to ensure the reliability of the Challenges Affecting the Implementation of Educational Policies Questionnaire (CAIEPQ), Extent to which Administrative, Financial, and Human Resource Factors Influence the Implementation of Educational Policies Questionnaire (EAFHRFIIEPQ) and Roles of School Administrators and Teachers in Addressing Challenges Associated with the Implementation of Educational Policies Questionnaire (RSATACAIEPQ), the researcher carried out a pilot test of the CAIEPQ, EAFHRFIIEPQ and RSATACAIEPQ using test-retest method which was conducted within an interval of two weeks at Army Day Secondary

School Birnin Kebbi in Kebbi State. The set of scores of the pilot study obtained via test-retest for the CAIEPQ, EAFHRFIIEPQ and RSATACAIEPQ was correlated using PPMCC and the reliability indices obtained for CAIEPQ, EAFHRFIIEPQ and RSATACAIEPQ were 0.76, 0.74 and 0.84 respectively. The instruments were then adjudged to be reliable.

## Results

In this section three research questions were answered and one hypothesis was tested and presented in the following tables.

### Research Questions One:

What are the major challenges affecting the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria?

This research question one was answered and presented using table 3.

**Table 3:** Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings on Challenges Affecting the Implementation of Educational Policies in Public Secondary Schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria

S/N	items	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Inadequate funding hinders the effective implementation of educational policies in my school.	378	4.62	0.81	SA
2	Shortage of qualified teachers affects the implementation of educational policies.	378	4.48	0.86	A
3	Poor school infrastructure limits effective policy implementation.	378	4.55	0.79	SA
4	Lack of instructional materials affects the execution of educational policies.	378	4.41	0.88	A
5	Insufficient training and professional development for teachers hinders policy implementation.	378	4.36	0.91	A
6	Weak administrative leadership affects the successful implementation of educational policies.	378	4.22	0.94	A
7	Poor monitoring and supervision by education authorities hinder policy implementation.	378	4.18	0.97	A
8	Overcrowded classrooms negatively affect the implementation of educational policies.	378	4.51	0.83	SA
9	Frequent policy changes without proper guidance affect effective implementation.	378	3.87	1.02	A
10	Socio-economic and environmental factors hinder policy implementation in schools.	378	4.33	0.89	A

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Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	4.46	0.81	A
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Table 3 shows descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation computed to measure the challenges affecting the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. The results also revealed that most of the Mean ratings of ten items were Agreed. However, the overall mean rating of the challenges affecting the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. (Average mean = 4.46 and Standard Deviation = 0.81) implies that majority of the teachers agreed that there was challenges affecting the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria.

**Research Questions Two:**

What are the major challenges affecting the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria?

This research question one was answered and presented using table 4.

**Table 4:** Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings on the Extent to which Administrative, Financial, and Human Resource Factors Influence the Implementation of Educational Policies in Public Secondary Schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria

S/N	Items	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	School administrators' leadership skills influence the implementation of educational policies.	378	4.28	0.87	A
2	Availability of adequate funding determines the extent of policy implementation in schools.	378	4.61	0.79	SA
3	Timely release of funds enhances effective implementation of educational policies.	378	4.54	0.82	SA
4	Shortage of qualified teachers affects the extent of policy implementation.	378	4.47	0.85	A
5	Teachers' workload influences their ability to implement educational policies.	378	4.12	0.93	A
6	Adequate training of teachers enhances policy implementation.	378	4.39	0.88	A
7	Effective supervision by school administrators improves policy implementation.	378	4.25	0.90	A
8	Availability of non-teaching staff supports effective policy implementation.	378	3.94	0.96	A
9	Efficient financial management practices influence policy implementation.	378	4.31	0.89	A
10	Motivation and welfare of teachers influence the implementation of educational policies.	378	4.44	0.86	A
	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )		4.26	0.85	A

Table 4 shows descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation computed to measure the extent to which administrative, financial, and human resource factors influence the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. The results also revealed that most of the Mean ratings of ten items were rated agreed. However, the overall mean rating of the extent to which administrative, financial and human resource factors influence the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. (Average mean = 4.11 and Standard Deviation = 0.80) this implies that majority of the respondents agreed that administrative, financial, and human resource factors influence the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria.

**Research Questions Three:**

What are the roles of school administrators and teachers in addressing challenges associated with the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria?

This research question one was answered and presented using table 5.

**Table 5:** Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings on Roles of School Administrators and Teachers in Addressing Challenges Associated with the Implementation of Educational Policies in Public Secondary Schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria

S/N	Items	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	School administrators' leadership skills influence the implementation of educational policies.	378	4.28	0.87	A
2	Availability of adequate funding determines the extent of policy implementation in schools.	378	4.61	0.79	SA
3	Timely release of funds enhances effective implementation of educational policies.	378	4.54	0.82	SA
4	Shortage of qualified teachers affects the extent of policy implementation.	378	4.47	0.85	A
5	Teachers' workload influences their ability to implement educational policies.	378	4.12	0.93	A
6	Adequate training of teachers enhances policy implementation.	378	4.39	0.88	A
7	Effective supervision by school administrators improves policy implementation.	378	4.25	0.90	A
8	Availability of non-teaching staff supports effective policy implementation.	378	3.94	0.96	A
9	Efficient financial management practices influence policy implementation.	378	4.31	0.89	A
10	Motivation and welfare of teachers influence the implementation of educational policies.	378	4.44	0.86	A
	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )		4.26	0.85	A

Table 5 shows descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation computed to measure the roles of school administrators and teachers in addressing challenges associated with the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. The results also revealed that most of the Mean ratings of ten items were rated agreed. However, the overall mean rating of the roles of school administrators and teachers in addressing challenges associated with the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. (Average mean = 4.26 and Standard Deviation = 0.85) this implies

that that teacher agreed with the roles of school administrators and teachers in addressing challenges associated with the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The first finding revealed that teachers agreed with the challenges affecting the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. This finding aligns with the observations of Adewale and Oduolowu (2019), who reported that the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria has consistently faced significant challenges, particularly within public secondary schools. While the Nigerian government has established several well-structured policies, including the National Policy on Education, the Universal Basic Education programme, and multiple reforms aimed at improving curriculum delivery and teacher development, the intended goals of these policies are frequently not realized in practice. The authors highlight that despite these policies being clearly articulated on paper, their translation into effective school-level practice remains problematic, resulting in limited improvements in educational quality and learning outcomes.

Okoroma (2017) further emphasizes that the persistent gap between policy formulation and successful implementation can be attributed to a combination of systemic and institutional factors. These include inadequate funding, which restricts access to essential teaching and learning resources; weak administrative and leadership capacity, which affects planning, supervision, and decision-making; and insufficient infrastructure, which limits the ability of schools to create conducive learning environments. Additionally, teacher shortages and ineffective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms exacerbate the problem, as policies often fail to reach their full potential without skilled personnel and proper oversight. Collectively, these challenges suggest that while policy formulation in Nigeria has advanced, considerable attention is still required to address implementation bottlenecks, particularly in the context of public secondary schools.

The second finding revealed that teachers strongly agreed with the extent to which administrative, financial, and human resource factors influence the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. This is in line with the work of Babalola, (2018) who mentioned that administrative and leadership challenges also play a

significant role in shaping policy implementation outcomes. School principals and education administrators are key actors in the implementation process, as they are responsible for interpreting policies, mobilizing resources, and supervising teaching and learning activities. Weak leadership capacity, bureaucratic bottlenecks, lack of autonomy, and poor communication between policy makers and implementers often limit the effectiveness of educational policies at the school level. In some cases, policies are implemented without adequate consultation with school stakeholders, leading to resistance or superficial compliance.

The third finding revealed that teachers agreed with the roles of school administrators and teachers in addressing challenges associated with the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. The findings aligned with the work of Babalola, (2018) who noticed that school principals and education administrators are key actors in the implementation process, as they are responsible for interpreting policies, mobilizing resources, and supervising teaching and learning activities. Weak leadership capacity, bureaucratic bottlenecks, lack of autonomy, and poor communication between policy makers and implementers often limit the effectiveness of educational policies at the school level.

## **Conclusion**

This study examined the challenges facing the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. The findings highlight that, despite the existence of well-articulated educational policies aimed at improving the quality and effectiveness of secondary education, significant obstacles continue to hinder their successful implementation at the school level. Key challenges identified include inadequate funding, shortages of qualified teachers, poor infrastructure, weak administrative capacity, and limited monitoring and supervision mechanisms. The study also revealed that school administrators and teachers play a crucial role in the policy implementation process; however, their efforts are often constrained by insufficient training, unclear policy guidelines, and minimal involvement in policy formulation. Additionally, contextual factors such as socio-economic conditions, security challenges, and cultural practices in the North-West Zone further complicate the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that effective implementation of educational policies requires more

than sound policy formulation. It demands adequate resource allocation, strengthened leadership and administrative capacity, continuous professional development for teachers, and policy strategies that are sensitive to local realities. Addressing these challenges is essential for bridging the gap between policy intentions and actual practice, thereby improving the quality of secondary education in public schools within the North-West Zone of Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

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

- I. Government and relevant education authorities should address the major challenges identified by ensuring adequate funding, timely release of resources, and regular provision of instructional materials to public secondary schools in the North-West Zone of Nigeria.
- II. Education stakeholders should strengthen administrative, financial, and human resource capacities through improved school management systems, recruitment of qualified teachers, and continuous professional development programmes for school personnel.
- III. School administrators and teachers should be actively involved in policy planning and implementation processes, with regular training and support to enhance their understanding of policy objectives and improve effective execution at the school level.

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