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An Assessment Of The Application Of The Rational Stages And Planning Principles In The Planning Of Educational Programmes In Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
The study assessed the application of the rational stages and planning principles in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was adopted. Four research questions and four corresponding hypotheses guided the study. A sample size of 108 representing 30% was drawn from a population of 288 lecturers of educational planning and directors. A validated instrument titled assessment of the application of planning stages and principles in educational planning questionnaire was used for the study. Reliability was obtained through test re-test method, and the instrument yielded a reliability index of 0.71. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while Z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05. The study concluded that the application of rational stages and the principles of educational planning in planning educational programmes is important to ensure that a concrete educational plan is achieved.
Keywords: rational stages, planning, economic integration

INTRODUCTION

Application of rational steps in educational planning has been advocated by many educationists and planners as the very first step towards achieving a meaningful planning process. According to Agabi (1999), there are six stages in the rational planning of educational system. These include plan survey and deliberation, policy formulation and programme design and rationalization. Others include programme provision and implementation monitoring, plan evaluation and plan regeneration. When educational planning is carried out in this manner, it constitutes a "structural interrelationship subsystem model" (Agabi, 1999, p. 66), which ensures that successful completion of one stage provides useful and indispensable input to the next stage.

The issue of how far different nations have adhered to this has been discussed by many experts. Ehiametalor (2004) while discussing the issue of access and equity and private sector involvement in educational deregulation maintained that the educational planning process in Nigeria is never allowed to move smoothly from one step to another, thereby excluding some sectors from the educational policy making process. Okebukola (2005) appears to be confirming this when he asserted that to achieve quality in Nigeria university system, conscious efforts must be made systematically to plan for it, which has never been the case for a very long time. Systematic and rational planning is about going by the basic stages in educational planning process, whether or a given educational system, programme or project.

Jarzabkowski (2002) and Okure (2004) have lauded the effectiveness of rational approach in resource allocation and control in education. For Jarzabkowski (2002), strategic implementation of resource allocation model ensures effective resource allocation, whether it is decentralized or centralized. This strategic implementation is the sequential outlining of activities that are similar to the rational planning steps. Okure (2004) on the other hand insists that realistic budgeting is indispensable for ensuring resource control in higher education. Realistic budgeting here is conceived as a budgeting strategy that starts from information gathering analysis to rationalization, implementation monitoring and evaluation. These are the rational stages in planning educational programmes. Ta-Ngoe Chau (2003) reaffirms the indispensability of forecasting school enrolment from the demographic trends.

Evidence from practice reveals that one of the major flaws with educational plans that have not been successful is non-application of the rational stages in the planning process. This appears to be the consensus opinion of Ugiomoh (2005), Little (2001). For Ugiomoh (2005), many institutions are established without reference to standard specifications that have been systematically designed.

Educational planning is an activity that is done for a given society. The planning of the socio-economic development of that society should therefore not be done to the exclusion of educational planning (Agabi, 1999). Esu (2004) for example has maintained that the content of what is to be taught in education must be such that would meet the needs of the society needing the education. This is because of the nature of relationship between education and the economy. The principle of systematic integration is one principle of rational planning network that recognizes this relationship. As educational facilities are scarce resources of high value, Rowley (1971:18) posit that "planning to extend hem must operate in a highly sensitive political area, with competition between social classes, area and language groups". Thus, the content and context of education are all matters of high political important right from the pre-independence to the post-independent Nigeria.

Private proprietorship, location patterns of educational institutions, placement of students, allocation of staff and other resources, welfare and promotion of staff, student evaluation, the issue of government take-over of the control and management of schools, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme, nomadic and migrant fishermen children education programme, vocational education, school curricular, quality versus quantity in educational provisions, educationally advantaged and disadvantaged states, etc, are all areas of dynamic political activity and concern in Nigeria, and are wrapped up with political decision and value judgement. Decision in all these educational matters must be done with reference to the state of the economy and its capacity to carry it along with other economic development projects (Alu, 2000). For Little (2001), educational planning is for a life-long socio-economic development of the economy. Their planning must therefore remain inseparable.

Additionally, Okeke (1987), observes that the degree of diversification of political interests and manpower in these issues account to a large extent for the failures and successes of educational system.

The principle of participatory planning in education requires that all those whose interest is to be affected by any educational policy must be involved in making policy decisions on such programme to enjoy their collective support (Agabi, 1999:72). In providing a guideline for developing coherent policy and producing credible action plan to achieve the goal of Education For All, UNESCO (2005) insists that such a blueprint among others must be defined in consultation with all civil society and development partners. This view is equally shared by Jallade, Radi and Cuenin (2001) while examining the role of UNESCO in international cooperation in national educational policy and programmes.

An educational policy may be referred to mean a course setting involving educational as well as political decisions of the widest ramifications and longest time perspective for the education system and development in the country. Educational policies do not become actualized until they are implemented. The National Policy on Education 1977 (and revised in 1981, 1998, 2004) is a good example of a policy. It is expected to last for the next several years. Policy formulation may be referred to as a process through which courses of action are determined.

According to Agabi (1999) and Ehiametaor (2004), a policy which affects the socio-cultural and political aspects of the nation is both a political as well as a technical-blue-print, and reviewing politics in educational policy formulation and implementation, focus would be directed at the initiation, evolution, and implementation of the National Policy on Education with a view to

underscoring the very role of politics in its development and implementation. Such a policy document must involve the representative interest groups.

These factors at different times and in different ways put pressures on educational policy options which may be classified into education, economic, social or institutional. These areas o educational policy are ways of expressing through policy the values that are pressing on society at any given time. A policy may also be directed at defining or redefining the share of educational responsibility among various bodies-governmental, private and professional that are interested in education, thus giving rise to institutional pressure to prevailing conditions in the society. The education bureaucrats acting as aggregator of these pressures of the interest groups source policies for educational change. In other words, this model advocates policy formulation through group interaction. And this is said to encourage political participation among all segments of society while providing the safe-guards needed to ensure stability.

The 1969 National Conference on Curriculum Development, sponsored by National Education Research Council (NERC), brought together a cross-section of the Nigerian society. All interest groups were represented. They looked into the problem of national objectives and adoption of school curricular, which meet the need and aspirations of the nation. The conference mapped out the course for educational policies and development in Nigeria during the military regime of the 1970's. the conference report was the major source for the development of the National Policy on Education as it was extensively used by the National conference on National Education Policy. The report of the National Curriculum Conference itself was the basis for the National Policy on Education published in 1977 (revised in 1981).

Contrasting the consensus model, Slter and Tapper (1981), as cited in Adiele (2008) advanced the "bureaucratization of educational policy-making" model. They observed that it is the emerging trend in Britain. In this model, policy making is purely technical. The professionals in the educational bureaucracy at the different levels of the political administration-local government, state and national identify the demands of social ends of education and demographic shifts, and provide the necessary choices to meet the demands acting on behalf and in the interest of the community. This position is true to an extent, but does not give the complete picture of the evolution process of educational policies in this country. In most cases, both the consensus model and the bureaucratization of educational policy-making model are complementary in the evolution of educational policies.

The nature and practice of education demand multi-disciplinary approach. More so, when it is realized that education is at the very heart of political process. Professionals, be they educational planners, curriculum development specialists, economist, statisticians, demographers, principals, directors of education, etc, must compliment their job performance with their views of the socio-political environment of their job content.

Sequel to the foregoing, Okeke (1989:92-96) had preferred a number of ways the professionals in the education bureaucracy would behave in is job situation that is heavily surrounded by politics. These are abridged in the underlisted:

1. Planning education is a technical proves and requires a high degree of the technical knowledge and skills in projection, modeling, computer techniques, etc.
2. He needs to establish a high degree of stability between his responsibilities and freedom. This is possible through the recognition that he is a developer and described an alternative technical means by which the objectives will be attained.
3. To recognize that the politicians are responsible for stating the broad educational objectives and also choosing among the alternative means of implementation. Furthermore, that taking action to implement falls within the purview of the administrator.
4. However, the concern of the planner at the implementations stage is to acquire further technical sophistry through the examination of the results should be able to recognize social attitudes and react politically, to political pressures.
5. To appreciate the national economic system, the national ideology, political system and the social context of educational planning and consequently, to question principles and accommodate the interest groups.
6. To explore and expose alternative directions for policy options without value-orientation.

7. Must not try to influence decisions in the political area but should incorporate political aspects in educational plans.
8. Should understand the legal, ethical and public relations aspects of educational planning and relate to community norms and prejudices as well as analyze community powers.

Igani (1986) as cited in Ebete (2016) in his "the political factors in educational planning in Nigeria", reported that people did not differ in the perception of influence of politics on education. This means, that the assessments of most persons of the relationship of politics and education corresponded. Based on these findings, he made recommendations purported to "aim to minimizing and checking awareness through which the issue of politics has previously been exploited to selfish ends". Igani's respondents in that research report included both layman and professionals in the Ministry of Education).

So far, we have been able to show that the content and control of education are all matters of government and the use of powers. The use of powers ideologically is perpetually a variable, which is determined by politics. Political activities and development started from the colonial days in Nigeria. Prior to this period there was no nation to be known and called Nigeria. To buttress our ambition, it became necessary to trace political development and education in Nigeria between 1946 to the present era. The exposition so far made has suggested an overwhelming political presence that dictated the pace of educational progress. From one generation to another and from one dispensation to another, our educational pursuit has entered different stages. This is because of the different perceptions of the people at the helms of affairs who dictate policies. These policies are formulated in the bid to better the future of our education, which is viewed to be the vehicle for political and economic development.

As a matter of truth, it is difficult to draw up a functional plan or even initiate its implementation without adequate involvement of specialist in different areas. Esu (2004) maintains that curriculum development is a specialized function requiring professionals to achieve the best result. A sustainable educational programme must therefore build planners' capacity for curriculum development. In the same direction, Ugiomoh (2005) maintains that standard specification that guides the provision of resources for education is a technical plan that must be left to the technical planners to draw up. For Agabi (1999), technical decisions should be left to the technical planner, while political or policy decision should be handled by the policy decision maker. The complementary roles player by the technical planner, the policy decision maker and the administrator are clearly recognized by Ta-Ngoc Chau (2003) and UNESCO (2005).

Unfortunately, available literature indicates that this principle of functional specialization is hardly implemented. Agabi (1999) asserts that the most serious inhibitions to effective educational planning is political interference with technical decision. This is the same opinion held by Mgbodile (2000). Besides, these predicaments, it is still necessary for researches to be conducted so as to explore possible avenues that would make for application of the rational stages and planning principles in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Application of rational steps in educational planning is essential and adherence to the planning principles is also another importance fact when planning any educational programme. But in Nigeria, there seem not to be a complete and thorough application to the rational steps and principles of educational planning in the planning of educational programmes. This could be so, because of haphazard programme planning, design and implementation. The study therefore, sees the need to assess the application of rational steps, planning principles in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. To what extent has the rational stages in educational planning been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria?
2. To what extent has the principle of economic integration been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria?
3. In what ways has the principle of participatory planning been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria?

4. How has the principle of functional specialization been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant different between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on the extent of the application of rational stages in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria
2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on the extent of the application of principle of economic integration in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria.
3. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on the ways that the principle of participatory planning has been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria.
4. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on how the principle of functional specialization has been applied in the planning of educational programme in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted of all the directors of planning in the ministries of education in the 36 states of Nigeria and 288 lecturers of educational planning in the federal universities in the 36 states of Nigeria. The population of the study is 324 consisting of 36 directors and 288 lecturers of educational planning in 36 universities from the 36 states of Nigeria. A sample size of 108 representing 30% were drawn from a population of 324. The instrument for the study was a questionnaire titled; Assessment of the application of the planning stages and principles in educational planning questionnaire (APSPEPQ). Validity of the instrument was done through professional critique of experts in educational measurement and evaluation. The reliability was obtained through test re-test method, and the instrument yielded a reliability index of 0.71. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significant level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: *To what extent has the rational stages in educational planning been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria?*

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of directors and educational planners on the extent of the application of rational stages in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria

S/N		Principals		Directors			Decision
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$ $\bar{X}$	
1.	The planning strategy of educational programmes in Nigeria went through the first three stages of educational planning.	3.01	.90	3.06	.91	3.03	Agree
2.	The planning of education in Nigeria passed through plan evaluation.	3.10	.95	3.12	.96	3.11	Agree
3.	The planning of educational programmes did not pass through plan regeneration stage.	2.83	.85	2.79	.80	2.81	Agree
4.	The planning of educational programmes in Nigeria went through the six rational stages of educational planning.	2.92	.89	2.84	.85	2.83	Agree
	Aggregate mean	**2.96**	**.89**	**2.95**	**.88**	**2.95**	

The data in table 1 above show that the mean scores of the assessed variables are above the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicate that there is a moderate extent of the application of rational stages in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria. The planning of educational programmes passes through the six stages of educational planning.

Research Question 2: *To what extent has the principle of economic integration been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria?*

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of directors and educational planners on the extent of the application of principle of economic integration in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria

S/N		Principals		Directors			Decision
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$ $\bar{X}$	
1.	The planning principle for educational planning in Nigeria are all done for development.	3.10	.95	3.13	.96	3.11	Agree
2.	The planning of education in Nigeria is also an integration of economic planning.	2.90	.89	2.95	.91	2.92	Agree
3.	Education is planned in Nigeria by integrating economic planning.	3.09	.94	3.11	.96	3.10	Agree
4.	Education in Nigeria is planned with the inclusion of socio-economic development.	2.92	.89	2.96	.90	2.94	Agree
	Aggregate mean	**2.96**	**.89**	**2.95**	**.88**	**2.95**	

The mean scores of the assessed variables are above the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that the extent of the application of principle of economic integration in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria is high. Education is planned as an integral part of economic planning.

Research Question 3: *In what ways has the principle of participatory planning been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria?*

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of directors and educational planners on the ways that the principle of participatory planning was applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria

S/N		Principals		Directors			Decision
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$ $\bar{X}$	
1.	Teachers and principals opinions are always sought in the planning of educational programmes.	3.04	.91	3.05	.91	3.04	Agree
2.	Parents opinions were also sought during the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria.	3.13	.96	3.14	.97	3.13	Agree
3.	Religious groups and other stakeholder opinions were also sought during the planning of education in Nigeria.	2.99	.90	2.87	.86	2.96	Agree
4.	There was effective participation of stakeholders in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria.	2.96	.90	2.98	.90	2.92	Agree
	Aggregate mean	**3.30**	**.91**	**3.01**	**.91**	**3.02**	

The data in table 3 show that the mean score of the assessed variables are above 2.50. This reveals that the principle of participatory planning was applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria. The stakeholders in education such as educational planners, teachers, parents and religious groups are always involved in educational planning in Nigeria.

Research Question 4: *How has the principle of functional specialization been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria?*

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of directors and educational planners on how the principle of functional specialization was applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria

S/N		Principals		Directors			Decision
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$ $\bar{X}$	
1.	The planning of educational programmes in Nigeria brought together different specialist like policy makers, technical planners and administrators.	3.12	.96	3.05	.91	3.08	Agree
2.	Professionally trained educational planners are usually used in educational planning.	2.97	.90	2.92	.89	2.94	Agree
3.	In planning education in Nigeria, there exist a relationship between technical planners and other stakeholders.	3.02	.90	3.00	.90	3.01	Agree
4.	The principle of functional specialization was applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria.	3.10	.95	3.14	.96	3.12	Agree
	Aggregate mean	**3.05**	**.93**	**3.02**	**.92**	**3.03**	

The data in table 4 show that the mean scores of the assessed variables are above the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that the principle of functional specialization was applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria. Professionally trained educational planners and specialists are always used in educational planning in Nigeria.

Hypothesis I

There is no significant different between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on the extent of the application of rational stages in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria.

Table 5: Z-test analysis for the significant difference between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on the extent of the application of rational stages in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	Z-calculated	z-critical	Decision
Principals	12	2.96	.89	106	0.79	±1.96	Accepted
Directors	96	2.95	.88				

The result in table 5above revealed that the calculated Z-value of 0.79 is lower than the critical Z-value of ±1.96 at 0.05 significant level. Since the calculated Z-score is lower than the critical Z-value, the hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant different between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on the extent of the application of rational stages in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on the extent of the application of principle of economic integration in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria.

Table 6: Z-test analysis for the significant difference between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on the extent of the application of principle of economic integration in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	Z-calculated	z-critical	Decision
Principals	12	3.00	.91				Accepted
Directors	96	3.03	.93	106	0.65	±1.96	

The data in table 6 above revealed that the calculated Z-value of 0.65 is lower than the critical Z-value of ±1.96 at 0.05 significant level. The hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on the extent of the application of principle of economic integration in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on the ways that the principle of participatory planning has been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria.

Table 7: Z-test analysis for the significant difference between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on the ways that the principle of participatory planning has been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	Z-calculated	z-critical	Decision
Principals	12	3.03	.91				Accepted
Directors	96	3.01	.91	106	0.57	±1.96	

The data in table 7 above revealed that the calculated Z-value of 0.57 is lower than the critical Z-value of ±1.96 at 0.05 significant level. The hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on the ways that the principle of participatory planning has been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on how the principle of functional specialization has been applied in the planning of educational programme in Nigeria.

Table 8: Z-test analysis for the significant difference between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on how the principle of functional specialization has been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	Z-calculated	z-critical	Decision
Principals	12	3.05	.93				Accepted
Directors	96	3.02	.92	106	0.69	±1.96	

The data in table 8 above revealed that the calculated Z-value of 0.69 is lower than the critical Z-value of ±1.96 at 0.05 significant level. The hypothesis is therefore accepted. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on how the principle of functional specialization has been applied in the planning of educational programme in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

The findings revealed the extent of the application of the rational stages in planning of educational programmes in Nigeria. It reveals that the rational stages of educational planning has been applied in planning of educational programme in Nigeria. This finding agrees with Okebukola (2005) when he asserted that to achieve quality in Nigeria university system, conscious effort must be made systematically to plan for it, which has never been the case for a very long time. According to him, systematic and rational planning is about going by the basic stages in educational planning process,

whether for a given educational system, programme or project. Test of hypotheses one was accepted that there is no significant different between the mean ratings of directors and educational planners on the extent of the application of rational stages in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria.

The findings of the study further revealed that the principle of economic integration has been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria. The finding agrees with Agabi (1999) when he stated that educational planning is an activity that is done for a given society and the planning of socio-economic development of that society should therefore not be done to the exclusion of educational planning. The finding also corroborates Little (2001) when he stated that educational planning is for a life-long socio-economic development of the economy, so their planning must therefore remain inseparable.

The finding further revealed that the principle of participatory planning has been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria. This finding corroborates Agabi (1999) when he stated that planning education requires that all those whose interest is to be affected by any educational policy must be involved in making policy decision on such programme to enjoy their collective support.

The finding revealed that the principle of functional specialization has been applied in the planning of educational programmes in Nigeria. This finding also agrees with Agabi (1999) when he stated that technical decisions should be left to the technical decisions should be left to the technical planners, while political or policy decision should be handled by policy decision maker. The finding also agrees with Esu (2004) who maintains that curriculum development is a specialized function requiring professionals to achieve the best result.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Federal government should ensure that every educational programme is planned in line with planning stages and planning principles.
2. Federal government should ensure that all educational programmes planning are incorporated into national developmental planning.
3. Federal government and educational planners should ensure that educational planning activities are participatory.

CONCLUSION

The application of rational stages, and the principles of educational planning in planning educational programmes is important to ensure that a concrete educational plan is achieved.

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