PROVISIONS, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN IMO STATE AS PERCEIVED
BY EDUCATIONAL MANAGERS IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

By

NGOZIKA A. NWAOKU, PhD
Department of Curriculum Studies,
Educational Management and Planning,
University of Uyo
Uyo.

And

STELLA N. NWOSU, PhD
Institute of Education,
University of Uyo,
Uyo.

Abstract

The study determined the various educational services provided in Nigeria, the
challenges encountered as well as the prospects of improving educational
services for the attainment of quality education at all levels in Nigeria. Three
research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. A 27-item
questionnaire was developed and used in collecting data from educational
managers (principals) in the 266 government owned secondary schools in Imo
state. The major findings were that educational services as stipulated by the
National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) are not provided. Challenges in the
 provision of educational services were highlighted as well as strategies for
improvement. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made which
included matching plans with projections in policy formulations by
government.

The Nigerian educational reform as indicated by the Federal Ministry of
Education (2007) was necessitated by a situation which people and the government saw
a crisis. A crisis in education which if allowed going further would translate into a
failure of the country in all spheres of development since education holds the key to
economic, scientific and technological development of any nation. Thus, the education
reform has been strategized to overhaul the whole education system in Nigeria from pre-
primary to tertiary level. According to Ekwujuru (2007), all these reforms are driven by
the belief that they would transport education to a better and more appropriate place. To
Obaji (2006), the goal of educational reform is to draw attention to the need for
government to focus on her function and to implement performance related reforms as well as in managerial principles in the delivery of educational services for the progressive development of the educational system. This, the authors claim is in order to build a society that allows every citizen to fully develop their creativity and challenging spirit.

The National Policy on Education (2004) specifies that educational delivery facilitates the implementation of educational policy, the attainment of policy goals and the promotion of effectiveness of the educational system. In essence, NPE (2004:51) stated the goals of educational services to be:

(a) develop, assess and improve educational programmes;
(b) enhance teaching and improve the competence of teachers;
(c) make learning experiences more meaningful for children;
(d) make education more cost effective;
(e) promote in-service education, and
(f) develop and promote effective use of innovative materials in schools.

Based on the stipulations of the policy on educational services, it could be deduced that quality could not be assumed without adequate provision of educational services by government. However, Onuh (2006) stated that for policies to be matched with practices there must be adequacies of plans and projections.

This study therefore, determined through the opinion of educational managers (principals) in Imo State the various educational services provided by the government, challenges and prospects of educational services for the attainment of quality in education.

Research Questions

Three research questions that guided the study are:

(1) What are the various educational services provided by the government?
(2) What are the various challenges facing the provision of educational services?
(3) What are the strategies that could be adopted to improve provision of educational services?

Null Hypotheses

(1) There is no significant difference between the mean perceptions of principals in urban and rural locations.
(2) There is no significant difference between the mean perceptions of male and female principals.
(3) There is no significant difference between the mean perceptions of more experienced and less experienced principals.

Method

The study adopted the survey technique to collect information from principals on the provisions, challenges and prospects of educational services in Imo State. The
area of study was the three education zones of Imo State. The population of the study comprised all 266 principals in the government owned secondary schools in the state as at the time of this study. There was no sampling done since the entire population was used for the study.

The major instrument for data collection was the questionnaire developed by the researcher titled Educational Managers’ Perception on the Prosvisions Challenges Prospects of Educational Services Questionnaire (EMPPCPESQ). The questionnaire consisted of two parts. Section A sought information on the personal data and years of experience as a principal. Section B consisted of twenty seven (27) items divided into three (3) parts. Part 1 has thirteen (13) items on types of educational services provided; part 2 has seven (7) items on challenges of educational services, while section part 3 consisted of seven (7) items on the strategies for improving educational services. Part 1 items were based on the stipulations of the National Policy on Education (2004) on educational services while parts 2 and 3 based on information from literature review. The responses to the questionnaire items were structured on a modified four-point Likert-type scale of Strongly Agree (SA) 4 points, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point. A decision rule was established in which 2.49 and below indicates disagreement with the statement and 2.50 and above indicates agreement with the statement.

Results and Discussions
Research Question I
What are the various educational services provided by the government?

Table 1: Mean ratings of principals on the various services provided by the government. N=230

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Educational Services</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teachers’ discussion centers are educational service provided by government in Imo state.</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>DA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Resource centers are available for teachers’ use.</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>DA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A study workshop for knowledge improvement is there in your schools</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>DA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Short re-training courses are provided for teachers.</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>DA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Teachers in the State often go on conferences.</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>DA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A resource center for teaching materials is provided in the state.</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>DA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The result presented in table 1 indicate that the respondents agree that functional public libraries (item 10) and Guidance and counseling services (item 9) were the main forms of educational services provided in the state. Their mean values were above the upper limit of 2.50. The provision of Resource Center for Teaching materials and re-training courses for teachers also had a relatively moderate rating but their means were below the upper limit for agreement. Thus, from the data analysis of the various educational services to be provided or established by the Federal State and Local Government only items 9 and 10 have mean scores above 2.50 which is an indication of non-provision of educational services by the government.

**Research Question 2**

What are the various Challenges facing the provision of educational services?

**Table 2:** Mean ratings of principals on the various challenges in the provision of educational services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Challenges in the Provision of Educational Services</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Inadequate planning and projections constitute challenges to provision of educational services</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Lack of adequate machinery to for the supervision of educational services</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Lack of ability to obtain financial assistance from stake holders.</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>DA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Inability of policy makers to break the educational services into workable units or phases</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Political appointees formulating policies without the knowledge of the administration.

Non-involvement of professional associations in Education in the formulation and execution of policy statements.

Inadequate planned funding system for educational service provision.

From the results in Table 2, only lack of ability to obtain financial assistance from stakeholders (item 16) has mean rating below 2.50 which indicates that item 16 is not considered a challenge to the provision of all educational services by the respondents. However, all the other items were considered challenges in the provision of educational services by the principals in Imo State. Inadequate planned funding system for education (item 20) is rated the highest challenge, to the provision of educational services, followed by non-involvement of professional associations in education (item 19).

Research Question 3
What are the strategies that could be adopted to improve provision of educational services?

Table 3: Mean perception of principals on the strategies for adequate provision of educational services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Strategies for Adequate Provision of Educational Services</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Feasibility studies of what and why of the problems</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Prioritizing important possible ways for achieving the goals in education.</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Proper Planning of the implementation process of educational service provision</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>The use of political appointees with unlimited educational vision</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Professional associations should constructively criticize to improve to on the</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>implementation of educational policies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The implementation of educational services reforms by government.</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Educational administrators should utilize the available resources adequately</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: t-test Analysis of the Mean Perception of Urban and Rural Principals on the Various Educational Services Provided by the Government in Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Respondent</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-crit</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
<td>±1.96</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value of -0.42 is less than the critical t-value of 1.960 at 264 degree of freedom and .05 level of significance. This shows that there is no significant difference between the mean perception of urban and rural principals on the various educational services rendered by the government in Nigeria. The null hypothesis is therefore upheld.

Table 5: T-test Analysis of the Mean Perception of Male and Female Principals on the Challenges in the Provision of Educational Services in Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Respondent</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-crit</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
<td>±1.96</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 revealed that .05 level of significance and 264 degree of freedom, t-calculated of -0.082 is less than t-critical of 1.960. As such the null hypothesis is accepted, there is no significant difference between the mean perception of male and female principals on the challenges in the provision of educational services in Nigeria.

Table 6: T-Test Analysis of More Experienced and Less Experienced Principals on the Strategies for Adequate Provision of Educational Services in Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Respondent</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-crit</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 years and above</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-10 years</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows that the calculated t-value of 1.027 is less than the critical t-value of 1.960 tested at .05 level of significance and 264 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference between the
mean perception of more experienced and less experienced principals on the strategies for provision of educational services in Nigeria.

Discussion

According to answers to research question one; the respondents agreed that educational services are not provided by the government for functional teaching and learning. Out of the numerous stipulations made in the National Policy on Education, it is only two items o providing career Guidance counselors in post-primary schools and functional public libraries are provided. Null hypothesis one revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean perception of urban and rural principals on the provision of educational services in Nigeria.

These findings are in line with the report of Igboabuchi (2007) that the National Policy on Education goals of educational services are promising and include among others, to develop and improve educational programmes, enhance teaching and improve the competence of teachers, make learning experiences more meaningful for children, as well as make education cost-effective but unfortunately according to him, the educational services are not being rendered. Ene (2007), opined that Nigeria’s problem has never been lack of ideas or policies but the will to implement such policies. Onuh (2006) stated that the imbalances in formulation and implementation of education policies could be attributed to the fact that the expertise of professionals in education are not usually sought by the government. On the other hand, Ocho (1997), argue that professional associations in education should regard it as both right and duty to offer advice to the government on the implementation of educational services.

In research question two, the respondents generally agreed that provisions of educational services in Nigeria are faced with a lot of challenges. These challenges include; inadequacies of plans and projections; lack of adequate supervisory machinery; political appointees with administrative knowledge formally formulating educational policies among others. Null hypothesis two equally revealed no significant different in the mean perception of female and male principals on challenges to the provision of educational services. These findings are in line with the observations of Okeke (1997), Ocho (1997), and Igboabuchi (2007).

In the study, the strategies for provision of educational services included making feasibility studies; listing all important possible ways for achieving goals of educational services, as well as predicting and investigating important consequences that would follow from each alternative action among others. Data analyzed on null hypothesis three again revealed no significant difference among the respondents. Suleman (2006) stated that the stipulations in the National Policy need total overhaul which will take cognizance of the prevailing problems the education section is faced with, in order to find lasting solutions. Onuh (2006) stated that unless effective strategies are adopted in checking the imbalances in educational policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria, a glorious future in the education system in bleak.
Implications of the Research Findings for Quality Assurance and Enhancement Strategies in Education

One of the findings of this study is that educational services which have been described by the National Policy on Education (2004) are those services that facilitate the implementation of educational policy for attainment policy goals as well as the promotion of effectiveness of educational the system are not provided. The findings is of importance to Federal, State and Local governments as well as Ministries of Education, because it implies that the tools for achieving quality in education reforms from basic to tertiary education are lacking, therefore, no meaningful work will be done. Unless educational services are provided, quality in education will continue to be mediocre and unimpressive thereby, impeding the attainment of the goals of educational policies.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it could be observed that the respondents are unanimously agreed that educational services are not provided for the transformation of the dwindling Nigeria education system. In essence, for the proper reformation of the Nigerian educational system adequate plans must be made to ensure the maximum provision of education for optimal performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

(1) Government should make effort to match plans with projections in policy formulations.

(2) Government should vigorously pursue the provisions of the National Policy on Education.

(3) Professional educational associations should always submit proceedings from researches, conferences and workshops to government agencies for implementation.

(4) Professional educational bodies should from time to time advise the government on policy statements and their implications on education.

References


