



Research Article

# A Critical Analysis of the Influence of Policy Reforms on Education Management and Leadership in Developing Countries: The Nigerian Experience

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## Abstract

*In the context of the global struggle to ensure quality education for all, Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa, serves as a significant case study regarding the effects of policy reforms on educational management and leadership. This research offers a thorough examination of how such reforms influence educational governance in Nigeria, illuminating the intricacies, obstacles, and prospects that these changes present. Utilizing empirical data and theoretical frameworks, the study demonstrates the potential of policy reforms to enhance educational outcomes, foster community engagement, and strengthen leadership and management practices. By analyzing the Nigerian context, this research enriches the international dialogue on educational reform, providing essential insights and lessons pertinent to the attainment of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education. The data for this investigation were sourced from secondary materials, including government publications, both published and unpublished texts such as textbooks, academic journals, periodicals, seminar and conference proceedings, as well as online resources. The findings indicate that the Nigerian government should prioritize educational funding to effectively implement policy reforms. Additionally, it is recommended that the government equip teachers and school administrators with the necessary training and resources to successfully enact these reforms. Ultimately, the study concludes that policy reforms can significantly enhance educational outcomes, broaden access to education, and increase community involvement in educational planning and decision-making. Moreover, it underscores the critical role of effective leadership and management in education, asserting that school leaders and educators must possess the requisite skills and knowledge to implement policy reforms successfully.*

**Keywords:** Policy Reforms, Education, Management, Leadership, Nigeria.

## INTRODUCTION

The impact of policy reforms on educational management and leadership in developing nations, especially Nigeria, has been a focal point of considerable discussion among academics and policymakers. As the most populous nation in Africa, Nigeria faces numerous obstacles within its educational system, such as insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure, and ineffective management (Adeyemi, 2019). This paper offers a thorough examination of how policy reforms have shaped educational management and leadership in Nigeria, emphasizing both the achievements and the difficulties faced throughout this process. Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria's education sector has experienced substantial policy reforms aimed at enhancing educational quality, expanding access, and fostering equity (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). A pivotal reform in this sector is the establishment of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in 1999 (UNESCO, 2016).

A notable reform in Nigeria's educational landscape is the establishment of the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1977, which sought to create a cohesive educational framework emphasizing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) (Federal Ministry of Education, 1977). The NPE also prioritized the enhancement of teacher training and development to elevate the quality and effectiveness of educators (Adeyemi, 2019). This policy has significantly influenced the educational sector by fostering STEM education and enhancing teacher quality (Adeogun, 2016). Nonetheless, it has encountered obstacles such as insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure, and limited teacher training (Obanya, 2004). Despite these hurdles, the NPE is regarded as a success, evidenced by a marked increase in students engaging in STEM fields (Adeyemi, 2019). In recent years, Nigeria has implemented additional reforms aimed at elevating educational quality and advancing management and leadership within the sector, including the Education Sector Reform (ESR) program initiated in 2006. This program aimed to instill a culture of excellence, focusing on enhancing teacher quality, school facilities, and educational management (Federal Ministry of Education, 2006). The ESR program has also made a significant impact, promoting excellence and improving educational management and leadership (Adeyemi, 2019). However, it too has faced challenges such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and insufficient teacher training (Adeogun, 2016). Despite these issues, the ESR program is celebrated for its contributions to improving educational quality and management in Nigeria (Adeyemi, 2019).

Notwithstanding the achievements associated with these policy reforms, Nigeria's educational sector continues to encounter a multitude of challenges, such as insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of comprehensive teacher training (Adeyemi, 2019). These obstacles have profoundly affected the management and leadership of education in Nigeria, emphasizing the need to foster a culture of excellence and enhance teacher quality (Adeogun, 2016). To effectively tackle these issues, it is imperative for Nigeria to prioritize educational management and leadership, concentrating on the cultivation of excellence and the elevation of teacher quality (Adeyemi, 2019). This endeavor necessitates substantial investments in teacher training and development, alongside improvements in infrastructure and educational management (Adeogun, 2016). Moreover, Nigeria must embrace a more integrated strategy towards educational management and leadership, focusing on the promotion of excellence and the enhancement of teacher quality (Adeyemi, 2019). Achieving this goal requires a concerted effort among policymakers, educators, and various stakeholders to advance educational management and leadership in Nigeria (Adeogun, 2016). Additionally, it is crucial for Nigeria to emphasize educational research and development, aiming to foster evidence-based practices in educational management and leadership (Adeyemi, 2019). This approach calls for significant investment in educational research and development, as well as a commitment to fostering collaboration among researchers, policymakers, and educators (Adeogun, 2016). The impact of policy reforms on educational management and leadership in Nigeria has been considerable, with a persistent focus on nurturing a culture of excellence and improving teacher quality.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The impact of policy reforms on educational management and leadership in developing nations, especially Nigeria, has been a focal point of considerable discussion among academics and policymakers. As the most populous nation in Africa, Nigeria faces numerous obstacles within its educational framework, such as insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure, and ineffective management (Adeyemi, 2019). This paper offers a thorough examination of the difficulties posed by policy reforms on educational management and leadership in Nigeria. A primary obstacle to the successful implementation of policy reforms in Nigeria's educational sector is the absence of robust implementation strategies. Research conducted by Adeogun (2016) indicates that the execution of policy reforms has been impeded by ineffective monitoring and evaluation systems, leading to a pronounced disparity between the formulation and actual implementation of policies. Additionally, the issue of insufficient funding presents a significant challenge to policy reforms in Nigeria's educational landscape. A report from the World Bank (2018) highlights that the education sector in Nigeria suffers from underfunding, with a large portion of the budget directed towards recurrent expenses rather than capital investments. Consequently, this has resulted in a scarcity of essential resources for educational institutions, including textbooks, furniture, and necessary infrastructure.

The deteriorating condition of infrastructure in Nigerian educational institutions presents a significant obstacle to policy reforms. Research conducted by Obanya (2004) indicates that a substantial number of schools in Nigeria are devoid of essential infrastructure such as classrooms, sanitation facilities, and water supply. This deficiency has created an unfavorable learning environment, adversely affecting student performance. Furthermore, the insufficient training and professional development of educators constitutes another barrier to educational policy reforms in Nigeria. A study by Adeyemi (2019) reveals that many teachers lack the requisite training and development necessary for the effective execution of policy reforms, leading to a deficiency in their capacity to implement new initiatives. Additionally, the limited engagement of communities in the formulation and execution of educational policies poses another challenge to reforms. Ajuwon (2017) emphasizes the importance of community involvement for the successful implementation of educational policy changes; however, in Nigeria, such involvement is often minimal, resulting in a lack of ownership and commitment to these reforms. Moreover, the inadequate integration of technology in Nigerian schools further complicates the landscape of policy reforms. Ogunyemi (2018) notes that the restricted use of technology in educational

settings limits access to digital resources and tools, which has detrimental effects on student outcomes, particularly in mathematics and science. Lastly, the absence of effective leadership and management within Nigerian schools is a critical challenge to policy reforms. Adeogun (2016) asserts that strong leadership and management are essential for the successful implementation of educational reforms, yet many school leaders in Nigeria lack the necessary training and development to effectively guide and manage their institutions. Furthermore, there is an insufficient emphasis on inclusive education, which remains another significant challenge to policy reforms in Nigeria.

The insufficient collaboration among stakeholders presents a significant obstacle to policy reforms in Nigeria. Research conducted by Ogunyemi (2018) emphasizes that robust collaboration among stakeholders, such as government entities, educational institutions, and local communities, is essential for the successful execution of policy reforms. Nevertheless, in Nigeria, such collaboration is frequently inadequate, leading to disorganization and inconsistency in the implementation of policies. Furthermore, the insufficient attention given to teacher welfare constitutes another barrier to effective policy reforms in Nigeria. Adeyemi (2019) highlights that the welfare of teachers is vital for fostering their motivation and dedication to their profession. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, teacher welfare is often overlooked, which contributes to diminished motivation and commitment among educators. Additionally, the absence of effective accountability mechanisms poses yet another challenge to policy reforms in Nigeria. Adeogun (2016) asserts that robust accountability systems are necessary to ensure that policymakers and educators are responsible for their actions. However, in Nigeria, such mechanisms are frequently inadequate, resulting in a lack of accountability and transparency in the implementation of policies.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the impact of policy reforms on education management and leadership in Nigerian schools?
2. How have policy reforms influenced the capacity of school leaders to manage and lead schools effectively in Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of policy reforms in Nigerian schools?

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of this study is to critically analyze the Influence of Policy Reforms on Education Management and Leadership in Developing Countries: The Nigerian Experience. While the specific objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the impact of policy reforms on education management and leadership in Nigerian schools.
2. To investigate the influence of policy reforms on the capacity of school leaders to manage and lead schools effectively in Nigeria.
3. To identify the challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of policy reforms in Nigerian schools.

## HYPOTHESES

1. Policy reforms have a significant positive impact on education management and leadership in Nigerian schools.
2. Policy reforms enhance the capacity of school leaders to manage and lead schools effectively in Nigeria.
3. The implementation of policy reforms in Nigerian schools is associated with significant challenges and opportunities

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### POLICY REFORM ON EDUCATION MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA

The education system in Nigeria has experienced substantial policy reforms aimed at enhancing educational management and leadership. A pivotal reform is the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004, which sought to ensure free and compulsory basic education for all children in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). This Act also led to the creation of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) to supervise the program's implementation. The UBE initiative has significantly influenced educational management and leadership within the country, resulting in increased enrollment rates, especially among girls and children from underprivileged backgrounds (Adeyemi, 2019). Nevertheless, the program has encountered considerable obstacles, such as insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of teacher training (Ogunyemi, 2018). Another important reform is the National Policy on Education (NPE), initially introduced in 1977 and revised in 2013 (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). The NPE establishes a framework for educational management and leadership in Nigeria, underscoring the critical role of education in national development. It also stresses the necessity for effective management and leadership to fulfill educational objectives. The NPE has significantly influenced educational management and leadership, leading to the formation of the National Council on Education (NCE), which is responsible for overseeing educational policy and planning in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). The NCE has been instrumental in advancing educational management and leadership in the country. Despite these advancements, challenges persist in educational management and leadership in Nigeria, with inadequate

funding being a primary issue that hampers the development of educational infrastructure and the delivery of quality education (Adeyemi, 2019).

In response to these challenges, the Nigerian government has instituted the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), which oversees teacher education and training within the country (TRCN, 2020). The TRCN has formulated a framework that underscores the necessity of ongoing professional development for educators. Additionally, the government has established the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), which offers training and development opportunities for educational managers and leaders (NIEPA, 2020). The NIEPA has been instrumental in advancing education management and leadership in Nigeria. Consequently, it is imperative for the Nigerian government to enhance the National Council on Education (NCE), which is responsible for education policy and planning in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). The NCE has also been pivotal in fostering education management and leadership in the nation. Moreover, the government must encourage community involvement in education management and leadership, necessitating the engagement of parents, teachers, and community leaders in educational decision-making and planning (Adeyemi, 2019). Furthermore, the Nigerian government should harness technology to enhance education management and leadership, which entails investing in digital infrastructure, promoting online learning, and utilizing data analytics to guide educational decision-making (Ogunyemi, 2018).

## IMPACT OF POLICY REFORM

The influence of policy reform on the management and leadership of education in Nigeria has been profound. A pivotal reform is the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004, which sought to ensure free and compulsory basic education for all children in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). This initiative has resulted in increased enrollment rates, especially among girls and children from underprivileged backgrounds (Adeyemi, 2019). Furthermore, the UBE program has contributed to enhancements in educational infrastructure, including the establishment of new schools and the refurbishment of existing facilities (Ogunyemi, 2018). Nonetheless, the program has encountered considerable obstacles, such as insufficient funding, inadequate teacher training, and a lack of educational resources (Adeyemi, 2019). Another significant reform is the National Policy on Education (NPE), initially introduced in 1977 and revised in 2013 (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). The NPE outlines a framework for education management and leadership in Nigeria, underscoring the critical role of education in national development. It also emphasizes the necessity for effective management and leadership to fulfill educational objectives. The NPE has facilitated the creation of the National Council on Education (NCE), which is responsible for overseeing educational policy and planning in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). The NCE has been instrumental in advancing education management and leadership; however, it too has faced challenges, including limited funding and poor collaboration with state and local governments (Ogunyemi, 2018). Additionally, the impact of policy reform on education management and leadership in Nigeria has been shaped by international entities such as the World Bank and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (World Bank, 2020), which have offered technical and financial support for educational reform initiatives in the country.

Despite advancements, the management and leadership of education in Nigeria continue to encounter substantial obstacles. A primary issue is the prevalence of corruption, which has infiltrated every tier of the educational framework (Adeyemi, 2019). Additionally, inadequate infrastructure has adversely impacted the quality of education in Nigerian institutions (Ogunyemi, 2018). It is imperative for the Nigerian government to fortify the National Council on Education (NCE), the body responsible for overseeing educational policy and planning in the country (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). The NCE has been instrumental in advancing education management and leadership in Nigeria. Moreover, fostering community involvement in educational governance is essential. This entails engaging parents, educators, and local leaders in the decision-making and planning processes related to education (Adeyemi, 2019). Furthermore, the influence of policy reform on educational management and leadership in Nigeria has been shaped by technological progress. The integration of technology, including online learning platforms and digital resources, has facilitated greater access to education and improved the overall quality of teaching and learning (Ogunyemi, 2018).

## CHALLENGES FACING EDUCATION MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

The obstacles encountered in the realm of educational management and leadership in Nigeria are diverse and intricate. A primary obstacle is insufficient funding, which has impeded the advancement of educational infrastructure and the delivery of quality education (Adeyemi, 2019). The Nigerian government has faced criticism for its inadequate financial allocation to education, leading to a scarcity of essential resources such as textbooks, furniture, and technology (Ogunyemi, 2018). Furthermore, corruption poses a significant challenge within the educational sector, affecting all levels from the Ministry of Education to individual institutions (Adeyemi, 2019). This corruption has led to the misappropriation of resources, the hiring of unqualified educators, and the embezzlement of funds intended for educational purposes (Ogunyemi, 2018). Additionally, poor infrastructure remains a critical issue, with numerous schools lacking fundamental facilities like classrooms, restrooms, and water supply (Adeyemi, 2019). This deficiency has contributed to an unfavorable learning environment, adversely impacting educational quality and student performance (Ogunyemi, 2018). Moreover, inadequate training and professional development for teachers represent another



significant challenge, as many educators do not possess the requisite skills to effectively teach and manage their classrooms (Adeyemi, 2019). This lack of preparation has diminished teachers' confidence, thereby affecting their capacity to motivate and inspire their students (Ogunyemi, 2018). Lastly, ineffective leadership constitutes a major challenge in educational management and leadership in Nigeria, with many school leaders lacking the necessary skills and training for effective school management (Adeyemi, 2019). This deficiency has resulted in poor decision-making, insufficient resource allocation, and a lack of accountability (Ogunyemi, 2018).

The absence of community engagement presents a significant obstacle to educational management and leadership in Nigeria. Numerous communities are devoid of the essential resources and support required for meaningful participation in educational decision-making and planning (Ogunyemi, 2018). Consequently, this has led to a diminished sense of ownership and accountability among community members, adversely impacting the quality of education and the academic achievements of students. The influence of poverty on educational management and leadership in Nigeria is profound. A considerable number of students originate from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, which hampers their access to quality education (Adeyemi, 2019). This situation has resulted in a scarcity of resources, such as textbooks, uniforms, and transportation, further affecting students' academic performance. Additionally, the deficiency of technological resources poses another challenge to educational management and leadership in Nigeria. Many educational institutions lack essential technological tools, including computers, internet access, and digital resources, which detrimentally impacts the quality of education and students' academic outcomes (Ogunyemi, 2018). The Nigerian government has faced criticism for its insufficient efforts to advance the integration of technology in education. It has been accused of failing to allocate adequate funding for the development of educational technology, providing insufficient training for educators, and not promoting the utilization of digital resources within schools (Adeyemi, 2019). Furthermore, ineffective policy implementation remains a significant challenge in educational management and leadership in Nigeria. Although numerous policies have been formulated to tackle the issues plaguing education, their execution has been lacking (Ogunyemi, 2018). This has resulted in a lack of accountability, poor resource distribution, and suboptimal decision-making. The ramifications of conflict on educational management and leadership in Nigeria are also considerable. Numerous schools have suffered due to conflict, leading to the destruction of educational infrastructure and the displacement of students.

## GAP IN LITERATURE

Despite the considerable research conducted on education management and leadership in Nigeria, a notable deficiency persists in the existing literature. A primary shortcoming is the absence of empirical investigations into the effects of policy reforms on education management and leadership within the country. Although numerous studies address the challenges encountered in this field, few have specifically analyzed the influence of policy reforms on education management and leadership. Additionally, there is a limited emphasis on the involvement of stakeholders, such as teachers, school leaders, and community members, in the education management and leadership landscape in Nigeria. Most research has concentrated on the roles of government and policymakers, overlooking the essential contributions of other stakeholders in shaping education management and leadership. Moreover, further exploration is warranted regarding the intersection of education management and leadership with various factors, including poverty, conflict, and corruption. Lastly, the literature lacks sufficient examination of innovative and contextually relevant approaches to education management and leadership in Nigeria. Predominantly, studies have depended on traditional and Western-centric methodologies, failing to consider Nigeria's distinct cultural, social, and economic contexts. There is a pressing need for research that investigates indigenous and innovative strategies for education management and leadership, such as community-based leadership and participatory decision-making. Addressing these gaps will enable future research to yield a more thorough understanding of education management and leadership in Nigeria.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

This theory asserts that institutions, encompassing policies, laws, and regulations, significantly influence the behaviors and actions of both individuals and organizations (Scott, 2001). Within the realm of educational management and leadership, Institutional Theory indicates that policy reforms can affect the conduct and actions of educators, school leaders, and various stakeholders. This theory is particularly pertinent for examining the impact of policy reforms on educational management and leadership in Nigeria, as it underscores the importance of institutions in shaping individual and organizational behaviors. For instance, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004, which sought to ensure free and compulsory basic education for all Nigerian children, serves as an institutional framework that directs the actions of educators, school leaders, and other stakeholders (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). By exploring the effects of policy reforms through the perspective of Institutional Theory, researchers can achieve a more profound comprehension of how institutions influence the behaviors and actions of individuals and organizations within the educational sector. Additionally, Institutional Theory aids researchers in pinpointing the elements that either promote or obstruct the successful execution of policy reforms in educational management and leadership. For example, researchers

may investigate how institutional elements, such as resource availability, the capabilities of educators and school leaders, and the extent of community involvement, affect the implementation of policy reforms (Ogunyemi, 2018).

## METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The data for this study were collected from secondary sources from related literature on the subject matter. By this, we mean any written material (whether hand-written, typed or printed) that is already in existence, which was produced for other purpose than the benefit of the investigator. The secondary sources of data therefore include government publication/documents, both published and unpublished works such as text books, journals, periodicals, seminar and conference papers and internet.

## DISCUSSION

### HYPOTHESIS ONE

**Policy reforms have a significant impact on education management and leadership in Nigerian schools.**

The interplay between policy reforms and the management and leadership of education in Nigerian schools is intricate and diverse. Various policy reforms have been enacted in Nigeria with the objectives of enhancing educational quality, expanding access, and fostering equity (Adeyemi, 2019). Nonetheless, the effects of these reforms on educational management and leadership within Nigerian schools remain a topic of active discussion among academics and policymakers. One significant reform is the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004, which sought to ensure free and compulsory basic education for all children in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). The UBE Act has notably influenced educational management and leadership, resulting in increased enrollment rates, especially for girls and children from underprivileged backgrounds (Adeyemi, 2019). However, the execution of the UBE Act has encountered numerous obstacles, such as insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of teacher training (Ogunyemi, 2018). These issues have adversely impacted educational quality and student performance in Nigerian schools. Another significant reform is the National Policy on Education (NPE), initially introduced in 1977 and revised in 2013 (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). The NPE establishes a framework for educational management and leadership in Nigeria, underscoring the critical role of education in national development. It also emphasizes the necessity for effective management and leadership to fulfill educational objectives. The implementation of the NPE has profoundly influenced educational management and leadership, exemplified by the creation of the National Council on Education (NCE), which is responsible for overseeing educational policy and planning in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013).

The influence of policy reforms on educational management and leadership within Nigerian schools is significantly shaped by the involvement of various stakeholders, such as educators, school administrators, and community members. Educators, for example, are pivotal in the execution of these reforms (Adeyemi, 2019). Nevertheless, many teachers in Nigeria frequently lack adequate training and resources to implement these reforms effectively. Similarly, school administrators are essential to the reform process; however, they too often face challenges due to insufficient training and support, which hampers their ability to lead and manage educational institutions effectively (Ogunyemi, 2018). This deficiency has detrimental effects on the quality of education and the academic outcomes of students in Nigeria. Furthermore, the socio-cultural landscape of Nigeria, characterized by its multicultural composition of over 250 ethnic groups (Ogunyemi, 2018), complicates the implementation of policy reforms, as varying expectations and aspirations for education exist among different communities. Additionally, Nigeria's economic situation, as a developing nation with constrained resources (Adeyemi, 2019), poses significant challenges to educational funding, resulting in schools often lacking the essential resources required for effective reform implementation. The political framework of Nigeria, a federal republic with a multifaceted governance structure (Ogunyemi, 2018), further complicates the execution of educational policy reforms, as disparate governmental levels possess distinct roles and responsibilities regarding education. This comprehensive analysis substantiates the hypothesis that policy reforms exert a considerable influence on educational management and leadership in Nigerian schools.

### HYPOTHESIS TWO

**Policy reforms enhance the capacity of school leaders to manage and lead schools effectively in Nigeria.**

The interplay between educational policy reforms and the ability of school leaders to effectively manage and lead institutions in Nigeria is intricate and diverse. Various policy reforms have been enacted in Nigeria with the objectives of enhancing educational quality, expanding access, and fostering equity (Adeyemi, 2019). A pivotal reform is the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004, which sought to ensure free and compulsory basic education for all Nigerian children (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). The UBE Act's implementation has significantly influenced school leaders' capacity to manage and lead effectively, evidenced by increased enrollment rates, particularly among girls and children from underprivileged backgrounds (Adeyemi, 2019). This surge in enrollment has heightened the demand

for capable school leaders. Nonetheless, the UBE Act's implementation has encountered numerous challenges, such as insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of teacher training (Ogunyemi, 2018), which have hindered school leaders' effectiveness. Additionally, the National Policy on Education (NPE), first introduced in 1977 and revised in 2013 (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013), serves as another significant reform. The NPE outlines a framework for educational management and leadership, underscoring education's role in national development and the necessity for effective management to fulfill educational objectives. The NPE's implementation has also notably impacted school leaders' capacities, leading to the formation of the National Council on Education (NCE), which is responsible for overseeing educational policy and planning in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013).

The execution of the National Policy on Education (NPE) has encountered numerous obstacles, such as insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of teacher training (Ogunyemi, 2018). These obstacles have hindered the ability of school leaders in Nigeria to manage and lead their institutions effectively. Furthermore, the effectiveness of school leaders is significantly shaped by the involvement of various stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and community members. Teachers, in particular, are essential in assisting school leaders in their management roles (Adeyemi, 2019). Nevertheless, many teachers in Nigeria do not receive the requisite training and support to fulfill this role effectively. Additionally, parents and community members are vital in aiding school leaders, yet they often lack the necessary knowledge and understanding of educational policies and planning to provide adequate support (Ogunyemi, 2018). The socio-cultural landscape of Nigeria, characterized by its multiculturalism and over 250 ethnic groups (Ogunyemi, 2018), further complicates the capacity of school leaders, as varying expectations and aspirations for education exist among different ethnicities. Moreover, Nigeria's economic situation, being a developing nation with limited resources (Adeyemi, 2019), has adversely impacted educational funding, leaving schools without the essential resources needed to support their leaders effectively. Based on the preceding analysis, we affirm the hypothesis that policy reforms can enhance the capacity of school leaders to manage and lead schools effectively in Nigeria.

### **HYPOTHESIS THREE**

#### **The implementation of policy reforms in Nigerian schools is associated with significant challenges and opportunities**

The execution of educational policy reforms in Nigerian schools is a complex and multifaceted endeavor, fraught with significant challenges and opportunities. A pivotal reform in this context is the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004, which sought to ensure free and compulsory basic education for all Nigerian children (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). However, the enactment of the UBE Act has encountered numerous obstacles, such as insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of teacher training (Ogunyemi, 2018).

In spite of these hurdles, the UBE Act's implementation has also opened avenues for enhancing education in Nigeria, notably through increased enrollment rates, especially among girls and children from underprivileged backgrounds (Adeyemi, 2019), thereby fostering a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape.

Another significant reform is the National Policy on Education (NPE), initially introduced in 1977 and revised in 2013 (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). The NPE outlines a framework for educational management and leadership in Nigeria, underscoring the critical role of education in national development. Yet, similar to the UBE Act, the NPE's implementation has faced challenges, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and insufficient teacher training (Ogunyemi, 2018). Nevertheless, the NPE has also created opportunities for educational advancement, such as the formation of the National Council on Education (NCE), which is responsible for overseeing educational policy and planning in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013).

The socio-cultural landscape of Nigeria has significantly influenced the execution of policy reforms within its educational institutions. Nigeria's status as a multicultural nation, comprising over 250 distinct ethnic groups (Ogunyemi, 2018), has led to varied expectations and aspirations regarding education among these groups, thereby impacting the formulation and implementation of educational policies. Furthermore, the economic conditions in Nigeria, characterized as a developing nation with constrained resources (Adeyemi, 2019), have hindered educational funding, resulting in schools frequently lacking essential resources for the effective realization of policy reforms. Additionally, the political framework of Nigeria, as a federal republic with a multifaceted governance structure (Ogunyemi, 2018), has further complicated the implementation of educational policies, as different governmental tiers possess varying roles and responsibilities in the education sector. Consequently, it is reasonable to conclude that the implementation of policy reforms in Nigerian schools is fraught with considerable challenges and opportunities.

## FINDINGS

1. Policy reforms in Nigeria have led to an increase in enrollment rates, particularly among girls and children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Adeyemi, 2019).
2. The implementation of policy reforms in Nigerian schools is often hindered by inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and insufficient teacher training (Ogunyemi, 2018).
3. The National Policy on Education (NPE) has played a critical role in promoting education management and leadership in Nigeria, but its implementation has been limited by the lack of capacity and resources at the local level (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013).
4. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004 has led to an increase in access to education, but its implementation has been hindered by the lack of infrastructure and resources (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004).
5. Policy reforms in Nigeria have led to an increase in community participation in education decision-making and planning, but this participation is often limited by the lack of awareness and understanding of education policy and planning among community members (Adeyemi, 2019).
6. The use of technology in education in Nigeria has the potential to improve access to education, particularly in rural and disadvantaged areas, but its implementation is often hindered by the lack of infrastructure and resources (Adeyemi, 2019).
7. Policy reforms in Nigeria have led to an increase in transparency and accountability in education management and leadership, but this transparency and accountability are often limited by the lack of capacity and resources at the local level (Ogunyemi, 2018).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Nigerian government should prioritize education and allocate sufficient funds to support the implementation of policy reforms.
2. The Nigerian government should provide teachers and school leaders with the necessary training and support to effectively implement policy reforms.
3. The Nigerian government should promote community participation in education decision-making and planning by providing community members with the necessary awareness and understanding of education policy and planning.
4. The Nigerian government should invest in education infrastructure, including technology, to support the implementation of policy reforms.
5. The Nigerian government should establish clear policies and procedures for education management and leadership to promote transparency and accountability.
6. International organizations should work closely with local stakeholders to develop context-specific solutions to support education reform in Nigeria.
7. The Nigerian government should promote the use of technology in education to improve access to education, particularly in rural and disadvantaged areas.

## CONCLUSION

This research has conducted a thorough examination of the impact of policy reforms on educational management and leadership within Nigeria, a nation in development. The results indicate that such reforms have significantly influenced educational management and leadership, resulting in enhanced access to education, increased community involvement, and greater transparency and accountability. Nevertheless, the research also underscores the obstacles to the effective implementation of these reforms, such as limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of sufficient teacher training. Despite these hurdles, the findings suggest that policy reforms possess the capacity to revolutionize educational management and leadership in Nigeria. Ultimately, this research offers important perspectives on the role of policy reforms in shaping educational management and leadership in Nigeria. By emphasizing education, investing in educational infrastructure, and fostering effective leadership and management, policymakers and educators can leverage the potential of these reforms to enhance educational management and leadership, thereby improving educational outcomes for all.

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