

ASSESSING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIES FOR TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

GOODHOPE CHINENYE IGWE
Government Technical College
Trans Amadi, Port Harcourt
Rivers State, Nigeria
goodhope.igwe67@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines policy implementation and enforcement strategies for technical and vocational education in Rivers State. Although national policies outline clear expectations for curriculum delivery, teacher preparation and skill development, implementation gaps remain widespread. A descriptive survey design was used to assess teachers' and students' perceptions across four Government Technical Colleges and seven Government Craft Development Centres. A sample of 532 respondents was selected through proportional stratified random sampling. Data were gathered using a validated questionnaire, interviews and document analysis, and were analysed using mean scores, z-test and t-test statistics at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings showed that most policy provisions guiding technical and vocational education are not effectively implemented in the state. Only the design of technical courses for industry relevance and the provision of practical skills for students were consistently carried out. Other essential policy elements such as teacher training, resource provision and staffing showed low implementation levels. Enforcement strategies were also largely ineffective, with only supervision of staff and students identified as a consistently applied strategy. Hypothesis testing revealed no significant differences in perceptions between teachers and students on policy implementation and between teachers in technical colleges and vocational centres on enforcement strategies. These results indicate systemic weaknesses rather than isolated lapses. Strengthening implementation and enforcement structures is therefore essential for improving training quality and ensuring alignment with national TVE goals.

Keywords: Policy Implementation, Enforcement Strategies, Technical Education, Vocational Education, Rivers State.

Introduction

Technical and vocational education in Nigeria is guided by national policies that aim to equip learners with practical skills, technical knowledge, and entrepreneurial competence for socio-economic development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). These policies provide a framework for curriculum design, instructional methods, and programme evaluation to ensure the effective delivery of TVE. Successful implementation of these policies requires the adoption of clear strategies, including teacher training, monitoring mechanisms, and resource allocation, to translate policy objectives into practical outcomes (UNESCO, 2012). Without proper enforcement and oversight, policy directives often fail to achieve their intended impact.

In Rivers State, challenges such as inconsistent policy enforcement, limited government commitment, and inadequate monitoring mechanisms have been observed, which hinder the effectiveness of TVE programmes. These gaps affect both teachers and students, reducing the quality of instruction and students' acquisition of technical skills (Okojie, 2013). Enforcement strategies also involve institutional measures, including curriculum supervision, induction

programmes for instructors, and the development of innovative teaching approaches. Such strategies ensure that TVE policies are consistently applied across schools and that students benefit from standardized, high-quality training (Adebayo, 2015).

Examining policy implementation and enforcement strategies is therefore critical for identifying weaknesses and proposing interventions that enhance TVE effectiveness. Strengthening these aspects can ensure that policy objectives are fully realized, resulting in better-trained graduates who can contribute to economic development.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the existence of clear policies for technical and vocational education, their implementation in Rivers State has been inconsistent, often due to poor enforcement, lack of supervision, and inadequate strategic planning. This has limited the effectiveness of TVE in achieving its objectives of skill development and employability.

Aim of the Study

The study aims to assess policy implementation and enforcement strategies for technical and vocational education programmes in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

1. Examine the implementation of policies guiding technical and vocational education in Rivers State.
2. Determine the strategies to enforce programme implementation of technical and vocational education in Rivers State.

Research Question

1. How effective is the implementation of policies guiding technical and vocational education programmes in Rivers State?
2. What are the enforcement strategies used for technical and vocational education programme implementation in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between mean scores of teachers and students on the implementation of policies guiding technical and vocational education programmes in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between mean scores of teachers in technical colleges and teachers in vocational centres on the strategies used to enforce programme implementation of technical and vocational education in Rivers State.

Literature Review

Policy implementation in TVE involves translating national directives into actionable programmes that guide curriculum delivery, teacher training, and student assessment (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Effective enforcement strategies are necessary to ensure compliance with standards, uniformity in instruction, and alignment with labour market requirements (UNESCO, 2012). In Rivers State, inconsistencies in policy execution and weak monitoring mechanisms have been identified as barriers to effective TVE programme delivery (Okojie, 2013). This necessitates a deeper examination of the extant literature on policy implementation frameworks and enforcement models specifically adapted to the unique socio-economic

landscape of the region. This review therefore explored conceptual frameworks related to supervisory roles, particularly those concerning school heads' performance in overseeing teacher duties and maintaining educational standards within technical colleges and vocational centres (Anibasa et al., 2015). It also delved into the implications of school heads' leadership styles on teaching and learning outcomes, drawing parallels to the vocational context to inform robust policy implementation strategies (SAIDU, 2017).

Enforcement strategies may include teacher induction, instructional supervision, provision of guidelines, and periodic evaluation of programme outcomes (Adebayo, 2015). When such strategies are absent or poorly implemented, policy intentions remain unfulfilled, resulting in suboptimal training outcomes and limiting the benefits of TVE for students and society (Anibasa et al., 2015). Furthermore, consistent punishment for teachers found guilty of indiscipline is crucial for maintaining educational standards and serving as a deterrent for others within the system. Supervisory strategies employed by principals, including those focused on teaching materials and discipline maintenance, directly influence teacher instructional performance and adherence to educational policies. This includes ensuring teachers prepare schemes of work and lesson plans, utilize instructional materials, and conduct thorough student evaluations to prevent teaching from complex to simple topics and improve student performance (Anibasa et al., 2015). Principals' administrative strategies, encompassing instructional supervision and robust disciplinary actions, are pivotal in shaping teachers' job performance and ensuring adherence to established educational policies (Osagie & Akinlosotu, 2017).

Such leadership from principals, particularly through transformational styles, is critical for supporting teachers and improving overall student performance in both internal and external examinations (SAIDU, 2017). Nonetheless, research indicates that while principals may excel in supervision and teacher involvement in decision-making, deficiencies in staff development practices can attenuate the overall impact on instructional quality (Anibasa et al., 2015). Conversely, a robust instructional supervision framework, where principals actively guide and support teachers, has been shown to significantly enhance teacher effectiveness and commitment (SAIDU, 2017). This includes regular monitoring of lesson notes and schemes of work to uphold quality in teaching and learning outcomes (SAIDU, 2017). Principals are also expected to organize internal training sessions to further develop teachers' pedagogical skills, alongside ensuring appropriate teaching methods and instructional aides are consistently utilized in the classroom (Anibasa et al., 2015).

These supervisory responsibilities extend to fostering academic competitions and providing continuous, adequate feedback to teachers, which are vital for improvement in school instruction (Anibasa et al., 2015). Effective supervisory practices are fundamental to improving teaching quality and, consequently, student academic outcomes (Anibasa et al., 2015). Principals' leadership styles significantly influence teaching and learning environments, with effective leadership being a strong determinant of student academic success (SAIDU, 2017). For instance, principals exhibiting strong leadership are crucial in organizing the teaching and learning process to ensure the school's mission is achieved (Cruickshank, 2017). This underscores the importance of appointing credible, experienced, and qualified individuals to

principal positions, as their leadership directly impacts school effectiveness and student performance (Wahlstrom et al., 2010).

Theoretical Review

The Goal Theory of Organizational Effectiveness explains that policy implementation must be oriented towards achieving the set organizational objectives, in this case, equipping students with employable skills (Hoy & Miskel, 1982). The theory underscores the importance of aligning strategies and resources to accomplish these goals efficiently.

The Top-Down Model of Policy Implementation further supports this view by emphasizing that clearly communicated objectives, skilled implementing personnel, and resource availability are critical for successful policy enforcement (Matland, 1995). Applied to TVE, the model illustrates that effective strategies for policy implementation directly affect programme outcomes and the overall success of educational interventions.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey design to investigate the implementation of policies and enforcement strategies for technical and vocational education in Rivers State. The population consisted of all teachers and students in four Government Technical Colleges and seven Government Craft Development Centres, totaling 5,324 respondents. A sample of 532 respondents was selected using proportional stratified random sampling, including 351 respondents from Technical Colleges and 181 from Vocational Centres. This sampling approach ensured representation across schools and respondent categories.

Data collection instruments included the TAVEPITS questionnaire, interviews, and document analysis. The questionnaire focused on policy implementation, enforcement strategies, and demographic information. Interviews captured insights from principals, teachers, and students on how policies were communicated, monitored, and enforced. Responses were structured using a four-point Likert scale.

Validity was ensured through expert review and alignment with research objectives, while reliability was determined using Cronbach Alpha, showing strong consistency. Face-to-face administration yielded a 94% response rate, with 500 completed questionnaires retrieved. Percentages and mean scores were used to answer research questions, while z-test and t-test statistics were used to test hypotheses at 0.05 significance level. A mean score of 2.50 or above indicated agreement that policies and strategies were effectively implemented and enforced.

Result

Research Question 1: How effective is the implementation of policies guiding technical and vocational education in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean scores and Ranking of Teachers and students of Technical Colleges and Vocational Centres on the implementation of Policies guiding Technical and vocational education in Rivers State

S/N	Implementation of Policies guiding Technical and vocational education in Rivers State	Technical Coll N=321		Vocational Centres N=179		Aggregate Mean N = 500	
		Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
4	Teachings of all basic subjects to enable students acquire further knowledge and develop their skills are carried out to a large extent	2.69	3rd	2.87	4 th	2.78	3rd
5	There is adequate provision of well qualified teaching staff and local artisans to teach the various trades	1.66	8th	2.09	7 th	1.88	7th
6	There is adequate provision of facilities, equipment and health services.	1.93	6th	3.25	2 nd	2.59	5th
7	Technical courses are designed towards directing graduates to the fields and industries	3.20	1st	3.32	1 st	3.26	1st
8	There is regular and adequate training/development of teachers especially in applied science, technology and commerce	1.69	7th	1.85	8 th	1.77	8th
9	Provision of technical knowledge/vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development of students is adequate	2.61	4th	2.83	5 th	2.72	4th
10	Introduction of professional studies in engineering and other technologies are adequately provided for	2.53	5th	2.41	6 th	2.47	6th
11	There is provision of practical skills for students who are judged to lack the ability to continue with an academic career in a higher education institution.	2.46	2nd	2.47	3 rd	2.91	2nd
Aggregate mean		2.41		2.48		2.45	

As shown in Table 1, faculty members and students of technical colleges and vocational schools agreed, albeit slightly, to an average aggregate mean of 2.55, that most of the policies on technical and vocational education and training programmes are not effective in execution in the technical and vocational schools within Rivers State. Over the 15 policies, Table 1 also shows that the Policy on the Direction of Technical Graduates to the Appropriate Fields/Industries and the Policy on the Provision of Practical Skills to Students deemed to be Unfit for Higher Academic Pursuits were the only two policies that were actually implemented in the Technical Colleges and Vocational Centres in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What are the enforcement strategies used for technical and vocational education programme implementation in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean scores and Ranking of Teachers and students of Technical Colleges and Vocational Centres on the strategies put in place to enforce programme implementation of Technical and vocational education in Rivers state?

S/N	Strategies to enforce compulsory programme implementation of Technical and vocational education in secondary schools in Rivers state	Technical Colle N=321		Vocational Centres N=179		Aggregate Mean N = 500	
		Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
12	Procuring and distribution of technical and vocational facilities/equipments to all technical schools.	1.45	6th	1.58	4th	1.51	4th
13	Ensuring effective participation of students in practical work	1.49	5th	1.51	5th	1.50	5 th
14	Providing staff development support to enhance teachers' performance in techno-vocational education programmes.	1.94	3rd	1.63	3rd	1.78	3 rd
15	Broadening the curriculum of technical and vocational schools to address the occupational needs of communities.	2.45	2nd	2.26	2nd	2.35	2 nd
16	Expanding the facilities for the training of technical teachers for technical and vocational education programmes	1.45	6th	1.42	7th	1.44	7 th
17	Supervision of Staff/Students to serve as a check	2.98	1st	3.49	1st	3.23	1 st
18	Creating awareness to the students on what is required.	1.55	4th	1.44	6th	1.49	6 th
Aggregate mean		1.90		1.90		1.90	

The respondents in Table 2 provided mean instances of 1.51, 1.50, 1.78, 2.35, 1.44 and 1.49 and stated that the 6 particular items (12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 18) did not meet the 2.50 criterion mean and disagreed that the items are the strategies necessary to implement Technical and Vocational Education in the Vocational and Technical Schools in Rivers State. The only agreed strategy is the Supervision of Staff/Students (item 17) and is thus the only strategy. Table 4.4 depicts that the major strategies of expanding the Facilities for Training Technical Teachers are seldom practiced in technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The Teachers and Students of Technical Colleges and Vocational Centres as indicated in the aggregate mean of 1.90 shows that the strategies were neither adequately nor effectively enforced to foster the implementation of programs of Technical and Vocational Education in Rivers State.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers and students of technical colleges and vocational centres on the implementation of policies guiding technical and vocational education in Rivers State.

Table 3: z-test of the difference between the mean scores of teachers and student on the implementation of policies guiding technical and vocational education programme in Rivers State

Respondents	N	\bar{x}	SD	z-cal	z-table value	Decision
Teachers of technical colleges and vocational centres	22	2.31	1.13	0.13	± 1.96	Accept Ho ₁
Students of technical and vocational centres	478	1.13	1.08			

Note: N=500; Degrees of Freedom (DF) = 498; Level of Significance =0.05.

Data presented in Table 3 indicated a z-calculated value of 0.13, and a z-critical value of ± 1.96 . The hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference regarding the mean scores of educators and learners concerning the execution of policies regulating technical and vocational education in Rivers State is accepted, given that the calculated value of z is 0.13, which is below the z-critical value of ± 1.96 . The conclusion, therefore, is that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of educators and learners regarding the execution of policies regulating technical and vocational education in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers in technical colleges and teachers in vocational centers on the strategies that have been put in place to enforce programme implementation in Rivers State.

Table 4: t-test analysis of the difference between the mean scores of teachers in technical colleges and teachers in vocational centers on the strategies put in place to enforce implementation of technical and vocational education programmes in Rivers State

Respondents	N	\bar{x}	SD	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Teachers in technical colleges	13	1.62	1.21	0.85	2.31	Accept Ho ₂
Teachers in vocational centres	9	2.03	1.05			

Note: N=22; Degrees of Freedom (DF) = 20 (13+9)-2; Level of Significance = 0.05.

As shown in Table 4, for 20 degrees of freedom at the 0.05 significance level, the calculated t-value is 0.85 and the critical t-value is 2.31. Therefore, the null hypothesis which posits that there is no significant difference between the average responses of teachers at technical colleges and teachers at vocational centers with respect to the strategies employed to facilitate the implementation of technical and vocational education in vocational education and training in Rivers State is accepted as the calculated t-value of 0.85 is less than the critical t-value of 2.31.

Discussion of Findings

Most policies related to technical and vocational education in Rivers State are not effectively. While the mean score for responses is 2.45, which is less than the decision point of 2.50 suggesting most of the provisions of the policies are not being effectively implemented, two aspects of the policies, however, seem to have been implemented to some extent. The

most notable is the structuring of technical courses aimed at preparing graduates for field practice and employment, which had the highest mean score of 3.26. The second most notable is the provision of some practical skills for students who drop out of the formal schooling system, which is also moderately implemented with a mean score of 2.91. These are the only aspects of the policies that seem to have been reasonably implemented in the schools.

The sub-par level of implementation of the policies as highlighted in this study is also supported by the research findings from Ayonmike and Okeke which pointed out that in the field of technical and vocational education in Nigeria, there are scanty policy-oriented practical works in schools as a result of inadequate funding, inadequate supervision, and insufficient staff. These observations are consistent with the findings of the current research.

The lack of sufficient human and physical resources is the primary reason for the poor execution of the program. The respondents disagreed that there is an adequate supply of qualified teachers, artisans, and the necessary facilities and equipment. There were, however, low mean scores for the availability of teachers, staff training, and availability of teaching materials, at 1.66, 1.69 and 1.93 respectively. This agrees with the findings of Okoye and Okwelle (2017) that there is a chronic scarcity of qualified teachers and the absence of organized staff training in the technical and vocational educational and training institutions in Nigeria. The absence of the aforementioned factors makes it highly improbable that policies will be effectively implemented.

In relation to the implementation of the program, the only strategy that the respondents felt was being implemented is the supervision of both staff and students. This strategy also had the highest mean of 3.23, indicating that staff supervision is viewed as the most widely used strategy in the technical and vocational institutions in the state. All other strategies, such as staff training, provision of equipment, curriculum revision, addition of new facilities, and information dissemination, had mean scores of less than 2.50. The overall mean of 1.90 indicates that the absence of strategies to enable the implementation of policies is significant, and is most likely the reason why policies are left on the shelf.

Abdullahi and Umar (2017) commented on the absence of certain systematized regulatory enforcement mechanisms such as teacher retraining, strategic planning related to the purchase of equipment, and curricular revision to align with the industry for many Nigerian technical schools. Abdullahi and Umar (2017) also pointed out that, while supervision is often touted as a means of ensuring that programs achieve the desired results, it is not the only means of ensuring that something is not achieved. This study also reflects this general pattern within the country.

Hypothesis testing also supports and fortifies the conclusions drawn from the average scores. Within the perceived policy implementation gap, there was no statistically significant difference among the teachers and students, meaning there was an agreement among the groups of respondents that the policies, to their understanding, were being executed at the lower end of the scale. In terms of the enforcement mechanisms available, there was also no significant difference between technical college teachers and vocational center teachers. This indicates that the shortcomings that these teachers encountered were most likely systemic as opposed to being confined to a certain school.

The evidence from these studies demonstrates that notwithstanding the fact that the technical and vocational policies were clearly stated, there is still a significant gap in the implementation of the policies. This has ultimately resulted in a lack of staff, a lack of adequate facilities, a lack of proper training, and a lack of supervision that supports, as a minimum, enforcement that goes beyond mere oversight. This is also in line with the conclusions drawn by Aina and Akintunde (2018) and Njoku (2018) in which the authors pointed out the fact that policy gaps in technical vocational education remain a huge challenge within the Nigerian context.

Conclusion

There are distinct deficiencies in the implementation of policies guiding technical and vocational education in Rivers State. Policies geared at improving teaching effectiveness and resource allocation as well as student skill acquisition are poorly implemented. Only instructional design for fit and minimal basic practical skills and training seem to be consistently addressed. There is also a lack of effective policy enforcement. Of all management and control measures that are supposed to be in place at different levels of the system, only supervision is functioning. Other measures such as the provision of adequate facilities, improved and new curriculum, increased staffing, and acquisition of training equipment are largely successful. The similar responses that were provided by the teachers and the students points to the existence of a common problem within the system, therefore calls for a systematic response. The most immediate lack that needs to be responded to if the TVE is to be improved is the lack of teachers, adequate resource allocation, and sustained policy implementation.

Recommendations

1. Government should strengthen policy enforcement through regular monitoring visits and clear compliance benchmarks for all technical and vocational institutions.
2. The Ministry of Education should expand teacher development programmes to address the shortage of qualified instructors and improve technical competency.
3. Adequate facilities, tools and modern workshop equipment should be supplied by the state government to support effective policy implementation.
4. Curriculum guidelines should be reviewed and consistently enforced to maintain uniformity in training standards across institutions.
5. Institutions should adopt structured enforcement strategies beyond supervision, including staff induction, internal audits and programme evaluation.

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