

Private Primary School Proprietors' Compliance with Minimum Standard in Oyo State, Nigeria

Joel Babatunde BABALOLA

Department of Educational Management
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

¹joelbabalola2000@yahoo.co.uk

Ismail Adesina RAJI

Department of Educational Management
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

ia.raji@mail1.ui.edu.ng;

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Bolaji Gabriel POPOOLA

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo, Nigeria.
Corresponding author: bhorlarjee@yahoo.com; +2348039171270

Abstract

The objective for introducing the Facility Norms (FN), Instructional Resources Norms (IRN), and Personnel Norms (PN) in the Primary School Benchmark Minimum Academic Standard (PSBMAS) in Oyo State is to ensure the quality private primary education, achievable through proprietors' compliance with PSBMAS in the state. The survey design was used. The population of the study comprised all 947 registered private primary schools as of 2010 in the state. The multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted. Cluster technique was used to select 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs), while 296 Proprietors of Private Primary Schools (PPPS) were selected from the LGAs using a simple random technique. Proprietors' Compliance with PSBMAS Checklist ($r = 0.88$) and Compliance Factor Questionnaire ($r = 0.74$) were used to collect data. These were complemented with Key Informant Interviews with six secretaries of Local Government Universal Basic Education Authority (LGUBEA). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression at a 0.05 level of significance, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Proprietors' comprehension ($\bar{x}=2.15$) was low, while willingness ($\bar{x}=2.88$) and ability ($\bar{x}=2.95$) to comply were high. Proprietors' policy compliance with FN ($\bar{x}=3.09$) and IRN ($\bar{x}=3.30$) were high, while that of PN ($\bar{x}=3.61$) was very high. Policy comprehension, willingness, and ability did not contribute to compliance with FN, IRN, and PN. Enforcement of FN, IRN, and PN by the LGUBEA caused the high PPC. Total compliance with PSBMAS among PPPS should be ensured.

Keywords: Compliance, Policy Comprehension, Proprietors' willingness,

Introduction

The policy is as good as the extent to which it has been complied with by the target group. Thus, policy formulation is one thing, its implementation is another. Implementation, which is the last phase of policy formulation, is mostly neglected thereby giving feedback suggestive of policy failure. The extent to which target groups comply with a stipulated regulation determines the success rate of policy implementation. Ikelegbe (2006) and Nweke (2006) posited that many policies in Nigeria fail due to ineffective implementation. Nwankwo and Apeh (2008) and Ikechukwu and Chukwuemeka (2013) corroborated this position by stating that the implementation of a policy is vital in the policy process and it determines whether a policy will succeed or fail. Most times, the issue with policy implementation is based on the interplay between the stakeholders, which include the government agency that formulated the policy, the officials saddled with the responsibility of ensuring compliance, and the target group which comprises the proprietors. In Nigeria, it has become a great deal of challenges for educational policies to fail, leading to the discontinuation of good policies, stemming from implementation problems. Regulation is good and its implementation ensures uniformity of quality in the activities of the regulated entity. However, it is the concern of policy planners to know what issues are with a policy at the implementation phase for the possibility of reinforcing or reworking it to ensure a better policy formulation in the future.

The major type of government intervention intended at improving private primary education quality is the formulation of regulatory policies. Educational policy is a broad statement including rules, principles, and regulations, which administer many of the decisions on the ways, who, how, and where to educate the children (Babalola, 2003, Popoola, 2019). In addition, educational policies are extremely imperative to the attainment of educational system goals.

As required by the dictates of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, State Ministries of Education (SMoE) are saddled with the responsibility of monitoring, setting, and improving the minimum academic standard in the diverse states (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). The Oyo State Government, apparently concerned about the low quality of private schools, introduced the Private Schools Benchmark Minimum Academic

Standard (PSBMAS) in the state (OSMoE, 2010). In the PSBMAS, the input standard contains the following norms: facilities (buildings and classrooms, furniture, health, library, sports and recreational, water and electricity), instructional resources (instructional materials, syllabus), and personnel. These norms in terms of appropriateness, adequacy, and specification are the least expected to be complied with by Proprietors of Private Primary Schools (PPPS) for their schools to be approved for operation by the Oyo State Government (OSMoE, 2010). Some years after the introduction of PSBMAS, there were allegations that some registered private schools in the state were operating using facilities that are below the PSBMAS and less qualified teaching personnel (Adeleke, 2014, Popoola, 2018).

Previous studies on proprietors' compliance with regulations, especially Buckley et al. (2003) and Popoola (2018) looked at the extent of proprietors' compliance with facility norms only. Buckley et al. (2003) conducted a study on the extent to which schools in Los Angeles complied with facility requirements as demarcated by health and safety norms concerning academic performance. Also, Popoola (2018) conducted a study on the extent to which proprietors of private primary schools in Oyo State complied with facilities requirement as demarcated by buildings and classrooms, furniture, health, library, sports and recreational, and water and electricity norms concerning the academic performance of pupils. This study looked at the extent of PPPS' compliance with facilities, instructional resources, and personnel norms concerning the compliance factors on the norms.

The quality of education available in private and public schools in Nigeria has proved to be a source of particular contention (Ilusanya & Bayley, 2014, World Bank, 2015). The quality disparity among the private primary schools could be traced to non-compliance with the PSBMAS. Most of the reviews on the quality of primary schools in Nigeria showed that the quality, learning inputs, and outcomes vary across private schools (Fielden & LaRocque, 2008, Härmä, 2011, Afemike, Omo-Egbekuse & Imobekhai, 2018, Härmä & Adefisayo, 2013, Day Ashley et al., 2014).

It is assumed that PSBMAS is as good as the extent to which it is complied with but the objective for setting such a standard might not be achieved if the process that is expected to ensure compliance is compromised. According to the Federal Republic of

Nigeria (2014) in the National Policy on Education (section 9 subsection 139 (g)), SMoE is not just to provide appropriate education laws, they are equally to ensure their enforcement. Surprisingly, there has been slight theoretical attention, dedicated to the final stage of the implementation sequence: enlightenment on reasons the target groups of public policies decide to or not comply with policies. This simply means that public policy targets conduct themselves in ways that are not constant with the stipulated objectives of the policy in question (Weaver, 2009). A good example is that PPPS may not comply totally with the regulation governing the establishment of schools and continue to run their schools based on partial compliance. Also, the proprietors of private schools may not comply at all with regulations by operating below the radar of compliance enforcement officers or agents.

It was stated by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD (2000), that compliance factors (comprehension of regulation, willingness, and ability of target groups to comply with regulations) determine the extent of such groups' compliance with the regulation. This implies that PPPS' compliance with PSBMAS is determined by the extent of their comprehension of, willingness, and ability to comply with the PSBMAS. In this context, the nature of the risk attached to non-compliance with PSBMAS could be a failure of the policy. This necessitates an evaluation of the extent of compliance with PSBMAS policy.

According to Wang (2009), policy evaluation is beneficial and used in several ways for making policy decisions that relate to efficiency, effectiveness, worth, and sufficiency which are premised upon a diversity of methodical data collections and analyses. As such, it is important for policy planners in education to know what challenges are being faced by those that the educational policy is targeted at. This is intending to use such information to improve on the future formulation of policies and also to know the reasons, if there are, why PPPS in Oyo State may not comply with the PSBMAS. This study therefore, aimed at finding out the extent to which registered PPPS in Oyo State has complied with the facility, instructional resources, and personnel norms in the PSBMAS. Also, to know the extent that compliance factors (policy comprehension, willingness, and ability) have been responsible for PPPS' compliance with PSBMAS requirements in Oyo State.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed at:

- i. finding out the extent to which registered PPPS in Oyo State has complied with the facility, instructional resources, and personnel norms in the PSBMAS.
- ii. determining the extent that compliance factors (policy comprehension, willingness, and ability) have been responsible for PPPS' compliance with PSBMAS requirements in Oyo State.

Research Questions

- i. To what extent do PPPS in Oyo State comply with the facility, instructional resources, and personnel norms in the PSBMAS?
- ii. To what extent are compliance factors (policy comprehension, willingness, and ability) responsible for PPPS' compliance with PSBMAS requirements in Oyo State?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant composite influence of compliance factors (policy comprehension, willingness, and ability) on PPPS' compliance with the PSBMAS norms (facilities, instructional resources, and personnel) in private primary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of this study consisted of all 947 registered private primary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria in 2010. The multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted. At the first stage, the Local Government Areas (LGAs) were clustered in line with the Oyo North (13 LGAs), Oyo Central (11 LGAs), and Oyo South (9 LGAs) senatorial districts in the State. At the second stage, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 50% of the LGAs from each of the senatorial districts, which amounted to 17 LGAs. The third stage was a random selection of 50% of the private primary schools that were registered by the State as of 2010 from each of the sampled local government areas, totaling 296. Two chairmen of NAPPS and secretaries of LGUBEA were randomly selected from each of the three

senatorial districts, totaling six. Data were collected using a checklist named Proprietors' Compliance with Primary School Benchmark Minimum Academic Standard (PCPSBMAS), Compliance Factor Questionnaire (CFQ), and structured interview schedule with the secretaries of Local Government Universal Basic Education Authority. The PCPSBMAS which is an inventory format was adapted from the assessment format for PSBMAS in Oyo State. It has two sections, section (A) provided background information about the individual schools, while section (B) provided information on the extent of compliance with facility guidelines (buildings and classroom norms, furniture norms, health norms, library resources norms, recreational and sports norms, water and electricity norms) instructional resources guidelines (instructional materials norms, syllabus norms) and personnel requirements guidelines. This section has 40 items, rated on a 4-point Likert scale as: to a very high extent (4), to a high extent (3), to a low extent (2), and a very low extent (1). Each of these items was rated based on the extent to which the proprietors had complied with the norms as stipulated in the PSBMAS. This information was used to generate the extent of compliance by proprietors for each norm.

The CFQ was formed using the compliance factors as stated by OECD (2000). It was used to gather information about the factors responsible for proprietors' non-compliance with PSBMAS. It has two sections A and B, while section (A) provided background information on the school; section (B) has information on factors responsible for proprietors' non-compliance with PSBMAS. Section B has three segments (i, ii, and iii). Segment (i) has three items, segment (ii) has five items, while segment (iii) has six items. These make a total of 14 items, rated on a 4-point Likert scale as very great extent (4), great extent (3), little extent (2), and very little extent (1).

The Structured Interview Schedule has fourteen questions eliciting information from the NAPPS chairmen and secretaries of LGUBEA about the compliance of private primary school proprietors with the PSBMAS. These questions were extracted from the compliance factors (policy comprehension, willingness, and ability of proprietors to comply with PSBMAS). Cronbach's alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the scales. The reliability coefficient of 0.88 and 0.74 was obtained respectively. All the 296 copies of the instruments administered were returned. The two research questions were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, mean ratings, and cut-off points, while

multiple regression was used to test the hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. The qualitative data from the interview were analyzed thematically.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do proprietors of private primary schools in Oyo State comply with the facility, instructional resources, and personnel norms contained in PSBMAS?

Table 1. Proprietors Compliance with Facility, Instructional Resources and Personnel Norms

Variables	Norms	Cluster Means
*Facility	Buildings and Classrooms	3.50
	Furniture	3.29
	Health	3.01
	Library Resources	2.79
	Recreation and Sports	2.86
	Water and Electricity	3.1
Overall	(High Extent)	3.09
Instructional Resources	Instructional Materials	2.88
	Syllabus	3.71
Overall	(High Extent)	3.30
Personnel	Staffing	3.61
Overall	(Very High Extent)	3.61

Note: Mean responses range from 0-1.4=Very Low Extent, 1.5-2.4= Low extent, 2.5-3.4=High Extent, 3.5-4.0= Very High Extent. *Result of an earlier study (Popoola, 2018) It could be observed from Table 1 that PPPS’ compliance in all the clusters was above average which implies that the mean responses of all the norms examined were higher than 2.5 (high extent). Hence, it could be inferred that compliance among primary school proprietors with guidelines on the facility, instructional resources, and personnel guidelines was considerably high. Also, the proprietors' compliance with PSBMAS was not total.

Research Question 2: To what extent have compliance factors (policy comprehension, willingness, and ability) been responsible for PPPS’ compliance with PSBMAS requirements in Oyo State?

Table 2: Proprietors' Comprehension of, Willingness, and Ability to Comply with PSBMAS

Variables	Means
Proprietors' Comprehension of PSBMAS	
Proprietors are not able to interpret the PSBMAS	1.83
PSBMAS is not simple to understand	1.76
Ministry of Education did not give adequate information about PSBMAS	3.01
Cluster Mean (Low Extent)	2.15
Proprietors' Willingness to Comply with PSBMAS	
Compliance with PSBMAS has cost disadvantages	2.48
PSBMAS was not generally accepted	2.89
PSBMAS has technical aspects that can make compliance difficult	3.12
Content of PSBMAS is not relevant	3.05
PSBMAS is not necessary for quality assurance	2.87
Cluster Mean (Great Extent)	2.88
Proprietors' Ability to Comply with PSBMAS	
Low enrolment of pupils affects compliance with PSBMAS	3.07
There is low monitoring of private schools by government officials	3.27
Taxes are too high and discourage compliance	2.78
The extent of compliance may be low if deterrent proprietors are not sanctioned	2.68
Location of school affects compliance with PSBMAS	2.79
The paucity of funds affects compliance with PSBMAS	3.11
Cluster Mean (Great Extent)	2.95

Note: Mean responses range from 0-1.4=Very Low Extent, 1.5-2.4= Low extent, 2.5-3.4=Great Extent, 3.5-4.0= Very Great Extent.

Table 2 presents the result on PPPS' comprehension of, willingness and ability to comply with PSBMAS. The comprehension factors had a cluster mean value of 2.15 out of maximum obtainable 4.00, which was below the threshold of 2.5. This means that the extent of PPPS' comprehension of PSBMAS was low. The results on PPPS's willingness and ability to comply with PSBMAS show that the willingness factors had a cluster mean value of 2.88 while those of ability factors were 2.95 out of maximum obtainable 4.00. Based on the cluster mean value of 2.88 and 2.95, the result shows that proprietors' willingness and ability to comply with PSBMAS was above the threshold of 2.5. This

means that the extent of proprietors' willingness and ability to comply with PSBMAS were high.

Research Hypothesis: There is no significant composite influence of compliance factors (policy comprehension, willingness, and ability) on PPPS' compliance with the PSBMAS norms (facilities, instructional resources, and personnel) in private primary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Composite influence of compliance factors on PPPS compliance with the PSBMAS norms

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	944.357	3	314.786	2.231	.085
Residual	41201.640	292	141.102		
Total	42145.997	295			

Model Summary

R	.150
R Square	.022
Adjusted R Square	.012
Std. Error of the Estimate	11.87862

Table 3 shows the composite low positive influence of compliance factors (policy comprehension, willingness, and ability to comply: R = 0.15) found on PPPS' compliance with the PSBMAS norms was not significant. This implies also that compliance factors did not significantly explain variations in the PPPS compliance with the PSBMAS norms.

Interview Content Analysis

The secretaries to the LGUBEA and the chairmen of NAPPS were interviewed concerning reasons for compliance with PSBMAS. The following are their responses:

The secretaries to the LGUBEA stated that *“the proprietors are familiar with the content of PSBMAS”*, while the chairmen of NAPPS agreed with this position but stated that *“some of our members did not get the copy of PSBMAS when they applied for approval as it was out of stock”*.

The secretaries to LGUBEA stated that *“the content of PSBMAS is simple to understand”* and the chairmen of NAPPS also agreed with this position. The secretaries to LGUBEA

stated that *“information was adequately given to proprietors and that the dissemination is continuous”*. But the chairmen of NAPPS, however, stated that *“in recent times, there has not been much information from the MoE on compliance with PSBMAS”*. The secretaries to LGUBEA position was that *“the regulatory cost is not heavy since most of the proprietors collect tuition fee from their pupils”*, but the chairmen of NAPPS, however, stated that *“the cost of compliance is enormous and pleaded that government should cushion the effect of compliance cost on the proprietors”*.

On whether the PSBMAS was generally accepted when it was introduced or not? The secretaries to LGUBEA were not clear on this, as they seem not to have information. They just talked generally that it must have been well accepted since it was well introduced to them. The chairmen of NAPPS, however, stated that *“it was sort of accepted, just that we felt left out of the formulation process”*. The secretaries of LGUBEA stated that *“there are no technical aspects in PSBMAS that should be difficult for proprietors to understand, since there are members of NAPPS that have properly complied and as such, others should be able to comply”*. The chairmen of NAPPS however defer and said that *“there are parts that are technical and gave examples of chairs and tables specification, stating that, to appropriately measure to specification is technical”*. They even suggested that *“the specification is not appropriate for the children”*. They also mentioned that *“the land specification as not being realistic to achieve, due to cost implication, most especially in the urban areas”*.

The secretaries of LGUBEA stated that *“monitoring of private schools was regular”* but the NAPPS chairmen, however, said that *“the compliance officials usually visit to ensure that they have renewed their annual dues and that the visits are occasional”*. The secretaries of LGUBEA said that *“taxes in the state are not exceptional, such that can prevent compliance with PSBMAS”*. They believe that *“the proprietors are into business and are collecting tuition and as such should pay taxes”*. They even highlighted that *“compliance comes before taxation”*. But the NAPPS chairmen, however, said that *“taxes imposed are too high, such that reduces their profit margin and can invariably affect continuous compliance with PSBMAS”*. The secretaries of LGUBEA and the NAPPS chairmen all agreed that *“sanctioning non-compliant proprietors can deter non-compliance”*. However, the NAPPS chairmen stated that *“such*

sanctioning should be blind to the influence of certain proprietors who are seen as being above the law, as this can negatively influence others”.

The secretaries of LGUBEA thought that *“the policy is not location-sensitive and that it is the choice of a proprietor to choose a location that will be suitable for the establishment of a school”*. However, the NAPPS chairmen believe that *“the location of a school could affect PPPS' compliance with PSBMAS in certain ways. They gave the example of land specification in the PSBMAS which is difficult and expensive to acquire in the urban areas”*. The secretaries of LGUBEA and the NAPPS chairmen all stated that *“paucity of funds could affect compliance with PSBMAS”*.

Discussion of findings

The result shows that compliance among primary school proprietors with guidelines on the facility, instructional resources, and personnel guidelines was considerably high, and that proprietors' compliance with PSBMAS was not total. The implication of this varied compliance with PSBMAS suggests that not all the aspects of the facility, instructional resources, and personnel requirements were provided by the PPPS. This shows that the compliance enforcement officials saddled with the responsibility of ensuring total compliance are not doing due diligence to the enforcement. The study revealed that some proprietors' compliance with the norms was proper, many were partial, and a few very low. This corroborates existing literature, showing that there is variance in the extent target audiences comply with government policies (Weaver, 2009, Shamsaei et al., 2011, Shamsaei, 2012).

The result on PPPS' comprehension of, willingness and ability to comply with PSBMAS shows that comprehension factors was below the threshold of 2.5. This means that the extent of PPPS' comprehension of PSBMAS was low. This finding contradicts the excerpts from the interview sessions that, proprietors have ease of interpreting PSBMAS, that PSBMAS is simple to understand and that there has been adequate dissemination of information by the MoE. This result implies that proprietors do not have a good comprehension of PSBMAS. This is reflected in the extent to which the proprietors have complied with certain aspects of the facilities, instructional resources, and personnel norms of the PSBMAS as discovered in this study, despite the high extent of compliance. These results corroborate the existing literature OECD (2006), Grindle

(2007), and Weaver (2009) which states that lack of regulatory comprehension by the target group is a reason for non-compliance with regulations.

The results on PPPS's willingness and ability to comply with PSBMAS show that proprietors' willingness and ability to comply with PSBMAS was above the threshold of 2.5. This means that the extent of proprietors' willingness and ability to comply with PSBMAS were high. These results are in line with the submissions of (OECD 2000, Grindle, 2007 and Weaver, 2009). This result implies that PPPS in Oyo State have the willingness and ability to comply with PSBMAS. This is actually reflected in the extent to which the proprietors have complied with the facilities, instructional resources, and personnel norms of the PSBMAS as discovered in this study. The position of the secretaries of LGUBEA and the NAPPS chairmen somehow agreed with this result but disagreed slightly on the technicality of the PSBMAS. The secretaries of LGUBEA think that monitoring was regular and that taxes are not too high. But the NAPPS chairmen, however, stated that the compliance officials' visit was occasional and often to ensure renewal of their annual dues and that taxes were too high. They also agreed that low enrolment adequate sanction for non-compliance and paucity of funds affect PPPS' compliance but disagreed that location of the school encourages non-compliance.

The finding shows a low composite positive influence of compliance factors (policy comprehension, willingness, and ability of PPPS' to comply with the PSBMAS norms that was not significant. The findings of this study implied that other factors beyond PPPS policy comprehension, willingness, and ability brought about the extent to which proprietors complied with PSBMAS norms in Oyo State. As found out in the literature review, other factors which encompass policy enforcement threats such as the closure of school premises could be responsible for target audience compliance with PSBMAS policy. This corroborates the findings of some existing studies (Weaver 2014, Parker & Nielsen 2017). The findings contradict the position of OECD 2000, that comprehension, willingness, and ability are the factors responsible for compliance of target audience with regulations.

Conclusion

Education policy failures in Nigeria have been traced to poor implementation which is a reflection of the extent to which the target audience has complied with the

policies. This has negatively impacted the attainment of educational objectives, most especially as it pertains to quality private education in Oyo State. This calls for concern by stakeholders to examine how compliance factors have impacted the extent to which proprietors of private primary schools have complied with the regulatory policy on private primary schools. There have been issues with compliance with policies most especially when it concerns facilities, instructional resources, and personnel norms required to ensure effective teaching and learning process. Knowing the impact of the compliance factors as it affects PPPS's compliance with PSBMAS will help policy planners to think of new approaches to take when reviewing the policies. It would also suggest to decision-makers how to tackle/reinforce those identified factors that could either mar or make compliance better.

Recommendations

- i. There is a need to ensure that proprietors of private primary schools improve their compliance with facility norms, instructional resources norms, and personnel norms of PSBMAS since it is the minimum acceptable academic standard for proprietors to establish and run a private primary school.
- ii. The intentions of the state government for introducing PSBMAS should be made known through awareness programs.
- iii. Ministry of Education officials who are saddled with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of PSBMAS policy should always ensure proper monitoring of private primary schools.
- iv. There should be an overhaul of the PSBMAS policy by educational policy planners in conjunction with other stakeholders (Parents, Association of Proprietors of Private Schools, and Ministry of Education) to address the aspects that proprietors adjudge to be technical and making compliance difficult.
- v. It will be good if the Ministry of Education can place the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standard document on the internet, for the would-be proprietors/investors in private education in the state to have easy access to the required information.

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