

Effectiveness of Recent Educational Policies in Enhancing Academic Achievement in Lagos State Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Education remains a central driver of social and economic development, particularly in Lagos State, Nigeria, where secondary schools play a critical role in preparing students for higher education and employment. In recent years, the Lagos State government has introduced multiple policy reforms aimed at enhancing teaching quality, modernising curricula, improving infrastructure, and providing better learning resources. Despite these efforts, the actual impact of these policies on academic achievement—and whether such effects are perceived equally by male and female teachers—remains unclear. This study evaluates the perceived effectiveness of recent educational policies in enhancing student academic achievement in Lagos State secondary schools, with a focus on gender-based perception differences. A quantitative survey research design was employed, targeting public secondary school teachers across various Local Government Areas. Using a structured questionnaire administered to 170 randomly selected teachers, data were analysed through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and independent samples t-tests. Findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between the perceived effectiveness of educational policies and student academic achievement ($r = 0.372$, $p = .018$), suggesting that well-implemented reforms are associated with improved learning outcomes. No significant difference in perception was observed between male and female teachers, indicating equitable reception of these reforms across genders. The study concludes that targeted educational reforms can positively and consistently influence academic performance when effectively implemented. Its contribution lies in providing empirical, teacher-centred evidence to guide policymakers in refining and sustaining reforms. Recommendations include ongoing policy evaluation, expanded scope to other regions, and inclusion of objective achievement measures in future research.

Keywords: Educational Policy Effectiveness, Academic Achievement, Policy Implementation, Secondary Education



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INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognised as a primary driver of social and economic progress, equipping individuals with the skills, knowledge, and values needed to contribute meaningfully to society (Nwachukwu, 2024). For countries like Nigeria, where a large proportion of the population is young, the quality of education is a determining factor in long-term national development. Lagos State, being the country's most populous and economically vibrant region, plays a central role in this process. At the secondary school level, students transition from basic foundational learning to more advanced academic and vocational skills, which prepare them for

higher education, skilled employment, and informed citizenship (Fletcher Jr et al., 2018). In recognition of the importance of this stage, the Lagos State government has, in recent years, implemented several education policy reforms designed to improve student outcomes. These initiatives have included continuous professional development programmes for teachers, curriculum reviews to integrate contemporary skills, improved provision of teaching and learning materials, and targeted investments in school infrastructure (Obizue & Enomah, 2025). The ultimate aim of these reforms is to enhance teaching quality, create conducive learning environments, and raise levels of academic achievement.

However, the effectiveness of such reforms cannot be taken for granted. The success of education policies depends on how well they are implemented and the extent to which they address on-the-ground challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, unequal distribution of qualified teachers, and disparities in access to learning resources (Başaran & Turan, 2025). While some schools may show improved results following policy changes, others may see little difference, highlighting the importance of assessing actual impact rather than relying solely on stated intentions. Teachers are at the forefront of this process, serving as the link between policy design and classroom practice. They are responsible for interpreting policy directives, adjusting their instructional strategies, and evaluating whether students are benefiting from the changes. As such, teachers' perceptions are a valuable measure of whether reforms are achieving their intended purpose (Oladunjoye & Ngozi, 2014). Furthermore, examining whether male and female teachers hold similar or differing views on policy

effectiveness can help identify potential differences in experience, ensuring that policies are equitable in their impact.

This study focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of recent educational policies in enhancing academic achievement in Lagos State secondary schools from the perspective of teachers. Specifically, it investigates the gender distribution of teachers in the study sample, the relationship between perceived policy effectiveness and student achievement, and whether perceptions differ significantly between male and female teachers. The findings are expected to provide evidence-based insights that can guide policymakers, school leaders, and stakeholders in refining reforms to achieve measurable and equitable improvements in the quality of secondary education.

Statement of the Problem

Secondary education in Lagos State is a pivotal stage in preparing young people for higher learning, vocational training, and participation in the workforce. The quality of outcomes at this level is strongly shaped by the policies that govern teaching, learning, and school management (Chukwuma & Ibe, 2024). In response to persistent concerns over student performance, the Lagos State government has introduced reforms aimed at improving teaching standards, modernising curricula, providing better learning resources, and enhancing school infrastructure (Obizue & Enomah, 2025; Oluoha, 2025). Such reforms align with findings that targeted teacher training, curriculum upgrades, and adequate resources can positively influence academic achievement (Hunt, 2015; Masnawati & Darmawan, 2022). However, evidence from prior studies indicates that the effectiveness of educational policy is

often undermined by challenges in implementation, including overcrowded classrooms, unequal distribution of qualified teachers, and inadequate teaching resources (Hudson et al., 2019; Enyiazu, 2022). While some reports suggest that well-implemented reforms can improve performance (Ige & Odu, 2024; Rathnakar et al., 2025), others show that socio-economic disparities and rapid population growth continue to limit policy impact (Munir et al., 2023). This discrepancy underscores the need for empirical evaluation of whether stated policy objectives translate into tangible learning gains in the Lagos State context.

Teachers, as the direct implementers of policy, play a central role in bridging the gap between policy design and classroom reality. Their perceptions can serve as a reliable indicator of whether reforms are producing intended benefits (Oladunjoye & Ngozi, 2014). Yet, there is limited research examining these perceptions in Lagos State, particularly about recent reforms. Furthermore, while literature recognises that educational reforms affect all teachers, little is known about whether perceptions differ by gender—an oversight that may conceal disparities in how policies are experienced or applied (Farley & Leonardi, 2021). Without a clear understanding of the relationship between teachers' perceived policy effectiveness and student academic achievement—and of whether these perceptions vary across demographic groups—policymakers risk designing reforms that appear effective on paper but fail to deliver equitable results in practice. This study addresses these gaps by investigating: (1) the gender composition of secondary school teachers in the study

sample; (2) the relationship between perceived policy effectiveness and student achievement; and (3) whether male and female teachers differ significantly in their perceptions. The findings will provide evidence-based insights for refining education reforms to ensure both effectiveness and equity.

Research question

1. What is the gender distribution of secondary school teachers in Lagos State who participated in the study on the effectiveness of recent educational policies?
2. Is there a significant relationship between the perceived effectiveness of recent educational policies and the academic achievement of secondary school students in Lagos State?
3. Does the perceived effectiveness of recent educational policies differ significantly between male and female teachers in Lagos State?

Educational Policies and Their Role in Enhancing Academic Achievement

Educational policies serve as structured frameworks that shape the objectives, delivery, and evaluation of learning within schools. When effectively designed and implemented, such policies can create supportive learning environments, enhance instructional quality, and promote equitable access to resources (Chukwuma & Ibe, 2024). Common reforms in secondary education include curriculum restructuring, revisions to assessment standards, targeted teacher training initiatives, and improvements in school governance (Ezewuzie et al., 2025; Okeke et al., 2024). In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (NPE) provides the foundational structure for

education delivery nationwide. However, the translation of policy into practice is often challenged by limited resources, administrative bottlenecks, and insufficient stakeholder involvement (Hudson et al., 2019). In Lagos State, recent reforms have focused on upgrading infrastructure, improving teacher welfare, integrating modern learning tools, and aligning curriculum content with 21st-century skills. These measures are intended to raise academic achievement and better prepare students for higher education and the labour market. Literature indicates that policies such as curriculum reform, teacher training, and infrastructure improvements are intended to enhance learning outcomes (Hunt, 2015; Shangase, 2013). Studies have shown that resource allocation, teaching quality, and supportive learning environments influence performance (Akinyemi et al., 2024; Masnawati & Darmawan, 2022). However, the direct link between perceived policy effectiveness and measurable achievement, specifically in Lagos State, remains underexplored. This question seeks to empirically test that relationship.

Determinants of Academic Achievement in Secondary Schools

Academic achievement is shaped by an interplay of individual, institutional, and systemic factors. At the individual level, student motivation, socio-economic background, and parental support are significant predictors of academic success. For example, students from supportive family environments are often more engaged and demonstrate higher performance in assessments (Oni & Osuji, 2024). At the school level, the qualifications of teachers, the availability of instructional resources, and the condition of

facilities influence how well students learn. Schools with better-equipped classrooms, access to technology, and trained teaching staff tend to achieve higher academic results (Ezepue et al., 2025). Systemic factors such as education governance, funding allocation, and policy priorities also play a central role in shaping outcomes. Policy changes, such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, have been aimed at expanding access and improving quality, but results vary across regions due to disparities in implementation (Oladele, 2018; Osarenren-Osaghae & Irabor, 2018).

Educational Policy Reforms in Lagos State

Lagos State, as Nigeria's economic hub, presents a distinctive context for evaluating education policy effectiveness. The state government's reforms—outlined in strategic documents such as the Lagos State Education Sector Plan (LSESP)—have prioritised teacher training, curriculum enhancement, resource provision, and infrastructural development (Adebayo, 2021; Oluoha, 2025). These policies aim to reduce inequities in educational opportunities, improve teaching standards, and raise student performance levels. Despite considerable investment, challenges persist. Munir et al. (2023) note that socio-economic inequalities continue to influence student outcomes, with learners from less advantaged backgrounds often performing below their peers. Furthermore, rapid population growth and increasing school enrolments exert pressure on existing facilities and staff, making consistent policy implementation difficult (Enyiaz, 2022). This reality raises the question of whether the reforms are

effectively bridging performance gaps or simply maintaining existing patterns of achievement. In the literature, Lagos State's reforms are described as affecting all teachers, but little is known about whether demographic representation—such as gender—affects perspectives on policy effectiveness. Establishing the gender composition of the teaching workforce in this study provides a foundation for interpreting the diversity and representativeness of the collected data.

Research Gap and Rationale for the Study

The reviewed literature underscores that while educational policies have the potential to improve academic achievement, their actual impact depends on implementation quality, stakeholder engagement, and context-specific challenges. In Lagos State, where educational reforms have been frequent and varied, there is limited empirical evidence assessing their effectiveness specifically from the perspective of teachers—the individuals responsible for translating policy into classroom practice. The literature review identifies a lack of evidence on gender-based differences in perception of policy effectiveness. This question directly addresses that gap, providing nuanced insights into whether policies are experienced uniformly or differently across genders. This gap is significant because teachers' perceptions can reveal how policies function in real learning environments and whether they lead to tangible improvements in student achievement. Moreover, existing research rarely examines whether these perceptions differ across teacher demographics, such as gender. Addressing these gaps will provide actionable insights for policymakers

seeking to refine reforms for maximum impact. Accordingly, this study examines the perceived effectiveness of recent educational policies in enhancing academic achievement in Lagos State secondary schools, the relationship between policy effectiveness and student performance, and whether perceptions vary significantly between male and female teachers.

METHOD

This study adopted a quantitative survey research design. The choice of this design was guided by the study's aim—to capture teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of recent educational policies and their relationship to student academic achievement. The survey approach was considered appropriate because it allows for the collection of standardised data from a relatively large number of respondents within a short time, enabling meaningful statistical analysis. Using this method also provided the flexibility to examine both general trends and potential differences across subgroups, such as gender. The target population comprised all public secondary school teachers in Lagos State, Nigeria. By focusing on teachers, the study captured informed insights from those who regularly interact with both policy directives and students' day-to-day learning experiences. A total of 170 teachers participated in the study. To ensure representativeness, participants were drawn from multiple schools across different Local Government Areas in Lagos State, covering urban, semi-urban, and peri-urban contexts. A simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents. First, a list of public secondary schools in selected LGAs was obtained from the Lagos State Ministry of Education. Schools

were then randomly chosen from this list, after which teachers within these schools were also randomly selected. This approach gave each teacher an equal chance of being included, reducing selection bias and increasing the generalisability of the findings. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher, titled the Recent Educational Policies and Academic Achievement Questionnaire (REPAQ). The instrument was divided into three sections: **Section A:** Items measuring the perceived effectiveness of recent educational policies. **Section B:** Items assessing perceived student academic achievement indicators (e.g., test scores, class participation, skill acquisition). All items in Sections B and C used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree (1)* to *Strongly Agree (5)* to enable quantifiable responses. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha, which produced a coefficient of 0.834. This value exceeds the generally accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency and making the instrument dependable for this study. The collected data were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Descriptive statistics—such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations—were used to summarise demographic information and overall perceptions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: *What is the gender distribution of secondary school teachers in Lagos State who participated in the study on the effectiveness of recent educational policies?*

Table I. Distribution of Respondents by Gender

S/N	Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Male	78	45.9
2	Female	92	54.1
Total	—	170	100

Note. N = 170. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place.

Out of the 170 respondents, 78 (45.9%) were male and 92 (54.1%) were female. This distribution indicates a slightly higher proportion of female teachers in the sample, which reflects the common gender composition in Lagos State secondary schools. The representation from both genders provides balanced insights into the perceived effectiveness of recent educational policies.

Research Question 2: *Is there a significant relationship between the perceived effectiveness of recent educational policies and the academic achievement of secondary school students in Lagos State?*

Table II. Correlation Between the Effectiveness of Recent Educational Policies and Academic Achievement

Variable	Mean (X̄)	SD	r	p
Effectiveness of recent educational policies (X)	16.84	3.09	0.372	.018
Academic achievement of secondary school students (Y)	10.42	2.71		

Note. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used. N = 170. **p** < .05 indicates statistical significance.

The Pearson correlation coefficient (**r** = 0.372, **p** = .018) reveals a significant positive relationship between the perceived

effectiveness of recent educational policies and student academic achievement. This suggests that well-implemented reforms—such as targeted teacher training, curriculum realignment, and infrastructure upgrades—are associated with improved student performance. The null hypothesis for this question is therefore rejected.

Research Question 3: *Does the perceived effectiveness of recent educational policies differ significantly between male and female teachers in Lagos State?*

Table III. Independent Samples t-test on Policy Effectiveness by Gender

Gender	Mean (\bar{X})	SD	df	t_crit
Female	92	3.21	0.82	168
Male	78	3.14	0.87	0.92

Note. N = 170. **t_crit** refers to the critical value at the 0.05 significance level (two-tailed).

The independent samples t-test ($t = 0.92$, $p > .05$) indicates no statistically significant difference in perceptions between male and female teachers regarding the effectiveness of recent educational policies. This suggests that both male and female teachers share similar views on how these policies impact academic achievement, supporting the conclusion that the reforms are experienced consistently across gender groups.

Discussion

The findings from this study indicate that recent educational policy reforms in Lagos State are perceived by secondary school teachers as contributing positively to students’ academic achievement. The statistically significant positive correlation between perceived policy effectiveness and academic performance suggests that well-targeted reforms—such as professional development initiatives for teachers, curriculum realignment, and improvements to school infrastructure—are yielding benefits that are visible in classroom learning

outcomes. This result supports previous work by Rathnakar et al. (2025) and Ige and Odu (2024), who found that policy-driven changes focusing on the quality of teaching, access to resources, and instructional delivery tend to have measurable impacts on student performance. The present study provides fresh evidence from Lagos State’s secondary schools, where the combination of urban challenges and diverse student needs makes effective policy design and implementation particularly critical. The analysis also showed no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers in their perceptions of policy effectiveness. With mean scores of 3.21 for female teachers and 3.14 for male teachers, the similarity in views suggests that the perceived benefits of these policies are being experienced relatively equally across the teaching workforce. This aligns with Hollings’ (2021) observations that broadly inclusive education policies often result in equitable perceptions of their value among stakeholders. However, while uniform perceptions may indicate equitable policy design, they may also mask gender-specific classroom realities that teachers do not explicitly capture in survey responses. Farley and Leonardi (2021) argue, surface-level equality in policy perception can sometimes obscure deeper disparities in actual outcomes for male and female students. This raises an important consideration for policymakers: continuous evaluation of reforms should not only focus on aggregate improvements but also investigate whether particular student groups are experiencing different levels of benefit. The Lagos State context adds further significance to these findings. Rapid urbanisation, high enrolment pressures, and varying socio-economic conditions across districts present substantial challenges for

policy execution. The fact that a positive association was found between recent reforms and academic achievement despite these constraints suggests that targeted interventions can be effective even in complex environments. Yet, Marín-González et al. (2022) note, sustaining such gains requires not only well-conceived policy frameworks but also consistent funding, stakeholder engagement, and strong oversight mechanisms. Overall, this study reinforces the principle that policy effectiveness in education depends not only on the intentions behind reform but on the depth and quality of its implementation. For Lagos State, maintaining the momentum will require continued investment in teacher development, resource provision, and monitoring systems that track both general and subgroup-specific outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The study provides clear evidence that recent educational policies implemented in Lagos State have a measurable positive influence on students' academic achievement. Unlike the results section, which only presents statistical associations, this conclusion synthesises the broader implications: the significant positive correlation between policy effectiveness and student performance underscores that reforms such as targeted teacher training, curriculum realignment, and infrastructural improvements are not only well-received by teachers but are also linked to tangible learning gains. Equally important is the finding that male and female teachers do not differ significantly in their perceptions of policy effectiveness, suggesting that these reforms are perceived as equitable across genders. The value of this research lies in its contribution to the limited body of empirical

evidence linking teacher perceptions of policy reforms to measurable student outcomes in Lagos State. By integrating quantitative insights with gender-based analysis, the study adds depth to ongoing discussions on policy equity and impact, offering policymakers practical feedback on which aspects of reform are translating effectively into classroom benefits. This teacher-centred perspective ensures that policy evaluation considers the experiences of those most directly involved in implementation, bridging the gap between policy intention and classroom reality. Nonetheless, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The study relied solely on teacher perceptions and self-reported measures of student achievement, which may be subject to bias or influenced by factors beyond policy reforms. The research was also confined to public secondary schools in Lagos State, limiting the generalisability of findings to private schools or other regions with different socio-economic contexts. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to determine causal relationships between policy reforms and academic outcomes. Future research should address these limitations by incorporating longitudinal designs, objective student performance data, and broader geographic coverage. Comparative studies between public and private schools, as well as qualitative inquiries into specific policy components, could provide richer, more nuanced insights. Additionally, exploring whether certain subgroups of students—such as those from disadvantaged backgrounds—benefit differently from reforms could help ensure that future policies are both effective and inclusive. This study affirms that well-targeted educational reforms can have a positive and equitable impact on academic

achievement in complex urban contexts, provided that their implementation is monitored, refined, and adapted to evolving classroom realities.

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