

Moving With Global Trends in Curriculum Innovation: Mitigating the Challenges of Curriculum Implementation for Effective Teaching and Learning in Nigeria

Ayodele M. Asebiomo (PhD)

NERDC, North Central Zonal Office,
Minna, Niger State.

ayodele.asebiomo@yahoo.co.uk, asebelau@yahoo.ca

Abstract: *Education is the key to achieving and sustaining the goals of any society that must develop its citizen. Its adoption as the instrument for national development cannot be over emphasized. Curriculum is a deliberate and direct efforts within a given programme framework for strengthening synergy and relevant services for ensuring the acquisition of knowledge needed for the improvement of man's surrounding. A strategic curriculum innovation is one of the educational reforms that have been witnessed by education sector in Nigeria. The paper x – rays the Challenges of implementing the curriculum for effective teaching and learning. Two hundred and fifty teachers were selected from the North Central Geo – Political Zone of Nigeria that form the sample population for the research. An instrument titled Teachers Perception of Curriculum Implementation Analysis Questionnaire (TPCIAQ) was used for data collection. The data collected from the questionnaires administered were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. The finding of the study revealed the numerous challenges to include non availability of the curriculum, insecurity in the zone, lack of trained teacher and instructional materials, lack of sensitization and capacity building advocacy from stakeholders and a lot more. Based on the findings from the study appropriate recommendations were made.*

Keywords: *curriculum innovation; implementation and challenges; education; teaching and learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the key to achieving and sustaining the goals of any society that must develop its citizen. Hence it must be adopted as the tool for achieving desirable social change that can lead to meaningful growth and development of the nation.

The two strategic goals of Nigerian Education as identified by the last Presidential Summit on Education includes:

- Access
- Quality

Other identified issue that must be addressed in order to achieve these goals includes:

- *Strengthening the Institutional Management of Education*
- *Teacher Education and Development*
- *Technical and Vocational Education & Training (TVET) and*
- *Funding, Resource Mobilization and Utilization*
- *Curriculum development and implementation.*

(FME, 2013)

The importance of teaching and learning to the socioeconomic development of any nation cannot be overemphasized. This is because teaching and learning are responsible for the translation and implementation of educational policies, curriculum or course offerings. Curriculum therefore constitutes a conspicuous element in the totality of organized education, formal and non-formal subsystems.

The aims of any level of education cannot be achieved if the planned program for such level of education is not well implemented. Observing this Onyeachu (2008) asserted, “no matter how well is a curriculum of any subject is planned designed and documented, implementation is important.” This happens due to the reasons or problems that arises at the implementation stage. Recognizing this Babalola (2004) and Mkpa (2005) remarked that, it is at the implementation that many excellent curriculum plans and other educational policies are married without any trace of adequate integration.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tanner and Tanner (1980) defined the curriculum as “planned and guided learning experiences and intended learning outcomes formulated through or symmetric reconstruction of knowledge and experience under the auspices of a school for learners”. Curriculum is also seen as all the learning experiences which are planned and guided by the school whether carried out in groups or individually either in school or outside the school (ESU 2007, Offorma 2007, Parson 2009, & Enu 2007).

Also, curriculum is the sum total of activities which is planned and directed by the school for the attainment of educational goals. Olaitan and Alli (1997) described the curriculum as activities that a student has under the auspices or direction of the school. Olabiyi (2005) opined that curriculum is the totality of experience, knowledge skills, and activities systematically planned to educate the student for gainful employment.

Garba (2004:136) viewed curriculum implementation as “the translation of the objectives of the curriculum from paper to practice”. Ivowi (2004) defined curriculum implementation in a nutshell as “the translation of theory into practice or proposal in action”. Onyeachu (2008) viewed curriculum implementation as the process of putting all that have been planned as a curriculum process into practice in the classroom through the combined effort of the teachers, learners, school administrators, parents as well as the interaction with the physical facilities, instructional materials, psychological and social environment. All these definitions show that curriculum implementation is the reaction between the teachers, learners and other stake holders in education geared towards achieving the objectives of education.

Any plan of actions designed to achieve or implement a programme such as the curriculum in the school system should be directional, activity based, spell out the benefits/advantages, prescribe resources, spell out expected outcomes and be amenable to changes or modification.

The purposes of curriculum implementation according to Eze (2001) include:

- *To translate the idea into a workable blueprint and to develop program for it successful implementation.*
- *To advice on how to provide and monitor the required infrastructural requirement of a given program*
- *To create wide spread of awareness of the program in question thus trying to fit the characteristics of adopting institutions*

According to Asebiomo & Popoola (2013) the sustainability of the emergent curricula, must focus on strategies which include:

- *Articulated sustainable education policy in the school with a clear roadmap.*
- *Private sector support in the provision of adequate resources for the programmes in schools.*
- *Training and re-training of teachers and managers on how to impart skills acquisition to students in schools.*
- *Introduction of basic productivity related topics in the curricular such as, strategic planning (vision, mission, goals of enterprise), team building, simple productivity measurement techniques etc.*
- *Proper monitoring and evaluation of the scheme.*
- *Availability of equipment and relevant facilities e.g. for laboratories, workshops, resource room, the curriculum etc.*

- *Increasing funding because of the capital intensive nature of the programme.*

The prospects of curriculum implementation as listed by Asebiomo & Popoola (2013) include:

- *Recruitment of well qualified and competent teachers.*
- *Full implementation of Teachers Salaries Scale (TSS) both on federal, state and local government levels.*
- *Provision of adequate instructional materials and facilities.*
- *Provision of training and retraining of teachers*
- *Involvement of parent teacher association (P.T.A), UBEC and Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) in provision of materials, facilities and fund.*

These and many more challenges are begging for answers. However, our action today will define where we are tomorrow. In this paper, effort was geared towards taking a cursory look at the challenges that has bedeviled the curriculum implementation in Nigerian education institutions

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is a known fact that education is an instrument for social and economic transformation. Failures in the challenge for effective implementation of the curriculum could lead to a run-down system and a crash from the heights sought by the players.

The mission of operational curriculum in the secondary school is to give effect to the nation's drive for self-reliance, prepare a world class and African leading, create skilled and creative work-force in capacity building, service delivery that would transform Nigerian natural resources into goods and services thus affect economic, social well being and quality of life of people. The development of any curriculum for obvious reasons of teaching and learning is a welcome development but more important is the dedicated implementation of such policy for the benefit of the nation. Hence looking at the challenges that has bedeviled the curriculum implementation in Nigerian education institutions is the focus of this study.

4. PURPOSE

The study examined the challenges of implementing the curriculum in schools for effective teaching and learning. The study also examined how the teacher's efforts to implement the curriculum and find out challenges faced in its implementation.

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Will qualification of teachers influence the level of proper implementation of the school curriculum?
- How well do teachers understand the appropriated use of the school curriculum?
- Do teachers able to translate their understanding of the curriculum into cogent implementation on the teaching of the students?

6. HYPOTHESES

- There is no significant difference between teachers' experience and cogent understanding of the implementation of school curriculum
- There is no significant relationship between male and female ability in the implementation of the school curriculum

7. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The population of the study consisted of teachers in the North Central Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. Survey design was used because a survey reveals current conditions and also shows needs for improvement.

8. METHODOLOGY

8.1. Design

A descriptive research design of the survey type was used in the study

8.2. Population

Participants were secondary school teachers who have been teaching in the school in the last one year in all public schools in all the six states and FCT that constitute the North Central Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria.

8.3. Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample for the study was 260 participants comprising teachers from all the six states and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) that made up the North Central Geo-Political Zone of the country which were randomly selected as follows: two secondary schools randomly selected from each of the senatorial district of each state of Niger, Kwara, Kogi, Nasarawa, Benue, Plateau and FCT giving a total of 26 schools (2 senatorial districts per state and 1 in FCT). Secondly, in each of the twenty six selected schools, ten teachers were randomly selected from each school making a total of two hundred and sixty respondents. The teachers responded to questionnaires on challenges faced in the implementation of school curriculum as well as suggesting the best and appropriate ways and strategies of implementing the school curriculum. The selection was based on multistage sampling techniques. Stage 1 was random selection of schools in each of the senatorial district of each state and FCT consisting North Geo-political Zone. The schools were to be co-educational and must have been founded for a minimum of six years, while stage 2 was purposive selection of random selection of teachers with gender; qualification and experience play a major determinant. The choice of North Central Geo-Political Zone was made because of being central zone between the other zones of the country.

8.4. Instrument

Data were collected through Teachers Perception of Curriculum Implementation Analysis Questionnaire (TPCIAQ). TPCIAQ contains bio-data of respondents' school, senatorial district, state, sex, teaching experience and qualification. The other section of TPCIAQ is "Curriculum Implementation Analysis Questions (CIAQ)" constructed by the researcher to measure teachers understanding of curriculum implementation (facilitating learning, using content effectively, knowledge of teaching, addressing and directing students understanding of curriculum contents among others). The test was designed to provide response on 5-item scale dimension to be answered by the teachers.

The author developed the items while three experts in curriculum and research development centre and two secondary school teachers and tertiary educators did the content validation for relevance and accuracy. The instruments were used for pilot study of twenty six (10%) teachers in a state different from the experimental states. The scores for the trial tested instrument were collated and subjected by Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistics. The result yielded correlation co-efficient of 0.86 which were considered to be statistically good enough for the instruments which was personally administered to the respondents by the researcher.

9. DATA ANALYSIS

The research questions were pre-coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics: frequency counts, percentage and pie charts. The hypotheses were tested using Means, Standard Deviation, and chi-square. All hypothesis generated were tested at α -level of 0.05.

10. RESULTS

10.1. Descriptive Analysis

The research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics and results were reported thus:

- Will qualification of teachers influence the level of proper implementation of the school curriculum?

Table1. Teachers' Qualifications on the Level of Influence on the Implementation of Curriculum

Qualification difference among the teachers	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Trained Teachers {NCE, BSc (Ed), BA (Ed), PGDE etc}	124	47.69	0.462	4.24
Untrained Teachers {BA, BSc, ND, HND}	136	52.31	0.530	
Total	260	100		

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Table 1 shows the difference in the Means (0.068) and Standard Deviation (4.24) of teachers' qualification influence on the implementation of the school curriculum. 124 (47.69%) teachers have qualifications in education as well showed the level of their influence in the implementation of the school curriculum while 136 (52.31%) teachers who are not trained with the mean score of 0.530 which is far from the standard deviation of 4.24. Hence 124 out of 260 teachers are trained to teach in school while 52.31% of the teachers were untrained.

- How well do teachers understand the appropriated use of the school curriculum?

Table2. Analysis of Teachers' Understanding of Appropriate Use of the School Curriculum

Level of teachers Understanding	Range	Frequency	Percentage
Insufficient understanding	0-39	113	43.46
Sufficient understanding	40-59	85	32.69
High understanding	60- above	62	23.85
Total		260	100

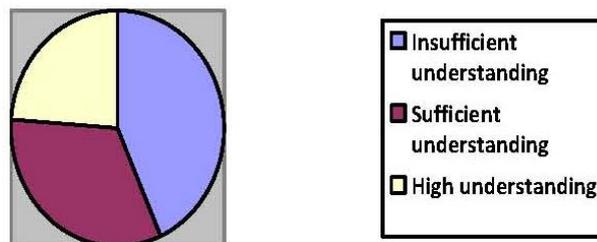


Fig1. Teachers' level of understanding of appropriate use of curriculum

Table 2, Figure 1 shows that out of 260 teachers who were observed, 113(43.46%) scored in the range of 0-39 are categorized as insufficient understanding of the appropriate use of the school curriculum. This is followed by 85(32.69%) of teachers in the range of 40-59 which are categorized as those with sufficient understanding of the appropriate use of the school curriculum. While, 62(23.85%) whose scores are between the range of 60 and above are categorized as having high understanding of the appropriate use of the school curriculum.

- Do teachers able to translate their understanding of the curriculum into cogent interpretation on the teaching of the students?

Table3. Translation of Teachers' Understanding of the Curriculum into Cogent Interpretation on its daily use in Teaching and Learning

Cogent Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
Insufficient	135	51.92
Sufficient	70	26.92
High sufficient	55	21.16
Total	260	100

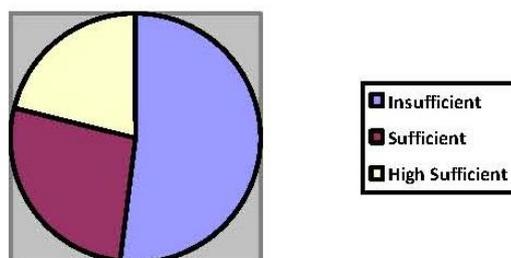


Fig2. Translation of teachers' understanding of the curriculum into cogent interpretation on its daily use in teaching and learning

Table 3, Figure 2 shows that, out of 260 teachers studied 135(51.92%) could not sufficiently translate their understanding of the curriculum into cogent interpretation of it on teaching and learning. Seventy (26.92%) of the teachers could sufficiently translate the understanding of the curriculum into meaningful teaching and learning, while, only 55(21.16%) had high translation of their knowledge of the curriculum in the teaching and learning. Hence, those teachers who could

not translate their understanding of the curriculum into cogent interpretation for proper teaching and learning are more than the other.

11. HYPOTHESES TESTING

- There is no significant difference between teachers’ experience and cogent understanding of the implementation of school curriculum

Table4. Chi-Square (x^2) Analysis of Teaching Experience Cogent Understanding of the Implementation of School Curriculum

Level of cogent understanding	1 – 5 yrs	6 – 10 yrs	Above 10 yrs	Total	Df	X ² cal	table
Insufficient	30	115	15	160	4	0.858	9.47
Sufficient	10	15	10	35			
Highly sufficient	15	40	20	75			
Total	55	170	45	260			

$p < 0.05$

Table 4 shows that X² cal (0.858) is less than X² table (9.47) at 0.05 level of significant. The hypothesis is not rejected. This implies there is no significant relationship between teaching experience of the teachers and cogent understanding of the implementation of the school curriculum.

- There is no significant relationship between male and female ability in the implementation of the school curriculum

Table5. Chi-Square (x^2) analysis of sex and teachers’ cogent understanding of the implementation of School Curriculum

Level of cogent understanding to sex	Male	Female	Total	df	X ² cal	table
Insufficient	20	35	55	10	8.178	5.89
Sufficient	55	115	170			
Highly sufficient	20	15	35			
Total	95	165	260			

$p < 0.05$

Table 5 shows the analysis of sex and teachers’ cogent understanding of the implementation of the school curriculum. The X² (8.178) is greater than X²table (5.89) at 0.05 level of significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It implies that there is significant relationship between sex difference of teachers and cogent understanding of implementation of the school curriculum.

12. DISCUSSION

The analysis of the data shows that the qualification of teachers has influence on their understanding of the implementation of the school curriculum. From the analysis of the research question 1, only 47.69% of the respondents (teachers) are trained to teach while those untrained are in the majority. The descriptive analyses of questions 2 and 3 shows that a relative high percentage of teachers were on the average in terms of understanding the implementation of the school curriculum. Sufficient and high understanding percentage were 32.69, 23.85 respectively as in the case of research question 2 while insufficient ability to translate the understanding of the school curriculum into meaningful teaching and learning account for 51.92% of the total percentage.

The findings from the hypothesis one tested the relationship between teaching experience and teachers’ ability to translate their understanding of the school curriculum to its implementation and showed that there is no relationship between the two variables. The implication is that teacher’s inability to translate their understanding to cogent understanding for teachers may be as a result of not able to have enough knowledge of the subject matter. The findings from the testing of relationship between the sex of teachers and understanding of the implementation of the school curriculum indicated that there is a relationship between the two variables. The findings corroborate the work of Leder (1992) that gender difference was found and the possible

explanations for the existing differences include teacher's inability to explain the content properly the teachers' cognitive variables.

13. CONCLUSION / RECOMMENDATION

Findings of the study further established that less than half of the teachers who were observed during curriculum implementation had sufficient and high sufficient understanding of the implementation of the school curriculum. It was found that sex of teachers would not have a relationship with the cogent understanding of the implementation of the school curriculum. The study revealed that teachers' understanding of the school curriculum is a major factor in the effective implementation of the school curriculum. However, the finding revealed the numerous challenges of curriculum implementation to include non availability of the curriculum, lack of training, sensitization and capacity building advocacy from both teachers and stakeholders and a lot more. Teachers need to be skillful in order to use the curriculum effectively. He also needs to understand how to effectively use the school curriculum during teaching and learning. However, adequate training and retraining programmes is advocated for teachers in effort to successfully implement the school curriculum. Availability of curriculum and adequate funding policy, and robust advocacy and sensitization of all curriculum users will be a panacea for a successful curriculum implementation in the country.

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