



Curriculum Implementation in Basic Education in Nigeria

Abstract:

This paper examined the challenges facing the implementation of curriculum in the Nigerian basic schools. Secondary data were adopted in the paper. The data were collected from published and unpublished articles. The paper identified poor funding, shortage of teachers, inadequate infrastructure facilities, and shortage of instructional materials, poor supervision, corruption, insecurity and poor capacity building programme as major challenges facing curriculum implementation in the Basic schools in Nigeria. In order to address this challenges, the paper suggested increment in funding of basic schools, employment of more teachers, provision of more infrastructure facilities and instructional materials, improvement in school supervision, capacity building programme of teachers, deployment of anti-corruption agencies to fight corruption in school administration and provision of adequate security in school through deployment of more security officers to schools.

Keywords:

Basic Education, Curriculum Implementation.

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Introduction

School system is designed for curriculum implementation. Curriculum is an organized experiences that is meant to be executed in the school. Ivowi (2004) noted that curriculum implementation involves a number of activities culminating in translating curriculum documents into classroom practice. It involves translation of theory into practice or proposal into action. Offorma, (2005) viewed curriculum implementation is the translation of the planned curriculum into the operational curriculum. Okoro, (2008) defined curriculum implementation as the translation of the objectives of the curriculum from paper to practice. Isife & Ogakwu, (2015) observed that curriculum implementation means the actual exposure of the learner to the contents of curriculum and the real teaching and learning activities that involve the teachers, learners and materials. Curriculum implementation is experienced when the inert curriculum has been translated into operating curriculum.

Okebukola (2004) defined curriculum implementation as the transition of the objectives of the curriculum from paper to practice. That is only effective curriculum implementation ensures achievement of the objectives for which the curriculum was designed to attain. Okoro, (2010) noted that curriculum implementation makes teachers to prepare lesson notes, use reinforcement and motivational strategies, classroom control and creation of friendly relationship, application of theories and principles of learning, effective use of evaluation techniques and adequate consideration of



learner's cognitive styles. This facilitates resolution of instructional challenges as well as achievement of overall goals of education, which is the vision of the 21st century. Onyeachu (2008) also defined curriculum implementation as the process of putting all that have been planned as a curriculum document into practice in the classroom through the combined efforts of teachers, learners, school administrators, parents as well as interaction with physical facilities, instructional materials, psychological and social environments". Curriculum implementation as the task of translating the curriculum document in to the operating curriculum by the combined efforts of the students, teachers and others concerned, that is, curriculum implementation demands concerted efforts of end-user soft he curriculum for its effective implementation at all levels in order to achieve the desired goals.

Concept of Basic Education Schools

Basic Education is the education given to children aged 0-15 years. It encompasses Early Child Care and Development Education (0-4) and 10 years of formal schooling. Early Child Care and Development Education however is segmented into ages 0-4 years, situated in daycare or creches, fully in the hands of the private sector and social development services, whilst ages 5-6 are within the formal education sector. For purposes of policy coordination and monitoring, the Federal Government instituted a Universal Basic Education (UBE) with the following objectives: developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion; the provision of compulsory, free and universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school age; reducing the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency; to cater through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the promotion of basic education, for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their schooling; and to ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communicative and life skills, as well as the ethical, moral, security and civic values needed for the laying of a solid foundation for life-long learning. Basic Education, to be provided by Government, shall be compulsory, free, universal and qualitative. It comprises 1 year of Pre-Primary, 6 years of Primary and 3 years of Junior Secondary Education (FRN, 2013).

The goals of Basic Education are: to provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship, wealth generation and educational advancement; to develop patriotic young people equipped to contribute to social development and in the performance of their civic responsibilities; to inculcate values and raise morally upright individuals capable of independent thinking, and who appreciate the dignity of labour; to inspire national consciousness and harmonious co-existence, irrespective of differences in endowment, religion, colour, ethnic and socio-economic background; and to provide opportunities for the child to develop manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capability (FRN, 2013).

Challenges of Curriculum Implementation in Basic Education Schools in Nigeria

There are many challenges facing curriculum implementation in Nigerian basic schools. Some of the challenges include; poor funding, Shortage of teachers, inadequate infrastructure facilities, shortage of instructional materials, poor supervision, corruption, insecurity and poor capacity building programme.

Poor Funding

Poor funding of basic education in Nigeria have affected the implementation of curriculum in majorities of basic schools across the country. This submission is supported by Onyekwena, Uzor, Oloko, & Adeniran (undated) and Ogunode, Ohibime, Nasir & Gregory (2021) who acknowledged that basic education in Nigeria is underfunded and this have hampered effective implementation of curriculum in the various schools across the federation. Ogunode, Jegede & Ajape (2021) posited that curriculum implementation is capital intensive and such capital are not provided for the school administrator to administer the curriculum implementation programme in their respective schools Ogunode & Nasir (2021) submitted that curriculum implementation involve the provision of adequate



human and materials resources and such resources cannot be procure adequately with the budgetary allocation that annually goes to the basic education. Reasons for poor funding of basic education according to Ogunode, Richard, & Musa (2021) include corruption, poor implementation of UNESCO 15-20 recommendation for education, insecurity problem, subsidy payment, linkage in revenue generation and short fall of national revenue.

Shortage of Teachers

Shortage of professional teachers in the school is a major challenge to curriculum implementation. Teachers are very important for the implementation of curriculum in the schools. Teachers are the major player in the execution of curriculum in educational institutions. Shortage of teachers in schools will affect the curriculum implementation. The teachers' roles in curriculum implementation include; lesson preparation, lesson presentation, instructional resource sourcing, marking of scripts for both continuous assessment and examination, result preparation and feedback report to parents. The inability of many basic school to have adequate teachers have affected effective curriculum implementation in the respective school. Report of independent newspaper (2020) that there was a deficit of 135,319 teachers at the Early Childhood Care Development Education, 139,772 deficit in primary schools and 2,446 shortage in Junior Secondary School across the nation. We have identified a number of challenges have been identified as clogs in the realization of good access, equity and quality of education in Nigeria. One of these is the critical issue of teacher shortage at all levels of education. There is a shortage of early child education teachers needed to attain the proposed 1:20 teacher-to-pupil ratio. Corruption in administration of basic school in Nigeria have been identified as one of the cause of shortage of professional teachers in the system. For instance, Ogunode & Stephen (2021) submitted that many public primary schools in the country do not have adequate professional teachers due to the high rate of corruption in the administration. There are many corrupt practices responsible for the shortage of professional teachers in the public primary school across the country. Funds diversion is one of the factor, the money released for the recruitment of qualified teachers and other human resources services are diverted by some officials and political officeholders. Another corrupt practices in the educational administration that is responsible for shortage of teachers is the problem of ghost workers. The ghost workers syndrome is another factor responsible for shortage of teachers in many primary schools in Nigeria. Ghost workers, is a situation where fake names are been used to collect salaries for teachers that are supposed to be employed in the school. This corruption practices is common in Nigerian educational sector. Other factors responsible for shortage of professional teachers in the Nigerian schools according Ogunode & Paul (2021) include, poor manpower planning, inadequate funding, shortage of teachers institutions and insecurity. Philip, Peter, & Iro (2015) have concluded that the shortage of teachers in most basic schools in Nigeria have affected the implementation of school curriculum.

Inadequate Infrastructure Facilities

Infrastructure facilities are very essential for curriculum implementation in schools and their inadequacy will affect the curriculum implementation in the educational institutions. Ogunode & Agwor (2020) defined school infrastructure facilities refer to social capital within the school environment. They include school buildings/complexes such as classrooms, tables, exam hall, chairs, auditoria, desks, staff offices, seminar/conference/board rooms, laboratories, workshops, studios, farms, gymnasias, central libraries, specialized/professional libraries, faculty libraries, departmental libraries, etc., Institute/centers' specialized facilities e.g. ICT infrastructure, special laboratories, conference facilities, etc., and Boards e.g. interactive, magnetic, screen and chalk, etc., ICT that is computer laboratories and services, network connectivity, multi-media system, public address system, slide, and video projectors, and Ergonomics furnishing in laboratories, libraries, and lecture rooms/theaters, moot courts, and studios, etc. Students' hotels or accommodation include Boys and Girls hostels; municipal/physical infrastructure i.e. power supply, water supply, good road networks, sports, health and sanitation, staff schools, security facilities, etc. The importance of school infrastructural



facilities in the realization of educational goals cannot be underestimated. School facilities aid the delivery of the teaching and learning process in the schools. The school offices provide a conducive working environment for teachers, the classrooms help the learners to learn while the school fence protects students, the teachers, and school administrators from criminals. The school plant protects the entire human resources from the sun, rain, heat cold, and snow. It is unfortunate that most basic schools in Nigeria do not have adequate infrastructure facilities to support the implementation of curriculum in their respective schools. Kubiati (2018) and Ogunode & Ahaotu, (2021) submitted the shortage of school facilities in Nigerian schools have hampered curriculum implementation in the schools. Ajayi and Yusuf (2009) maintain that high levels of students' academic performance may not be guaranteed where instructional space such as classrooms, libraries, technical workshops, and laboratories are structurally defective or not available and adequate.

Shortage of Instructional Materials

Shortage of instructional materials in some basic schools in Nigeria have resulted to poor implementation of school curriculum. Instructional materials are educational resources designed purposely for implementation of curriculum in the classrooms. Ogunode & Josiah, (2023) observed that instructional materials are used in all forms of educational institutions. The resources are influencing the implementation of teaching, research and community service in the various tertiary institutions. In secondary schools, instructional materials are supporting teaching and learning. Teachers in educational institutions teach well with the deployment of instructional materials. Instructional materials serve as a channel between the teacher and the students in delivering instructions. They may also serve as the motivation for the teaching-learning process. It is used to get the attention of the students and eliminate boredom. Akubue, (1993); Onykwelu, (2000) and Patrick & Etukudo 2014) disclosed that non-utilization of instructional materials by teachers in Nigerian schools. Akubue (1993) discovered in his study that none of the teachers in the 60 social studies lessons she observed in JSS in the former Anambra State used instructional materials in teaching. Teachers made no effort to use such materials as the atlas, Maps, and pictures, even when they were within their reach. The study also revealed the non-availability of instructional materials, lack of funds, lack of electricity in schools and no encouragement from the government, as major constraints to teachers' use of instructional materials to teach pupils in primary schools. Ogunod & Josiah (2023) concluded that poor funding of basic schools, poor improvisation, high cost of instructional resources, poor storage, poor planning, lack of maintenance, poor capacity building in instructional materials management and corrupt practices as factors that have militated against the deployment of instructional materials in the Nigerian basic schools.

Poor Supervision

Poor supervision in some basic schools in Nigeria have also affected the effective implementation of curriculum in the schools. Curriculum is designed to function with supervision. Human and materials resources are supposed to be supervised and inspected for smooth implementation of curriculum. Ogunode (2020) observed that the problem of poor school supervision by the respective school administrators have also contributed to the challenge facing the administration of basic schools. Many school administrators do not effectively supervised the basic schools under their watch. The Nigerian government recognized the need to monitor not only the financial management of the school, but also the teaching of students. Educationists at the Ministries of Education both at the federal and the state levels have set up quality control divisions in their respective ministries to ensure that quality education is maintained. It has been established that quality and standard could be maintained in the educational institutions through regular inspection and continuous supervision of instruction in the schools. Supervision and inspection have been identified as very germane to the day-to-day activities of educational institutions (National Open University of Nigeria, 2009). Shortage of professional supervisors, poor funding, inadequate supervisory materials, insecurity, shortage of transport facilities and poor training have been identified as problems that have hampered the development of supervision



in most schools in Nigeria by (Isa, & Jailani 2015; Umar, Hauwa & Nura, 2017; Ogunode & Ajape 2021).

Corruption

Poor implementation of Basic education policies in Nigeria is as a result of the corruption practices in the administration of Basic education. There are many policies designed and formulated for the development of primary school education in Nigeria. For instance, teacher-student policy of 1:35, ICT facilities policy, feeding programme etc. All these policies and programme are poorly implemented because of the high corruption going on the various agencies, commissions and ministries responsible for the implementation of the policies and programme. Ogunode (2021); Godwin (2018); Osunyikanmi,(2018) concluded that corruption have penetrated the Nigerian educational system. Funds released by the government for the administration of the schools some time ended up in the private hands. These funds are meant for the capital and recurrent services in the secondary schools are been diverted by the officials of the ministries. Funds budgeted for different programmes in the ministries are been diverted into private banks. Many public funds meant for the development of education in Nigeria are diverted and mismanaged. Ogunode & Stephen (2021) opines that corruption practice in the Nigerian educational institutions is another major challenge preventing the implementation of primary school policies in Nigeria.

Insecurity

Insecurity challenges in Nigeria have affected smooth curriculum implementation in most basic school across the country. Basic schools in North West, North East and South East geo-political zone of Nigeria have been attacked severely. Ogunode (2020) observed that insecurity is one of the major problem facing the administration of primary schools in Nigeria. Administration of basic education in Nigeria is frustrated by the insecurity challenges facing the country especially the Northern part of the country. Many Basic schools have been closed down. Educational officers cannot travel to areas where they are supposed to travel to for administrative functions because of insecurity challenges. One of the most insecurity challenge facing the country is the Boko Haram group. The militant group, Boko Haram, has carried out violent attacks in the north-eastern parts of Nigeria. Thousands of Nigerians have been killed, and many more have been forced to flee their homes. Schools have been the primary target of the attacks. Since 2011, Boko Haram, whose name means ‘Western Education is Forbidden, has expanded its attacks to the direct target of schools. It has resulted in the killing and abduction of hundreds of teachers and students and the destruction of school buildings and teaching materials. As a result of increased attacks on education, all schools in Borno State were closed from the 14th March 2014, and roughly 253,000 children were out of school in the 2013–2014 school year (Borno SUBEB). By the end of 2014, Adamawa, Yobe and Borno State Universal Basic Education authorities have reported a total of 338 schools destroyed. The recent attacks on basic schools national wide have led to unstable school calendar, unstable examination, and destruction of school facilities and poor implementation of curriculum (Ohibime & Mohammed, 2022;Ogunode, & Ohiosumua 2021).

Poor Capacity Building Programme

Poor capacity building programme in the basic schools have also affected curriculum implementation. Training and retraining are key for a successful curriculum implementation in the classrooms. The teachers needs constant training and retraining programme to be able to implement the curriculum in details. Poor capacity development programme of teachers in Nigerian primary schools is another fundamental problem that has affected the development of curriculum at that level. The national policy on education (2013), states that” no educational system may rise above the quality of its teachers.” This is in tandem with the National Policy on Education which stated that the purpose of teacher education is to produce highly motivated, conscientious and effective classroom teachers while boosting the spirit of creativity and enquiry and assisting them to adapt the current societal ways of life; making available teachers with sound professional and intellectual background which will be



applicable in their daily teaching obligations and ensuring their adaptability in an ever changing society and the world at large and to enhance their commitment to the teaching profession. Osiesi (2020) and Kolo (2009), observed that teachers fundamentally need a continued and lifelong learning as to be able to shoulder their duties in and outside the classroom and be capable of positively inducing pupils' behaviours, way of life and the way they think. Mcbrown & Ogunode (2022) and Ogunode, Adah, Audu & Pajo (2020) noted that the primary school teachers in Nigeria do not enjoy staff development programme as planned by the federal, states and local government authorities because of inadequate funding, lack of strategic plans, poor implementation of staff development policies, institutional corruption, poor internal school administration of staff development programme for teachers, unstable educational policies, political instability and lack of data/information on training need gaps of schools (Ogunode, Adah, Audu & Pajo 2020). Abubakar, (2015) concluded that teachers in Nigeria lack capacity development programme for effective teaching in the school.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper discussed the challenges facing the implementation of curriculum in the Basic schools in Nigeria. The paper concluded that poor funding, shortage of teachers, inadequate infrastructure facilities, shortage of instructional materials, poor supervision, corruption, insecurity and poor capacity building programme are the major challenges facing curriculum implementation in the Basic schools in Nigeria.

In order to address these challenges, the paper suggested:

1. Increment in Funding of Basic Schools: The government should increase the funding of basic education to enable the school administrators procure all needed resources for curriculum implementation
2. Employment of more teachers: More professional teachers should be employed to reduce the high teacher-students ratio in classrooms.
3. Provision of Infrastructure Facilities: More facilities like classrooms, offices, stable light, internet services, and ICT facilities should be provided in all the Basic schools.
4. Instructional Materials: More instructional materials should be provided in the Basic schools across the country.
5. School Supervision: The governments should improve on the school and instructional supervision to ensure full implementation of curriculum.
6. Capacity building programme: The government should provide adequate funding for capacity building programme of teachers. This will help to improve their capacity of teaching.
7. Deployment of Anti-Corruption Agencies: Various anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria should be deployed to fight corruption in school administration
8. Provision of Security: The government should provide security in all basic schools through deployment of more security officers to schools.

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