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CHAPTER 10

CHALLENGES OF ADMINISTERING CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION IN NIGERIA

UMOH, UKEME EKPEDEME

Introduction

Curriculum is viewed by different people to mean different things and the idea of what the curriculum means differ from an individual to another; the contents of the curriculum also differ from society to another. The content of any functional curriculum is determined by the needs, desires, ambitions, aspirations, and goals of the society it is designed for. For a school curriculum to achieve its goals and objectives, it must be a complete reflection of the nature of the society that will implement it.

Curriculum could be seen as a vehicle or avenue for meeting the needs of the society and for solving societal problems. This means that even the problems peculiar to a particular society is solved through the curriculum implemented by its schools. Afangideh (2009) defined curriculum as a structured series of intended learning experiences which embraces purposeful experience provided and directed by educational institutions to achieve

predetermined goals. Therefore curriculum is an organized learning experiences systematically selected and arranged to result in learning experiences administered and supervised by an educational institution to attain desirable objectives. Usually these learning experiences are encountered by the learner through the process of instruction.

Instruction according to Offorma (2005) is the implementation stage of the curriculum. It is the on-going aspect of teaching. It is the stage in which the learner and the teacher interact with each other and with learning experiences as well as learning material so as to facilitate learning. Curriculum implementation takes place mainly at the school level and in the classroom. Teachers who are the real implementers of the curriculum are involved in interpreting the documented curriculum; selection of learning experiences, learning materials methods, and techniques appropriate for the contents. They also execute the planned curriculum through the process of instruction and teaching. There are usually some challenges encountered by schools' administrators and the implementers (teachers) during the process of

curriculum implementation; this chapter therefore intends to highlight and discuss some of such challenges; these include:

- * Inadequate finance
- * Curriculum overload
- * Overcrowded classrooms
- * Teacher factor
- * Unavailability and Dearth of Instructional materials
- * Lack of Trial testing
- * Evaluation of learning outcomes
- * Poor communication network
- * Learner Related Issues
- * Poor transportation network
- * Learner Related issues

Inadequate Finance

Education is a costly venture and the success of any educational system is proper planning, effective administration and supervision as well as adequate financing, where there is no sufficient fund, curriculum development and implementation cannot be effectively and efficiently carried out. Funds are needed for organization of workshops and seminars to create awareness, train teachers on newly developed curriculum or innovation, production of curriculum materials, trial testing of the new

curriculum. Also at the school level, the school administrator and the implementers (teachers) of the curriculum are usually faced with inadequate finance to procure laboratory equipment, textbooks and other instructional materials.

Etuk, Udosen and Edem (2004) established that inadequate funding of education in Nigeria has impeded the proper implementation of section 9 of the NPE on educational services, the objectives of which are to:

- (a) develop, assess and improve educational programmes;
- (b) enhance teaching and improve the competence of teachers;
- (c) make learning experiences more meaningful for children;
- (d) make education more cost effective;
- (e) promote in-service education; and
- (f) develop and promote effective use of innovative materials in schools (FRN 1998, p.40).

The implication of inadequate finance in curriculum implementation is usually unattainment of curriculum goals and objectives.

To reduce the problem of educational system to minimum, it is advisable that the funds allocated to education in Nigeria should be adequate and properly managed, diversion of funds for personal use should be stopped and the funds channeled for effective use. When this is done other challenges and factors affecting curriculum implementation will be reduced if not completely eradicated.

Curriculum Overload

Nigerian Schools' curricula are overload at the primary and secondary school levels. According to Ivowi (2005) and Anwuka (2005), curriculum overload occurs because of the high number of subjects to be offered at the primary, and junior and secondary levels of education. Afangideh (2009) established that the learners are expected to offer eleven (11) subjects at the primary school level; twelve (12) or thirteen (13) subjects at the junior secondary level, but some global and emerging issues such as family life education, citizenship environmental education, HIV/aids, drug abuse among others are also introduced as curriculum contents to be learnt by the pupils.

However, Ivowi (2005) asserted that the content of our curriculum is satisfactory, though overloaded. The implication of an overloaded curriculum on the education system according to Offorma (2006) is that:

The issue is not only the large amount of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to be presented to the learners, but the availability of adequate time, and resources of the implementation of these content areas. The non-coverage of the content has left the learners to be half-baked as some teachers rush to cover the contents, thereby treating the content shabbily, while others leave a lot of grounds uncovered (p. 28).

Too many curriculum contents with limited time for implementation is a problem and has a negative effect on the achievement of learners and the Nigerian economy as the labour market is filled with unseasoned graduates times may not be able to defend their certificates.

It is necessary to apportion time for implementation of the curriculum based on the weight of the content. There should be balance in time allocated to each content (subject). This can serve as a means of coping with the overloaded curriculum which is already in use rather than removing these contents from the curriculum at the various level of education.

Overcrowded Classrooms

The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) recommend that the teacher-pupil ratio at the primary school level should be 1:25; while that of the secondary school should be 1:40. Today, learners' ratios at these levels of education have double whereas that of the teacher is kept almost constant. Afangideh (2009) explained that the awareness created by the Universal Primary Education Launched in 1976 brought about increase in school enrolment and has contributed to overcrowded classrooms as everybody wants to be educated. The number of teachers produced and employed is not adequate to match the school population. A class is made of 45-50 children when they should be about 15 for effective teacher-pupil

interaction. In this type of situation, it is either that the proprietor wants to maximize profit by not employing enough teachers or that competent teachers are not available for employment or that the available space is not adequate (Offorma 2006). Also, the facilities available in our schools cannot accommodate the number of learners enrolled in the school.

Training, employment as well as deployment of teachers and provision of facilities to accommodate the number of learners enrolled in the school can go along way in this type of situation.

Teacher Factor

The teacher is the actual implementer of the curriculum as earlier said; this has direct impact on the success of curriculum implementation. Since no nation can rise above the quality of the teachers, teacher variables such as qualification, competence, attitudes, and dedication must be considered in planning and implementing the curriculum. Udofot (2005) asserted that it is a common experience that the Nigerian populace is shouting for quality in the products of the Nigerian education system. He also observed that without good teachers there would be national retrogression than progression. This shows how important the teacher is in curriculum implementation and nation's development.

There are so many teachers in our schools today who are not qualified; some offer to teach as the last resort

without professional skills, experience, interest, passion, commitment and enthusiasm. Most of our schools too are under staffed with qualified and professional teachers, so that the available teachers are made to teach subjects outside their areas of specialization. This poses a big problem on the outcomes of curriculum development and implementation.

To handle this problem, the nation should train more professional teachers; organize in-service training, seminars, and workshops, for professional teachers to update their knowledge on curriculum implementation. The government should employ and deploy these teachers to handle curriculum issues in the schools.

Unavailability and Dearth of Instructional Materials

Unavailability of curriculum materials is a well known problem in our educational system. It is either there is complete absence of instructional materials or limited number that cannot go round the number of pupils. In some schools the structural facilities are completely dilapidated with no classrooms, seats, laboratories, libraries, textbooks and other instructional aids. Udofot (2005) observed that:

Instead, what the schools appear to be experiencing is a feature of dwindling institutional facilities, equipment and poor staffing vis-à-vis enlarged pupils' enrolment because of the high social demand for education, this has resulted in poor institutional performances and low pupils achievement. (pg. 5)

Tying to implement a curriculum without instructional materials is like trying to start and move a car without fuel. There can never be an effective curriculum implementation without curriculum (instructional) materials. This problem of dearth of instructional materials could be due to high cost of procurement or lack of proper care and maintenance.

To eradicate this problem, the government has to ensure proper funding; renovation of physical facilities, procurement and delivery to schools which are in need of these facilities.

Lack of Trial Testing

Trial testing has to do with the trying out or implementing a new curriculum on a small scale to ascertain its workability before full adoption. This is often times ignored due to inadequate funds, time, and resources (human and material). Often times Nigeria embark on curriculum implementation without trial testing to see if the goals and objectives are achievable. The fact remains that any curriculum adopted for wide scale implementation without trial testing will likely not be successful and effective and may not achieve its goals.

It is therefore recommended that newly developed curricula should be trial tested before wide scale implementation. This will help curriculum planners to determine its workability for adoption or rejection if necessary. This is a very crucial step in successful curriculum implementation and should be strictly adhered to.

Evaluation of learning outcomes

Proper evaluation of the curriculum provides feedback which is used as input back into the curriculum development process. Evaluation can be formative or summative. Formative evaluation is ongoing during implementation, while summative is done at the end of implementation. Every curriculum to be implemented has its objectives and expected outcomes. Therefore for effective evaluation to take place, it must be valid. That is, it must be consistent with the stated objectives and must measure behaviours at the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.

Quite often in stating objectives in lesson plans, teachers state affective objectives, but in evaluating learning outcomes, not much is done to reflect the emphasized affective objective (Anwuka, 2005). Teachers must therefore be made to understand how to measure outcomes in affective and psychomotor domains and not to evaluate only in cognitive domain.

Learner Related Issues

Learners' attitudes, interest, and motivation seem to affect the implementation of the curriculum. If learners show no interest in what the teacher is teaching, it affects the teachers' effort and consequently curriculum implementation.

Lack of study materials like textbooks, workbooks,

books, exercise books etc definitely affect the performance of the teacher in the classroom. This may have an adverse effect on curriculum implementation. Oshin (2009) explained that teachers complain about the difficulty of teaching effectively when learners refuse to bring along to school necessary textbooks, workbooks, exercise books, and other related materials. This constitutes a hindrance to effective curriculum implementation.

Parents should provide their children with the necessary learning materials for effective learning and effective curriculum implementation.

Communication /Transportation Network

A good communication network is crucial in curriculum implementation. Information on new curriculum implemented must be disseminated on time in order to achieve success. According to Etuk, et al (2004), often, activities of the central curriculum development body, are hardly communicated to the beneficiaries and the RDC is charged with the responsibility of not only disseminating such relevant information but also monitoring and coordinating the curriculum developments of other centres. Most times these centres operate in isolation due to poor communication links such that

changes, innovations, and materials produced for curriculum implementation do not get to the teachers who need them; some teachers in some schools are not made to be aware of curriculum innovations.

Similar to communication problem is poor transportation network in Nigeria which does not allow available materials for curriculum implementation to be transported to some schools and implementation centres due to bad roads. At other times, implementers may not be able to get to their centre due to bad roads condition. This also affects the attitude of teachers to work as they may not be able to go to work. And this can impede effective implementation of the curriculum.

The government should train teachers on ICT as a way of solving the problem of poor communication in curriculum implementation and also inform teachers on innovations. Government should provide good road network to ease movement to various schools.

Conclusion

There are many challenges encountered in administering and implementing curriculum and instruction in the educational system; these have been listed and explained to include inadequate finance, curriculum overload, unavailability and dearth of instructional materials, overcrowded classroom, teacher factor, evaluation of learning outcomes, poor communication

network, poor transportation network and learner related issues.

Based on these identified challenges, it has been recommended that there should be proper funding of schools; provision of learning facilities, good communication and transportation network by government and other stakeholders in Education.

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