

CURRICULUM CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION BARRIERS: PERCEPTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN OYO STATE

BY

Aishat Mojisola Rabi

Department of Early Childhood Education,
Lagos state University
2ashiaishat@gmail.com
08068504495

&

Racheal Taiwo Ogunnaiya

School of ECCPED
Primary Education Department,
Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate.
Ogunnaiya.rt@gmail.com
08034803119

Abstract

At the forefront of any curriculum change lies the efforts of the teachers in determining its success or failure. This has prompted this study to determine the challenges encountered during implementation of curriculum change in Ibarapa land of Oyo state. The study was able to discover that among the challenges faced by teachers are teachers' attitude, inadequate resources and governmental efforts. Of the 104 teachers questioned, only 6(6%) were trained to be teachers, 1(1%) strongly agreed that there are adequate basic facilities and 48(46%) agreed that political decisions are made without regards for teachers. It was recommended that teachers should be motivated with incentives and training towards curriculum change. It was also recommended that adequate resources and facilities be provided by both the government and the community for fostering curriculum change implementation.

Key words: Curriculum Change, Implementation, Challenges, Resources, Attitude.

Introduction

The objectives of primary education in Nigeria include the inculcation of literacy, numeracy, scientific, critical and reflective thinking skills. It also involves instilling social and moral values as well as adaptability and communication skills in children. In other words, the production of holistic learners to be integrated into his immediate society not leaving out the required skillset to adapt anywhere they find themselves in the entire world. These objectives are obviously diverse and would in turn require a detailed, sequential framework that would integrate all necessary content required to deliver the necessities to a child. Apart from content, this framework is also expected to entail an interactive delivery mode, ease the teacher's task, be appropriate in terms of context, content as well as needs of children and be accessible. This has brought about the need and use of curriculum in primary educational institutions.

Curriculum has been defined by many experts to be educational experiences designed purposely for certain learners within a specific time in order to accomplish the set objectives (Alade, 2005). It was also described as planned learning activities for learners, directed and monitored by schools in order to achieve its educational goals (Sani 2014). Curriculum should be all-embracing learning experiences which accommodates both formal (curricular) and informal (co-curricular) activities within the school with guidance from teachers. Joseph (2010) also perceived curriculum as the entire spectrum of educational experiences made available to students through a given instruction. It is all the learning experiences or educational programs planned for pupils under the auspices of the school (Tijani, Tinja& Umar, 2010). It is also the overall process through which the content and assessment practices of evaluation are structured and implemented. It specifies the subject matter to be taught, the teaching plans, the learner's experiences, and the evaluation plan. Indeed, it is the heart of education.

Curriculum is fundamental to the nation and it serves as an instrument for guided instructions that benefits the society both on long term and short term. As much as it is the total learning experiences intended and designed for learners in school, it also reflects on the society its being used. With every society having its own peculiarity in terms of what a curriculum should entail, curriculum combines objectives, subject matter, activities and evaluation techniques to suit their individual needs. Curriculum should be continuous, dynamic and reflect values of its immediate environment (Ogunbiyi, 2009). A working curriculum is prone to change from time to time. This is in order to meet up with the continuous changing needs of the learners, teachers and subsequently, the society. A curriculum with outdated goals would definitely fail in providing for new day needs. The need for this change is liable to come in different ways such as innovation, alteration, substitution, value change or just addition to the existing curriculum. The major connecting factor to all these types of change is the fact that on the long run, something becomes different either in a particular concept of the curriculum or the whole curriculum itself.

Hancock, Hyk&Jones (2012), defined curriculum change as the transformation of the curriculum schemes, for example, its design, goal and content. This often implies the alteration to its aims and objectives, reviewing the contents included, revising its methods and rethinking its evaluation procedures. Dziwa (2013) submitted that curriculum change is not a matter of supply of appropriate technical information; rather it involves changing attitudes, values, skills and relationships. Therefore, curriculum change means making the curriculum different in any way, to give it a new position or direction. Curriculum change is a learning process for teachers, children, educational institutions as well as parents and the community. A good understanding of change and a clear conception of the curriculum are

necessary conditions for improved implementation of a curriculum change into practice. The practical realization is that curriculum redesign process is relatively straightforward, but that successful implementation of a renewed curriculum is much more challenging. Barnett and Coate (2005) refer to this as the difference between the curriculum-as-design and the curriculum-as-enacted

Changing established practices are never easy, particularly when the change involves an entire system or concept. It requires understanding and cooperation from all concerned stakeholders as well as change agents. Any slight conflict or dispute is likely to result in set back or worse still, total failure. Factors that hinder curriculum change implementation range from human factors to governmental and economic factors (Duckett, 2006; Afibola, 2008). These could include the position of school staff with regards to their understanding and support for change, the needs of teachers in terms of sufficient time and fund to engage with the renewal process and complete the necessary work to implement the change, or even the perception of the society on the relevance of the change. Humans naturally prefer comfort zone, and anything that threatens to displace them from that zone is believed to pose a threat hence, the exhibition of negative attitudes to frustrate the process. In view of curriculum change, teachers may tender excuses that the learners are incapable of shifting learning process to suit change or that parents may not be supportive of change. Administrators such as the head teachers or supervisors may begin to notice the teachers are incompetent at their required teamwork. This stems from the belief of learners, teachers, parents and community that the status quo is comfortable and change is unnecessary.

Worthy of note that some teachers are not even qualified or adequately informed to teach (Nwiyi & Uriah, 2007). Over the years, the quality of teachers produced has not been able to meet up with the expectations and needs of the nation. Also, the downtrodden employment rate has pulled a lot of unqualified people into the profession of teaching, leaving the curriculum change process in the wrong hands. The influx of variety of subject matter contents, activities, equipment, and innovations for the teachers to handle without proper training also serves as a bane on curriculum change (Ukpong & Udoh, 2012). In order to navigate any curricula change successfully, some form of upfront training is required for teachers. According to Offorma (2005), lack of teachers has hindered curriculum translation in Nigerian schools. While some schools experience ineffective teachings due to inadequacy of staff, others have neglected some subjects for lack of teachers.

Furthermore, other factors that hinder curriculum change implementation include governmental decisions without the involvement of teachers and experts on curriculum issues (Nwadiokwu, 2018). Due to the unquestionable power of autonomy the Nigerian government has, corruption has spread far and wide in the governmental bodies. Curriculum change also has its fair share in this lot as the due protocols such as invitation and involvement of concerned bodies, experts and teachers have remained ordinary protocols without actual practice. This has led to continuous production of substandard curriculum. Change in political policies such as the changing of systems of education from 6-5-4 to 6-3-3-4 and finally to the current 9-3-4 without due assessment of the previous system's failure is another factor. Nwadiokwu (2018), is of the opinion that ordinary making attempt and putting in effort to solve problems with a current system might have achieved better results.

Ukpong & Udoh, (2012) in their study of challenges of Nigerian educational system found that assessments and evaluations have been soiled with fraud by corrupted officials and schools. Apart from the fact that most officials saddled with supervising curriculum change implementation do not carry out their duties, those who end up getting involved also task schools or collect money instead of doing their jobs effectively. In curriculum change

process, money is very important as it is a very intensive project. From the initiation stage to production of content and activities, to distribution and trial testing and finally assessment, require en masse utilization of funds. Meanwhile, from the year 2009 till 2018, yearly budget allocation to education sector in Nigeria never exceeded 10% (Odigwe & Owan, 2019), although UNESCO estimated budget allocation of 26% to education. In recent years, the story hasn't changed as the government only allotted 5.4% of the budget to education in year 2022. This continues to directly and indirectly affect curriculum change in terms of inadequate human and material resources needed for production, implementation and evaluation.

Statement of the problem

The implementation of a change in curriculum possess a range of challenges to teachers, pupils and the society at large which eventually results in barriers to change. Teachers might prefer the existing methods and believe change would require too much effort. They may find it difficult to adapt to the new curriculum due to the attitudinal factors of the government and the administrators who are saddled with the responsibility of properly training teachers. When they eventually become ready to implement, adequate funding may not be granted. Studies such as Nwadiokwu, 2018, Ukpong & Udoh, 2012 and Odigwe & Owan, 2019 have been able to broaden our knowledge of barriers in curriculum change in Nigerian education but only few studies have selected Ibarapa area of Oyo state as a population to study. This has opened an opportunity to add to the already broad knowledge field in terms of studying a particular group of people with regards to their primary education.

Research Questions

1. What are the barriers teachers face during the implementation of curriculum change in Ibarapa area of Oyo state?
2. What resources are available to aid the success of curriculum change in Ibarapa area of Oyo state?
3. What are the contributions of the government and parents in the successful implementation of curriculum change in Ibarapa area of Oyo state?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The identified population for this study included all primary school teachers in Ibarapa land of Oyo state. Multistage sampling was used at different stages of sample selection in this study although total enumeration was adopted in selecting all three (3) local governments in Ibarapa land. Purposive sampling was adopted to select five (5) primary schools from Ibarapa North and four (4) primary schools each from Ibarapa East and Ibarapa central. This is because there are more primary schools in Ibarapa North compared to the other two local governments. Simple random sampling was used to select eight (8) teachers from each primary school preselected. One hundred and four (104) teachers were selected in all at the end of the selection. One self-designed instrument was used to collect data. **Perspective of Primary School Teachers to Curriculum Change Implementation Barriers** was used to collect information regarding the barriers to curriculum change from the teachers. This instrument was designed on a 4-likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Simple percentage, mean and frequency count were used to answer the research questions.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the barriers teachers face during the implementation of curriculum change in Ibarapa area of Oyo state?

Table 1: Teacher's Attitude and Qualification

S/N	Q u e s t i o n s	S A	A	D	S D	Mean	Std.
1	Curriculum change is hard because existing curriculum is comfortable	5 8 56%	4 1 39%	1 1%	4 4%	3.32	3.01
2	Team work is effort and time consuming	4 7 45%	4 7 45%	3 3%	7 7%	3.29	2.86
3	I was trained to be a teacher (in the university/college)	6 6%	1 7 16%	5 9 57%	2 2 21%	2.07	1.68
4	I usually attend training on curriculum change	1 4 13%	5 5%	2 3 22%	6 2 60%	1.72	1.53

The results from Table 1 showed that 58 (56%) of the teachers with corresponding highest mean $M=3.47$ and standard deviation $STD=3.01$ strongly believed curriculum is hard because existing curriculum is comfortable. Closely followed by 47 (45%) teachers with corresponding mean 3.29 and STD of 2.86 who strongly believed team work is time and effort consuming. The data presented also showed that only 6(6%) of the teachers strongly agreed to being trained to be a teacher which is confirmed in the mean 2.07 and STD of 1.68. Finally, 14 (13%) teachers strongly agreed to attending trainings on curriculum change resulting to mean 1.72 and STD 1.53.

Research Question 2: What resources are available to aid the success of curriculum change in Ibarapa area of Oyo state?

Table 2: Available Resources

S/N	Q u e s t i o n s	S A	A	D	S D	Mean	Std.
1	Available teachers are usually adequate	3 3%	9 9%	2 3 22%	6 9 66%	1.48	1.14
2	Instructional materials are made available (teaching aids)	7 7%	1 4 13%	5 9 57%	2 4 23%	2.04	1.66
3	Basic infrastructural facilities like conducive buildings, seats and tables are available	1 1%	7 7%	6 8 65%	2 8 27%	1.82	1.35
4	Funds are available to purchase unavailable resources	2 2%	2 2%	4 7 45%	5 3 51%	1.55	1.12

Data presented in table 2 above revealed that the mean of items 1 to 4 are 1.48, 2.04, 1.82 and 1.55 such that their standard deviations are 1.14, 1.66, 1.33 and 1.12 respectively. Only 3(3%), 7(7%), 1(1%) and 2(2%) of the teachers agreed that available teachers are adequate, instructional materials are available, basic infrastructural facilities are available and funds are available to purchase unavailable resources.

Research Question 3: What are the contributions of the government and parents in the successful implementation of curriculum change in Ibarapa area of Oyo state?

Table 3: Governmental Effort/Contributions

S/N	Q u e s t i o n s	S A	A	D	S D	Mean	Std.
1	The government provides courses and training towards curriculum change implementation	3 3%	1 4 13%	6 2 60%	2 5 24%	1.95	1.53
2	Political decisions concerning curriculum changes are taken without regard for teachers	4 8 46%	5 2 50%	0 4 4%	0 0 0%	3.42	2.93
3	Government provides incentives to encourage curriculum change implementation	0 1 1%	0 1 1%	4 5 43%	5 7 55%	1.48	1.02
4	Governmental bodies come to monitor and assess change implementation	0 1 1%	0 3 3%	4 8 46%	5 2 50%	1.55	1.10

Table 3 above revealed the governmental efforts during curriculum change implementation. 3(3%), 1(1%) and 1(1%) of the teachers strongly agreed to item 1, 3 and 4 which are provision of courses and training towards curriculum change implementation, incentives to encourage the teachers and monitoring as well as assessment of curriculum change implementation. These items recorded mean of 1.95, 1.48 and 1.55 respectively with standard deviation of 1.53, 1.02 and 1.10. It was also found that 48(46%) of the teachers strongly agreed to item 3 which stated that political decisions concerning curriculum changes are taken without regards for teachers. This resulted in mean 3.42 and STD of 2.93.

Discussions of findings

Considering the analysis of teacher's attitude towards curriculum change implementation, the study discovered that most teachers find it hard to move from their comfort zone when curriculum change looms. They would rather prefer to continue using an old curriculum which they are well acquainted with than begin another rigorous process of familiarization with the new one. They also believe that team work is time and effort consuming. Teaming up with other teachers in the process of curriculum implementation seems distasteful to most teachers. This supports the position of Afibola (2008), that humans naturally prefer comfort zones and whatever tends to displace them becomes a threat.

The study also discovered that apart from the fact that most teachers are not qualified and trained enough to be a teacher, they also do not attend recommended trainings for curriculum change implementation process. This, according to Nwiyi & Uriah (2007), is due to the influx of unprofessional personnel in the teaching business due to high unemployment rate.

The study discovered that available teachers as well as available resources are usually not adequate for the curriculum change implementation process. This shortage was found to span across basic infrastructures for curriculum implementation such as conducive classrooms, chairs as well as tables and the availability of funds for purchase of unavailable resources in aiding implementation process. This is in line with the result Odigwe&Owan, (2019) had in their analysis of budgetary allocation to education over the years. The decreased allocation of budget to education would only result in inadequate funding which ultimately affects teacher's employment, available resources, materials as well as infrastructural facilities.

The study found that government did not provide training or courses on implementation of curriculum change, incentives for encouraging teachers involved in curriculum change implementation and also adequate monitoring and assessment of curriculum change implementation. In terms of decision making that affects curriculum change; government also did not regard teachers in the involvement. These corroborate with Ukpong&Udoh, (2012) who discovered that that assessments and evaluations have been soiled with fraudulent activities by corrupted officials and schools. The officials would rather be paid bribed than perform their duties. Nwadiokwu (2018) also brought forward that one of the factors that hinder curriculum change includes governmental decisions without the involvement of teachers and experts on curriculum issues.

Conclusions

Teachers are directly concerned with curriculum implementation as they are the ones who interpret the curriculum. While this should be a piece of cake, it has been discovered that numerous challenges are faced in the course. These range from teachers' attitude to curriculum change, to governmental decisions without giving consideration to these teachers. Among others are resources and funding which are usually inadequate. This study is important as it was able to localize the study of challenges of curriculum change implementation from a broad generalization to Ibarapa land of Oyo state.

Recommendations

1. When teachers do not see any value in curriculum change, they are likely to be unmotivated to get involved. It is hereby recommended that governments as well as change agents consider educating and motivating teachers about the usefulness of every future curriculum change as well as the values it is likely to add to the pupils, teachers and the society as a whole.
2. It is recommended that only qualified teachers who are trained with the skill set to be teachers should be employed by employment agencies and personnel. This would ensure the retaining of teachers who are efficient in their job of curriculum change implementation process, thereby building a model educational sector.
3. In policies and decision making, it is recommended that government select representatives from concerned teaching bodies during decision making processes that involve curriculum change. They should also ensure that the final draft of all policies and decisions made are followed and not relegated to be unused.
4. The government is implored to increase subsequent budget allocated to education. This would ensure that adequate staffing, resources, facilities and funds are disbursed to all necessary departments for progressive and effective curriculum change implementation.

5. Apart from the government efforts, it is also recommended that the community should also be involved by contributing their quota. The effect of a working curriculum change would not only be seen on the school alone, it transverses to the community as well.

References

- Afibola, M.A. (2008). *Innovation and Curriculum implementation for basic education in Nigeria: Policy priorities and challenges of Practices and Implementation*, Research Journal of International Studies and Issues. 8(4) 51-58.
- Alade, I.A. (2005). *Rudiments of curriculum studies*. Ibadan: Suflo Publications
- Barnett, R. & Coate, K. (2005) *Engaging the Curriculum in Higher Education*. Maidenhead: SRHE/Open University Press
- Brown, D. F. (2006). It's the curriculum, stupid: There's something wrong with it. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 87(10), 777–783
- Dziwa, D. et al., (2013). *Curriculum innovation or renovation: Feasibility in Zimbabwean secondary schools*. Masvingo: Great Zimbabwe University.
- Duckett, D.C. (2006). *Planning and Managing Curriculum change*. London: Allcolours Printers Ltd.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2004) *National Policy on Education* (4th Ed). Lagos. Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council Press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2013) *National Policy on Education*, 6th Edition Lagos. NERP Press.
- Hancock, D., Dyk, H., & Jones, K. (2012). Adolescent Involvement in Extracurricular Activities. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 11(1), 84–101
- Joseph, D. E (2010). *Education and training for industrialization*. Ibadan. StirlingHorden Publisher.
- Nwadiokwu, C.N. (2018). Challenges and Prospects of Curriculum Development in Nigeria. *Journal of Pristine*. 14(1).
- Nwiyi, G.U & Uriah .O.A (2007). Teacher Empowerment and commitment to duty in secondary school in port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State. *Journal of pedagogy and Educational Development* 12, (1) 84-89
- Odigwe, F. N. & Owan, V.J. (2019). Trend Analysis of the Nigerian Budgetary Allocation to the Education with Reference to UNESCO'S 26% Benchmark. *International Journal of Educational Benchmark*. 14(1).
- Offorma G.C. (2014). Approaches to Curriculum Development. In Nwagwu, N.A. & Ivowi U.M.O.(eds.). *Education in Nigeria: Development and Challenges*. Yaba, Lagos: The CIBN Press Limited.
- Ogunbiyi, J. O. (2009). *Introduction to curriculum development: Theory and practice for social studies educators and curriculum planners*. Abeokuta; Nike Onward Publication Service
- Sani, A. (2014). Nigerian Curriculum and National Integration: Issues and Challenges. *British Journal of Education, Society and Behavioral Science*. 4(3). 309-317.
- Tijani, O.A., Tinja, R.M. & Umar M.K. (2010). *Curriculum Innovation in Primary Teacher Education: Prospects and Challenges in Nigerian Primary Schools*. Unpublished Paper.
- Ukpong, I. & Udoh, N.S. (2012). *Curriculum Development and Implementation: Challenges for Nigerian Education System*. *Nigerian Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*. 20(1).