

Review Article

Strategies for Enhancing the Implementation of Prevocational Education Curriculum in Nigeria

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Abstract: The importance prevocational education in the development of an individual in order to contribute to the technological and economic development in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. Prevocational education is a type of functional education that lay a solid foundation for the training of future engineers, technologist, business men and women, accountants, and entrepreneurs. This paper looks at strategies for enhancing the implementation of prevocational education curriculum in Nigeria. It further discussed the concept of curriculum implementation, Universal Basic Education (UBE) and its objectives, prevocational education in Nigeria, implementation issues of prevocational education curriculum in Nigeria and strategies for enhancing the implementation of prevocational education curriculum in Nigeria.

Keywords: Prevocational Education, Universal Basic Education, Curriculum

1. Introduction

Curriculum implementation is the key aspect of curriculum, because no matter how well a curriculum of any level of education is planned and documented, implementation is indispensable. Mkpa (2005) posited that it is the stage of implementation that many excellent curriculum plans and other educational policies are buried without trace. It is against this background that this paper discussed the concept of curriculum implementation, Universal Basic Education (UBE) and its objectives, prevocational education in Nigeria, implementation issues of prevocational education curriculum in Nigeria, and strategies for enhancing the implementation of prevocational education curriculum in Nigeria.

2. Concept of Curriculum Implementation

Curriculum implementation is the translation of what has already been documented theoretically into practical terms. It is the task of translating the curriculum document into the operating curriculum by the combined efforts of the

“students, teachers and others concerned” (Modibbo, 2008). Ivowi (2004) described curriculum implementation as the translation of theory into practice, or proposal into action. It is putting the curriculum into work for the achievement of the goals for which the curriculum is designed (Garba, 2004). Babalola (2004) defined curriculum implementation as the multifarious activities of translating a complex curriculum conception in the form of a design or plan into new patterns of practical actions useable and realizable in a teaching/learning milieu. It is the translation of the objectives of the curriculum from paper to practice (Okebukola, 2004). This implies that curriculum implementation connotes putting what have been planned into action. Curriculum implementation, according to Onyeachu (2008), is the process of putting all that have been planned as a curriculum document into practice in the classroom through the combined effort of the teachers, learners, school administrators, parents as well as interaction with physical facilities, instructional materials, psychological and social environment. The implication of these definitions is that curriculum implementation involves the real and practical application of theory into practice in such a manner that the overt outcome is noticed through the

performance of learners in the classroom even in the Universal Basic Education level.

3. The State of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria

Universal Basic Education (UBE) is an ambitious educational programme that was launched and executed by the government and people of Nigeria to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance and poverty as well as stimulate and accelerate national development integration (Borishade, 2002). Its objectives as stated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) in her national policy on education include:

1. Developing in the entire citizenry, a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion;
2. Provision of free universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school going age;
3. Reducing drastically the incidence of drop outs from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency;
4. Catering through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision of Universal Basic Education for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their schooling; and
5. Ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communicative and life-skills as well as the ethical, moral and civil values needed for the laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

To realize these well articulated objectives of the UBE, the curriculum of the upper basic education which is the final stage of the nine-year basic education must be well implemented. Implementation of the upper basic education (junior secondary school education) curriculum is very important because its effective implementation leads to smooth transition to other levels of education.

The history of education in Nigeria under the Universal Basic Education (lower basic-primary school and upper basic-junior secondary school) is reflected in the challenges which education at these levels has been facing and continues to face. The education at this level is a mirror that shows the sad fate of education in this Nigeria. Akande (2001) stated that parts of the mirror are dark and blurred, even cracked. This implies that education at this level is far from what it should be. Even though stakeholders (learners, parents, teachers, communities and the government) in education have various optima's regarding the most effective ways to confront the issues that exist, one clear truth is that they all agree to the need to work together towards a better educational system at these levels in particular, a system that will equip the learners with the type of knowledge, skill, attitudes and habits and enhance their contributions to sustainable development in Nigeria.

The standard of education at the UBE of our educational system is affected. Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013)

recognizes the fact that a sound Universal basic education can become a strong foundation for tertiary levels of education to thrive highly. The good and sound foundation laid in Universal basic education in a nation's educational system can bring about the success of its educational system. This was the basis of the assertion of Deny Xiaopin (1904-1997), a Chinese statesman when he said "if we developing nations are to catch up with and surpass the advanced countries science and technology, we must improve not only the quality of higher education but, first of all that of the primary education and secondary education". One of the main objectives of the current national policy on education is "developing self-reliant citizens". In a bid to actualize this objective, Nigeria introduced prevocational education into the curriculum of the junior secondary school in 1982.

4. Concept of Prevocational Education in Nigeria

Prevocational subjects in the Nigerian junior secondary school (JSS) system are Practical Agriculture, Business Studies, Home Economics, Basic Technology, local crafts, computer education, Fine Arts and Music. Prevocational subjects provide students with a process of orientation in production and consumption through experiences in planning, producing, testing, servicing and evaluating types of consumer and industrial goods (Uwameiye, 1993 in Adeola & Oviawe, 2009). The exposure of students to prevocational education enables them to develop a broader understanding of industrial and business processes, and is also able to expose their individual interest and aptitudes (Uwameiye & Onyewadume, 1999). The philosophy of pre-vocationalism presupposes that the product of the JSS should be equipped with the capacity to be familiar with the world of work, career options and choices. According to Aluwong (2002) in Adeola & Oviawe (2009), prevocational subjects are tremendously important to the economy of Nigeria, as they help to lay a solid foundation for the training of future Engineers, technologist, Accountant, Managers and Entrepreneurs. The objectives of prevocational education as stated by Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) are:

- (i) Introduction of students into the world of technology and choice of vocation at the end of junior secondary school and later in life;
- (ii) Acquisition of technical skills;
- (iii) Exposing students to career awareness by exploring usable options in the world of work; and
- (iv) Enabling youth to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the basic desire of government on prevocational education is to facilitate the process of economic and technological development of the nation. The prevocational subjects are very unique among the Universal Basic Education subjects taught in junior secondary schools. Students are required to work with equipment in the workshop; computer and typewriter in the

typing pool; cutleries and utensils in the Home economics laboratory as well as farm tools in the school demonstration farms (Adeola & Oviawe, 2009). It is unfortunate that Nigeria as a country cannot boldly assert as present that the stated objectives of prevocational education in the Universal Basic Education programme has been effectively achieved. In the guise, this discourse examines the challenges to Prevocational Education in Universal Basic Education; and the way forward.

5. Implementation Issues of Prevocational Education Curriculum in Universal Basic Education in Nigeria

The objectives of prevocational education are laudable, but there are some challenges that posed a bottleneck to its anticipated success and progress. Some of these challenges are discussed below:

Dearth of inadequate skillful and competent/qualified teachers to implement and interpret the existing prevocational education curriculum. Science teachers and those from other subject areas are made to teach prevocational subjects (Oviawe, 2015). The few available qualified teachers are isolated. Obanya (2005) posited that the involvement of a teacher is crucial because, the teacher can feel his/her experience about what and how to teach into the work of the curriculum team and influence what goes into a curriculum to suit different schools.

Instructional Materials for Learning in authentic and real-world environment. The issue of poor teaching infrastructural facilities, laboratories, equipment and workshop is still hindering curriculum development and implementation in prevocational education. Many schools lack the required learning infrastructure such as libraries, workshops, laboratories that can enhance quality prevocational education. Obanya (2005) posited that for efficiency, schools require instructional materials for day-to-day work, and that schools devoid of these materials cannot operate successfully. Obanya added that inadequate provision of instructional materials affect school activities negatively. Hence, there is need for adequate provision of tools, machines, equipment, books, curriculum modules, wall charts, flash cards, picture cards amongst others.

Lack of motivation of teachers who are to implement the prevocational education curriculum. Stenhouse (1975) in Aromolaram (2014) opined that the absence of incentives is the cause for the teachers' rejection to take part in curriculum implementation. Aromolaram asserted that incentives will influence and control teachers for the purpose of achieving educational goals. Teachers in Nigerian educational system are poorly motivated; this may be as a result of poor assimilation of the number of teachers required to implement the scheme and inaccurate financial evaluation and proper channels to disburse the funds required to finance the prevocational education programmes.

Non pilot-testing the prevocational education curriculum before implementation to determine the applicability in all schools. Chitate (2005) stated that lack of pilot-testing and studying contributed to the failure of some curricula because the architect of such curricula had very little time to consult widely with relevant stakeholders during the period of formulation.

Inadequate funding, Government budget is still not enough for this laudable scheme. The percentage of Federal budgetary to education has been declining from 7.2% to 4.5% in 2004 (UNDP, 2004) which still falls below the United Nations benchmark of 26%. This has resulted in low level of funding in the areas of human and material resources which in turn hinders curriculum development in prevocational education. Most of the equipment, laboratories/workshops in prevocational education are capital-intensive. Adequate funding is needed for monitoring and implementation of the curriculum.

The utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching and learning process is one of the greatest challenges of curriculum development in prevocational education. Most secondary schools lack ICT equipment. Aromolaram (2013) asserted that where few ICT equipment are available, they are either obsolete or allowed to lie fallow. Aromolaram posited that students in 'jet and digital' age have different needs than previous learner-graduates of old. Curricula of prevocational education therefore should be adjusted to the challenges of modern times.

Sensitization of stakeholders in education. Stakeholders in education include supervisors of school, school administrators, school guidance counselors, teachers, students and parents need to be sensitized on the need for them to play their roles in implementation of prevocational education curriculum. This is necessary because curriculum implementation is an arduous task involving combined effort of all concerned (Okebukola, 2004). Okebukola further identified the major actors to be sensitized as teachers, students, school administrators and the community.

Table 1. Stakeholders to be sensitized for effective implementation of universal basic education curriculum (in which prevocational education is a part) in Nigeria.

Teacher:	Their knowledge of subject matter (content knowledge), knowledge of how to teach the subject matter (pedagogic content knowledge); workload; motivation; self-esteem; take-home pay in relation to minimal need to keep body and soul together; magnitude of social pressure to satisfy basic human needs; teaching experience; marital status/stability; and residence in relation to school location.
Student:	Level of interest in the subject; motivation; career aspiration; level of Cognitive development; home training; and state of health.
School:	Conduciveness of the environment; availability of facilities for teaching and learning; location/distance from residence of teachers and students; availability of guidance and counseling services; and availability of health facilities.

School Administration:	Responsiveness of the head of school to requirements for effective implementation of the curriculum; and discipline tone of staff and students.
Community:	Adequacy of support for welfare of staff and students; PTA support for teaching and learning activities.

Source: Okebukola (2004)

Moral decadence from teachers and students hinders the implementation of curriculum development. Kpee, Oluwuo & Baridam (2012) identified moral decadence as a factor hindering the success of implementing curriculum. These include pretence, corruption, fraud, bribery, sexual harassment and nepotism. Others are falsification of documents, lying, gossiping and inordinate hatred and affection. According to the authors, the core value of honesty, integrity, total commitment to academic excellence, obedience, respect, patriotism is no longer considered part of the virtues of the present generation.

No proper improvisation initiative to circumvent shortfalls of instructional materials. As a result of poor funding of education in Nigeria, basic prevocational equipment and infrastructures that are crucial to the realization of its objectives are not available. This challenge could have been reduced to its barest minimum if improvisation initiative is incorporated into prevocational education curriculum, to fabricate tools, equipments and other instructional materials locally to fill the vacuum created due to lack of funds to import such equipment.

Poor planning: The will to conceive, plan and religiously implement a national educational programme such as the prevocational education curriculum in a systematic manner has been lacking all the while. Nigerians are impatient to experiment hence no new policy is given time enough to get assimilated before it is jettisoned for a new one, which invariably would be ill-planned and ill-conceived.

Poor Monitoring and Supervision. Inadequate monitoring and supervision by various government organs charged with the responsibility for implementation is a challenge. Most schools do not receive adequate and timely information from these government organs. It would appear that teacher supervisors visits schools and write reports. Effective dissemination and utilization of supervision reports is a function of supervision and this facilitates teaching and learning when vigorously and efficiently carried out (Nwaka, 2008).

Lack of political will/commitment from leaders. The formulation of policies in Nigeria is never in short supply but rather implementations of such policies have always been the issue. This challenge is contingent on lack of commitment from the ungenune leaders who make policies for their own selfish political or economic motives. But as soon as such extraneous objectives are realized, the programmes or policies that are initiated are visited by abandonment spirit which has cumulatively contributed to the under-development state of the nation despite the huge enormous resources at her disposal.

6. Strategies for Enhancing the Implementation of Prevocational Education Curriculum in Nigeria

For effective implementation of prevocational education curriculum in Nigeria, the following strategies can be adopted:

Provision of enabling facilities and equipment such as classrooms, laboratories, workshops, equipment and tools which can facilitate the effective implementation of prevocational education curriculum. It was mentioned in this paper that the absence of tools, equipment, facilities, laboratories and workshop hinders the implementation of prevocational education curriculum. Hence, the need arises for these facilities, tools, equipment and workshop to be put in place. The government and the society owe the students the responsibility of providing an adequate environment necessary to promote learning of prevocational education in the curriculum. Prevocational education teachers and their students should maintain material supplied to them to ensure their longevity (Oviawe, 2015).

Learning environment of the students should be made conducive to encourage students to learn and subsequently make wise choice of career.

Use of improvised instructional materials. Instructional materials or teaching aids are tools, equipment and materials used by teachers in teaching and learning process to make the lesson real thereby reducing abstract thinking on the part of the students. These aids include real objects, pictures, illustrations and use of computers, among others. Instructional materials make teaching and learning real and interesting especially where students are involved in the production and utilization of such aids. In like manner, creativity is aroused and developed by students. Prevocational education teachers have the requisite training in the use of instructional materials and should use them in the implementation of prevocational education curriculum.

Exposure of students to field trips/work-visit. Field trips/work-visits can also be organized to visit technological firms, experts and professionals for students to compliment what is taught to the students in class. Work-visits and field trips are a way to reinforce and expand on concepts taught in class (Kelly, 2011). Opportunities provided through work-visit exposes students through exploration to the world of work. The students learn how the experts and professionals work, what they do and qualifications for entry into the field. This helps the students to form their opinion about the nature of work and other requirements towards intelligent career choices, and gives them to contribute to intelligent consumption of goods and services. Information obtained from work-visit provides awareness and enlightenment to students about their environment, which enables them make constructive and effective adjustments and motivates them to be serious with their studies (Uwameiye & Onyewadume, 1999). The choice of career becomes easy because it is based on their understanding and interest of the work situation.

7. Conclusion

From the foregoing, it could be concluded the provision of enabling environment; facilities and equipment such as classrooms, laboratories, workshops, equipment and tools which can enhance the effective implementation of prevocational education curriculum in Nigeria. The good intension of the Federal Government to making education functional has not been achieved. Effective implementation of prevocational education curriculum will lay a solid foundation for the training of future engineers, technologist, business men and women, accountants, and entrepreneurs.

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