Curriculum Implementation and Quality Delivery Services in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

This paper deals with curriculum implementation and quality delivery services in Nigerian universities. For university education to be of top quality, it needs to be delivered through the process of efficient curriculum implementation. This paper discussed the proper ways through which curriculum can be implemented and also how universities in Nigeria can deliver quality educational services to its customers (students). The problems facing the achievement of the objective of this paper were also discussed to include brain drain, inadequate funding, technological and political factors and much more. Conclusions were made and the way forward proffered include adequate funding, effective security facilities and personnel, motivation of lecturers and much more. This paper proves relevant to researchers who understand the curriculum and the necessity of its development in the university.

Keywords: Curriculum, Curriculum Implementation, Curriculum and Quality Implementation, University Education, Quality Delivery Services

Introduction

The federal and state governments have good intentions and plans for university education in Nigeria, but the problem is how to effectively put those plans to action, achieve its goals and objectives in the university and how the university education is going to be beneficial and useful to the students, society and the nation at large. University education is a catalyst for the generation of resources to the nation and overall. Gusau (2008) argued that since vast sums of money are being spent by governments, private organizations, individuals and communities on education, it is expected therefore, that this investment should produce quality educational programmes for students; programmes that would meet the needs of the nations and bring about desirable changes expected in the learner. Quality teaching and learning therefore become prerequisites for improved educational outcomes.

Concept of Curriculum in Nigerian Universities

Okobiah, (2010) opined that there is a common understanding that curriculum is a set of planned and organized materials designed for intended learning outcome, considered as adequate for any functional expectations of a people in time and place. Oladosu (2014) and Ajidagba (2014) stated that the term curriculum was derived from the Latin verb 'curere' which means 'to run". This has an extension to a noun form which means 'a course to be run', 'a running course' or an educational course to be covered. It is the totality of the learning experiences and opportunities, planned for the learner under the guidance of the school. Curriculum is the system of the body of materials and an organized plan put together to modify the behaviour of a person in his/her

environment as seen in (Ivowi, 2009). Aboho (2007) sees it as the process of preparing or ordering of the selected content and learning experiences of children in such a way that they reinforce each other for easy understanding resulting in learning outcomes. Ofojebe (2011) explained that the curriculum is derived from the Latin word 'currus' which means a race track or a running course. In relation to education, curriculum refers to a track for learning. As a race track with starting and ending points, curriculum becomes the course students cover to acquire knowledge. This entails the entire students' activities, from the day they entered school to the day they leave school. The idea of a race track connotes a target or a goal to be achieved. Students get involved with the curriculum as they learn and aim to achieve a set goal that can be achieved by receiving university education. Before then, there was no single co-ordinated and well planned curriculum in any of the school programme/course of study and subjects. The tendency then was to expand the existing structure of education system while maintaining the old syllabuses which had been in existence since the beginning of the colonial era. In the sixties and the early seventies many educators and politicians felt that the old curricula had outlived their usefulness as they had little relevance to the needs, aspirations and values of post-independence Africa. (Akpan, 2010, Abdulkareem, Fasasi & Akinubi, 2011) agreed that having identified some scholarly definitions of curriculum, it is therefore pertinent that one has an idea of what curriculum development and improvement really entails. Curriculum development and improvement is ever vital to educational success and nation building. Nations spend vast amounts of time and resources on designing what ought to be learned in schools in order to elevate social consciousness and improve economic viability (Alade, 2011). Alade (2011) also maintained that a curriculum is a search for qualitative improvement in education system, in response to societal changes. Ude, (2013) noted that a curriculum in broad terms includes four basic components namely: goals, methods, materials and assessment. Goals refer to the expectation/benchmark for teaching and learning which are made explicit in form of a scope and sequence of skills to be addressed in teaching and learning process. Methods are specific to teacher as every individual teacher has a way of imparting knowledge to students. Materials refer to the media and tools used for teaching and learning and assessment refers to the reasons for and methods of measuring students' progress in the instruction delivered. Curriculum therefore refers to the totality of students' experiences that occur in the educational process. "Curriculum" means the planned interaction of pupils with instructional content, materials, resources and processes for evaluating the attainment of educational objectives. Igwe and Rufai (2012) remark that in the build up to the development of a curriculum, the first aspect known as the curriculum design. The design of a curriculum must of necessity involve curriculum planning, curriculum content, methods etc. The design of a curriculum begins from its plan. A plan involves the complete identification of needs, resources to meet the needs inclusive in the process and in most cases implementation and evaluation. In the process of planning a curriculum, the following must be available. There must of necessity be a need. After the need, there must be goals that the need is directed at and consequently objectives. When the objectives are known, then a philosophy must be formulated and thereafter, it can be said that a scope has been created. When these are in place, the curriculum design process has begun to take shape. Corruption in curriculum building is a hindrance to the growth of the university. Nwaokugha and Ezeugwu 2017 are of the opinion that it is possible because corruption in any of its multi-dimensional forms has terrible potentials that can neutralize and bring to zero point the developmental aspirations of honest and hardworking individuals and institutions in country in the form of causing general instability, making mockery

of the curriculum's purpose, discouraging and eroding genuine value system upon which the sustainability of a country is laid. They further emphasised that, it is obvious, no serious rational thinker can doubt that any form of corruption does not have serious implications for the implementation of curriculum and general well- being or survival of a people.

Curriculum Implementation

Mkpa (2007) opined that curriculum implementation has a task of translating the curriculum documents into the working curriculum by the collective efforts of the students, teachers, and other stakeholders (like librarians, laboratory attendants, etc.). Mkpa in Okoro (2011) on the other hand posited that curriculum implementation is thus, largely the classroom efforts of the teacher and students of a school in putting into operation the curriculum document. Ogar and Awhen (2015) maintained that curriculum implementation is the process of putting the curriculum into work for the achievement of the goals for which the curriculum is designed. Okorafor and Wogu (2017) observed that Nigeria like most countries has adopted education as the instrument par excellence for achieving natural objectives and the goal could only be realized through a well designed and implemented curriculum. Ivowi (2009) asserts that curriculum implementation involves the dissemination of the structured set of learning experiences, the provision of resources to effectively execute the plan plus the actual execution of the plan in the classroom setting where teacher-learning interactions take place. Onyeachu (2008) rightly puts it that curriculum implementation is the process of putting all that has been planned as a curriculum process into practice in the classroom through the combined efforts of teachers, learners, school administrators, parents, as well as the interaction with the physical facilities, instructional materials, the psychological and social environments. It is the catalyst for growth and sustainable development. As education is central to society, so is curriculum the heart and life wire of education (Alade,2006). Mkpa & Izuagba (2009) indicated that during curriculum implementation, the learner for whom the programme is planned interacts with the contents and materials in order to acquire the necessary skills and ability**.** From the researcher view, curriculum implementation involves the actualization of the learner's curriculum so as to maintain a planned and systematic mode of learning. It aids the step-by-step process of an individual's education.

Onyeson and Umoeshiet (2013) remarked that education today must have the effect of making it possible for a country to have a steady supply of highly creative citizens, who help to improve the living conditions of the general citizenry and to solve the existential problems that are thrown up from time to time. Ofogbor and Emekedou (2017) quoted UNESCO's definition of education as the total process of developing human ability and behaviours. They said that education is an organized and sustained instruction designed to communicate a combination of knowledge, skill and understanding, values for all activities of life. Education is the process of transfer of positive skills, values and inclination towards values that are desirable to the society and would bring about self-awareness, self-orientation and self-reliance. National Policy on Education (2013) maintained that education is the greatest force that can be used to bring about redress as well the greatest investment that the nation can make for the quick development of its economic, political, social and human resources. Balogun (2010), submitted that education is the light without which the world will be in darkness. Boyne (2012) states that there is no longer the dominant view that education is primarily about the development of the person and the creation of a virtuous society, but about the development of the person and the creation of a virtuous society,

but about the development of the market. It was believed that, through education children learn, and become competent. It is education that leads them to become productive citizens of a dynamic land of opportunities. With a sound education, which is aimed at building a self-reliant nation, Nigeria might as well be able to readdress issues related to corruption and bad governance that had seriously infected every fabric of the society. Boyi (2014) sees education as a systematic procedure for the transfer and transformation of culture through formal and informal training of people in a society. Fafunwa in (Enevoh, Okon & Eking, 2012) posits that it deals with mental, physical, psychological and social development of citizens in a given society.

Education has been described as entirely all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavioural patterns that are positive value to the changing of the society in individual lives (Fafunwa in changing of the society in which the individual lives.)Education here is seen as a way, an approach or means through which things are instilled into the young person to grow with such and use it to make his society a better place than he met it. Asuka (2014) asserted that education does only hold the key to modernization or development of society, but it is the king of all the academic disciplines, social institutions of society and the key to human happiness and good society. Asuka continued by stating that the future of Nigeria lies in getting it right in her educational system. Education all over the world is seen as a means of fostering social mobility, achieving independence, political stability and promoting economic development (Olulube, 2009) in Darusa, 2015).Tuemi (2016) supplied the meaning of education as the transmission of what is worthwhile to those who become committed to it, and must be lived or acted out to qualify the person as having acquired education. The usefulness of indigenous education is that it gives people the possibility to develop values, skills, attitudes and competence other than the ones developed in the framework of formal education. Akpo (2015) sees education as the process of facilitating knowledge through the transfer of skills, values, beliefs and habits under the guidance of educators through the learners may also educate themselves in a process called autodidactic training. Akpo (2015) views education as the acquisition of knowledge planned or unplanned which enhances the all-round development of human potentials for the good of the individuals and his general society.

In Ada (2012), education is a tool for self-development and the development of the society. It provides descriptions given to education by these individuals that it would be difficult to separate education and entrepreneurship from one another. So, it will be very crucial to see the relationship that exists between education and entrepreneurship education. Unachukwu (2009) submits that, through education the individual citizen is fully equipped to contribute meaningfully to the social and economic development of his nation. The researcher viewed Education as a way of reducing poverty mindset, reformation and enlightenment of the people in the society to attain a greater height. In a related sense, Ololube (2009) stressed that Nigerian children need to be taught by quality teachers who could apply various innovations that would help the students acquire lives skills that would help them be their own masters in a hash economy, that is, being security conscious, self-employed and even become an employer of labour. Education today is largely an instrument of production. UNICEF (2000) stated that the children have a right to education, and quality education for that matter. It goes further to state that quality education includes:

i. Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn and supported in learning by their families and facilities.

ii. Content that is reflected in relevant curricular and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace.

Curriculum and Quality Implementation

University education is education obtained after the secondary school level. The purpose of the university is to train future leaders who will be politicians, educationist, lawyers, engineers, doctors and scientist etc. The purpose of university education is for teaching, learning, research, community, and skill development. The lofty goals of university education are to be achieved through teaching, research, dissemination of existing and new information, services to community, skill development and a storehouse of knowledge from the researcher.

Benefit of University Education

Ofor-Douglas (2020) highlighted the following as benefits of university education

a. Individuals are required to have degrees for a wide range of careers such as medicine, education, engineering, accounting and law and the university provides for the obtainment of such degrees.

b. University education will help an individual to succeed in today's workforce and establish an enjoyable career of his/her choice

c. The job market is extremely competitive, and employers require the services of skilled employees to work for them. This skill can be developed in the university.

Quality Delivery Services in Nigerian Universities

Asiyai and Oghuvbu (2009) opined that quality is a measure of how good or bad the products of higher education institutions are in terms of their academic performance and meeting established standards. It is not just a feature of a finished product or service but involves a focus on internal processes and outputs and includes the reduction of waste and the improvement or productivity. Quality is concerned with how good or bad a product is, but it is not easy to deliver. (Ijaiya,2001). Also education in Nigeria in its present form is devoid from standard (Balogun, 2012) However, quality is something everyone considers good and wants to have cited in (Babalola,Akpa, Ayeni and Adedeji (2007). Maduewesi (2005) opined that quality of educational input and output in its entirety. Okebukola (2004) mentioned that it is a continuous process of improvement in the quality of teaching and internal and external to the universities. It is ensuring that the provisions of the Minimum Academic Standard (MAS) are attained, maintained and enhanced. Ekong (2006) observed that quality builds knowledge, live skills, perspectives, attitudes, and values. Idumange and Major (2006) observed that quality in education is usually confused with standards; whereas standards are usually specified targets with measurable indicators for comparative purpose, quality can be referred to an achievement in core function of the university. Obadara and Alaka (2013) submitted that quality is the ability or degree with which a product, service, or phenomenon conforms, to an established standard, and which makes it to be relatively superior to others.

Quality delivery is the thorough management of services in other for which there is commitment to meeting demands and needs of customers. In this paper the customer here is refers

to as the students, the universities administrators have to ensure that there is quality delivery in the universities in terms of quality.

The following are ways the University Administrators will Deliver Quality Service to the students:

1. **Quality Teaching and Learning:** Quality teaching is teaching that not just imparts knowledge to students but gives them a transformative experience that develops the way they think and how they apply their know ledge in real life situations.
2. **Conducive Environment**: A conducive learning environment in a university is one that has the absence of disturbance and distraction from the main goals of the university. It is a common saying that where there is peace, there is progress. Thus, where there is a provision of a peaceful and conducive learning environment, quality delivery of educational services can take place.
3. **Quality Learning**: Quality learning is learning that builds those who get it. It means when students learn in such a way that they understand retain and can reproduce what they've learnt from their view point. This can be done by using e-learning facilities which ensures top quality learning for students.
4. **Adequate Supervisory unit :** A supervisory unit is a body of professionals in an establishment that are responsible for overseeing the activities of workers in the university so as to ensure their assigned duties are performed efficiently. When there is an adequate supervisory unit within universities in Nigeria, quality delivery of educational services can be ensured.
5. **Quality Content:** Quality content is information that is well presented, organised and easy to understand for students. The content can be shown in slides on projectors for viewers in seminars or on a social media platform in webinars.
6. **Functional Libraries:** These are libraries that have a good supply of knowledge and are easily accessible to students and staff. These libraries should be organised, spacious and have quality facilities and books necessary for the students of any department to study in.
7. **ICT Facilities:** These are devices and technology that can be connected to the internet for the use of communication and learning. These facilities include high speed routers, good computers etc.
8. **Sound and Qualified Lecturers:** Sound and qualified lecturers are those who have quality training and are able to properly educate students. These lecturers follow the teaching schedule, punctual to class and treat students and their fellow staff with respect and professionalism.
9. **Conducive Environment for Research:** A conducive environment for research is one that is well organised and has the suitable materials, resources and space to carry out one research effectively. A conducive research environment should be built to suit the research purposes of the researcher with the materials he requires to carry out his research effectively.

Challenges Facing Curriculum Implementation and Quality Delivery Services in Nigerian Universities

The following factors serve as problems that university administrators in Nigeria face when trying to implement curriculum and provide quality delivery services:

a. **Inadequate Funding:** Mkandawire (2010) said that it is very difficult to implement a curriculum successfully if the education system has limited funding capacities In the Nigerian society, university education lacks quality as it lacks adequate funding which would aid in quality delivery of educational services. The lack of funds would result to mismanagement, insufficient or inadequate teachers and teaching aids/resources, and possibly teaching methods and infrastructures. Popoola, Bello and Atanda (2009) findings revealed that between 1999 and 2009, the Federal Government spent less than 15% of its total budget on the educational sector as a whole. This is below the UNESCO minimum standard of 26%. Joda (2014) posited that even when provisions have been made and money spent, a large amount of it cannot be properly accounted for.

b. **Brain Drain:** Ogenyi and Ugwu (2017) stated the mass departure of Nigerian intellectuals and skilled populations to western nations which is called "brain drain" has been one of the greatest obstacles to the development of African countries which has resulted to suffering from the shortage of professional and skilled individuals necessary for the advancement of the nation's capital.

c. **Insecurity:** Insecurity is a condition in which people have no confidence in the institutions and leadership that should protect their lives, property and provide for their wellbeing. Consequently, they live in trauma, fear, anger, despair, suspicion and mistrust .Some effects of insecurity on education include the closure of schools, loss of lives and property, arson within the schools, psychological and emotional trauma and much more. Insecurity as a normal occurrence will cause a lack of progress in Nigerian Universities as quality educational services are not delivered and curriculum implementation is poor.

d. **Non-Uniformity of Course Contents and Non-Availability of Ideal Learning Environment:** Most of the Nigerian universities and colleges that offer vocational educational programme do not have uniform course contents. Non uniformity in the course contents usually creates problems for students who may wish to transfer to another institution to complete their studies. This disparity in course contents of vocational educational programme in Nigerian universities and colleges poses a great challenge for the standardization of the VTE programmes. An ideal environment for the teaching and learning of vocational and technical education is a *sine qua non* as no meaningful teaching and learning can take place in environment that is not conducive. There is no gain saying the fact that most schools lack adequate infrastructural facilities, poorly equipped classrooms and obsolete equipment. For better results to be achieved in this flank of the country's educational system so that the country will ultimately reap the benefits therein for its development, the teaching and learning environment need to be conducive and well furnished. In the same vain (Okoro, 2011) in Okorocha (2012) had opined that effective vocational education can only be achieved where the training on the jobs are carried out with the same tools and machines as exist in the industry itself. This means that vocational and technical education will be efficient and effective in proportion to the environment in which the learner is trained. To achieve this, a well-planned and organized environment is imperative for students to learn.

e. **Political Factor:** Ogbonnaya (2012) enumerated the political factors that influence our education to be so; government policies, instability of government, pressure groups, teachers' strike, students' riots and demonstration. Ogbonnaya believed that Nigerian government has some obnoxious educational policies. They include the quota system, catchment areas and educational disadvantaged states. Such programmes have adverse effects on many Nigerians who are considered as coming from educational advantaged states. The existence of these factors affects quality delivery of educational services and curriculum implementation in universities in Nigeria.

f. **Technological Factor:** Technological innovations have remained a core challenge to curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria. In the first instance, along with all aforementioned challenges especially personnel, technology has a lot to contribute to modern curriculum monitoring and implementation. Despite cost for acquiring these cases not well used. Modelling in curriculum using technology has not been articulated in developing countries. Again, educational dissemination is mostly technological (e-learning, computer assisted learning) etc. these are yet to take root in most less developed countries. E-learning is education which is gotten from using electronic devices outside of a classroom. It is education which can be achieved even from the comfort of the students' home irrespective of distance. The poor state of technology in the educational scene in Nigeria has led to poor delivery of educational services and poor implementation of the curriculum in Nigerian universities.

g. **Poor/Inadequate Science Materials:** Science is experimental and so it is best learnt by doing. Experimentation in science is solely dependent on the availability of science equipment/materials for its understanding, development and application. The provision of these science equipment/materials is grossly inadequate in schools (Ogunkunle & Mbedede, 2008). It is expected that in the absence of laboratory equipment/materials for teaching of science, that improvised local materials should be an alternative but this is not forth-coming either.

h. **Lack of Encouragement:** Lecturers need to be encouraged by university administrators so that learning will be enhanced. This encouragement can come in many forms (motivation, supervision, opportunities to attend workshops/conferences etc.).The benefits derived when university administrators encourage lecturers for enhancement of curriculum implementation include the following; identification of objectives needed to be achieved, identification of adequate resources needed to achieve the objectives, sufficient provision of needed resources (like human, materials and financial) for implementing curriculum, providing relevant information when necessary, encouragement of the use of ICTs providing incentives to both the teachers and the learners, and organization of seminars, workshops and conferences regularly for teachers (Okoro & Ali Okoro, 2016).

Conclusion

Every university in Nigeria aims to deliver quality educational services to its students who will in future contribute positively to the growth and development of the nation. Universities in Nigeria serve as the fountain that springs forth knowledgeable members of society who are well groomed through a properly implemented curriculum. This paper discussed curriculum implementation and quality delivery services in universities in Nigeria. It has shown that in order

for a university's curriculum to be properly implemented and for a university to properly deliver quality educational services, there must be a presence of adequate funds, adequate security personnel and facilities, motivation of lecturers and much more. The problems facing the implementation of curriculum and quality delivery of educational services were discussed to include lack of funds, lack of library, laboratory and security facilities, brain drain and lack of motivation of lecturers. Despite the fact that there are numerous problems facing the implementation of curriculum and delivery of quality educational services in Nigerian universities, university administrators can adopt the following suggestions;

Way Forward
1. The federal and state governments need to have a rethink and improve on the welfare of the staff in other to avoid exodus movement of staff to other countries (brain drain).
2. There should be a continuous improvement on curriculum implementation policies which will take care of the student's needs.
3. There should be training and retraining programmes for academic staff to enable them to be up to date knowledge of the curriculum in Nigerian universities.
4. A better innovative curriculum should be adopted in the university system that will be a catalyst for the development of the nation's economy for sustainability.
5. The federal government should ensure the adequate provision of funds for university education in Nigeria.
6. The universities in Nigeria should work together with the community where the university is situated to ensure peace and security.
7. Adequate security facilities and personnel should be provided in the universities to ensure a peaceful environment for learning in the university.
8. There should be provision of adequate laboratory, library and hostel facilities within the universities.

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