



Curriculum Implementation in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

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Abstract: This paper discussed challenges facing curriculum implementation in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Qualitative and quantitative data were employed in the paper. The paper concludes that poor funding, shortage of academic staff, inadequate infrastructural facilities, insecurity, strike actions, unconducive learning environment and poor supervision. The paper recommended adequate funding, employment of more academic staff, provision of adequate facilities, implementation of agreement of trade unions and provision of adequate security and conducive learning environment.

Keywords: Curriculum, Implementation, Tertiary institutions.

Introduction

Tertiary education is the education final stage of education that handles the production of manpower for the social, economic and technological development of a country (Akin-Ibidiran, Ogunode, & Ibidiran 2022). Tertiary education is an organized education that deals with intensive teaching, research and provision of community services. (FRN, 2013) sees tertiary education as the education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-University Centres such as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI).

The goals of Tertiary Education are to: Contribute to national development through high-level manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; provide high-quality career counselling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work; reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market; promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service; forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction (FRN, 2013).

Akin-Ibidiran, Ogunode, & Ibidiran (2022) notes that tertiary institutions are saddled with the responsibilities of curriculum implementation. Curriculum implementation is the act of executing the planned curriculum in the school to modify behaviour of the learners. Curriculum implementation is the process of carrying out an organized and planned curriculum document into actions in the educational environment through professional teachers, learners, school administrators, and parents as well as interaction with physical facilities, instructional materials, and psychological and social environments. Curriculum implementation is the act of executing a planned curriculum document into the practical curriculum.

The word 'implementation' is the process through which a proposed concept, model, topic, theory etc. is taken up by some practice. To implement means to make something that has been officially decided on to be in use or to be put in motion or practice. It also refers to putting a plan, scheme, decision, proposal, intention, an agreement, policy or ideas into effect (Nneka, & Ejike, 2018; Chukwuemeka, 2014). Implementation determines the success or failure of any plan, proposal, intention etc. In other words, it is the bedrock of any plan (Nneka, & Ejike, 2018).

Curriculum implementation, therefore, is the disseminating of information on a wide basis, after pilot-test, on a newly designed curriculum or on a change or revised curriculum. It ascertains the feasibility, adequacy or relevance of curriculum plans towards the accomplishment of intended learning outcomes. Curriculum implementation could also be viewed as the various steps involved in achieving the derived curriculum objectives of educational programmes ((Nneka, & Ejike, 2018; Ekpo & Oka, 2009). Obanya (2004) views implementation of curriculum as day-to-day activities which school management and classroom teachers undertake in the pursuit of the objective of any given curriculum. Obanya (2007) argues that effective curriculum is the one that reflects what the learner eventually takes away from an educational experience, which he termed 'the learned curriculum'. Obanya states that in many cases, there would be gap between the intended curriculum and the learned curriculum, and defined effective curriculum implementation as concerned with narrowing such a gap as much as possible

Curriculum implementation entails putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabuses and subjects (Chikumbi and Makamure 2000). Putting the curriculum into operation requires an implementation agent. The teacher is identified as the agent in the curriculum implementation process. Curriculum implementation therefore refers to how the planned or officially designed course of study is translated by the teacher into syllabuses, scheme of work and lessons to be delivered to students. Implementation is said to take place when the teacher-constructed syllabus, the teacher personality, the teaching materials and the teaching environment interact with the learner. Implementation further takes place as the learner acquires the planned or intended experiences, skills, knowledge, ideas and attitudes that are aimed at enabling the same learner to function effectively at the society. The learner is therefore seen as the central figure of curriculum implementation process.

Nneka, & Ejike, (2018) notes that the lecturer or teacher is identified as agent in the curriculum implementation process. Implementation takes place as the learner acquires the planned or intended experiences, skills, knowledge, ideas and attitude that are aimed at enabling the same learner to function effectively in the society. The lecturer/teacher, the learner, teaching materials, and the teaching environment, the school management all constitute major players at the implementation stage. If a curriculum is not implemented, all the efforts spent in the planning and development process will be a waste. Curriculum Implementation fosters curriculum Evaluation and this guides the learning outcomes.

The major implementers of curriculum are the teachers or lecturers. They set up learning opportunities aimed at enabling learners acquire the desired knowledge, skills, attitudes and values through adoption of appropriate teaching methods and materials to guide students' learning. The curriculum planned and developed is implemented through the medium of instruction. This is why curriculum implementation is seen as the daily activities of school management and classroom teacher in the pursuit of the achievement of the objectives of the school curriculum, all in a bid to realize the national philosophy of education (Nneka, & Ejike, 2018).

Problems Facing Curriculum Implementation in Tertiary Institution in Nigeria

There are many challenges facing implementation of curriculum in the Nigerian tertiary institutions. Some of these challenges include; poor funding, shortage of academic staff, inadequate infrastructural facilities, insecurity, strike actions, unconducive learning environment and poor supervision.

Poor Funding

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria are faced with the problems of poor funding from both Federal and State government (Tunde, & Issa, 2013; Otokunfer, 2015; Ogunode & Ohibime 2021). The budgetary allocation for the administration of public universities in Nigeria is not adequate to implement the programme of universities in Nigeria. The university system requires a lot of funds for effective administration to be able to realize its goals. Funds are needed to procure the human and material resources needed for the implementation of the curriculum. Resources like facilities, staff, instructional aids, supervision, energy etc. (Ogunode & Ahaotu, 2021; Ogunode, & Ohibime 2021) opines that the problem of inadequate funding makes it impossible for higher institutions' leaders to implement school programmes. Because of the problem of inadequate funding of the various higher institutions in the country, higher institutions' administrators now resort to the acquisition of loans from financial institutions to run their respective institutions. The inability of vice-chancellors, Rectors and Provosts to access adequate funding for the running of the institutions is responsible for the poor development of the respective institutions in Nigeria. The problem of inadequacy of funds in Nigerian higher institutions can be linked to many factors. Factors responsible for inadequate funding of public universities in Nigeria according to Olowonefa, Ogunode, & Ohibime (2022); Ogunode, (2020); Ogunode (2020) include lack of political will, corruption, increase in population, inflation, fall in national revenue and poor financial planning and Ogunode & Onyekachi (2021) observes that the implications of underfunding of the public universities include; inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of academics staff, poor quality of education, brain-drain and strike action.

Shortage of Academic Staff

This has to do with professional qualifications of lecturers. Lecturers as the implementers of curriculum must possess the teaching qualifications to enhance their instructional delivery process. A major setback in effective curriculum implementation is the problem of unqualified lecturers. Inadequate and unqualified academic staff is a problem hindering effective curriculum implementation in tertiary institutions. Academic staff according to Ogunode & Adamu, (2021) are those teaching staff in higher institutions. Academic staff are the implementer of the school curriculum and lecture presenters. Academic staffs are the teachers and delivery of instruction in the higher institutions. Academic staff are the knowledge and character builder/importers in the higher institution. The academic staff are the engine room of the higher institutions. They are the pillar and foundation of higher institutions. The functions of the academic staff include lecturing, preparing the lecture note, sourcing instructional materials, giving an assignment to students, assessing the students through continuous assessment and examination, setting exams questions, marking the answer sheet, supervising students' research work, especially projects, thesis, dissertation and prepares the students to grade points. The academic staff conducts different levels of research, presents their findings and contributes to the development of knowledge in the higher institutions (Ogunode, Olatunde-Aiyedun & Mcbrown, 2022; Ogunode, Jegede & Musa, 2021; Alechenu, 2012; Bamiro, 2012). The shortage of academic staff is affecting curriculum implementation in many higher institutions. There is a shortage of manpower in Nigerian universities that is why the (National Universities Commission 2021) submits that universities should be isolated from the Federal Government's circular on new employment owing to the shortage of lecturers. The commission noted that 100,000 academic staff members were attending to 2.1 million students in Nigerian universities. The NUC disclosed that the commission was supervising over 200 universities consisting of 48 belonging to the Federal Government; 54 states and 99 private institutions. NUC observed that —The entire system has about 2.1 million students and a staff strength of about 170,000 non-teaching and 100,000 academic staff. —Some of the problems facing the system include increased running costs, meagre budgetary allocations, issues of power shortages and shortages of manpower. Ogunode & Adamu (2021) and Ogunode & Okwelogu (2022) notes that underfunding, poor manpower planning, poor motivation, government policy on the embargo, corruption (Ghost worker) and strike action problems are the causes of inadequate academic staff in the public universities in North-central Nigeria. The implications of the shortage of academic staff in public universities according to Ogunode (2020)

include poor implementation of teaching programme, high student-lecturers ratio, and heavy workload for lecturers, poor local and international ranking, bad international image, poor coverage of scheme of work and poor academic programme accreditation.

Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

Indeed, infrastructural facilities count as another problem that inhibit curriculum implementation and possible realization of the curriculum objectives in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Shortage of infrastructural facilities is another factor militating against effective curriculum implementation in higher institutions spread across the country (Ohiare, Ogunode, & Sarafadeen, 2021; Akin-Ibidiran, Ogunode, & Ibidiran 2022). Infrastructural facilities according to (Ogunode, 2020) refer to facilities aiding the delivery of academic and non-academic services in educational institutions. Infrastructural facilities include; libraries, laboratories, halls, offices, administrative blocks, hostels, road facilities, water, electricity, internet etc. The availability of infrastructural facilities in adequate quantities will support the effective administration of educational institutions and the inadequacies will prevent effective administration of educational institutions. Many public universities in Nigeria do not have adequate lecture halls, laboratories and offices for both students and academic staff due to poor funding (Akomolafe & Ibijola, 2014; Ogunode, 2020). Ogunode, Josiah & Ajape (2021) submitted that inadequate infrastructural facilities in many public universities in Nigeria have been linked to the high rate of corruption in the system. The money provided for infrastructural facilities is diverted and looted, leaving the universities to suffer a shortage of facilities. Ebehikhalu & Dawam (2017) and Ogunode, Josiah & Ajape (2021) submitted that inadequate infrastructural facilities in many public universities in Nigeria have been linked to the high rate of corruption in the system. The money provided for infrastructural facilities is diverted and looted, leaving the universities to suffer a shortage of facilities. Ogunode (2020) and Ogunode, & Jegede (2021) submit that factors responsible for inadequate infrastructural facilities in Nigerian public universities include; underfunding, increased student population, corruption, poor infrastructural facilities planning, poor supervision and inflation. The implication of inadequate infrastructural facilities in the Nigerian public universities includes; poor quality of education,

Insecurity

The insecurity problem in Nigeria is also affecting curriculum implementation. Due to insecurity, many higher institutions in the country no longer enjoy a stable academic calendar. Insecurity has collapsed the school calendar in Nigerian educational institutions (Akin-Ibidiran, Ogunode, & Ibidiran 2022). Ogunode (2020) affirms that insecurity is another problem facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. Nigeria is facing an insecurity challenge and this is affecting the entire educational institutions in the country. The Islamic sect called Boko haram meaning western education is forbidden is attacking educational institutions in the Northern part of Nigeria (Ogunode & Tyaybee, 2021); Ogunode & Adamu (2021). Many public universities located in Northern Nigeria have been victims of continuous attacks. Many students, lecturers and administrators have been killed while others kidnapped (Ogunode & Atobauka, (2021); Ogunode & Musa, (2020). The various attacks on the universities have resulted in school closure leading to the unstable academic programme (Ogunode, 2020). Garba, Ogunode, Musa & Ahmed (2022) submit that Brain-drain, increased in the cost of running tertiary education, destruction of infrastructural facilities, loss of manpower, reduction in enrolment of students and disruption of the academic programme were identified as the effects of insecurity on tertiary education in the North-East political zone of Nigeria while in the South East. Ogunode & Ukozor (2022) identified disruption of higher education administration, teaching programme, research programme, community service programme, academic calendar, academic programme accreditation, and suspension of infrastructural facilities projects, brain-drain and reduction of academic staff strength is the impact of insecurity on higher education in the south-east geo-political zone and the paper recommendation that the federal and state government should address issues responsible for the high rate of insecurity in the region.

Strike Actions

Strike actions in Nigerian public universities is another problem facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria (Akin-Ibidiran, Ogunode, & Ibidiran 2022). The Nigerian public universities are known for continuous strike actions by different union groups in the public universities. The continuous strike actions by these different union groups are frustrating the administration of public universities in Nigeria (Ogunode 2020; Ogunode, Akinjobi, & Musa, 2022; Ogunode & Adah 2022). The reasons for the strike actions by different union groups according to Ogunode (2020); Ogunode, Yiolokun & Akeredolu, (2019); Ogunode, Ugochukwu, & Jegede (2022) include; underfunding of the public universities, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor implementation of the agreement reached with union groups and poor working conditions. The implications of the continuous strike actions on the public universities include; disruption in the academic programme, poor quality of education, bad image for the universities, poor ranking internationally and poor patronage of public universities in Nigeria.

Unconducive Learning Environment

Learning environment has been identified as one of the major players in curriculum implementation in tertiary institutions. A conducive learning environment must be created for the realization of the objectives of tertiary education. Good learning environment promotes quality education, which goes beyond good classroom, library, laboratories, hostels, and teachers' attendance to workshops and conferences. It includes adequate policies and practices, which prohibits students and teachers' harassment, examination malpractice, cultism and its associated violence. It connotes good academic culture (Ogbodo, 2006). It is also within the preview of the schools to engender a peaceful and conducive climate and academic culture so that the school curriculum would be implemented, which would guarantee excellence on the part of the students, (Nwiyi, 2009).

Poor supervision

Poor supervision of tertiary institutions by the various institutions and individuals in charge is also among the factors contributing to poor implementation of the curriculum in Nigerian tertiary institutions (Akin-Ibidiran, Ogunode, & Ibidiran 2022). Edokhamhen & Ogunode (2020) observes that ineffective supervision is also responsible for poor teaching programme in higher institutions in Nigeria. The Nigerian government, in a bid to ensure effective supervision of teaching programmes in the higher institutions, established the following agencies: universities are supervised by the National Universities Commissions, while colleges of education are supervised by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) oversees polytechnic education. These commissions are responsible for policy decisions affecting institutions under their supervision, maintenance of standards through a system of periodic accreditation of courses, distribution and monitoring of government funding, the appointment of members of governing councils, and the day-to-day running of the institutions (NEEDS, 2014). These supervisory agencies of higher institutions have not been effective in the supervision of teaching programmes at the various higher institutions due to many challenges that include underfunding, shortage of staffers, weak leadership and internal problems. The inability of these supervisory agencies to effectively supervise the activities of the higher institutions is one of the factors responsible for poor teaching in the higher institutions in Nigeria (Edokhamhen & Ogunode, 2020). Factors responsible for poor supervision of higher institutions in Nigeria (Ogunode & Adanna, 2022) include Inadequate funding, shortage of personnel, inadequate transportation facilities, insecurity, opposition from labour unions, limited offices, strike actions, inadequate supervision materials and corruption were concluded as the challenges militating against effective supervision of higher institutions in Nigeria (Ogunode & Ndayebom, 2022).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Curriculum implementation is vital to the sustainability of tertiary education in Nigeria. Curriculum implementation is key to the realization of tertiary institutions' goals and objectives. In Nigeria,

especially in tertiary institutions, curriculum implementation is faced with many challenges. This paper identified challenges facing curriculum implementation in Nigeria to include poor funding, shortage of academic staff, inadequate infrastructural facilities, insecurity, strike actions, unconducive learning environment and poor supervision. Based on the problems identified in this paper, the paper hereby recommends the following:

- i. Federal and state governments should increase the funding of tertiary institutions across the country;
- ii. The government should direct tertiary institutions administrators in the country to employ more academic and non-academic staff;
- iii. More infrastructure facilities should be provided in all the tertiary institutions in the country;
- iv. The government should employ agreements reached with the various trade unions in the tertiary institutions are implemented.
- v. The government should come up with packages to motivate the academic staff to stay in the various higher institutions through increments of salaries and other allowances.
- vi. The government should address all factors causing insecurity in the country; and
- vii. The various supervisory agencies should be strengthened to carry out their supervisory functions.

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