

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA: TOWARDS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria's Education Policy is quite laudable yet her investments in education are not too rewarding considering the deteriorating educational standards. No matter how laudable education policies/programmes are, poor implementation would lead to poor quality education which in effect undermines capacity building and sustainable development. This study therefore investigated the major administrative constraints affecting curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria and remedies. A survey was conducted using 2,706 randomly sampled secondary school administrators in Nigeria. Three research questions and one hypothesis were formulated. Results of data analyses using statistical mean and t-test revealed no significant difference among administrators' perceptions, identifying eight major administrative constraints of planner-executor (4.12) manpower (4.08), acceptance (4.04), planning process (3.88), teacher demand/supply (3.78), environment (3.49), sociological (3.36) and manual method of operation (3.02). Also, most effective remedies were to relate educational policies/programmes to specific educational issues and school administrators should participate fully in all stages of policy/programme formulation/planning which were consequently recommended.

Keywords: Educational Policy, Implementation, Administrative Constraints, Sustainable Development, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The educational system comprises the schools, the nature of the curriculum; the pupils' age distribution, their range of abilities, background, and purpose in attending school; the teachers, their education and training as well as their attitudes; the relationship of the school with the state, church and family; and the nature of educational administration and control. Education everywhere is inevitably influenced by the political, economic, social and religious climates of the time and place. Every age and people has devised a system of education suited to their own needs and circumstances. While some are doing very well, others seem not to be. Nigeria seems to belong to the latter category with negative views and outcries from renowned educators and scholars about the quality of educational outputs at all levels and types. Nigeria seems to have lost quality in education despite lofty education policies, huge investments in education, and gains in quantity. The factors that determine the quality of education include:

- The students (interest, commitment, quality, entering behavior, etc).
- The programmes reflecting the policies (the curriculum content, aims/objectives, activities involved).
- The resources available (human and physical e.g. teachers, buildings, facilities, finance, funding).

- The environment (peace, home stability, government\private support, aesthetics, location).

This study is concerned with the second item above which deals with the curriculum. Nigerian educational system has fallen short of curricular expectations as revealed by studies and observations in recent times (World Bank, 2000; Duze, 2003; National Universities Commission (NUC), 2004; Okebukola, 2006; Nwangwu, 2007). A critical analysis of the Nigerian educational system revealed that curriculum and its development are awkwardly implemented. Curriculum together with its proper implementation, vested in educational administration and control, is seen as the key factor in education since it specifies the immediate objectives and long term goals, the philosophy, scope, and learning experiences which will be used to achieve the desired aims and objectives and for meaningful evaluation of the system. Curriculum development without routes to implementation is obviously meaningless. Thus, curriculum development and implementation is seen to pilot the affairs of educational systems (Akudolu, 1994; Okeke 2002; Duze, 2003; Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2004; Obioma, 2005; NERDC, 2005; Okigbo, 2007).

Amadi (1990) sees curriculum as planned learning experiences which are mostly carried out in schools by the pupils who are simultaneously guided and evaluated by the teachers. The end result should be the production of competent individuals who have passed through various instructional programmes and who can be useful to themselves and the society. Curriculum development however, is a course of action designed to produce a structure set at learning experiences. Ntukidem and Etudor (2003) described it as the field of study which may or may not be new or cross traditional subject boundaries, the outcome of which may include any or all the student resource materials, guides of study, teachers' guide, syllabus, program of learning experiences, structured set of objectives and set of evaluation techniques and instruments. These underscore the fact that for curriculum to be operationalized, school administrators in form of principals and classroom teachers who are the direct implementers of educational policies and programmes must be effective and efficient in carrying out their jobs. Implementation here involves every action put into place at the appropriate time and space by the appropriate persons to effectively and efficiently "deliver" the curriculum for optimum realization of set goals and objectives. In doing this, all constraints must be eliminated as much as possible, or else, the system may produce sub-standard outputs. For instance, Okigbo (2007) and Obioma (2005) found that mathematics is not systematically taught in secondary schools and attributed this to improper implementation of the old and new curricula in mathematics in Nigeria which led to poor performances. They found lack of qualified teachers, lack of material resources and poor method of instruction as major implementation problems. Ntukidem and Etudor (2003) observed that science subjects which are expected to be discussed at the level of people's level of scientific knowledge are done otherwise because of lack of equipment and other administrative constraints. Also, supportive of these in other subjects are the findings of Duze (1988, 2003), Akudolu (1994), Udeinya and Okabiah (1991).

Ntukidem and Etudor (2003) listed certain administrative constraints affecting curriculum development in Nigeria to include Planner-Executor constraint, manpower constraint, planning process constraint, teacher demand\supply to schools constraint, as well as constraints of acceptance, manual method of operation, and sociological constraints. It is however not known the extent to which all these constraints jeopardize effective curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria. This study therefore investigated the major administrative constraints affecting curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria as well as proffered solutions that would effectively eliminate them. It is hoped that the outcome of this study would be

useful to policy-makers, educational planners/administrators, and curriculum developers/implementers in Nigeria, Africa, and elsewhere in enriching educational standards thereby maximizing the potentials of educated persons for sustainable national development. The study was guided by three research questions from which one hypothesis was formulated and tested.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the administrative constraints affecting curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria?
- 2) What are the possible solutions to administrative constraints affecting curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria?
- 3) Is there a significant difference between the perceptions of principals and teachers on administrative constraints affecting curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria?

HYPOTHESIS

H₀: There is no significant difference between perceptions of school principals and teachers on administrative constraints affecting curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The research is an ex post facto design of the descriptive survey which sought the opinions of subjects on the three research questions raised in the study. The population comprised all the administrators (teachers and principals) of secondary schools in Nigeria. For effective representation in the population, the schools were stratified along the 36 states in Nigeria, with the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, grouped under Niger State (its geographical location). Ten schools were randomly selected from each State. This gave a total of 360 secondary schools. Considering the large number of administrators involved, the researcher decided to include all the 360 school principals in the study sample but further select the teachers. Considering the differing numerical strengths of teachers in the schools, ten percent of teachers in each sampled secondary school were selected through stratified random sampling. This presented a fair representation of teachers from each school, giving a total of 2,448. The sample size for this study was therefore a total of 2,808 subjects comprising 360 principals and 2,448 teachers. However, this reduced to 2,706 subjects because 102 teachers who did not adequately complete the research instrument were dropped. The subjects were required to indicate the administrative constraints affecting curriculum development and implementation listed in the research instrument in a four-option response of extremely much, very much, much, and not at all, with rating points of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Mean scores of 2.5 and above were considered to be major administrative constraints. They were also required to give a very short statement of solution against each chosen constraint. The instrument being a form of checklist, was adjudged to satisfy face and content validity, and also reliable by experts in the field of educational administration and policy studies. The instrument was administered to the subjects and retrieved with the help of well-briefed third parties. This lasted for a period of ten weeks. The data collected were collated and analyzed according to how they related to the research questions and hypothesis formulated in the study. The two research questions were answered using frequency, mean, and standard deviation, while the hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance applying the t-test for independent means.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Research Question One: What are the administrative constraints affecting curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria?

To answer to this question, the responses of the subjects were collated, scored, and the means and standard deviations computed. The results were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean rating and Standard Deviation (SD) of administrative constraints affecting curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria

S/N	Constraints	X (Mean)	SD	Remarks
1.	Planner-executor	4.12	1.45	Extremely Much
2.	Planning process	3.88	1.56	Extremely Much
3.	Manpower	4.08	1.25	Extremely Much
4.	Acceptance	4.04	1.28	Extremely Much
5.	Sociological	3.36	1.44	Very Much
6.	Manual method of operation	3.02	1.26	Very Much
7.	Teacher demand and supply	3.78	1.47	Extremely Much
8.	Environment	3.49	1.87	Very Much

The results in Table 1 revealed that all the eight administrative constraints found were major administrative constraints affecting curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria. While the constraint of planner-executor with a mean score and standard deviation of 4.12 and 1.45 respectively was found as most devastating, the manual method of operation constraint was least in this result with a mean score of 3.02 and standard deviation of 1.26. Others fell within this range in the order of manpower constraint (4.08 and 1.25); acceptance constraint (4.04 and 1.28), planning process constraint (3.88 and 1.56), teacher demand and supply constraint (3.78 and 1.47), environmental constraint (3.49 and 1.87), and sociological constraint (3.36 and 1.44).

The implication of this finding, based on the result in Table 1, for the education sector, is indeed grave, leaving a lot to be desired in the school system. Principals and teachers seem to be terribly handicapped in carrying out their jobs of instructional supervision/leadership and the real classroom instruction. The teaching/learning environment may have so deteriorated in terms of conduciveness as a result of the effects of these devastating constraints on curriculum implementation which in turn would have reduced learning experiences. This probably accounts for the continued downward trend in poor quality output from the Nigerian educational system in recent times. It calls for a thorough overhaul of the machineries for curriculum development as well as the implementation.

Research Question Two: What are the possible solutions to administrative constraints affecting curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria?

To answer this question, all the responses of all subjects were reviewed, collated, organized, and discussed as solutions to the major administrative constraints indicated. These are summarized as follows:

- To effectively eliminate or minimize the planner-executor and acceptance constraints, school administrators should as much as possible be involved in all the planning for new policies and programmes related to specific educational issues. For manpower constraint, top management should work by good examples. If they are committed to their duties and exhibit appropriate leadership styles, their subordinates would be encouraged to do the same. To avoid planning process constraint, more educational administrators/planners should be trained and re-trained so as to be current with all the new techniques and technologies in planning. To cushion the effects of sociological constraints exhibited in the form of increase in school age population and school enrollment, increasing demand for higher education, inadequate supply of basic needs both at home and in school, and the alarming rate of unemployment, private sector partnership with government in funding education should be intensified. Paper certificates should be down-played while the curriculum should be truly vocationalized at all levels of education to encourage entrepreneurship among school leavers.
- The constraints of teacher demand and supply will be effectively eliminated if the teaching profession is made attractive in Nigeria in all ramifications of the word. Specifically, motivators which are things that induce individuals to perform at utmost potentials should be made available in reasonable quantity and quality and as at when due to teachers at all levels and types of education. The youths of today are already avoiding the teaching profession. Making teaching\learning attractive will also eliminate the constraints of environment and manual methods of operation. Schools and school plants should be given serious face-lifts and located in environments that are conducive for effective teaching\learning. Modern instructional gadgets and aids like computers, projectors, well equipped laboratories, digital libraries, internet accessibility, etc, should be provided in schools. Electricity supply to run these must be constant. Communication, accommodation and transportation facilities should be provided and well maintained.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of principals and teachers on administrative constraints affecting curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria.

This hypothesis was tested applying the t-test statistic and the result presented in Table 2.

Table 2: t-test Result on Perceptions of Principals and Teachers on Administrative Constraints Affecting Curriculum Development and Implementation in Nigeria. N = 2706

Variable	N	X (Mean)	SD	df	t-cal	t-critical	Decision ($p \geq 0.05$)
Principals	360	3.81	1.46	2704	0.142	1.960	Not Significant
Teachers	2,346	3.89	1.57				

Since the calculated t-value of 0.142 is less than the critical t-value of 1.960, as shown by the result in Table 2, the null hypothesis was retained. This meant that there was no significant difference in the administrative constraints between the responses of principals and teachers on curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria. This implied that principals as overall administrators at the school-level and teachers as sub-administrators at the classroom-level agreed that they encountered the same constraints in more or less the same order of magnitude in carrying out their school duties. The implication of this finding based on the result of data analysis in Table 2, is that these constraints have become so deep-rooted that their effects transcend administrative levels and experience and constitute real biting problems in day-to-day school activities reducing especially the learning experiences at school.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of the study presented in Tables 1 and 2 revealed that the eight administrative constraints identified had significant devastating effects on curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria, to the extent that no significant difference was observed between the perceptions of the principals and teachers who are obviously the school administrators/implementers of the curriculum at different levels of operation. The principals as overall instructional supervisors/leaders in the school as well as the teachers as direct classroom instructors experienced similar handicaps in delivering the curriculum to a satisfactory extent. Top on the list of major administrative constraints on curriculum development and implementation found in this study was planner-executor constraint. This was followed closely by manpower constraint, acceptance constraint, the planning process constraint, and teacher demand/supply constraint. Others in the order of severity were environment constraint, sociological constraint, and manual method of operation constraint. These findings tallied with those of Ntukidem and Etudor (2003) who also listed most of these as administrative constraints on curriculum development. The explanations to these would not be farfetched since curriculum development and implementation pilot the affairs of educational systems, and school administrators are the major implementers of educational policies and programmes. Nigeria's lofty policy on education caters for various levels and types of education, yet her investments, reforms and innovations in education tend not to be too rewarding considering the poor standards in educational output in recent times. No matter how laudable education policies/programmes are, poor implementation of school curriculum would lead to poor quality education which in effect undermines capacity building and sustainable development in any nation. Nigeria's educational system has continued to fail in delivering the intended outcomes of the curriculum due to poor implementation as a result of the serious administrative constraints encountered by school principals and teachers.

It is often observed that the policy-makers and planners as well as political officials most of the time idealize the education programmes in Nigeria without putting into place feasible routes to implementation and without involving the real school implementers all through policy formulation and programme design/planning as a result of undue politicization of education. In a democracy that is yet to be stable in Nigeria, this trend obviously affects the education sector adversely since every ruling political party runs with its own political agenda. This adverse effect cuts across manpower production and development, the planning process itself, the acceptance of changes by the school administrators in form of innovations and reforms, increasing socio-politico problems resulting in lack of amenities to adequately absorb demand for academic education and concomitant inadequate demand/supply of teachers to schools, the already deteriorated school plants and aesthetics, as well as the poor linkage to information and communication technology (ICT). All these are related to the major

administrative constraints identified in this study as stumbling blocks to curriculum development and implementation. These observations have also been made variously by Nwangwu (2007), NERDC (2006), Okebukola (2006), Obioma (2005), NUC (2004), Duze (2003), Ntukidem and Etudor (2003), Uwazurike (1991), and World Bank (2000), as tending to reduce learning experiences at school, thereby lowering educational standards and punctuating capacity building and sustainable national development.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the major administrative constraints affecting curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria, thought to be stumbling blocks to education for sustainable development. Foremost in indentified constraints was the planner-executor constraint, which tended to rub across all the other constraints identified, to adversely affect curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria. These, in the order of severity, were manpower, acceptance, planning process, teacher demand and supply, environment, sociological, and manual methods of operation constraints.

Also investigated, were the possible ways of preventing such constraints. Consequently, solutions intended to reduce, avoid or eliminate these administrative constraints at curriculum development and implementation have also been proffered with major emphasis on involving school administrators in the planner-executor duo where relating educational policies and programmes to specific educational issues as well as their full involvement in all stages of curriculum design and planning would go a long way in improving curriculum development and implementation which will enhance capacity building and sustainable development in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion in this study, it was recommended that educational policies and programmes be directed towards solving specific educational problems and that school principals and teachers who are the major and direct implementers of the curriculum should participate fully in all stages of policy/programme design and planning. It is hoped that if these remedies are adopted by all stakeholders in education, curriculum development and implementation in Nigeria would be greatly improved and the entire educational system would begin to record better educational standards. Nigeria's educational system would begin to turn out quality graduates that would effectively interact, communicate, and compete in the global school and labour market to boost economic development and sustainable development.

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