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IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES OF THE 9-YEAR BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING, POLICY AND LAW

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Abstract

This study investigated implementation challenges of the new 9vear Basic Education Curriculum in Nigeria. Three hundred and fifty one primary school teachers that were selected from all the Local Government Areas of Osun State were used for the study. They provided information on the availability and quality of teachers for the newly introduced subjects at the primary school level. Curriculum Implementation Questionnaire [CIQ] was used to generate data for the study. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient estimated on CIQ was 0.65. Descriptive statistics was adopted to analyse the data. It was found that majority of primary school teachers in the state have the Nigeria Certificate in Education [NCE] as their minimum qualification, and majority of them had taught for more than ten years. Majority of the sampled teachers were not aware of the introduction of Computer Studies, Civic Education and Life Skills. They also indicated that there were no teachers for the newly introduced subjects [Basic Science and Technology, Computer Studies, Civic Education and Life Skills] in their schools. The findings of this study clearly revealed complete lack of the required subject teachers in most schools. In order for the implementation of the new curriculum to achieve the desired success, there is an urgent need to ado t some planning, policy and legal measures.

Introduction

The Universal Basic Education {UBE} is an educational programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria varich was officially launched by the immediate past president, Chie Olusegun Obasanjo on 30 September, 1999, in Sokoto, Sokoto State of Nigeria. The UBE programme is one of Nigeria's strategies for the attainment of the international goals of the World Conference on Education for All {EFA}, as approved in Jomtien, Thailang in 1990 and the educationrelated Millenium Development Goals (1DGs). It is also one of the means for realising the country's economic agenda as enunciated by the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy {NEEDS} [OYO SUBEB, 2006].

following its passage by the National Assembly. The UBE 2004 act makes primary and junior secondary education free and compulsory for all children. In December 200 the National Council on Education [NCE] directed the National Educational Research and Development Council [NERDC] to for ulate a curriculum for the implementation of the UBE programme [NERDC,2007a]. The aftermath of this directive was 9-year asic Education Curriculum. The structure of the curriculum attempt to address the problems of access, quality and equity in primary and junior secondary schools. It is a 9-year educational ladder programme of six years duration for the primary segment and three years of junior secondary [NERDC.2007b]. These two levels of basic education are universal, free and compulsory for all Nigeria children aged 6-15. The programme also stipulates learning from early years of 3-5+, which is called Early Child Care Development [ECCDE]{UBEC, 2008}

The president signed the UBE Into law on 26 May 2004 and Education

Educational Precursors of URE

Before the adoption of the UBE now | vogue, attempts had been made severally to formulate educational programmes. Some of these programmes are:

- 1. Universal Primary Education in Vestern Region in 1955
- 2. Universal Primary Education in astern Region in 1957
- Introduction of UPE in Lagos Federal Territory in 1957 3.

- 4. Publication of National Policy on Education in 1977 which has undergone several revisions, the latest been that of 2004.
- 5. Launching of Universal Basic Education in 1999 [Yusuf and Ajere, 2008].

Table 1 presents the curriculum structure of the new 9-year basic education in Nigeria.

Table 1: The 9-year Basic Education Curriculum Structure

BASIC EDUCATION	CORE COMPULSORY	ELECTIVE SUBJECTS
CURRICULUM LEVEL	SUBJECTS	
LOWER BASIC	1. English Studies	1 Agriculture
EDUCATION [PRIMARY	2. One Major Nigerian	2 Home Economics
1-3]	Language [Hausa,	3 Arabic Language
-	Igbo	
	or Yoruba]	
	3. Mathematics	
	4. Basic Science and	Note
	Technology*	Must offer 1 elective,
	5. Social Studies	but not more than 2.
	6. Civic Education*	7.7
	7. Cultural & Creative	
	Arts[CCA]	
	8. Religious Studies	
	[CRK/IRK]	
	9. Physical & Health	
	Education[PHE]	
	10 Computer Studies*	
MIDDLE BASIC	1. English Studies	1 Agriculture
EDUCATION	2. One Major Nigerian	2 Home Economics
[PRIMARY 4-6]	Language [Hausa,	3 Arabic Language
	Igbo,	
	or Yoruba]	Note
	3. Mathematics	Must offer 1 elective,
	4. Basic Science and	but not more than 2.
	Technology*	-
	5. Social Studies	
	6.Civic Education*	
	7.Cultural & Creative	
	Arts	
	[CCA]	
	8. Religious Studies	
8.7	[CRK/IRK]	

		9. Physical & He	alth	
		Education [P]		
		10 French Lang		
		11 Computer St		
		12 Life Skills*	uics	
UPPER	BASIC		-	1 A gui gultung
	BASIC	1. English Studi		1Agriculture
EDUCATION		2. One Major N		2 Home Economics
France 67		Language	Hausa,	3 Arabic Language
[JSS1-3]		Igbo,		4 Business Studies
		or Yoruba]		
		3. Mathematics		
		4. Basic Science		Note:
		5. Social Studie		Must offer 1 elective,
		6. Civic Educati	n*	but not more than 3.
		7. Cultural & Cr	ative	
		Arts[CCA]		
		8. Religious Stu	ies	
	-	[CRK/IRK]		
		9. Physical & H	alth	
		Education [P		
		10 French Lang		
		11 Basic Techn		
		12 Computer S	idles*	
		13 Life Skills*		
	(1)			
	6			

* > Newly Introduced Subject, Source: UBEC Training Manual, 2007

The implementation of a new curricul m always poses challenges to the nation as a whole and respective tate in particular. The extent to which the curriculum is sensitive to the values, beliefs, norms, tradition, science and technology, art religion and customs of the people constitutes a major challen e. According to Maduewesi [2000], the curriculum must be sensitive to the totality of the ways of life of the society for which it was designed. Actually, the new set of curriculum attempts to focus on functionality and relevance of its content to the society, bearing in mind the current trend of science and technology. Maduewesi [2002] mphasises the fact that the

need of any nation in the present age of scientific and technological advancement, which is further hastened by computer technology and information superhighway, are best determined through appropriate, relevant, pure and applied science curricula and dissemination of existing and new information which is impossible practically without teachers.

Teachers are major implementers of any curriculum. Regardless of the number of workshops organised for different stakeholders, if teachers are left behind, the objectives set for the curriculum might not be fully achieved. This position corroborates Maduewesi's [2000] opinion that teachers are largely responsible for the translation and implementation of educational policies, curriculum or course offerings, instructional material packages and assessment of learning outcomes at the level of learners. 'Computer studies' is one of the subjects integrated into the new curriculum. How available are the teachers who are competent to handle this subject? Kwache [2007] identifies lack of information and communication technology [ICT] personnel as one of the major problems which mitigate against the implementation of ICT and its related curriculum in Nigeria. He went further by saying that most institutions lack computer literate teachers and ICT experts that would support and manage the internet connectivity and or application of computing in the teaching-learning process. 'Teachers as Learners Strategy' [Downloaded 2008] stipulates that:

Curriculum implementation relies on teachers having access to high quality materials, developed by the people with expertise in content and pedagogy, as well as sufficient resources and time to design, test and refine the materials for use in classrooms with diverse students. Teachers and professional developers need to work together to decide how the curriculum will be used with the students and the milestones that will be met at different points in the implementation process. Overtime, teachers need to be given different kinds of support, tailored to their changing needs.

It is important that government and other stakeholders acknowledge the enormous task that rests on teachers while implementing the new curriculum.

The success or failure of the on-going 9-year Basic Education in Nigeria seems to lie in the fact that teachers are not only being

asked to change their roles and take en increased responsibility, but they are also being asked to change previously held attitudes and beliefs (Kennedy and Kennedy 1996) They are the change agents needed to bring the curriculum implementation procedures to the grassroots and communicate the im ortance to both parents and learners they deal with on aily basis. They require information/knowledge both about the background to the new curriculum (which would include in prmation about the approach and the design) and about how they will be expected to manage it, taking on responsibilities, for example for designing materials themselves that they may not have habefore. They require training in the skills required and they require the physical resources to implement the changes. In addition, new will need time to take on the new ideas and space to try then out and adapt them to their situation (Kennedy, 1996). According to him, time and space are important as teachers adjust their a itudes and beliefs and move through the psychological processes ssociated with change. These may be more or less stressful depending on the psychological "distance" between the old and the new practices.

training to update their content - are knowledge especially on the newly introduced subjects. Experience d teachers in term of years of teaching may be needed for this "change". Those with less years of teaching according to Fetler, (1999) are likely to be less effective compared with those with many rears of teaching. Level of certification of teachers seems to impact on their knowledge of the subject matter and the teaching gain Abell - Foundation, (2001) reported that highly certified teacher are no better in practice and knowledge of subject than the less certified ones. Darling -Hammond, (2002) on the other hand seerted that certification is an important factor in predicting knowledge of subject and quality teaching. The assertion of Darlin - Hammond, (2002) was supported by Wayne & Youngs, [2003] that, high level of certification in a particular subject a ea, within the context of this study mathematics, may result in high knowledge of the subject and more effective teaching.

The Federal Government kicl-started the implementation process by providing a rigorous training exercise on the new curriculum for only forty-two master trainers from each state and the Federal Capital Territory. Majorit of the participants that took

These heavy demands on teamers call for training and re-

part in the training in some states were not classroom teachers. Even if all were classroom teachers, the proportion in comparison with the number of classroom teachers in each state is insignificant. The challenge of carrying teachers along while implementing the new 9-year Basic Education curriculum especially in Osun State of Nigeria is the concern of this study. The qualities in terms of qualification and years of teaching of the teachers used for the implementation of the new curriculum were investigated. Level of availability of qualified teachers to teach the newly introduced subjects [Basic Science and Technology, Computer Studies, Civic Education and Life Skills] was also investigated.

Statement of Problem

Large proportions of annual budget of many countries go to education being the major means of producing high intellectual capacity for the nations. The teachers that will bring the objectives of education (especially that of 9-year basic education in Nigeria) to the grassroots must be available and should possess expected qualities that will ensure good performance. This study therefore investigated the availability and qualities of teachers used for the curriculum implementation and their awareness of the newly introduced subjects.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the qualities of teachers for implementation of the new 9-year UBE curriculum in terms of teaching and highest qualification?

2. Are the teachers aware of the new subjects [Basic Science and Technology, Computer Studies, Civic Education and Life Skills] integrated into the 9-year UBE curriculum?

3. How available are qualified subject teachers for the newly introduced subjects in primary schools?

Methodology

This study is a descriptive type. The variables were observed without any manipulation. Purposive sampling technique was used by Osun State Universal Basic Education Board [SUBEB] to select primary school teachers who attended a training workshop at the state headquarters, Oshogbo from all the thirty local government

areas in the state on 8 and 9 October, 2008. The participants for this workshop constituted the sample of this study. Three hundred and fifty one primary school teachers participated in the study.

An instrument titled C rriculum Implementation Questionnaire [CIQ] was constructed by the researchers. It comprised two sections. Section A elic ted information on personal data of the respondents, while section B sought information on teachers' awareness of and availability of teachers for the newly integrated subjects [Basic Science and Technology Computer Studies, Civic Education and Life Skills] in the 9-year UBE curriculum. The instrument also sought information on other related curriculum implementation process. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient estimated on CIQ was 0.65. Descriptive statistics [frequency counts and percentages] and graphs were employed to answer the three research questions raised in the study.

Results

The results to the research questions a e presented in this section.

Research Question One:

1150 J.

What are the qualities of teachers for implementation of the new 9-year UBE curriculum in terms of years of teaching and highest educational qualification?

Table 2: Highest Educational Qualification of Primary School Teachers

Qualification	Frequene /	Percentage	
Diploma	1	0.3	
Grade 11	6	1.7	
NCE	286	81.5	
B.Sc	5	1.4	
B.Ed	43	12.3	
M.Ed	1	0.3	
No response	9	2.6	
Total	351	100	

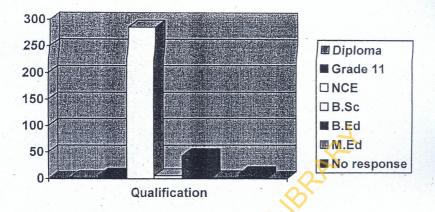


Fig 1: Qualification Profiles of the Selected Teachers

Table 2 and Fig. 1 show that majority of the sampled teachers 286 [81.5%] had Nigeria Certificate of Education [NCE] qualification while 43[12.3%] of the sample indicated B.Ed. as their highest educational qualification. This result seems to be in conformity with the stipulation of National Policy on Education [FRN, 2004] that the minimum educational qualification for primary school teachers should be NCE.

Table 3: Years of Teaching of Primary School Teachers

Year	Frequency	Per cent	
0-5 years	27	7.7	
6-10 years	05	1.4	
11-15 years	24	6.9	
16-20 years	123	35.0	
21-25 years	84	23.9	
26-30 years	76	21.7	
Above 30 years	12	3.4	
Total	351	100	

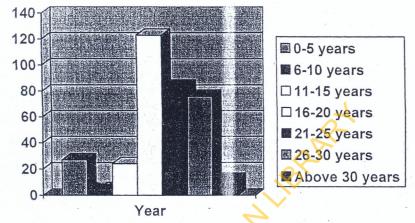


Fig 2: Year of Teaching of the sampled Teachers

Majority of the sampled primary school teachers as shown in table 3 and fig. 2 are experienced. As many 3319 [90.9%] had more than 10 years teaching experience. This implies that experienced teachers are available for the new 9-y ar UBE curriculum in primary schools.

Research Question Two

Are the teachers aware of the new subjects [Basic Science and Technology, Computer Studies, Civic Education and Life Skills] integrated into the 9-year UBE curriculum?

Table 4: Primary School Teachers' wareness of New Subjects

	Aware		Not Aware		
Subject	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	
Basic Science & Technology	211	60.1	140	39.9	
Computer Studies	151	43.0	200	57.0	
Civic Education	98	27.9	253	72.1	
Life Skills	55	15.7	296	84.3	

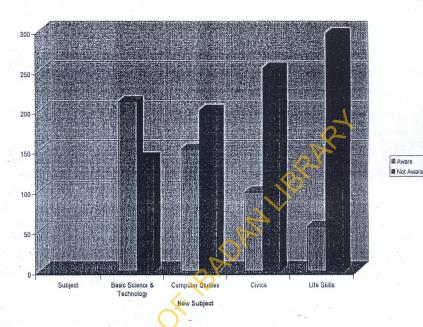


Fig.3.Awareness of the Sampled Teachers of the newly introduced Subjects

Table 4 and Fig. 3 reveal that majority of the sampled teachers were not aware of the newly introduced subjects [Basic Science & Technology, Computer Studies, Civic Education and Life Skills] in the new curriculum. Among the respondents teachers, 211[60.1%] and 151[43.0%]indicated that they were aware of Basic Science & Technology and Computer Studies as newly introduced subjects respectively. Only 98[27.9%] and 55[15.7%] indicated that they were aware of Civic Education and Life Skills as newly introduced subjects respectively. Implicit in this is that if majority of the teachers themselves are not aware of the newly introduced subjects, to what extent then would their pupils be aware of the subjects, needless to talk about being taught.

Research Question Three

How available are qualified subject teachers for the newly introduced subjects in primary Schools

Table 5: Availability of Qualified Subject Teachers for the Newly Introduced Subjects

New Subject	Teachers Available		Teachers Not Available		
	Frequency	0/0	Frequency	0/0	
Basic Science & Technology	144	41.0	207	59.0	
Computer Studies	37	10.5	314	89.5	
Civic Education	69	19.7	282	80.3	
Life Skills	34	9.7	317	90.3	

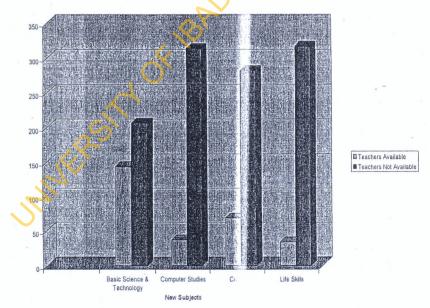


Fig. 4. Availability of Teachers for Newly Introduced Subjects

teach the newly Newly introduced subjects [Basic Science and Technology, Computer Studies, Civic ducation and Life Skills] were

not available in most of the primary schools in the state. Among the sampled teachers, 144[41.0] and 37[10.5] indicated that there were teachers for Basic Science and Technology and Computer Studies respectively in their schools. Only a few, 69[19.7%] and 34[9.7%] indicated that there were teachers for Civic Education and Life Skills respectively in their schools. The new 9-year basic education curriculum is already in use since September, 2008 in all the primary and junior secondary schools following the government policy. Yet there are no sufficient teachers to teach all the subjects, what a great challenge.

Discussion

It was found in this study that majority of the primary school teachers have the minimum requirement of educational qualification, that is Nigeria Certificate of Education [NCE] as specified in the National Policy on Education [FRN 2004]. Academic qualification of a teacher is a cogent factor that determines the quality of instruction given to learners. Implementation of curriculum will amount to nothingness if teachers are not well trained. Years of teaching of the majority of primary school teachers was found to be above ten years. This means that they are experienced enough to facilitate the implementation of the new curriculum.

The study revealed that qualified teachers were not available in almost all the primary schools in the state to handle the newly introduced subjects [Basic Science and Technology, Computer Studies, Civic Education and Life Skills]. This constitutes one of the major implementation challenges of the new 9-year Basic Education Curriculum. As at the time the data used for this study were collected, the new curriculum was already in use in all the schools [primary and junior secondary schools]. Yet, teachers for all these new subjects were not readily available. Schools where thesesubjects are being taught, the possibility of being taught by the unqualified teachers is high. Using the words of Maduewesi [2000], teachers are largely responsible for the translation of educational policies, curriculum or course offerings, instruction material packages and assessment of learning outcomes. How then will unqualified teachers perform these teacher-related roles effectively in relation to these newly introduced subjects? It is observed that many old teachers have gone on retirement without replacement

with new ones. In fact, for a period of four years, some state governments never employed any teacher. With this lackadaisical attitude, there is no way teachers well be adequate in the public schools. If employment of new teachers is not considered by the government, retraining of those on-the-job might be the alternative that will make realization of the set objectives of the new 9-year basic education a reality. It was found in this study that many teachers were not even aware of the newly introduced subjects. Implicit in this is that these new sull ects are not being taught in some of the primary schools in the sta :.

Implications for Educational Planning, Policy and Law

· stand

The findings of this study have neaningful implications for educational planning, policy and aw. The different Federal government seems to have ignored the planning aspect of the scheme, hence the inability to provide schools with qualified subject teachers for the newly introduced subjects. Fabunmi (2004) had claimed that most of the staff of the Nanning, Research & Statistics Division' of most Ministries of Education in Nigeria did not study educational planning at all. In a situation like this, there is an urgent need to recruit adequate educational planners that will assist in the planning of educational programmes ke this one.

The federal legislature shou I enact a law that makes it mandatory for both private and public education providers to employ specialists in educational planning jobs in schools and appropriate government departments. Appropriate instruments should also be put in place to ensure adequacy of teachers and other educational resources in schools. Governments at both state and Federal level should rise up to their responsibilities by recruiting sufficient teachers that will facilitate the implementation of the new 9- year basic education at urban and rural areas. Regular in-service training should be provided to update teachers' knowledge especially on the newly introduced subjects [Basic Science and Technology, Con outer Studies, Civic Education and Life Skills]. Machinery has to be et in motion for the training of teachers, especially those that wil be teaching the four newly introduced subjects [Basic Scienc and Technology, Computer Studies, Civic Education and Life Skills]. It has to be further emphasised that for the laudable objectives of the UBE, being pursued by UBEC and states' SUBEE to be achieved, the training of

teachers should involve integrating the use of modern instructional technologies such as the computers, access to the internet, audiovisual equipments and other assorted software used in today's business world.

Conclusion

This study has established that the major implementation challenges of the new 9-year Basic Education Curriculum is non-availability of required qualified teachers for the newly introduced subjects [Basic Science and Technology, Computer Studies, Civic Education and Life Skills]. As at the time the data used for this study were collected, the new curriculum was already in use in all the schools [primary and junior secondary schools]. Yet, teachers for all these new subjects were not readily available. Schools where these subjects are being taught used unqualified teachers.

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