

TOWARDS EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW REVISED SENIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM: THE ROLES OF STAKEHOLDERS

BY

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Abstract

Curriculum serves as a foundational framework for the delivery of instructional context, the development of knowledge, skills, and values, and the achievement of positive educational outcomes that contribute to national development. Effective curriculum implementation is a collective responsibility of various stakeholders which requires that all hands must be on deck. It is only when this occur that the attainment of secondary education can be guaranteed. It is in the light of this that this paper focuses on the roles of stakeholders towards effective implementation of senior secondary education curriculum. Concepts of curriculum, the stages of secondary education curriculum development in Nigeria, and challenges of curriculum development with reference to senior secondary education curriculum were not left out. The paper went further to examine the effective implementation of the senior secondary education curriculum and the stakeholders' roles in the implementation of secondary school curriculum were extensively discussed. The paper suggested among other things that stakeholders in the implementation of secondary education curriculum should further enhance synergy in their efforts towards curriculum implementation.

Keywords: Implementation, Curriculum, Stakeholders, Effectiveness, Senior Secondary School

Introduction

Curriculum is the total package of what is to be taught or learnt. Curriculum is also a planned learning experiences offered to the learners in the school. Hillary and Ethel (2019) asserted that putting the curriculum into practice requires an implementation agents or stakeholders. According to Ahmed (2020) the stakeholders involved in curriculum implementation includes; government, teachers, school administrators, supervisors, parents/guardians, curriculum developers among others. Federal government is expected to provide fund for curriculum design and development, which supposed to be distributed across the Nigerian secondary schools. Federal government is expected to monitor whether the curriculum get across all the state ministries of education, and ensure it reach all schools within its jurisdiction. In curriculum implementation, from the topmost level to the classroom, the teacher features prominently as principal actor. The teacher is in a better position to advice on materials and factors concerning curriculum planning and implementation (Eze, 2005).

When curriculum is broken down into syllabuses, it is the teacher who interprets it further into scheme of work. It is the teacher who plans and works out the details of course outlines, units of instruction and daily lesson plans. It is he/she who determines the objectives to be achieved and select materials and methods to put them into effect. The head teachers/principals also play a major role in curriculum implementation. When there is improvement or innovation incorporated into the curriculum, they can help a change to be successfully implemented because they know the school organization climate and they can support those persons initiating changes. Yaro (2020) posited that head teacher/principals can set the tune in their schools. If a principal has created an atmosphere in which a

good working relationship exists among teachers, and teachers are willing to take the risks necessary to create and deliver dynamic programmes, then it is more likely that curriculum will be effectively implemented.

The process of curriculum development and implementation must be supervised. Someone must monitor what is occurring and determine whether these are appropriate or not. Supervisors provide directions and guides, making sure teachers have the skills to carry out the desired changes. This requires making certain decisions, engaging in particular actions and interacting with others involved in the change efforts Yaro (2020). During workshops and seminars, supervisors engaged in demonstration teaching to make recommended ways of delivering the curriculum known to all involved teachers. If the supervisors are effective, it is likely that the teacher within the system will feel committed to and comfortable with the new programme being implemented. Curriculum developers subject specialists, especially university and colleges of education lecturer supported by curriculum experts in the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, Federal and State ministries of education, Universal Basic Education Commission, State Universal Basic Education Commission, classroom teachers and school administrators/principals, design and develop curriculum basically in line with Nigerian secondary education goals, and also train teachers on different techniques to be adopted in teaching and learning process. From the foregoing, the stakeholders are performing their roles. Thus, it has been observed that some are performing up to expectations and some are performing below expectation which can hinder effective curriculum implementation, hence, the reasons for this write-up to be focused on the roles of stakeholders towards effective implementation of the curriculum.

Concept of Curriculum

Curriculum describes the learning that is expected to take place during a course of programme of study in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. According to Olorundare (2018) one of the functions of curriculum is to provide a template which enables learning to meaningfully take place. Hence, a curriculum specifies the main teaching, learning and assessment methods and also provides an indication of the learning resources required to support the effective delivery of the course. Obiafuna (2018) described curriculum as planned and unplanned concept, content, skills, work habits, means of assessment, attitudes and instructional strategies taught in the classroom and the variety of school activities in and out of class that influence present and future academic, social, emotional and physical growth of students. Ogar and Awhen (2015) described the term curriculum implementation as the process of putting the curriculum into work for the attainment of the goals for which the curriculum is designed. Therefore, it has been observed that some critical stakeholders are not performing their roles as expected, thus, curriculum is not effectively implemented in most schools across the country (Ahmed, 2017), and this prompted the researcher to delve into the roles of stakeholders involved in curriculum implementation. If all the stakeholders perform their roles up to expectations, the curriculum will be effectively implemented, and therefore, the goals of secondary education will be achieved.

Stages of Secondary Education Curriculum Development in Nigeria

Secondary education in Nigeria has undergone significant changes in its educational curriculum over the years. During the colonial era, Nigerian government implemented an education act in 1882, which marked the beginning of formal education in the country. The curriculum was largely influenced by British colonialists and focused on producing clerks and other low-level administrative staff (Azikiwe, 2012). However, the goals of education were not realized because of limited access, lack of cultural relevance and narrow focus. During the post-colonial era, after Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the country introduced a new curriculum that aimed to promote national unity

and development. The curriculum emphasised subjects like mathematics, Science and English Language. However, the goals were not met because the curriculum lacked clear goals and objectives, leading to confusion and inconsistency. Also, the country faced significant challenges in providing adequate resources, including textbooks, facilities and qualified teachers. The implementation of curriculum also failed because it focused primarily on academic subjects, with limited emphasis on vocational skills and technical education.

In 1982, Nigeria introduced the 6-3-3-4 system, which restructured the country's educational system. The system consisted of six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary education, three years of senior secondary education, and four years of tertiary education. Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was introduced in 1999, which aimed to produce free and compulsory basic education to all Nigerian children. The programme introduced a new curriculum that focused on basic education and vocational skills. However, the current system of education is 9-3-4, which consisted of nine years basic education, three years post basic education and four years tertiary education level. The Nigerian curriculum in line with 9-3-4 system was introduced in 2014, which emphasizes the development of skills and competencies in areas like science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). The National Policy on Education clearly spelt out the minimum standards for all education system in the country. Obioma (2014) posited that the specifications in respect of inputs, processes and expected outputs/outcomes gave clear guides on which the old state of curriculum development activities started and thrived up to 2005, when restructuring and innovative efforts commenced. This was mainly in response to global priorities, particularly the International Agreed Goals (1AGs), Education for All (EFA), and adoption of a home grown National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDs).

The structure of present education system is designed to achieve national development. The focus of this research paper is on 3-Year Post Basic Education, which is also called Senior Secondary Education. According to Obioma (2013), the Senior Secondary School Curriculum (SSEC) was developed based on the philosophy, which majorly was to ensure among other things that: every senior secondary school graduate should have been well prepared for higher education as well as being self-reliant on completion of schooling; the development of Trade/Entrepreneurial skills, which was key to the restructuring of old senior secondary education curriculum was given priority, youths and school leavers are equipped with life-long trade and entrepreneurial skills to enable them cope with world of work, and acquisition of civic culture by young school leavers to further activate their potentials for patriotism and self-actualization. The introduction of Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects as compulsory subjects is to enable the vocationalization of the Senior Secondary Education Curriculum (SSEC) as well as create the enabling environment that will support higher education and self employment orientations. The structure was also geared towards ensuring the mass production of manpower with the requisite vocational and technical skills; as well as have professional with competencies to operate, maintain and sustain the nation's economic activities for rapid socio-economic growth and development (Obioma, 2013). According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014), the Post-Basic Education Curriculum consists of 39 subjects. They include four compulsory cross-cutting core subjects (English Language, General Mathematics, One Trade/Entrepreneurship Studies and Civic Education). All students irrespective of their field of study are to take these compulsory cross-cutting subjects. There are four distinct fields of study categorised as: Senior Secondary Science Mathematics, with subjects listing as Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Further Mathematics, Agriculture, Physical Education and Health Education. Senior Secondary Business Studies has Accounting, Store Management, Office Practice, Insurance and Commerce as its subjects.

The Senior Secondary Humanities has Nigerian Language, Literature-in-English, Geography, Government, Islamic Studies, History, Visual Arts, Music, French, Arabic, Economics and Christian Religious Studies as its subjects listing. Also, Senior Secondary Technology has Technical Drawing, General Metal Work, Basic Electricity, Electronics, Auto-mechanics, Building Construction, Wood-work Home Management Food and Nutrition and Clothing and Textiles as their subjects. There are also 34 Trade/Entrepreneurial subjects which all students irrespective of their field of study is expected to choose one. According to Apeji (2013) they are designed and developed in such a way that for those who are unable to pursue post secondary education, they would have acquired such skills that would enable them fit properly in the competitive world of enterprise to the extent that they would be able to live independent and fulfilled economic lives. In addition, Computer study is made compulsory for all students irrespective of their area of specialisation. Furthermore, the implementation of present post basic education curriculum started in 2012, and was due for review. Efforts are on top gear for the review of the curriculum in 2024. However, the review of the curriculum implies that certain topics will be added and some will be removed in order to meet up with international best practices. According to NERDC (2025), the revised curriculum shall be introduced in phases starting from primary 1, and progressively moves to the next class levels on yearly basis. Thus, within three years, the revised curriculum would have been fully introduced at all classes.

Challenges of Curriculum Development and Implementation with Reference to Senior Secondary Education Curriculum

Evidence of literatures show that the low level of curriculum implementation is traceable to some factors such as unqualified teachers, inadequate teachers, shallow knowledge of subject matters, inadequate laboratory equipment, class size voluminous, curriculum contents, poor preparation of subject textbooks, inadequate equipment/materials for teaching science subjects, poor motivation of teachers, use of inappropriate methods, lack of in-service training, lack of practical activities (Ejike & Oyelara 2015 & Lawrence, 2016). According to Osuju & Etuketu (2019), some of the challenges facing effective curriculum implementation in Nigeria are inadequate funding, inadequate planning, inadequate and unqualified teachers, large class size, ineffective supervision, examination malpractices, and the issue of curriculum deficiency.

Inadequate Funding: Education in Nigeria is associated with inadequate funding from federal, state and local governments. In many instances, teachers' salaries are not paid as at when due infrastructural facilities are in a state of decay. As a means of survival, many teachers abandoned their primary responsibilities (teaching) and find alternative means of survival. This situation is highly demoralizing and has negative impacts on curriculum implementation, which invariably affecting quality education in Nigeria.

Inadequate Planning: Curriculum development planning in Nigeria most times is done in haphazard ways. In most cases, planning is based on political interest. According to Nwagwu (2015), such inadequate planning brings about problems that challenge effective curriculum implementation in Nigerian secondary schools.

Inadequate and Unqualified Teachers: There is the problem of the production of half-baked teachers by colleges and institutes that run distant education, sandwich, in-service programmes and part-time programmes, because there is dearth of educational facilities in these colleges and other institutions that produce teachers. Teachers produced in these institutions could hardly produce quality students, such teachers in most cases do not have skills and knowledge to effectively implement curriculum.

Large Class Size: Large class size, specifically at secondary school level is one of the major hindrances to effective curriculum implementation. According to Denga (2018), the bulging enrolment figures have in most cases outstripped the existing learning space in most Nigerian secondary schools. The size of the class has become increasingly unimaginable with the students-teacher ratio of about 60:1; it becomes almost impossible for the teachers to give individual attention to students. Therefore, the large class size adversely hindered curriculum implementation, and invariably affects students' academic performance/achievement due to the fact that the teachers are unable to carry out individualized teaching.

Ineffective Supervision: No educational curricular, no matter how excellent it may be, cannot be effectively implemented if the school supervision is ineffective. According to Raju (2020), supervision occurs when teachers are helped to grow on the job. It is intended to bring about improvement of instruction by helping teachers do a better job and grow on the job simultaneously. Therefore, the quality and standard curriculum implementation in any school is completely dependent on the quality and standard of supervision available in that school.

Effective Implementation of the Senior Secondary Education Curriculum

Obanya (2007) contends that effective curriculum implementation is the one that reflects what the learner eventually takes away from an educational experience, which he termed 'the learned curriculum'. Obanya (2007) noted that in many cases, there would be gap between the intended curriculum and the learned curriculum, and described effective curriculum implementation as concerned with narrowing such a gap as much as possible. Since curriculum represents the total experiences to which all learners must be exposed, the contents or topics, performance objectives, content knowledge and skills, key competencies and values, learning activities for both teachers and learners, teaching and learning material/resources and evaluation guide are outlined in the revised curriculum for effective implementation. The prescriptions represent the minimum content to be taught in schools in order to achieve the objectives of the Senior Secondary Education Programmes. According to NERDC (2025), the new revised curricula are needs driven, evidence based, and reflects best practices, global development, and local contexts and peculiarities. The focal content areas in the new revised curricula will enable acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies including basic robotics, positive artificial intelligence and digital technologies, as well as life, citizenship and sport skills. The acquisition of these focal and subject-based competencies is strengthened by the incorporation of the 21st century skills (which are transversal) across all subjects and are to be acquired through the delivery process and learning engagements.

Table 1: The approved list of subjects and offerings in the Senior Secondary Education Curriculum are presented in the Table below:

SSS1-3

Fields of Study	Subjects
5 Core and Compulsory Subjects	English Language, General Mathematics, One Trade Subject, Citizenship and Heritage Studies, Digital Technologies
Science	Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Agriculture, Physical Education, Health Education, Digital Technologies, Foods & Nutrition, Geography, Technical Drawing
Humanities	Nigerian History, Government, Christian Religious Studies, Islamic Studies, One Nigerian language, French, Arabic, Visual Arts, Music, Literature in English, Home Management, Catering craft

Business	Accounting, Commerce, Marketing, Economics
One Core Trade Subject	Trade subjects (Students to choose one trade subject) 1) Solar Photovoltaic installation and maintenance 2) Fashion design and garment making 3) Livestock farming, 4) Beauty and cosmetology 5) Computer hardware and GSM repairs 6) Horticulture and crop production

Sources: NERDC 2025

The current curriculum reform efforts at the relevant education levels is part of the National Education Sector Renewal Initiatives (NESRI), and also in line with the requirements to review educational contents at designated interval and when exigent (NERDC, 2025). Effective implementation of the current senior secondary education curriculum is expected to yield positive results by solving growing unemployment rate; and students will have a skill that will make them become self-reliant, and on the long run, the attainment of positive outcomes, and national development. Therefore, effective curriculum implementation is the successful translation of a curriculum into practice, resulting in improved students' learning outcomes. Thus, effective curriculum implementation requires a deliberate and systematic approach, involving all stakeholders, to ensure that the curriculum is delivered in a way that improves students' learning outcomes.

Roles of Stakeholders in Curriculum Implementation

For curriculum implementation to be effective, there must be underlying principles and roles that guide the practices. These roles must be carried out by all parties involved, which include classroom teachers, school administrator or principals, supervisors among others.

Classroom Teachers - Teachers play a significant role in curriculum implementation besides their other functions. The main responsibility of the teacher is to put the content of the designed curriculum document into practice, otherwise referred to as implementation at the school level (Ibiwumi, 2023). In curriculum implementation, from the topmost level to the classroom, the teacher features prominently as principal actor. The teacher is in a better position to advice on materials and factors concerning curriculum planning and implementation (Eze, 2005). When curriculum is broken down into syllabuses, it is the teacher who interprets it further into scheme of work. The more experienced and trained teacher enlightens others on how to extract the scheme of work from syllabus, units of instruction from scheme of work and course outlines, and lessons from the units. It is the teacher who plans and works out the details of course outlines, units of instruction and daily lesson plans. It is he/she who determines the objectives to be achieved and select materials and methods to put them into effect. According to Yaro (2020), teacher is the "decomposer" of the curriculum from its broad, complex nature to its most simple and behaviourally attainable bits at the classroom level. This is why the classroom teacher is the principal actor in any functional curriculum. Without the teachers, there cannot be any effective curriculum plan, and its implementation would be virtually impossible in a school system. Furthermore, teachers' understanding of curricula and knowledge of the professional area are crucial elements of programme delivery but may be hindered in case of inadequacy (Parker, 2018). It implies that if teachers lack comprehension of the theoretical framework in length, it is nearly impossible to do justice with its execution. Also, it is learned that teachers' trait impact curriculum accomplishment. Several

studies indicated that teachers who are stimulated, open for change and keen to adopt new strategies are likely to be better curriculum implementers than non-motivated or un-flexible individuals.

Head Teacher/Principal - The head teachers/principals also play a major role in curriculum implementation. When there is improvement or innovation incorporated into the curriculum, they can help a change to be successfully implemented because they know the school organization climate and they can support those persons initiating changes. Yaro (2020) posited that head teacher/principals can set the tune in their schools. If a principal has created an atmosphere in which a good working relationship exists among teachers, and teachers are willing to take the risks necessary to create and deliver dynamic programmes, then it is more likely that curriculum will be effectively implemented. Berman and McLaughlin (2000) in their study concluded that the head teachers/principals' major contribution to implement is "not in how to do it advice" which is usually either offered by project directors or consultants, "but in giving moral support to the staff and in creating an organizational climate, that gives the project legitimacy". The head teachers also create a climate that fosters professional growth and leadership skills among the staff. He/she plays this role when he/she allows staff opportunities to accept and discharge various leadership responsibilities. As such, a head teacher must free classroom teachers from some of their regular duties so they can accomplish their new tasks of development.

Supervisor - The process of curriculum development and implementation must be supervised. Someone must monitor what is occurring and determine whether these are appropriate or not. Supervisors provide directions and guides, making sure teachers have the skills to carry out the desired changes. This requires making certain decisions, engaging in particular actions and interacting with others involved in the change efforts. Yaro (2020) posited that effective supervisors must alter their tactics depending on the situation and the participants. They place many responsibilities in the hand of seasonal, experienced, professional teachers. During workshops and seminars, supervisors engaged in demonstration teaching to make recommended ways of delivering the curriculum known to all involved teachers. If the supervisors are effective, it is likely that the teacher within the system will feel committed and comfortable with the new programme being implemented. Therefore, curriculum implementation is a joint effort and all parties involved must have a change in behaviour. It requires a person-to-person contact with groups or individuals working together. There must be a trusting relationship among all parties in schools, especially between the head teacher/principal and classroom teachers.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The implementation of curriculum involves a number of actors operating at different levels in the education system. These actors otherwise known as stakeholders need to work together, and all hands must be on deck to guarantee effective implementation of secondary school curriculum. The following suggestions were made:

1. Stakeholders in the implementation of secondary education curriculum should further enhance synergy in their efforts towards curriculum implementation.
2. Each stakeholder should ensure effective discharge of their roles towards the implementation of secondary education curriculum.
3. All stakeholders should be sensitized more on the need to perform their roles effectively in order to attain secondary education goals.
4. Students should be actively involved at all stages of curriculum design and development so as to be more connected with school goals and ways to accomplish them.

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