PROBLEMS MILITATING AGAINST CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION ON VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL SUBJECT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study dealt with the major problems militating against curriculum implementation on vocational/Technical subjects in secondary school in Nigeria. The paper discussed the concept and aims of vocational and technical education. The major challenges in the curriculum implementation on vocational/Technical education as identified in this study include shortage of specialized teachers, unconducive learning environment, poor infrastructural facility and lack of fund among others. The researchers made the following valuable recommendations that adequate and qualified vocational/technical teachers should be recruited and posted to the secondary schools. Practical teaching method should be adopted and infrastructure improved.

Curriculum issues have always occupied the center stage in academic discourse in Nigeria. Beginning from the colonial period through the independence era, various opinions and views were expressed over what should constitute a functional utilitarian school curriculum. The deliberations at the 1969 national conference led to the adoption of a national policy on education in 1977. The subsequent editions on the national policy on education integrated needs and...
aspiration of the Nigerian society towards developing the society scientifically and technologically.

Curriculum development is not a new concept in our educational system today. However, issues of curriculum, either in an explicit or an implicit are inextricably linked to current thinking and action on educational system around the world (Ajiobla, 2008).

Offorma (2005), saw curriculum as a planned learning experiences offered to a learner in school. It involves three components such as program of studies, programme of activities and program of guidance. In recent time, human activities and life have become highly industrialized and technical hence the meaning of the term curriculum has also been changed to meet the needs of society and different causes of studies.

Curriculum in fact is an organized plan of course outlined with the objectives and learning experiences to be used for the achievement of the objectives of education.

The Concept of Vocational and Technical Education

Vocational/technical education is that aspect of education that gives its recipients the opportunity to acquire practical skills as well as some basic scientific knowledge. (National policy on education, 2006). Oni (2007) defined vocational/technical education as that type of education which fits the individual for gainful employment in recognized occupation as semi-skills worker or technician or sub-professional.

Vocational education could be regarded as that aspect of education which provide the recipients with the knowledge and practical skills needed for entry into the world of work as employees or as self employed (Oni, 2007). Vocational education nurtures skills that are necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development and thus, builds a self-reliant nation.

Vocational education according to Oni (2007) includes technical education, which provides for the training or-retraining designed to prepare individuals to enter into a paid practical. Some instruction is said to be usually given to those who need to be employed in commerce and industry or in any type of enterprise which involves the use of tools and other machinery for their operational service. Olaitan (2007) explained vocational education as that type of education which is the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success in any occupation.
Goals of Technical and Vocational Education

National policy on education (2004) stated the following as the aims of technical/vocational education.
1. To provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and business particularly at crafts, advanced craft and technical levels;
2. To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development.
3. To give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically.

According to Oni (2007) the nation still lacks quality technical/vocational education programme in her educational institutions. This is why Oni (2007) however suggested the need to establish good vocational and technical institutions to provide the required training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skills personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant. Quality vocational/technical education is also essential in Nigerian institutions to sustain the nation populace where quality of life is still very poor.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1975) noted that revitalizing this important sector is among the ways to improve economic opportunities for the youth. This is why Dike (2009) in his own view saw vocational and technical education as that education which is designed to develop occupational skills, to give individuals the skills to “live” learn and work as productive citizens in a global society.

Curriculum Implementation and Vocational/Technical Education Subjects in Secondary Schools and Its Challenges

Curriculum implementation entails putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study. The putting of the curriculum into practice requires an implementation agent. The teacher is identified as agent in the curriculum implementation process. Implementation take 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 teacher, the learner, teaching materials, and the teaching environment, the school management all constitute major players at the implementation stage. 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.
The Teacher and Curriculum Implementation

Teacher quality has to do with the professional qualification of teachers. The teacher must possess the teaching qualifications to enhance his instructional delivery process.

A major setback in effective curriculum implementation is the problem of unqualified teachers, especially specialist teachers in vocational and technical subjects. Sofalaham (1992) noted at junior secondary school level, due to shortage of teacher, the requirements of two Nigerian languages is no longer strictly observed. Again Ajibola (2008) opined that most of the teachers in the secondary schools are not qualified to teach the subjects introduced in the curriculum.

Amuzo (1997) in his study on the relationship between availability of experts teachers and implementation of secondary school curriculum in Nigeria found that quality and quantity of teachers in Nigerian Schools significantly affect the implementation of curriculum in Nigeria schools, especially, at the secondary school level. Nwiyi & Uriah (2007) in their study also discovered that teachers in secondary schools are inadequate and unqualified in most cases and as such, implementation of the curriculum becomes difficult as some did not go through teachers training institutions. They observed that most teachers came into the teaching profession as the last resort due to lack of job, and cannot render or offer quality services, hence implementation of the curriculum is hampered. Offorma (2005) opined that the vocational and technical subjects are not effectively implemented as most of the subjects are not offered due to lack of teachers, workshops for practical work, and further noted that where there are teachers, the delivery is usually theorized because of lack of competence on the part of the teacher.

Learning Environment and Curriculum Implementation

Learning environment has been identified as one of the major players in curriculum implementation in this paper. A conducive learning environment must be created for the realization of the objectives of education in secondary schools. 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 vocational and technical school curriculum would be implemented, which would guarantee excellence on the part of the students, (Nwiyi, 2009).
Infrastructural Facilities and Curriculum Implementation

A study carried out by Ajayi in 1999 on “relationship between infrastructure availability and curriculum implementation in Nigeria school”. The result of the study showed that no significant relationship exists between school facilities availability in Nigeria secondary schools and curriculum implementation in those schools. However, Anyakogu (2002) in his study discovered that relationship exist between availability of school facilities and implementation of school curriculum. This result implies that without the availability of functional infrastructure in the school, the skilled–based curriculum will not be effectively implemented in Nigeria and the youths would lack skills and economic empowerment. Puyate, (2006) noted that most of the equipments, tools and workshop facilities in the secondary schools are either broken down, damaged or dilapidate and they are not replaced or renovated.

Funding and Curriculum Implementation

Education in Nigeria is associated with inadequate funding from the Federal, State and local governments (Nwiyi, 2009). The state of the secondary schools lack of workshop, conference etc proved the fact that the secondary schools in terms of facilities, classrooms, equipments are inadequately funded far below the UNESCO estimate of 26% budgetary allocation to education. According to Ogbuike, Agunloye and Okebe (2003) in Nwiyi (2009), teachers are stagnated and denied promotion, hence some spend nearly eight years without promotion and those promoted are not implemented in terms of payment of the new salaries and allowances. This situation is highly demoralizing and has negative impacts on the implementation of the curriculum in the secondary schools.

Teaching Method and Curriculum Implementation

The primarily goal for teaching vocational and technical education is to teach the students both practical and theoretical aspect of the subject matter, but unfortunately, it is not so in the secondary schools. Omo-Ojugo & Oluwerei (2008) identified lack of adequate instructional materials and ineffective teaching method as factors responsible for poor implementation of technical/vocational curriculum.

Akuezuilo (2007) stated that the basic science and technology curriculum including vocational/technical education is very practical in nature and should ideally be taught through methods that maximize the active participation of the learner but lamented the lack of facilities in school.

It is therefore imperative to teach vocational and technological education subjects in a more practical manner than theoretical.
Conclusion

For the curriculum to be implemented to achieve the goals of vocational and technical education in secondary schools, it is important that adequate and qualified teachers be recruited and posted to the secondary schools.

The importance of the vocational and technical subjects in secondary schools cannot be over emphasized, hence adequate funding, conducive enrolment and teaching methods that exhibits or exposes practical skills and knowledge for self-reliant should be emphasized.

Recommendations
The following recommendations are made:
1. Adequate and qualified vocational and technical subject teachers should be recruited and posted to secondary schools.
2. The government should provide equipment, works shop machines, for effective implementation of vocational and technical education curriculum in secondary schools.
3. Practical method of teaching vocational and technical subjects should be emphasized so that the youths will acquire basic practical skills and knowledge for self-reliance and general development of the society.

References


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