CHALLENGES OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN POST COVID-19 ERA IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

SOLUADE, Zabur Olayiwola (PhD)

College of Social and Management Sciences

Department of Sociological Studies

Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Soluadeola@gmail.com

soluadezo@tasued.edu.ng

+2348035754275

&

Latifat Apeke SAKA,

Department of Social Studies
Michael Otedola College of Primary Education,
Noforija-Epe, Lagos State, Nigeria.
Latifatapeke15@gmail.com, +2348038206078

Abstract

The study investigated the challenges facing curriculum implementation in the post covid-19 era in Ogun state senior secondary schools. The need for this study was borne out of the concerned over the effective implementation of the curriculum and challenges facing by the teachers and the students in the new normal caused by covid-19 pandemic in the country. The study set out to investigate the challenges facing the effective curriculum implementation in the post covid-19 era in Ogun state senior secondary schools and suggest way forward to the identified challenges. One research question was raised for the study. The area of the study was selected using stratified random sampling procedure. One hundred and sixty nine (169) senior secondary schools students and seventy five (75) teachers within the three senatorial district of Ogun state were selected for the study using stratified random sampling procedure. A validated questionnaire with 2 sections tagged "Challenges of Curriculum Implementation in the Covid-19 Era Questionnaire" (CCICEQ) (R=.86) constructed by the researchers formed the main instrument of the study. Data generated were subjected to statistical analysis using descriptive statistics of means and standard deviation. The findings revealed that there are pressures on the students and teachers as there is no adequate time for relaxation on the time table and the teachers can not cover the planned curriculum activities. Based on the results obtained from the study, it was recommended that the state should adjust the time allocated for the term and takes

the terms separately instead of combining 3rd and 1st term together and creates time for students to relax in between the periods of their study.

Key Words: Curriculum, Curriculum Implementation, Covid-19.

Introduction

Advent of Covid-19 in the world threw up the challenges of proper implementation of rigorous academic standards, aligned curriculum, accountability measures and teachers practice in our school system. Achieving the objectives of any level of education may be very difficult if the planned programme for such level of education is not well implemented. Covid -19 brings about the initiation of new policy to cope with the new normal the societies findherself in. In coping with the new life and to ensure social distancing in our schools, policies such as class shift system in public schools have to be implemented thus this lead to the reduction in the numbers of periods, teachers-students interaction and evaluation processes which in-turn is likely to affect the already structured curriculum before the advent of COVID-19. A well planned curriculum depends on effective implementation to be relevant.Curriculum implementation practices in Nigeria are bedeviled with challenges overtime. Factors such asfunding, obsolete educational facilities, inadequate qualified teachers, overloading of the already comprehensive curriculum content, overcrowded classes, not actively involving the teachers active participants in decision making and curriculum planning have been found to have effects on curriculum implementation (Alade, 2011). In addition,no government policy on education can be realized if it does not first of all perceived the problems and opportunities before initiating decision-making process, although some problems might not be envisaged at the time of planning the curriculum which might serve as challenges to curriculum implementation (Obinna, 2007). Curriculum implementation is very important towards the achievement of educational objectives. Therefore, government must always be conscious of the policies that can promote curriculum implementation at all time.Supporting this view is Mkpa (2005) when he remarked that in Nigeria, many excellent curriculum plans and other educational policies are marred at the implementation stages. Also, Mezieobi (1993) opined that curriculum with all its well-conceived goals is failing, largely as a result of implementation dormancy or fault.

Curriculum has over times been defined as all the learning experiences both planned and unplanned that the learner are exposed to under the guidance of schools which focused directed towards acquiring skills, competences, dispositions, contents that are necessary to change the behaviour of the learners. Wiles and Bondi, (2014) sees curriculum as the programme developed for schools or students which encompasses the experience and knowledge expectations that the leaners are expected to acquired. The focus of the above definitions is basically on the learner as it sees the aims of the curriculum as to transmit documented and non-documented learning experiences to the learner, with the goals of effecting changes in the behaviours of the students over time. Offorma (2005), however, viewed curriculum as a programme which is made up of three components: programme of studies, programme of activities and programme of guidance. It is therefore the blue-print or instrument by which school seeks to translate the hope and values of the society in which it operates into concrete reality. Curriculum is a particular form of specification about the practice of teaching. It is not a package of materials or syllabus of ground to be covered rather it is a way of translating any educational idea into a hypothesis testable in practice. It invites critical testing rather than acceptance (Stenhouse, 2005). Blenkin (2012) also stressed that curriculum is a body of knowledge contents and or subjects,that is, a process by which knowledge and skills are transmitted or delivered to learners by the most effective methods that can be devised. From the above assertions on curriculum we can conclude that curriculum focus on exposing learners to planned and unplanned learning experiences; the learning experience takes place under the school guidance; it takes place within a certain period and it aim at effecting necessary changes in the behavior of the learner.

The term implementation means the process of putting theory into practices and transforming the planned programme into reality. Mezieobi (1993) conceptualized the term implementation simply as a process of putting an agreed plan, decision, proposal, idea or policy into effect. It is the bedrock of any plan success or failure. It is the moving force of any plan without which a plan is only good wish or intention. Curricular Implementation refers to how teachers deliver instruction and assessment through the use of specified resources provided in a curriculum. Mkpa (1987)viewed curriculum implementation asthe execution of the contents of the curriculum document, this include translating the curriculum document into the operating curriculum by the combined effort of the students, teachers and others concerned. Supporting

Mpka (1987) view is Okebukola (2004) assertions that curriculum implementation is the translation of the objectives of the curriculum from paper to practice, this begins withthe teacher handling the curriculum and ends with the learners exposed to the learning experiences as established in the planned programme. Curriculum designs generally provide instructional suggestions, scripts, lesson plans, and assessment options related to a set of objectives. These, however, focused on consistency to help teachers successfully implement and maintain the curricular structure in order to meet various objectives (Wiles &Bondi, 2014). Curricular implementation encompasses different components, including the delivery of the curriculum through resources and instructional practices. To implement curricula effectively, instructional practices must fall in line with the curriculum and support the individual needs of the students (Causarano, 2015). Teacher preparedness and unpreparedness plays a vital role in curriculum implementation (Battey et al., 2016).) Teacher unpreparedness, accountability for alignment and instructional quality can create questions about the barriers to effective curricular implementation (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016 & Early et al., 2014).Steps in curriculum implementation therefore includes: daily classroom activities (verbal and non-verbal), practical or field work, students-students and students- materials interaction and evaluation.

However, while the government and other relevant agencies prepares the curriculum in conformity with the societal culture and government policies the successful implementation of the curriculum are majorly the responsibilities of the teachers. Although alteration within the society such as COVID-19 pandemic might create serious challenges to the effective implementation of the curriculum and that's why unforeseen circumstances must be considered during the curriculum planning processes.The major focus of this study is to access the effects of the new normal created by COVID-19 on the curriculum implementation in Ogun state public senior secondary schools. To achieve the objectives the teacher depends on planned curriculum contents, teaching technique and teachers experience.Over time, it can be observed that the problem facing our different level of educational system is not the formulation of policy but the implementation. Curriculum may be beautifully planned but will be of no relevance if it is not implemented. The advent of COVID-19 forced the different states education ministry to come up with policies to deal with the new normal. This policies altered the in process curriculum

implementation which affects classroom activities, students-students interaction and mode of evaluation which are bedrock of curriculum implementation processes.

COVID-19Coronavirus disease 2019 is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). It was first discovered in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, and has since spread globally, resulting in an ongoing pandemic. As of 17 December 2020, about 75,062 cases have been reported in Nigeria which had resulted into about 1,200deaths and about 66, 775people recovered. The common symptoms include fever, cough, fatigue, shortness of breath, and loss of smell and taste. Majority of cases result in mild symptoms, some progress to acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), multi-organ failure, septic shock, and blood clots. The time from exposure to onset of symptoms is typically around five days but may range from two to fourteen days. The virus is primarily spread between people during close contact, through small droplets produced by coughing, sneezing, and talking.

The Federal Ministry of Health confirmed the first coronavirus disease (COVID-19) case in Lagos State, Nigeria on the 27th of February 2020. Since then, various measures have been taken by the government and other bodies to curtail the spread of the diseases. These measures includes increased sensitization on hand and respiratory hygiene, temperature checks at the point of entries, emphasis on social distancing among others were gradually seen to get more enforced as cases of the disease were increasingly imported into the country by returning travellers. In addition, Nigeria government announced a total lockdown of major cities worst hit by the novel coronavirus this include Lagos, Ogun and Abuja. This was later followed by closures of all educational institution in the country. These measures are in place to enforce social distancing. to slow and ultimately halt the spread of the virus. The advent of covid-19 in the country had called for new thinking and new order in our daily life. This made states within Nigeria to formulate different policies in order to address the delay caused by the new normal and as well achieved the goals of the already laid down educational objectives. How do we implement the adjusted educational policy and as well achieved our educational objectives is now a big issues that academics are more concerned about.

In coping with the challenges of COVID -19 and adjust to the new normal Ogun state government announced a major shift in school timetable in the state school guideline for

2020/2021 academic session. The state adopted class shift policy for the primary and secondary sections. Under this arrangement Primary 1-3 and JS1-3 will attend schools between 8am – 11am for the morning section while Primary 4-6 and SS1 –SS3 will be in school between 12noon- 3pm for the afternoon section and students are to sit in average of forty (40) students per class. Emphasis were laid on core subjects only and few teachers that taught in the morning section in Junior school will also move to senior secondary section to bridge the gaps of inadequate of teachers in each section. The reduction in the numbers of periods and hours students used in the school as well as emphasis on core subjects only for two(2) terms might have implication on the effective implementation of curriculum. This raised the speculation for the study to access the challenges facing proper curriculum implementation during the COVID-19 era.

Odey and Opoh (2015) investigated teachers' perceived problems of curriculum implementation in tertiary institutions. They found that Inadequate funding of the educational system, Teachers' poor knowledge of interpretation of the curriculum, Failure of government to train teachers in curriculum implementation techniques, Insufficient motivation for teachers, increased workload due to classroom over population and Poor preparation of scheme of work and lecture note as parts of the teachers perceived problems of curriculum implementation in tertiary institutions. Ali (2015) studied issues surrounding effective implementation of new secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. The paper portrays education in the 21st century as a total departure from the factory-model education of the past. It is abandonment of teacher centered, paper and pencil schooling. The study concluded that there is need to review the status quo of secondary school curriculum in Nigeria in order to consolidate further the new basic education programme and to ensure the actualization of the Federal government national developmental programme especially in the area of human capital development. This study is predicated on Rogan and Grayson (2003) theory of curriculum implementation changes model. They lay emphasis on curriculum framework which focused on three constructs Profile of Implementation, capacity to support the innovation and support from outside agencies. The theory offered an applicable way to situate teachers' and students perspectives on curriculum implementation during the covid-19 era in Ogun state.

Statement of problem

Studies have showed that several factors are responsible for the challenges facing curriculum implementation world over. Factors such as funding, obsolete educational facilities, inadequate qualified teachers, overloading of the already comprehensive curriculum content, overcrowded classes, not actively involving the teachers active participants in decision making and curriculum planning have been identified as challenges to effective curriculum implementation in our school system. However, not much has been done in the area of occurrence of natural disasters and pandemic as a factor that can alter the curriculum implementation processes. This study therefore examined the challenges facing curriculum processes during the covid-19 era in secondary schools in Ogun state.

Objectives of the study

(i) To investigate the challenges facing the effective curriculum implementation during the covid-19 era in Ogun state.

(ii) To Suggest ways or solution to the problems identified in the study.

Research Questions

(1) What are the Teachers' views on the challenges facing the effective curriculum implementation during the COVID-19 era in Oguns state?

(2) What are the Students' views on the challenges facing the effective curriculum implementation during the COVID-19 era in Oguns state?

Methodology

The study employed the descriptive research design. The population for the study comprises of senior secondary students in the three senatorial districts in Ogun state. The area and subjects of the study and were selected using stratified random sampling procedure which comprise of one hundred and sixty nine (169) senior secondary school students and seventy five (75) teachers. The instrument used for this study was a questionnaire tagged"Challenges of Curriculum Implementation in the Covid-19 Era Questionnaire" (CCICEQ). The content and face validity of the questionnaire was established by presenting a copy of the draft questionnaire

to two experts in the field of test and measurement for further scrutiny and modification. This was to ascertain the suitability of the instrument in terms of language, presentation, clarity and applicability. Based on their comments necessary modifications were made. Also, a field trial of the instruments was carried on randomly selected senior secondary school students outside the study area. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instrument which was found to be 0.86. Data Collected were coded and analysed using descriptive statistics.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What are the challenges facing the effective curriculum implementation during the COVID-19 era in Oguns state?

Table 1: Distributions on the opinions of students on the effective curriculum implementation in the COVID-19 era in Ogun state.

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	I feel bored coming to the school in the afternoon.	169	4.41	.790	Strongly Agree
2.	The number of periods allocated to the core subjects are adequate.	169	2.57	1.296	Agree
3.	Number of the periods allocated to the important subject are not enough.	169	4.12	1.162	Strongly Agree
4.	Bringing new teachers to teach us in some subjects affects our levels of understanding of the subjects	169	2.81	1.249	Agree
5.	The time we used now for our lessons are not enough.	169	3.19	1.291	Agree
6.	Putting on nose mask is not convenient for me.	169	3.04	1.120	Agree
7.	I missed some subjects that are not on the timetable Now.	169	3.25	1.140	Agree
8.	We still do assignments and submit to our teachers as we have been doing before.	169	3.49	1.070	Agree
9.	Not doing last promotional examination doesn't make me to know my ability before promoting me to the next class.	169	3.44	1.255	Agree
10.	Our teachers are no more close to us because of COVID-19.	169	2.41	1.462	Disagree
11.	Our interaction with shifting teachers are not so cordial.	169	4.12	.862	Strongly Agree
12.	Not going on break affects our level of assimilation.	169	3.68	1.141	Strongly Agree
13.	Going on break at interval help to make us to relax	169	4.17	.991	Strongly

				Agree
	Grand Mean		3.44 .341	

Table 1 above presents the responses of the senior secondary on the challenges facing the effective implementation of the curriculum during the COVID-19 era in Ogun state secondary schools. Item 1 which stated that 'I feel bored coming to the school in the afternoon' recorded the highest means score of 4.41 (SD=.790), followed by item 13 which stated that going on break at interval help to make us to relax while learning with the mean score of 4.17 (SD= .991). This is followed by both Item 3 and 11 which recorded the same means score of 4.12. The lowest means score in the distribution of 2.41 (SD= 1.462) was recorded by item 10 which stated that 2.41 our teachers are no more close to us because of COVID-19. The respondents agreed to all statements in the distributions with the exemption of just one item. The grand mean of the distributions is 3.44 (SD =.341) which showed moderate agreement with the statements in the questionnaire. The standard deviation however showed high level of dispersion.

Table 2: Distributions on the opinions of teachers on the effective curriculum implementation during the COVID-19 era in Ogun state.

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Reduction in time and periods allocated to subjects will not allow for total coverage of course outline.	75	3.63	1.507	Strongly Agree
2.	We will still cover the curriculum despite the new arrangement.	75	3.30	1.267	Agree
3.	The covid-19 arrangements put more pressure on the teacher.	75	3.85*	1.175	Strongly Agree
4.	Students experience more pressure in the new order	75	3.49	1.255	Agree
5.	Not going on recess does not affect students learning processes.	75	3.75	1.205	Strongly Agree
6.	Teacher students interactions are not hampered by the new arrangement.	75	3.27	1.232	Agree
7.	Evaluation processes are still going on effectively despite the new normal.	75	3.39	1.296	Agree
8.	Teacher rotational policy might affect students interest and attention in the classroom.	75	3.90*	.980	Strongly Agree
9.	Bringing teachers from another level which students are not used to might affect students attention in the classroom.	75	3.57	1.223	Strongly Agree
10.	The reduction in the periods of the core subjects	75	3.45	1.253	Agree

doesn't affect the coverage of the course outlines of those subjects.

11. Class shifting have effects on the students that come to school in the afternoon.	75	3.63	1.253	Strongly Agree
12. Students in the afternoon do not commit themselves to the lesson as the students in the morning shift.	75	3.62	1.173	Strongly Agree
13. It's likely that the COVID-19 arrangements will affects students' academic standards.	75	3.78	1.155	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean		3.58	.483	

Table 2 above presents the responses of the teachers on the challenges facing the effective implementation of the curriculum during the COVID-19 era in secondary schools in Ogun state. Item 8 which stated that 'teacher rotational policy might affect students interest and attention in the classroom' recorded the highest means score of 3.90 (SD=.980), followed by item 3 which stated that covid-19 arrangements put more pressure on the teacher with the mean score of 3.85 (SD= 1.175). The lowest means score in the distribution was recorded in item 6 with the mean score of 3.27 (SD=1.232) which stated that teacher students interactions are not hampered by the new arrangement. The grand mean of the distributions is 3.58 (SD =.483) which showed moderate agreement with the statements in the questionnaire. The standard deviation also showed high level of dispersion.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the research question one revealed that the Ogun state government class shifting policy is not enticing the students to attend classes most especially the students in the afternoon section. Most of these students feel bored to attend afternoon classes which affected their interest and level of assimilation. Also, the students perceived the number of periods allocated to subjects on school time table and time they now used in the school as not adequate for their academic attainments. This finding supported the views of Alade (2014) whom have highlighted several factors such as timing of the class as a factor that affects effective implementation of curriculum in Nigeria. This finding might be due to the fact that the students aren't prepared for shift classroom policy and it's became so strange to them. This will take time before the students can get used to it. In addition, finding also showed that the new policy put more pressure on the teachers and the reduction in periods allocated to subjects might not allow for total coverage of

the course outline. This finding supports the view of Obinna (2007) who is of the opinion that for government educational policy to be realized it must address the perceived problems earlier identified. This might be due to the fact that the teachers are overwhelmed with increase in the numbers of classes a teacher will contend with coupled with the inadequate numbers of teachers to cater for the students as well as the policy of the teacher teaching the students they are not used to.

Recommendation

(i)   Government should embark on teachers recruitment to cater for the shortfalls in the system instead of bringing in the teachers the students are not used to, to teach on daily basis.

(ii)   The school timetable should accommodate the students having break in-between their lesson periods.

(iii)   The policy should be adjusted to day shifting instead of period shifting. Classes ranges (i.e JS 1-3) can be allocated to full two-three days of which they will be in school fully instead of current arrangements

(iv)   The online classroom that was previous adopted before the school fully rresumed after COVID-19 breaks should be used to fill the gaps created by the inadequate number of periods allocated to core schools subjects.

References
Ahmed H.A., Horan, D. A., & Lewis, M. A. (2016). Redefining community through collaboration and co-teaching: A case study of an ESOL specialist, a literacy specialist, and a fifth grade teacher. *Teachers and Teaching*, 22(8), 927 - 946. doi:10.1080/13540602.2016.1200543

Alade, I. A. (2011). Trends and issues on curriculum review in Nigeria and the need for paradigm shift in education practice. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETELAPS)*, 2(5) 325-333.

Ali, A.A. (2015). Issues and prospects of effective implementation of new secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice ,* 6(34), 29 -39.

Battey, D., Neal, R., Leyva, L., & Adams-Wiggins, K. (2016). The interconnectedness of

relational and content dimensions of quality instruction: Supportive teacher -student relationships in urban elementary mathematics classrooms. *Journal of Mathematical Behavior*, 421 - 19. doi:10.1016/.j.jmathb.2016.01.001

Blenkin, G. M. (2012). *Change and the Curriculum*. London: Paul Chapman

Causarano, A. (2015). Preparing literacy teachers in an age of multiple literacies: A self-reflective approach. Reading matrix: *An International Online Journal*, 15(2),196-209.

Early, D., Rogge, R.,&Deci, E. (2014). Engagement, alignment, and rigor as vital signs of high quality instruction: A classroom visit protocol for instructional improvement and research. *High School Journal*, 97(4), 219-239.

Mezieobi, K. A. (1993). Social Studies curriculum.Owerri Whyte and Whyte.

Mkpa, M.A. (1987). *Curriculum development and implementation*.Owerri: Totan Publishers Ltd.

Mkpa, M. A. (2005). Challenges of implementing the school curriculum in Nigeria.*Journal of Curriculum Studies,* 12(2), 65-17.

Obinna, I.P. (2007). The role of effective teaching is curriculum implementation in Nigerian. *Journal of Curriculum Studies,* 14(2), 65-71.

Odey, E.O &Opoh, F.A. (2015). Teachers perceived problems of curriculum implementation in tertiary institutions in cross river state of Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*. 6(19), 145-151.

Offorma, G. C. (2005). *Curriculum for health creation*. WCCI 3rd Biennial Seminar Lecturer, held in FCE. Kano, on 25th October 2005.

Okebukola, P.A.O. (2004). Curriculum implementation in Nigeria: Strategies for the 21st century in Noah, A.O.K., Shonibare, D.O., Ojo, A.A. &Olujuwon, T. (eds). *Curriculum implementation and professionalizing teaching in Nigeria*. Lagos: A Publication of Central Education Service.

Wiles, J.W.,&Bondi, J.C.(2014).*Curriculum development: A guide to practice (9th ed.)*. Boston, MA:Pearson.

Rogan , J.M & Grayson, D.J (2003).Towards a theory of curriculum implementation with particular reference to science education in developing countries. *International Journal of Science Education*, 25(10),1171-1204.

Stenhouse, L. (2005). *An introduction to curriculum research and development*. London: Heinemann.