



**CURRICULUM CONTENT AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION
IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CALABAR SOUTH LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

<https://doi.org/10.83151/ffee-e748>

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Abstract

This study investigates curriculum content and its implementation in secondary schools in Calabar South LGA, Cross River State. Two hypotheses were formulated to give direction to the study. A sample of 245 teachers was selected through simple random sampling, and the Curriculum Content and Implementation Questionnaire (CCIQ) was used to collect data. The hypotheses were tested using linear regression analysis. The results showed a significant relationship between teacher training and curriculum implementation, and a significant discrepancy between curriculum content and the skills required for the 21st-century workforce. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the Cross River State Ministry of Education should provide regular training and support for teachers to enhance their capacity for effective curriculum implementation. The curriculum content should be reviewed and updated to reflect the changing needs of society and the skills required for the 21st-century workforce. The study's findings have implications for curriculum reform and implementation in Nigeria, and highlight the need for a more dynamic and responsive approach to curriculum development and implementation.

Keywords: Curriculum content, implementation, secondary schools, Calabar, Cross River State.

Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, the curriculum stands as a pivotal element, guiding the teaching and learning process. However, its ability to adapt and respond to the changing needs of society, technological advancements, and emerging trends has become a pressing concern. The curriculum content and its implementation in secondary schools in Calabar South LGA, Cross River State, is a critical area of inquiry, as it has far-reaching implications for the quality of education and the preparedness of students for the challenges of the 21st century. Curriculum content has to do with the knowledge, skills, and values that a learner learns in school. It is the subject matter to be taught in school, including the methods and materials used to achieve the desired learning outcome.

On the other hand, curriculum implementation is the process of putting the designed curriculum officially into practice. This is done by the teacher in the classroom. Implementation is critical in the curriculum process; no matter how well designed a curriculum is, it may not go well if not well implemented. Igwebuike, Monity and Abam (2019) see the concept of curriculum implementation as the operationalization of good ideas and theories in education development and transforming agreed educational plans, proposals, ideas, decisions, and policies into actualization. They also added that a successful curriculum implementation needs the knowledge, correlation, and responsibilities of the stakeholders within the sector.

The curriculum, once considered a static entity, is now recognized as a dynamic and responsive tool, requiring continuous review and update to reflect the shifting sands of societal needs and technological advancements. The rapid pace of change in the modern world demands a curriculum that is agile, adaptable, and aligned with the needs of the present and future. In this context, the secondary schools in Calabar South LGA, Cross River State, face the daunting task of implementing a curriculum that is responsive to the changing needs of their students and the broader society.

The effective implementation of the curriculum is a complex process, influenced by a multitude of factors, including teacher training, resource availability, and societal expectations. Curriculum implementation has to do with the translation of the aims of the curriculum from paper to practice. It involves the interactive phase of the curriculum process that occurs within the classroom, in agreement with the teachers, students, school administrators, and parents. As such, it is essential to examine the dynamics of curriculum implementation in secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area, Cross River State, to identify the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for improvement. This study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on curriculum content and implementation, with a focus on the unique context of secondary schools.

The curriculum is a critical component of the education system, serving as a roadmap for teaching and learning. However, the issue of curriculum content and its implementation in secondary schools in Nigeria has been a subject of concern (Adeyinka, 2011). A worthwhile curriculum is never static; it keeps changing as the world evolves globally. When analysed, the intended objectives, learning experiences, method of instruction, method of evaluation, and all other parts or steps in curriculum development continue to change. Igwebuike et al (2019) opined that the more complex the Nigerian society is now, resulting from social as well as cultural changes, and equally has a

different effect on the implementation of curriculum content, especially at the secondary education level. Igwe (2013) added that the rapidly changing needs of society, technological advancements, and global trends necessitate a responsive and adaptive curriculum. Calabar South LGA, Cross River State, is not immune to these challenges, and the effectiveness of curriculum implementation in secondary schools in the area requires investigation (Ekpo, 2017).

The concept of curriculum content and its implementation in secondary schools is a critical aspect of education, as it determines what students learn and how they learn it (Ndifon & Igwebuike, 2019). Curriculum content refers to the knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to acquire through their schooling experience (Ololube, 2006). Effective curriculum implementation is essential to ensure that students receive a high-quality education that prepares them for success in their future endeavours. A very important part of curriculum content implementation is that the teacher should consider carefully the order in which learning targets should be learnt (Udo, 2018). The author further stated that it is logical to put learning targets requiring lower-level skills before those requiring higher-level skills, for example, teaching the children to draw lines before teaching them to write. This is made possible if the teachers are well-equipped with the skill of teaching through rigorous training. Anything less than this, they may not be able to impart effectively, and the desired change might not occur in the learners.

However, curriculum implementation is a complex process that is influenced by various factors, including teacher training, resource availability, and societal expectations (Adejumobi, 2015). Moreover, the curriculum content must be relevant, inclusive, and aligned with the needs of the 21st century to ensure that students are well-prepared for the challenges they will face in their personal and professional lives (Nwadiani, 2017).

Teacher training is a vital component in the effective implementation of curriculum content in secondary schools. It enables teachers to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies to deliver the curriculum content effectively and efficiently. According to Adejumobi (2015), teacher training is crucial in ensuring that teachers are well-equipped to implement the curriculum, as it has a direct impact on student learning outcomes.

Igwebuike et al (2019) maintained that teachers end up becoming great teachers not just by using textbooks or attending classes, but by acquiring more knowledge through attending workshops, conferences, seminars, etc. This further boosts their quality. The authors further stated that conferences, workshops, and continuing education abound that could afford the teacher the extra needed aid by the use of technology for themselves and learners. Ekpo, Monity and Eyo (2024) advised that the government and school management should organize workshops, conferences, and seminars on how to improve teachers' quality and productivity.

Effective teacher training programs should focus on developing teachers' pedagogical skills, subject matter expertise, and understanding of the curriculum (Igwe, 2013). This will enable teachers to create a conducive learning environment, design engaging lesson plans, and assess student learning effectively. Moreover, teacher training

should be ongoing and continuous, as it helps teachers to stay updated on best practices and research-based methods (Ekpo, 2017).

When teachers are well-trained, they are better able to implement the curriculum in a way that is responsive to the needs of their students. This leads to improved student learning outcomes, increased student engagement, and enhanced teacher confidence.

This study is anchored on Gross's curriculum implementation theory (1971). Gross explained in this theory that the implementation of any educational programme brings into consideration the question of facilities, teachers' capabilities, management support, and compatibility with organizational arrangement and clarity of the implementer of what is to be done. This theory is relevant to guide the study because the factors that Gross propounded are relevant to enhancing the effective implementation of curriculum content in secondary schools.

In theory, Gross advocated four major elements that influence curriculum implementation, namely: clarity of the innovation to implementers, capabilities of the implementers, availability of resources, and provision of management support. This theory was quite appropriate for this study since a curriculum encompasses all these things. The theory is relevant to the study as follows: Clarity of innovation to the implementers requires that teachers who are the implementers should be aware of the changes in the curriculum. Resources meant for the new and existing curriculum must be available and relevant to the curriculum. The capability of the implementers implies that the implementers, being the teachers, must be educators or trained on how to implement the curriculum so as to make it successful.

Research has shown that teacher training and support are crucial for effective curriculum implementation (Adejumobi, 2015). Monity and Anyin (2023) added that the importance of teachers in any educational system cannot be overemphasized. This is because the quality of teachers determines, to a great extent, the quality of the system itself in the implementation of policies and programmes. However, teaching is a high social service in every country of the world. Trained teachers are indispensable in their effort to develop the school system and the country at large. Moreover, the curriculum content should be relevant, inclusive, and aligned with the needs of the 21st-century workforce (Nwadiani, 2017). This study aims to explore the curriculum content and its implementation in secondary schools in Calabar South LGA, Cross River State, with a focus on teacher training and curriculum relevance.

Statement of the problem

Pervasive concerns persist regarding the static nature of the curriculum in secondary schools in Calabar South LGA, Cross River State, which appears to be disconnected from the rapidly changing societal needs and technological advancements. The curriculum, once designed to prepare students for the future, now seems to be stuck in a time warp, neglecting the essential skills and knowledge required for success in the 21st century. The implementation of the curriculum in these secondary schools is also marred by numerous challenges, including inadequate teacher training, insufficient resources, and outdated teaching methods. This has resulted in a significant disconnect between the intended

curriculum and the actual learning experiences of students. The consequences of this disconnect are far-reaching, with students being ill-prepared to navigate the complexities of the modern world. These consequences are evidenced in most external examinations like WAEC, NECO, and NABTEB.

Furthermore, the curriculum's inability to adapt to the changing needs of society has led to a mismatch between the skills and knowledge acquired by students and the requirements of the labour market. This has resulted in a growing number of unemployable graduates, unable to contribute meaningfully to the economy.

In addition, the lack of upgrade in the curriculum content has stifled creativity, critical thinking, and innovation among students' essential skills for success in the 21st century. The rigid and unresponsive nature of the curriculum has also led to student disengagement, low motivation, and poor academic performance.

The problems of curriculum content and its implementation in secondary schools in Calabar South LGA, Cross River State, are complex and multifaceted, requiring urgent attention from educators, policymakers, and stakeholders. This study seeks to investigate these problems, identify the underlying causes, and propose strategies for reforming the curriculum to meet the changing needs of society.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between the curriculum content and its implementation in secondary schools in Calabar South LGA.
2. Teachers' training and support do not significantly influence the effective implementation of the curriculum in secondary schools in Calabar South LGA.

Methodology

Multi stage procedure involving simple random and accidental sampling techniques was adopted to select A total sample of 245 teachers was selected through simple random sampling, and the "Curriculum Content Questionnaire" was used to collect data. Two research hypotheses were tested using linear regression analysis... In establishing the reliability of the instrument used for this study, a pilot test was done using fifty (50) teachers of the research area who were not used in the actual study. The data generated was analysed to establish its internal consistency using the Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient method. The result shows that the reliability estimates of the various sub-scales ranged from 0.88 to 0.91, and this was indeed considered significant enough to justify the instrument for use in this study. The data was analysed with Simple linear regression analysis.

Data analysis

The data collected during the study were analysed with simple regression analysis using the package IBM SPSS Version 22. The data were analysed at .05 level of significance.

Results

Hypotheses one

There is a significant relationship between the curriculum content and its implementation in secondary schools in Calabar South local government area of Cross River State. The independent variable in this hypothesis is curriculum content, while the dependent variable is curriculum implementation in secondary schools in Calabar South local government area of Cross River State. To test hypothesis one, simple linear regression analysis was used. The result of data analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Relationship between the curriculum content and its implementation in secondary schools in Calabar South L.G.A. of Cross River State

Model	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Regression	155.110	1	155.110	18.772*	.000
Residual	21976.826	243	12.332		
Total	22131.936	244			

* Significant at .05 level; R, .211; R^2 , .045

The Simple linear regression produced an adj. R^2 of .043. It therefore showed that curriculum content accounted for 4.3% of the determinant of curriculum implementation in secondary schools in Calabar South local government area of Cross River State. The calculated F-value (ANOVA) obtained $F = 18.772$ is significant since the p-value of .000 is less than .05 at 1 and 243 degrees of freedom. This result implies that there is a significant relationship between the curriculum content and its implementation in secondary schools in Calabar South local government area of Cross River State.

Hypotheses two

Teachers' training and support significantly influence the effective implementation of the curriculum in secondary schools in Calabar South LGA. The independent variable in this hypothesis is Teachers' training and support, while the dependent variable is curriculum implementation in secondary schools in Calabar South local government area of Cross River State. To test hypothesis one, simple linear regression analysis was used. The result of data analysis is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Simple linear regression analysis of the relationship between teacher training and its implementation in secondary schools in Calabar South local government area of Cross River State

Model	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Regression	144.223	1	144.223	13.711*	.000
Residual	21976.826	243	13.145		
Total	22131.936	244			

* Significant at .05 level; R, .201; R^2 , .042

The simple linear regression produced an adj. R^2 of .040. It therefore showed that Teacher training accounted for 4.2% of the determinants of curriculum implementation in secondary schools in Calabar South local government area of Cross River State. The calculated F-value (ANOVA) obtained $F = 13.711$ is significant since the p-value of .000

is less than .05. This result implies that teacher training and support significantly influence the effective implementation of the curriculum in secondary schools in Calabar South L.G.A.

Discussion

Data in Table 1 showed that there is a significant relationship between the curriculum content and its implementation in secondary schools in Calabar South L.G.A. The conclusion of this present hypothesis is in line with the study by Ololube (2006), who stated that the concept of curriculum content and its implementation in secondary schools is a critical aspect of education, as it determines what students learn and how they learn it. Curriculum content refers to the knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to acquire through their schooling experience (Ololube, 2006). According to the author, effective curriculum implementation is essential to ensure that students receive a high-quality education that prepares them for success in their future endeavours.

Data in Table 2 showed that teachers' training and support significantly influence the effective implementation of the curriculum in secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State. This outcome is consistent with the research conducted by Adejumobi (2015), who stated that Teacher training is a vital component in the effective implementation of curriculum in secondary schools. It enables teachers to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies to deliver the curriculum effectively and efficiently. According to Adejumobi (2015), teacher training is crucial in ensuring that teachers are well-equipped to implement the curriculum, as it has a direct impact on student learning outcomes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the result of data analysis, the following conclusions were reached: there is a significant relationship between the curriculum content and its implementation in secondary schools, and Teachers' training and support significantly influence the effective implementation of the curriculum in secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) The Cross River State Ministry of Education should provide regular training and support for teachers to enhance their capacity for effective curriculum implementation, and
- 2) The curriculum content should be reviewed and updated to reflect the changing needs of society and the skills required for the 21st-century workforce.

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