



An Evaluation of the Implementation of New Business Subjects Curriculum towards Unemployment Reduction among Secondary School Graduates in Rivers State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the implementation of new business subject curriculum towards unemployment reduction among secondary school graduates in Rivers State of Nigeria, adopted evaluation research design. Three research questions and a null hypothesis guided the study. A sample size of 662 public secondary school business teachers was drawn from the study population of 2,205. A self made questionnaire containing 50 item statements was the major instrument for data collection. The instrument was face validated and the reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.76. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer research questions, while z-test inferential statistics was used to test the hypothesis. The study conclude that the goals of the business subjects curriculum was well stated, teachers who teach business subjects mainly used the teacher-oriented methods and that majority of teachers who teach business subjects are holders of bachelors of education and science degrees in business education. It was recommended among others that business subject students be taught with experimental and participatory approaches to enable students acquire the right skills, knowledge and attitude that are needed for self-employment.

Keywords: New Business Subject Curriculum, Unemployment Reduction, Secondary School Graduate.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of business education (Business subject inclusive) to the economy has been the subject of increased attention in Nigeria and the world over in recent years. Ubulom (2006) defined business education as that aspect of educational programme designed to provide an individual with the needed practical business and vocational attitudes, understanding, knowledge, skills and values that will enable him or her function effectively in the society. Okolocha & Onyeneke (2013) viewed business subjects as that which equips its recipients with personal skill, consumer skills and knowledge for clerical and managerial abilities needed to adapt to changing economic and business realities and these skills made them to be wealth and job creators rather than wealth and job seekers. Also, Oghen & Amahi (2008) Opined that business subjects equip students with knowledge and skills that will help them to find a job after schooling or create their own employment. However, Business subjects involve wealth creation and employment generation for human sustainability.

Unemployment is a very serious problem facing the nation as a whole. Decades of economic stagnation and poverty have driven a large percentage of young school leavers to crime and violence. In the view of Ogwunte (2015), these school leavers are unemployed because they seem to lack the necessary skills for paid or self-employment. In her bid to reduce unemployment, the federal government introduced a new curriculum in the senior secondary school with effect from the 2011 academic year. The goals of the new business subject's curriculum is geared towards wealth creation, entrepreneur development and skill acquisition training for self-employment. The new business subject curriculum expected to launch Nigeria to higher level in terms of vocational skill acquisition was formally launched and presented to the public in Abuja on Monday, 14th March, 2011 by the then Minister of Education.

The philosophy of the new business subjects curriculum is summarized by Odusele, (2011) "every secondary education graduate should have been well prepared for higher education as well as capture relevant functional vocational skills needed for poverty eradication, job creation and wealth generation, and in the process strengthen further the foundation for ethical moral and civic values acquired at the basic education level. Many educationist have discussed the issue of curriculum implementation identified as the major setback for attaining goals of education (Obanya, 2007).

Curriculum implementation entails putting into practice the official prescribed course of study, syllabus and subjects. This involves helping the learner acquire knowledge or experience. The learner is the central figure in the curriculum implementation process. Viewed from this perspective, Esene (2015) opined that curriculum implementation refers to the stage when the curriculum itself, as an educational programme, is put into effect. In the view of Babafemi (2007), curriculum implementation is the interaction between learner and those who are charged to deliver it. It requires teachers to shift from current programme which they are familiar with to the new or modified programme.

Putting the curriculum into operation requires an implementing agent. The teacher is the key agent in the curriculum implementation process. Implantation is the manner in which the teacher selects and mixes the various aspect of knowledge contained in a curriculum document or syllabus. With their knowledge, experience and competencies, teachers are central to any curriculum improvement efforts. Teachers are the most knowledgeable about the practice of teaching and are responsible for introducing the curriculum in the classroom. Since implementation takes place through the interaction of the learner and the planned learning opportunities, the role and influence of the teacher in the process is indisputable. If the teacher is to be able to translate curriculum intention into reality, it is imperative that the teacher understands the curriculum document or syllabus well in order to implement it effectively. Implementation is said to take place when the teacher use a good teaching method, acquire requisite qualifications, the teaching materials and the teaching environment interact with the learner. Implementation further takes place as the learner acquires the planned or intended experience, skills, knowledge, ideas and attitudes that are aimed at enabling the same learner to function effectively in the society.

The importance of teachers in curriculum implementation cannot be over emphasized. Most times teachers are involved during policy formulation even though they are expected to implement this curriculum. A major setback in effective curriculum implementation is the problem of unqualified teachers, especially specialist teachers in areas like vocational and technical subjects. In recent times, curriculum is designed up to implementation without adequate manpower to translate these document into reality. Ajibola (2008) also pointed out that most of the teachers are not qualified to teach the subjects introduced in the curriculum.

Adangor (2013) studied the relationship between availability of expert teachers and implementation of secondary school curriculum in Rivers State, Nigeria. The sample consisted of 150 secondary school business teachers who were randomly selected from the population of business teachers in the 23 local government areas of Rivers state. Adangor hypothesized that there will be no significant relationship between availability of teachers and curriculum implementation in Rivers state, and that available specialist teacher only use theory methods in their classroom work without the practical aspect. The result of the study shows that there was a significant relationship between the availability of subject teachers and implementation of secondary school curriculum in Rivers State. Adangor concluded that quality and quantity of teachers in Rivers state secondary schools significantly affect the implementation of curriculum in schools, especially, at the secondary school level.

The primary goal for teaching vocational and technical education is to teach students both practical and theoretical aspects of the subject matter but unfortunately, this is said not to be so in our school (Omo-Ojugo & Ohiwerei, 2008). Several authors have identified factors causing this problem to include the lack of adequate instructional materials and /poor ineffective teaching method. Nwodo (2006) has singled out the expository approach said to be the dominant teaching method commonly used for instruction in schools. The expository approach, according to Nwodo, is instruction in which the teacher stands most of the time giving verbal explanations in the form of talk-and-chalk while the student listen and write notes from the chalk-board. Nwodo describes such teaching method as inadequate and limited that tends to negatively affect the learner's views of practical concepts and associated methods. Mannison (2009) opined that unless urgent measures are taken to curb the problem, the poor attitude towards vocational and technical education in Nigeria educational system will continue to persist. However Ajibola (2008) opined that when teaching and learning is directed towards the needs of the child, there is an accompanying tendency to make sure that he fully understands the material he is being taught. The focus is no longer on how much a student can remember, but how he understands; what meaning he makes of his understanding; and whether he can apply the knowledge and meaning in real-world situations.

Akuezuilo (2007) stated that the basic science and technology curriculum, including vocational, 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 schools. Lack of specialist teacher, according to Akuezuilo, equally hinders the implementation of the curriculum. On the factors that can be attributed to the cause of poor implementation of secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. Anyanwu (2000) tested a hypothesis which stated that there will be no significant relationship between teaching method and implementation of Nigeria secondary school curriculum. 150 participants were involved in the study and the Pearson product moment statistics was used to check if there is a significant relationship between the methods applied by teachers in the class and the consequent implementation of the school curriculum. The result indicated a positive relationship between teaching method and curriculum implementation. The implication of this result is that teachers as one of the main stakeholders of the school curriculum do not seem to promote the effective implementation of Nigeria secondary school curriculum, due to many factors ranging from lack of specialist teachers to lack of teaching materials and non-availability of equipment in the school.

No meaningful teaching and learning takes place without adequate resource materials e.g white boards, flip charts, simulator, models etc. The availability and quality of resource materials and the availability of appropriate facilities and personnel such as teachers, administrative and technical staff has a great influence on curriculum implementation. Confirming this assertion. Anyakogu (2002) conducted a study on the availability of school facilities and implementation of school curriculum. Anyakogu concluded that a relationship exist between the availability of school facilities and implementation of school curriculum. As stated by Anyakogu, without the availability of functional infrastructure in the school, the skill-based curriculum will not be effectively implemented in Nigeria, and youth would lack skill acquisition and economic empowerment. This is because, youth lack the ability to carry out some meaningful work due to lack of acquisition of basic skills that promote effective work performance.

The National Council on Education (NCE) has, in 2005 mandated the Nigeria Educational Research Development Council (NERDC) to produce a new business subject curriculum which is an improvement of the old Senior Secondary Education Curriculum (SSEC) (NERDC, 2008). Under the present structure, the curriculum has been designed to cover the following new courses such as financial accounting, store management, office practice, insurance and commerce.

By the expansion of the new business subject programme, this has added additional workload on the business teachers as well as business subject students. Problems assumed to constitute an impediment against effective implementation of the New Business Subject Curriculum includes, inadequate goals of the new curriculum, inability of business teachers to use appropriate teaching methods and poor preparation of business teacher's in terms of possessing academic and professional qualifications to meet current demands. All these problems accounted for the reason why this study is conducted.

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to determine the implementation of New Business Subjects curriculum in reducing unemployment among secondary school graduates in Rivers State, Nigeria with emphasis on the appropriateness of the goals of business subject curriculum, teaching methods adopted and academic and professional qualifications obtained by business subject teachers.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. To what extent are the goals of business subject curriculum in Nigeria, well stated to guide the teaching of business subject in Rivers State public secondary schools?
2. What are the teaching methods used by teachers who teach business subject in Rivers State public secondary school?
3. What are the academic and professional qualifications possessed by teachers who teach business subject in Rivers State public secondary school?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean rating scores of male and female business subject teachers on the teaching methods used in implementing the new business subject curriculum in Rivers State.

METHOD

The study adopted evaluation research design. The population for the study consists of 2,205 business subject teachers in Rivers State public secondary schools. A sample size of 662 business subjects' teachers was drawn randomly from the study population. Three research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire containing 50 item statements. The consistency and reliability of the instrument was assured using the split half method to determine the degree of reliability which yielded a correlation co-efficient of 0.76. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for research questions, and z-test for the test of hypothesis.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

To what extent are the goals of business subjects' curriculum in Nigeria, well stated to guide the teaching of business subjects?

Table 1: Goals of the New business subject curriculum in Nigeria (N = 662)

S/N	Goal of the New Curriculum	X	Sd	Remark
1	Preparation for useful living within society	4.10	0.32	Agreed
2	Preparation for higher education	3.84	0.40	Agreed
3	Develop individual to be self-reliant and become employers of labour	3.54	0.38	Agreed
4	Develop entrepreneurship skills, which will lead to emergence of small scale business	3.73	0.36	Agreed
5	For self-discovery in order to fast-track technological and economic development	3.60	0.47	Agreed
6	Impact creativity and ingenuity skills	3.65	0.38	Agreed
7	To meet the present need of the community and the nation at large.	3.60	0.41	Agreed

With regards to questionnaires items 1-7 in table 1 which seek to determine whether or not the goals of the new business subject curriculum in Nigeria are well stated, all the items received mean of 3.50 and above with a minimum standard deviation (SD) of 0.47. The conclusion here was that the goals of the new business subjects curriculum as listed by the national policy on education are well stated in order to properly guide the teaching of business subjects.

Research Question 2

What are the teaching methods used by teachers who teach business subjects in Rivers State public secondary school?

Table 2: Teaching methods used by business teachers in teaching business subjects(N = 662)

S/N	Teaching Methods Used By Business Teachers	X	Sd	Remark
8	Lecture method	3.84	0.40	Agreed
9	Assignment method	3.60	0.43	Agreed
10	Information, Advice and guidance	3.57	0.44	Agreed
11	Guest speaker	3.89	0.42	Agreed
12	Experiential method	3.02	0.50	Disagreed
13	Stimulated office plan	3.43	0.48	Disagreed
14	Small group method	3.22	0.46	Disagreed
15	Interview method	3.19	0.47	Disagreed
16	Institutional	3.04	0.46	Disagreed
17	Role playing	3.22	0.46	Disagreed
18	Debate method	3.07	0.49	Disagreed
19	Team teaching	3.19	0.48	Disagreed
20	Question Answer	3.76	0.48	Agreed
21	Cooperation plan	3.07	0.40	Disagreed
22	Project method	3.09	0.52	Disagreed
23	Demonstration	3.19	0.51	Disagreed
24	Seminar	3.25	0.59	Disagreed
25	Self questioning method	3.10	0.49	Disagreed
26	Conference method	3.16	0.51	Disagreed
27	Case report	3.23	0.52	Disagreed
28	Brain storming	3.42	0.42	Disagreed
29	Participatory	3.33	0.39	Disagreed
30	Discovery method	3.42	0.40	Disagreed
31	Case study	3.20	0.42	Disagreed
32	Excursion method	3.32	0.43	Disagreed
33	Model —lead-test method	3.22	0.47	Disagreed
34	Large group	3.41	0.54	Disagreed
35	Discussion	3.32	0.49	Disagreed
36	Apprenticeship	3.40	0.50	Disagreed
37	Story telling method	3.15	0.42	Disagreed
38	Experimental	3.17	0.49	Disagreed
39	Reference reading	3.12	0.62	Disagreed
401	Use of local resource material	3.19	0.63	Disagreed

With reference to table 2, items 8, 9, 10, 11 and 20 received 350 and above while other items recorded below 3.50. Similarly, the SD recorded is between 0.39 and 0.72 respectively. The conclusion drawn here was that the teachers who taught business subjects in Rivers State public secondary schools do not use

student oriented teaching methods that would make students acquired vocational skills for self-employment.

Research Question 3

What are the academic and professional qualifications possessed by teachers who teach business subjects in Rivers state public secondary schools?

Table 3: Academic and professional qualifications obtained by business subject teaches(N = 662)

S/N	Academic and Professional Qualification	No. of Teachers	Percentage (%)
41	M.Ed Business Education	104	15.71
42	MBA Business Administration with PGDE	8	1.20
43	MBA Business Administration without PGDE	8	1.20
44	MSC computer science	8	1.20
45	B.Eda/BSc Education in Business Education	189	28.5
46	BSc in Business Administration with PGDE	112	16.9
47	BSc in Computer Science	35	6.28
48	HND Business Administration with PGDE	90	13.59
49	HND Business Administration with PGDE (Tech. Edu)	51	7.70
50	NCE Business Education	57	8.60
		662	100

Table 3 shows that out of the 662 subject teachers covered in the study, 104 (15.71) obtained M.Ed. Degree in Business Education, 8 (1.20%) possessed MBA Business Administration with PGDE, 8 respondents representing 1.20% obtained MBA Business Administration without PGDE, 8 (1.20%) acquired a degree in computer science, while 189 respondents denoting 28.5% had B.Ed./BSc Education in Business Education. 122 (16.9) possessed BSc in Business Administration with PGDE, 35 (5.28) acquired BSc in Computer studies and 90 (13.59%) obtained HND in Business Administration with PGDE. Also, 51 respondents denoting 7.70% possessed HND Business Administration with PGDE in Technical Education, while 57 respondents acquired NCE, Business Education. From the above analysis, it does appear that majority of teachers who taught business subject are holders of B.Ed./BSc Education in Business Education. See table 2 items 44 which recorded 189 (28.5%).

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean rating scores of male and female business subject teachers on the teaching methods used in implementing the new business subject curriculum in Rivers State.

Table 4: Z-test analysis of mean scores of male and female business subject teachers in their mean ratings on the teaching methods used in implementing the new business subject curriculum in Rivers State.

Group	N	\bar{X}	S ²	Df	α	Z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Male	267	0.60	0.77	1,327	0.05	0.17	1.96	Accepted
Female	395	1.14	1.06					

N = 662 Df = 660 P = 0.05

Table 4 indicates that male and female business subject teachers do not differ significantly in their mean ratings regarding the teaching methods used in implementing the new business subject curriculum in Rivers State. (Z-crit=1.96, Z-cal=0.17, df =1,327, P=0.05). Consequently, the researchers conclude that there is no significant difference in the mean rating scores of male and female business subject teachers on the teaching methods used in implementing the new business subject curriculum in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the implementation of business subject's curriculum towards unemployment reduction among secondary school graduates in Rivers State. It was found that the goal of the new business subject curriculum are well stated. This finding was supported by the studies of Amadi (2014) and Ajibola (2008) which noted that the development of manpower for the country is the responsibility of the educational institutions. The study also revealed that teachers who teach business subjects mainly used the teacher oriented methods that would not lead student to acquire the relevant skills. The study by Ogwunte (2016) and Paul (2007), which noted that teachers teaching skill subjects should use the participating and experimental methods in which students are actively engaged in learning by doing. Finally, the study revealed that majority of teachers who teach business subjects are holders of B.Ed/BSc in Education. The finding by Esene (2012), Umoru (2012) and Mabane (2006) suggested that for student to possess the right education and training resulting in vocational skills for self reliant and self-employment, teachers with the right academic and professional qualifications should be employed to teach business subjects in public secondary schools.

CONCLUSION

From discussion, it was found that the goals of the new business subjects' curriculum was well stated. This implies that experts in curriculum such as curriculum planners and theorist have done their work by developing adequate curriculum. Also, the discussion so far revealed that teachers who teach business subjects mainly used the teacher-oriented methods and that majority of teachers who teach business subjects are holders of bachelors of education and science degree in business education. It is also clear that the role of the business teachers in curriculum implementation is very vital. Based on this, some recommendations were proffered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made:

1. The government should supply schools with adequate resource materials such as textbooks, teaching aids/other instructional materials such as classrooms, laboratories in order to enable teachers and learners to play their roles satisfactorily in the curriculum implementation process.
2. Staff should be qualified and appropriately skilled in pedagogical as well as technical areas.
3. Business subject students should be taught with experimental and participatory approaches to enable students acquire the right skills, knowledge and attitudes that are needed for self-employment.
4. There is need to adequately fund secondary schools to sustain curricular activities e.g., provision of books, journals and multimedia resources.
5. There should be synergy between curriculum developers (Experts) and curriculum implementers (Business teachers), and should constantly respond to required innovation as the need arises in Nigeria so as to bring about goal actualization.

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