

**ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING ECONOMICS  
EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ZUBA, ABUJA**

**Abdul Adamu**

[aadamu0315@yahoo.com](mailto:aadamu0315@yahoo.com)

08032107119

and

**James Yahaya**

[Jamesyahaya76@gmail.com](mailto:Jamesyahaya76@gmail.com)

08065095585

**Departments of Economics, FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja**

**Abstract**

This paper digs into the issues and challenges surrounding the effective implementation of new NCE minimum standard in Economics Education, College of Education Zuba. The paper is predicated on Functional Curriculum Theory which emphasizes that learners should have a worldpool of knowledge, ideas, inventions, human and financial capitals and become fully participating member of the global economy. The paper discussed elaborately the concepts of curriculum alongside curriculum implementation in educational institutions. The paper highlighted some peculiar issues and challenges mitigating the proper implementation of NCE minimum standard in college of education Zuba. Some of these problems include non-involvement of lecturers in the review of the minimum standard, lack of proper orientation on the implementation of the new minimum standard, inadequate motivation, poor funding, dormant ICT and lack of internet facilities, lack of adequate manpower among others. Finally, the paper recommends massive advocacy and sensitization of lecturers, improvement in funding, employment of adequate manpower to meet the requirement of the minimum standard, provision of ICT and internet facilities and motivating the staff in order to effectively ensue proper implementation of the new minimum standard.

**Keywords:** Issues and challenges, Economics Education, Curriculum Implementation, New Minimum Standard, Way Forward.

## **Introduction**

The curriculum is at the heart of the education process: it sets out what is to be learned, and how and when it is to be taught. It underpins all other parts of the system: it guides the day to day experiences of the classroom, it forms the basis for teacher training programmes, the content of textbooks and other materials, it determines how learning is assessed through the examinations systems, how standards are developed and how performance is monitored through school inspection and supervision systems. According to Ahmadi and Lukman (2015), curriculum is said to be a specification about the practice of teaching which involves pragmatic efficacy of the learners' experiences. Experience as a general concept comprises knowledge of or skill of something or some events gained through involvement in or exposure to that thing or event. In this wise, curriculum is an important element of education in which overall objectives of education depend largely on the nature of the curriculum (NERDC, 2004). The mandate of the teacher training programme at the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) level, which is the recognized minimum teaching qualification in Nigeria, is to produce quality teachers for the Basic Education sub-sector. According to National Commission for Colleges of Education, NCCE, (2012), if NCE is to remain relevant to the sub-sector it is intended to serve, it must do more than it is presently doing. It must prepare teachers with knowledge and skills required to teach effectively at the different levels and areas of basic education programme.

Periodically, NCCE embark on a major reform, where the curriculum is felt to be outdated and out of line with emerging economic and social needs. Typically, this will come in response to a shift in economic and labour market policy that point in a new direction; moving to a knowledge economy and becoming more competitive globally in an increasing technological world. It may also result from evidence that learning outcomes are low (though this may not be the fault of the curriculum), a political decision (on national language policy for example, as in the case of Rwanda), or a major societal change (Massimo, 2013).

Effective delivery of the curriculum relies on other parts of the system: a well-structured and relevant curriculum itself is no guarantee of the desired learning outcomes. Teachers require the appropriate skills, combined with other resources to enable effective learning. Curriculum reform needs to also include reform of teaching and learning materials, re-orienting and preparing teachers, and changes to how learning is assessed.

## **Concepts of Curriculum and Curriculum Implementation**

Etymologically, the word curriculum was coined from the Latin word "currere" meaning "race course", referring to the course of deeds and experiences through which children grow to become mature adults (Collins English Dictionary, 2003). Curriculum is the set of courses and their contents offered at a school or university. A curriculum is

prescriptive and is based on a more general syllabus, which merely specify what topics must be understood, and to what level to achieve a particular grade or standard. That is, a curriculum may be referred to as all courses offered at a school.

According to Kelly (2008), "Curriculum is all the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried out in groups or individually, inside or outside the school". In other words, curriculum specifies in advance what we are seeking to achieve and how we are to go about it. Offorma (2005) sees curriculum as a planned learning experience offered to a learner in school, adding that it is a program of studies made up of three components: program of studies, program of activities and programme of guidance. Hence the meaning of the term curriculum has also been changed to meet the needs of education of different courses of studies. Blenkin (2012) defined curriculum as a body of knowledge contents and or subjects. That is, curriculum is the process by which knowledge and skills are transmitted or delivered to learners by the most effective methods that can be devised.

Curriculum is an organized plan of course outlined with the objectives and learning experience to be used for achievement of these objectives. In a wider perspective, it is a way of preparing individuals to become productive citizens and useful member of the society to which they belong. Thus, curriculum is a tool of education to educate and humanize the whole man. Modern interpretation sees the curriculum as all the knowledge and experience got by a child in and out of the school walls, either on the time table or outside it i.e. the experiences the learner has regardless of when or how they take place (Akinsola and Abe, 2006).

Jeffs and Smith (2010) argued that the notion of curriculum provides a central dividing line between formal and informal education. Recognizing the fact that some informal educators adopted curriculum theory and practice as a desire to be clear about content, and the approaches to the curriculum which focus on objectives and detailed programmes appear to be compatible with all round development of the learner.

Many educationists that have discussed the issue of curriculum implementation in Africa identified it as the major setback for attaining goals of education in Africa (Obinna, 2007). Curriculum implementation entails putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabus and subjects (Chikumbi & Makamure, 2005). Mkpa (2007) defined curriculum implementation as the task of translating the curriculum document into the operating curriculum by the combined efforts of the students, teachers and others concerned. That is, curriculum implementation demands concerted efforts of end-users of the curriculum for its effective implementation at all levels in order to achieve the desired goals.

Garba (2004) described curriculum implementation as putting the curriculum into work for the

achievement of the goals for which the curriculum is designed. In his conception of curriculum implementation, Okebukola (2004) defined it as the transition of the objectives of the curriculum from paper to practice. That is, only effective curriculum

implementation ensures achievement of the objectives for which the curriculum was designed to attain. Ivowi (2004) supported the assertion by defining curriculum implementation as the translation of theory into practice, or proposal into action.

According to Onyeachu (2008), "Curriculum implementation is the process of putting all that have been planned as a curriculum document into practice in the classroom through the combined efforts of teachers, learners, school administrators, parents as well as interaction with physical facilities, instructional materials, psychological and social environments". At this juncture, it could be said that putting the curriculum into operation requires an implementation agent. The teacher is identified as the agent in the curriculum implementation process. Curriculum implementation therefore refers to how the planned or officially designed course of study is translated by the teacher into syllabus, scheme of work and lessons to be delivered to students. The above definitions show that effective curriculum implementation involves interaction within the teachers, learners and other stakeholders in education geared towards achieving the objectives of education.

Obanya (2004) defined implementation of curriculum as day-to-day activities which school management and classroom teachers undertake in the pursuit of the objective of any given curriculum. Obinna (2007) contends that effective curriculum is the one that reflects what "the learner" eventually takes away from an educational experience. Obinna noted that in many cases, there would be gap between the intended curriculum and the learned curriculum and defined effective curriculum implementation as concerned with narrowing such a gap as much as possible.

Teachers most at times are not 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 teacher in area like ICT and technical subjects. In recent times, curriculum is designed up to implementation without adequate manpower to translate these documents into reality.

Ajibola (2008) pointed out that most of the teachers are not qualified to teach the subject introduced in the curriculum. The successful implementation of a curriculum to a large extent is determined by teachers. Curriculum implementation is a well-researched subject that requires the collaborative efforts of all educational stakeholders to ensure its effectiveness. It is necessary to note that implementation is actualized, when there is effective translation of policies into practice (Okebukola, 2004).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is predicated on Functional Curriculum Theory (FCT) which emphasizes that learners should have a world pool of knowledge, ideas, inventions, human and financial capitals and become fully participating member of the global economy. The

curriculum is a tripartite in nature and practical. According to Obanya (2004), the functional curriculum theory could be achieved by following these steps: a) Developing the deepest sense of pride in being African through a deep understanding of the pride of Africa, the mother tongue or community language, the African world view, Africa's contribution to world view, Africa's contribution to world civilization over the ages, the nature and literature of Africa, past and present contemporary African's plan for its future in the emerging global community. b) Access to a wide world of people, knowledge, techniques, ideas and practices, the official language and their literature, mathematics, science and technology, information tools and methods of social analysis, western and oriental philosophies and religion. c) Personal development for contribution to social transformation and vocational activities, entrepreneurship, creativity, communication and interpersonal conduct and self-awareness among others. These three goals should be pushed simultaneously from the beginning with their horizons broadcasting in responses to the level of maturity of the learner. Elements from any of the goals can also be utilized to inject functional value to existing programmes. Obanya construes functional content education as the situation in which the child is growing and the world, he/she is going to live in should determine the way education is carried out, including what is taught and how it is being taught and learned.

It is on this basis; the paper elaborates on how the new minimum standard could be used to develop individual learner towards increased productivity and improved quality of life. Thus, this paper defines curriculum as the reconstruction of knowledge and experience, systematically developed with the guidance of the school or relevant agencies which will enable the learner to have better mastery of learning experience for the learners' and the societal well-being.

### **A synopsis of Curriculum Development for Colleges of Education**

The procedure for developing curriculum for Colleges of Education is slightly different from that of basic and post basic levels. At the colleges of Education level, different departments in all colleges are notified by the NCCE to make inputs into the curriculum. Such inputs may require them to suggest new content/course, expand, deepen, or reduce the content and so on. Modifications made at the college level are then sent to the NCCE who schedules a meeting of all heads of departments, of affected programmes to harmonize their inputs. Ministry of Education officials, policy makers, stakeholders' representatives of the NERDC are usually at this meeting.

After the harmonization, another meeting of Deans of schools of affected programmes will meet to deliberate on the harmonized draft and sharpen it for functionality. This meeting focuses on credit weighting of courses and so on. In addition, they play the role of the critique team. Their final work is again looked at by a team of consultants and the NERDC to ensure that there is a connect between the curriculum and those of the basic and post basic levels. This stage is very crucial because colleges of education prepare teachers of the basic education level. A duly edited and well-articulated draft is

looked at by Provosts and relevant officials of NCCE before it is presented to the JCC Referral for consideration. JCC Referral makes a recommendation to the National Council on Education NCE for final approval. The approved curriculum is known as Minimum Standards and the NCCE publishes it for colleges of Education.

When curriculum is developed, the next thing is the implementation of the developed curriculum. This is where instruction comes to play. Macdonald (1965) takes curriculum to mean “producing plans for further action”, and instruction as “putting plans into action.”

### **The Minimum Standard for Economics Education at NCE level**

The insight derivable from the study of economics not only frees the minds of the recipients from the shackles of destiny and chance events but also equips them with solutions to problems of the country. Further, it enables the development of critical thinking required for making logical contribution towards economic growth and development.

NCCE (2012) outlined the objectives of NCE programme in the minimum standard to include:

- i) Prepare recipients for good citizenship
- ii) Provide intellectual training which would create critical thinking
- iii) Prepare recipients for vocation
- iv) Acquisition of economic competence

In order to achieve these objectives, NCE programme is required to;

- Train teachers who have acquired in-depth knowledge of economic theory and applied economics to be able to appreciate economic problems;
- Produce teachers who have acquired adequate professional skills to be able to organize and teach economics at the secondary school level in Nigeria;
- Prepare teachers who would be able to undertake further education in economics or related areas of study;
- Produce teachers who have acquired economic skills and abilities and are able to apply them to their daily activities.

In line with the above, NCCE structured the minimum standard requirements for graduation to cover 30 credits in Education courses, 18 credits in General Studies, 6 credits in Teaching Practice and 32 credits in Economics courses. The minimum standard provides for a systematic connection between its contents, credit units taken

and the learning outcomes. The tables below show the distribution of course contents and the credit units in Economics.

**Table 1: Economics Course Contents, Year I**

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Units	Status
ECO 111	Principles of Economics I	2	C
ECO 112	Introduction to Mathematics for	2	C
ECO 113	EconomicsIntroductory Statistics IPrinciples of	1 2	C
ECO 121	Economics IIPublic Finance	1	C
ECO 122	Introductory Statistics II	1	E
ECO 123	Introduction to Business Finance	1 2	C
ECO 124	Introduction to Accounting	12	E
ECO 125	TOTAL		C

*Source:* NCCE, 2012

**Table 2: Economics Course Contents, Year II**

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Units	Status
ECO 211	Micro Economics	2	C
ECO 212	Money and Banking	2	C
ECO 213	Economics Methodology	1	C
ECO 214	Research MethodsMacro -	2	C
ECO 221	Economics Introduction to	1	E
ECO 222	Business Economics	1	C
ECO 223	Economics of Production	12	E
ECO 224	Structure of the Nigerian Economy	2	C
ECO 225	Development Economics	14	C
	TOTAL		

*Source:* NCCE, 2012

**Table 3: Economics Course Contents, Year III**

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Units	Status
ECO 321	Principles of Economics I	2	C
ECO 322	International EconomicsHistory of	21 2	C
ECO 323	Economics ThoughtLabour Economics	1	C
ECO 324	Human Resources Development	12	C
ECO 325	TOTAL		E

*Source:* NCCE, 2012

### **Issues and Challenges of implementing Economics Education Minimum Standard in College of Education Zuba**

The achievement of the objectives of NCE programme depends largely on the effective implementation of its planned programme. According to Onyeachu (2008), no matter how well the curriculum of any course is planned, designed and documented, the implementation is important. This is simply because issues and challenges mostly arise during implementation of the programme. A critical observation of the NCE programme in Colleges of Education in Nigeria reveal the following problems.

**Non-Involvement of Lecturers in Curriculum Review:** According to Tom-Lawyer (2015), the NCE Minimum Standard was reviewed without the contributions of a significant number of the lecturers from colleges of education. Hence the curriculum was hastily reviewed and imposed on colleges of education. Also, a close examination of the revised minimum standard reveals that only the credit units are changed leaving the contents constant over the years. This poses a serious challenge on the successful implementation of the NCE curriculum particularly in the light of obsolete and inadequate physical and instructional infrastructures.

**Orientation on the New Minimum Standard:** Teachers need to acquire the skills and knowledge to implement something, particularly if it is slightly different to their existing methods. According to Tom-Lawyer (2015), if teachers are not equipped to deal with the implications of a new approach, they are likely to revert to the security of their previous behaviour and the desired change may not take place. Without sufficient retraining, even teachers initially enthusiastic about an innovation can become frustrated by problems in innovation and eventually turn against it. Lack of proper orientation given to teachers usually affects to a great extent the efficient implementation of the New minimum standard in Colleges of Educations.



**Inadequate Funding:** One impressive feature of tertiary institutions in Nigeria since independence has been the phenomenal increase in students' enrolment. For this magnitude of expansion and development to be effective, there must be massive investment of resources in the form of funds. Despite the TETFUND intervention, all indicators point to a chronic gross under-funding of the system. In support of this, Ahmadi and Lukman (2015) argue that due to lack of political will and determination in providing quality education for citizens, budgetary allocations to education over the years show that Nigerian government had not met the required 26% of education budget recommended by UNESCO. This affects implementation of a well-designed curriculum. A situation where there is no money for payment of teachers' salaries, purchase of equipment, books, furniture and other facilities, teachers cannot perform effectively.

**Insufficient Instructional Materials:** In a study on "relationship between availability of instructional materials and curriculum implementation" Ajayi (2009), discovered a significant level of relationship between the two. It was noted that instructional materials are designed to promote and encourage effective curriculum implementation. However, a critical look at the economic resource room in college of education Zuba today does not live up to expectation. Also, with the increase enrolment of students into the department and with the deficient manpower, there is certainly a setback in the proper implementation of the NCE minimum standard.

**Inadequate Motivation:** Ofoegbu (2011) described teacher motivation as those factors that operate within the school system which if not available to the teacher would hamper performance, cause stress, discontent and frustration all of which subsequently reduce student quality output. That is, in order to improve performance on the part of students, teachers must be motivated. Ugwu (2005) affirmed that for a worker to live up to expectations, such worker must be motivated. Teacher can be motivated by realizing the need to regard teachers as the number one worker to be catered for in terms of prompt payment of salaries, promotion and payment of other allowances and remuneration. Ipaye (2012) argued that the prime motive of men going into a career is to obtain the resources to meet this psychological needs and support family among others. Unfortunately, teachers' monthly take home salaries and allowances are very poor and unattractive, and as such cannot sustain them in the face of the rising cost of living.

**Application of Information and Communication Technology:** In this age of technological development, ICT has proved very useful and effective in the teaching and learning process. But teachers' inability to apply ICT in teaching at NCE level is one of the problems militating against effective implementation of NCE curriculum. The ICT unit in College of Education Zuba does not provide an avenue for teachers to use computers to carry out research and teach their lessons efficiently. This has been attributed to many factors which include cyber, electricity and managerial problems.

### **The way forward**

The following are possibilities for effective implementation of the NCE minimum standard in Economics Education: -

- All stakeholders in education including College management, TETFUND, COEASU and the immediate community should synergize to provide required facilities and funds to ensure effective implementation of new minimum standard.
- The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should tighten measures at enforcing the provisions of the curriculum. The agency should monitor the quality of the teaching and learning process in the colleges. As a regulatory body, the objectives of the curriculum can only be achieved, if the body enforces the provisions of the curriculum.
- The subsequent review of the curriculum should be conducted at the local, state and national levels of the country. This should be extensive involving representatives of lecturers at the local level, representatives from the category of the heads of departments and deans of schools should constitute the state level, while the national level should comprise the provosts.
- The College management in collaboration with the Education Secretariat should allocate resources to employ more staff in the department in order to meet up the teacher/student ratio of 1:35 as provided in the minimum standard. This will help in the proper implementation of the new minimum standard.
- The Quality Assurance Committee of the college should organize seminars and workshops to acquaint the entire college community on the proper way to implement the provisions of the minimum standard. Also, the committee should put more effort in monitoring and supervising lecturers for efficient implementation of the minimum standard. Furthermore, heads of departments and deans of schools should be made to incorporate the task of monitoring their colleagues to the administrative task. With this heavy monitoring, teachers should be sufficiently motivated for noble role.
- The college management should provide functional ICT facilities for the entire college community. This can be done by providing computers and internet accessibility to all departments. Awareness should be created on the importance of incorporating ICT in teaching particularly in this era of Covid19.
- Since motivation is an important element in the successful implementation of the curriculum, the college management should ensure that lecturers' allowances, entitlements and other remunerations are paid to them as at when due. Management should inculcate the habit of listening to the yearnings of the academic staff. This will definitely motivate teachers to do their best in implementing new minimum standard effectively.

### Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is obvious that numerous issues and challenges characterized economics department of college of education Zuba in respect of proper implementation of the NCE minimum standard. Curriculum implementation is a very important aspect of the curriculum process. Hence, it is the bedrock of any school success or failure. This paper therefore concludes that there is need for a review of faulty policies to result oriented policies that would meet the challenges of curriculum processes.

### References

- Ahmadi, A. A. & Lukman, 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. Retrieved from [www.iiste.org](http://www.iiste.org)
- Ajayi, S.N. (2009). *Evaluation of Nigeria's Educational Goals*, Lagos: Memphis Publishers.
- Ajibola, M.A. (2008). Innovations and Curriculum Implementation for Basic Education in Nigeria: Policy Priorities and Challenges of Practices and Implementation, *Research Journal of International Studies*.8, 51-58.
- Akinsola, A., and Abe, F., (2006). *A Guide to School Effectiveness in Nigeria*. Ibadan. Laville Publications
- Blenkin, G. M. (2012). *Change and The Curriculum*. London: Paul Chapman
- Chikumbi, N. and Makamure, T. (2005). Training teachers for quality education in Europe. *European Journal of Teacher Education*. 25(1): 11-17
- Collins English Dictionary (2003). *Complete and Unabridged*. Harper Collins Publishers.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). *National Policy on Education 4th edition*. Lagos:NERDC Press.
- Garba, M. (2004). The Critical Role of Educational Resources on Curriculum Implementation in Noah, A.O.K., Shonibare, D.O., Ojo, A.A. and Olujuwon, T. (Eds) *curriculum implementation and professionalizing teaching in Nigeria*. Lagos: Central Educational Series.
- Ipaye, B. (2012). Teachers' apathy to teaching in searchlight on secondary education in Nigeria. *A handbook of 21-year educational research paper from the all Nigeria conference of principals of secondary schools, ANCOPSS*. Ado-Ekiti: All Nigeria Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools.
- Ivowi, U. M. O. (2004). Curriculum implementation: Implication for school administration in Noah, A.O.K., Shonibare, D. O., Ojo, A.A. and Olujuwon, T. (Eds) *curriculum implementation and professionalizing teaching in Nigeria*. Lagos: Central Educational Services.

- Jeffs, T. and Smith, M. (2010). *Using Informal Education: An Alternative to Casework, Teaching and Control*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Kelly, A. V. (2008). *The Curriculum Theory and practice 4th edition*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Macdonald, J.B. (1965). Educational Models for instruction in J.B. Macdonald and R. R. Leeper (eds). *Theories of Instruction*. Washington D.C: Association for supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Mkpa, M. A. (2007). *Curriculum development*. Owerri: Totan publishers Ltd.
- Massimo, A. (2013). *A rapid assessment of curricula for general education focusing on cross-curricular themes and generic competences or skills*. Background paper for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2-13/14. UNESCO.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2012). *Nigerian Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences Education*. Garki Abuja: NCCE Publishers.
- Obanya, P. (2004). *The Dilemma of Education in Africa*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nigeria Plc.
- Obinna, I. P. (2007). The role of effective teaching in curriculum implementation in *Nigerian journal of curriculum studies*. 14(2), 65-71.
- Ofoegbu, A. (2011). *Practical Research Method in Education*. Onitsha: Summer Educational Publishers Ltd.
- Offorma, D., (2005). *A Critical Appraisal of Mode of Implementation of Nigerian Secondary School Curriculum: Towards Socio-Economic Empowerment of Youth* (Published Research Work).
- Okebukola, C. (2004). Quality assurance in teacher selection among private secondary schools in Owerri municipal, Imo State for effective implementation of the UBE. *Journal of Curriculum Organization of Nigeria*. 37-44
- Onyeachu, E. (2008). Teachers Characteristics and School Curriculum Implementation in Nigeria Secondary Schools: *A Theoretical Review in Journal of the Nigerian Academy of Education*. Nigeria Joanned: (1), 118-120.
- Tom-Lawyer, O. O. (2015). Lecturers' Perceptions of the Implementation of the Revised English Language Nigeria Certificate in Education Curriculum. *Journal of Education and Practice*. 6(12), 181-193. Retrieved from [www.iiste.org](http://www.iiste.org)
- Ugwu, M.U. (2005). *Can Nigerian Effectively Implement her Curriculum Content?* Owerri: Uzor Press Ltd.