

# **INTERNATIONALIZATION OF CURRICULUM DESIGN/ DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A PROGRESSIVE APPROACH**

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## **Abstract**

This paper discusses internationalization of higher education as the process of creating opportunities for developing inter-cultural agility, recruiting multicultural students and fostering international research collaboration among others. The paper also discussed curriculum in education, curriculum design and development in Nigeria, progressive approach to internationalization of curriculum in Nigeria and recommended that frequent seminar/ conference should be organized for curriculum designers / developers, and stakeholders in the education sector, curriculum designers/developers should study the internationalization methods of other countries as a guide to internationalizing curriculum in Nigeria, curriculum should be designed in Nigeria to include the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Millennium goals and curriculum to be internationalized should include courses that will serve both local and foreign students.

**Keywords:** Internationalization, Curriculum in education, Curriculum design/ Curriculum development, Progressive approach.

Universities globally have gone international recruiting staff and both undergraduate, and post graduate students from all over the world. Internationalization according to Ashley (2017) is a process that identifies culture as related to values and norms that helps regulate peoples' behaviour. The regulation of behavior leads to the maintenance of a social system, the social system of the world (globally).

The world is becoming more and more interconnected, and as this interconnectivity increases across borders, the boundaries of higher education increasingly expands too. Bois (2013) stated that internationalization creates great opportunities for cross pollination. The possibilities of cross pollination taking place between people of different background are multifaceted and depends on the mission of each university. He contended that each universities strategy for going international should tally with its goals. In an article of the Association of International Educators

(AIE), Hedzik (2011) wrote that in internationalization it should be ensured that graduates are prepared to be global citizens that can live and work anywhere in the world. These graduates also should be able to contribute meaningfully to the global society and to their countries of origin.

The University of Sheffield (2017) observed that internationalization covers a certain scope which are:

- Offering international students exchange;
- Encouraging the learning of a second language
- Embedding international perspective opportunities for developing intercultural agility
- Recruiting multicultural students.
- Fostering international research collaborations
- Welcoming multicultural academic staff and student body;
- Considering issues of global citizenship such as sustainable development;

While Ellen, (2017) agrees that Internationalization should:

- foster human development through understanding and respect across nation;
- expand and sustain avenues for economic competitiveness; and
- promote academic entrepreneurialism .

Internationalization takes place in different fields, in science, Religion, business and education. Internationalization in education takes place in Higher education (HE)

### **Internationalization of Higher Education**

Knight (2014) opines that internationalization of education in HE, takes the form of integrating culture internationally in the purpose, function and delivering of postsecondary education. Aibach and Knight (2007) agreed that internationalization of higher education also involves universities policies and their practices that helps them cope with global academic systems and environment.

As had been stated, Internationalization take place in higher education (HE), when staff and students are recruited from foreign countries into a university. Knight (2014) contended that apart from recruiting staff and students from other countries, University education is commercialized and that there is international competition within universities to recruit foreign students from rich countries that will help them have good national profile and international reputation, especially to generate revenue. The major purpose for internationalization of HE as opined by Khorsand, (2014) are:

- Global competition for talents
- Recruitment of international students
- Development of international branch companies
- Students, staff and schools exchange programmes
- Internationalization of the curriculum and research

- Education partnership between institution regionally and internationally. Sanket, (2015), of the association of Common Wealth Universities (ACU) described internationalization as one of the ways a country responds to the impact of globalization, yet at the same time respects the individuality of the nation, meaning that even if there are exchange of students between nations, each nation respects the policies of each other. In the attempts to internationalize HE, universities should consider taking into account the following tips.

- The background and interest of students
- Use culturally diverse texts, web sites, case studies and other materials.
- Provide learning materials in different formats (written, online, audio, video, podcast) to support key concepts and knowledge.
- Ensure that the assessment requirements are explicit with details being clearly explained to students. (University of Sheffield 2017)

### **What is Curriculum in Education**

People have different views of what constitutes the concept ‘curriculum of education’ and what the curriculum of a given educational system means. The term according to Aginobu (2006) is used very frequently by people both inside and outside the field of education, the point is that each user seems to attach a different meaning to it. It has frequently been looked at as a vehicle through which the school strives toward the achievement of educational goals whether they be those of a nation, state or local government.

Ebert, Ebert and Bartley (2013) asserts that in education, whatever the learners interact with that helps them achieve stated educational outcomes including all the means and materials, is seen as curriculum. The Universal Design for Learning Guidelines (2016) noted that in the definition of the term curriculum, four basic components are broadly identified, namely:

- Goals: the benchmarks or expectation of teaching and learning often made explicit in the form of a scope and sequence of skills to be addressed.
- Methods: the specific instructional methods for the teacher often described in a teachers edition
- Materials: the media and tools that are used for teaching and learning.
- Assessment: The reasons for and methods of measuring student progress.

In an article of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2017), it was observed that curriculum, encompasses everything a society or nation envisages as important to be taught and learned, all of it makes up the curriculum of that society or nation.

The curriculum of a nation is not made up of only the officially written curriculum, it also includes some unwritten aspects known as the “hidden curriculum” This constitutes the things a learner learns outside the classroom and school environment, they include

values, beliefs and personality development. Every nation such as in Nigeria has their curriculum designed and developed by specialist to ensure that the nation's needs, values and norms are properly identified and included in the curriculum.

### **Curriculum Design and Development in Nigeria**

Designed curriculum is usually presented as a written document; it indicates the elements of the curriculum and shows the way each element is related to others. Omieibi-Davies (2006) stated that, there is a preamble that indicates clearly the kind of learners for whom it is designed and the rationale for the programme. A curriculum design is actually an educational proposal which postulates that, given certain conditions and particular types of learners, the programme the curriculum is designed for is likely to succeed in attaining its set objectives but whether it succeeds or not will depend on how well it is developed.

Curriculum development on the other hand is the process by which intended learning experiences are planned that will bring about certain changes in learners, the methods of assessment of these intended changes and the extent to which these changes have occurred. Since the design and development of a curriculum in any nation is based on the need of that country, in Nigeria, the development of a curriculum at any one time went through these three stages according to the blog Yaake digital learning network (2017):

- Situational analysis
- Selection of aims, goals, and objectives
- Selection of appropriate learning experiences and content for the achievement of aims, goals, and objectives
- Organization of learning experiences

The extent to which the objectives, identified in step Two (2) have been achieved  
Evaluation

There are different types of curriculum designs some of which are:

=Overt/Explicit curriculum – This is that part of a curriculum which is written as part of formal instruction of schooling experiences

=Societal/ Social Curriculum-- is an ongoing, informal curriculum of family, peer group, neighborhood, churches, organizations, occupation etc.

=The Hidden Curriculum—is that part of curriculum which is implied by the structure of school revolving around daily routines.

=Null Curriculum—that, that is not taught in school, that, that gives the message of non importance in the learners schooling and experiences.

=Concomitant Curriculum—this includes all knowledge got from home and family.(Wilson 1990). Other types of curriculum include;

- =Broad field Curriculum Design,
- = Core Curriculum Design
- = Activity/ Experience Centred Design.

Nigeria has gone through discipline/ subject centered curriculum where subjects are organized and taught in subject areas. Omiebi-Davies (2006), stated that in Discipline Curriculum, every subject has its systematic and logical build up. Knowledge is organized and handled discipline by discipline, this shows in Nigeria school system for subjects like mathematics, English, Biology, Chemistry that are taught singularly. And the broad field curriculum which aimed at compartmentalization of subjects grouping or combining several specific areas (subject-matter) into large fields in order to eliminate the sharp distinction or demarcation that exist in the discipline centred curriculum (Agina-obu 2006). That is why According to Davis, (2012), the primary and junior secondary schools curriculum was reviewed in June 2012. A new 9 years basic education curriculum (BEC) now has ten subject listing. The curriculum was revised to grouping related disciplines by the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) which reduced the subjects from 20 to 10 listing of UBE subject eg: Related UBE subject curricula like:

*“Home Economics and Agriculture are brought together to create a new UBE subject curriculum called pre-vocational studies. Islamic studies, Christian Religions studies, social studies, Civic Education and all others that focus primarily on the inculcation of values now form a new UBE subject called Religion and National values”.*

Nigeria has also gone through educational reforms, reviewing her curriculum from time to time including: Universal Primary Education (UPE): This was a free universal education for all children of school age in Nigeria. It was launched on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1976 and stipulated that irrespective of a Nigerian child’s religion, social or economic status of his parents, he would have six years of free primary education. Nigeria then had six years of primary school, five years of secondary and four years of higher education.

Universal Basic Education (UBE): This educational reform, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) was launched at Sokoto on September 30<sup>th</sup> 1999, 23 years after the launching of UPE. Agino-obu (2006) posit that UBE is regarded as the foundation for sustainable life-long learning in Nigeria. UPE articulates the formal, non-formal and informal approaches and mechanisms for the awakening of an all round development of the Nigerian child potentials as it affects Nigeria.

The UBE scheme includes, primary, junior secondary, nomadic education and adult literacy. According to Fafuwa (1974), UPE is a pre-cursor to UBE. Though both UPE and UBE profess equal access to primary Education for all.

The components for UBE scheme are that;

- a. Formal basic education will spread over the first nine years of schooling (primary and junior secondary education) for all children;

b. Nomadic education for school age children of pastoral nomads and migrant fishermen

c. Literacy and non-formal education for out-of-school children, youth and illiterate adults. (Mba, 2003). Nigeria was operating the 6- 3- 3- 4 system, but now she operates the 9-3-4 system of education based on the UBE scheme that had been workable since 1999 and so can really design and develop a curriculum that can be internationalized.

### **Progressive Approach to Internationalization of Curriculum in Nigeria**

Different components need to be identified when internationalizing a curriculum. For Nigeria to design and develop an internationalized curriculum, such components like;

- Global perspective
  - Intercultural communication and
  - A socially responsible citizenship should be emphasized (Clifford 2013).
- Emphasizing these components will aid schools and staff have a clear concept of what internationalization means.

Heigh (2002) suggests that for an English speaking nation that has English language as the official language like Nigeria, it is mandatory to have a curriculum that will teach English to all non-English speaking students. On the other hand, Isolated remedial English Language classes can be incorporated into course structures for international students. He contends that as the curriculum is designed, and developed, issues, bordering on cultural diversification should be incorporated into all aspect of the curriculum because one of the major aims countries and universities internationalize their curricula is to breed global citizens who can live and work anywhere in the world.

Oxfam Development Education Program (2006) identified in its definition that in internationalization of curriculum, that a global citizen is one who:

- Is aware and is conscious of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen;
- Has an understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially and culturally, technologically and environmentally;
- Is outraged by social injustice
- Participates in and contributes to the community at a range of level from local to global,
- Is willing to act to make the world a more sustainable place; and
- Takes responsibility for their actions.

Nigeria should take cognizance of these guides so as to design and develop an all embracing curriculum suitable for both internal (local) and foreign students that will enable them fit into life globally. Therefore for Nigeria to internationalize her curriculum, the curriculum designers / developers should according to Ammeri-

Allatiyari (2017) carry out Intercultural case studies before the development of a curriculum, and during the design /development of any curriculum should provide:

- i. An assessment format that has an intercultural perspective
- ii. The resources for learning (module) that includes intercultural materials
- iii. Lecture notes drawn from international experiences or case studies.
- iv. Course materials should also be drawn from different cultural context.
- v. Modules should include international online discussion forums.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has discussed internationalization of curriculum design and development in Nigeria and how Nigeria can progressively internationalize her curriculum. Internationalization is an ongoing global phenomena and HE institutions worldwide are striving towards internationalizing their curriculum, it is only pertinent that Nigeria as a nation does same. This will increase the firm, and global recognition of the nation and financial status of individual universities, better educational standards of schools and the nation and on the other hand produce not only better and responsible youth (locally and internationally) but will secure the future of the nation Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the discussion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Frequent seminar/ conference should be held for curriculum designers / developers and all stakeholders in the education sector to create awareness and to discuss the internationalization of Nigeria education curriculum.
2. Curriculum design/developer should study the internalization methods of other countries as a guide.
3. Curriculum should be designed in Nigeria to include the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Melleniuin goals
4. Curriculum to be internationalized should include courses that will serve both local and foreign students.

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