
Curriculum Implementation for Achievement of Quality Assurance in Education: Christian Religious Educators' Perspective.

DR. CHRISTIANA N. NWADIOKWU

*Department of Arts and Social Science Education
Faculty of Education,
University Of Delta, Agbor,
Delta State*

Abstract

Quality assurance is a mechanism for ensuring an appropriate learning process whereby an institution complies with basic requirements or is accountable to its stakeholders including founders and students for effective learning process. The strategies used for quality assurance in education include: monitoring, evaluation, supervision, inspection, quality control, access and equality control, access and equality. At any level of education, curriculum has the aim of achieving pre-determined goals. In order to achieve sustainable development goals, curriculum should be planned adequately and embedded in a curriculum document. Execution of curriculum document into practice results to curriculum implementation. This 21st century needs an innovative technique to enhance, upgrade and assist the curriculum implementation process. In this article, the following are discussed: concept of quality; concept of quality assurance; concept of curriculum implementation; curriculum in education for quality assurance; factors enhancing curriculum implementation; challenges facing quality assurance in curriculum implementation; quality assurance strategies in curriculum implementation, Christian Religious Educators' Perspective and so on. It was recommended among others that quality control should be one of the strategies for establishing quality assurance in curriculum implementation.

Keywords: Quality assurance, curriculum implementation, education, Christian Religious Educators' Perspective

Introduction

Curriculum is the reservoir of all the interconnected activities that take place in the field of learning or education as a whole. Education and its policy goals and objectives are aimed at improving the quality of life of people especially in Nigeria. Nigeria is one of the developing countries who have taken education programmes as a tool to build free democratic and just society, united and self reliant nation, great and dynamic economy and full opportunities for all her citizens (Gbamaja, 2010).

The success of Quality Assurance education depends on the curriculum and the effectiveness of its implementation. Implementation of the curriculum is the process of putting all that have been planned as a curriculum process into practice in the classroom through the combined efforts of the teacher, learner, school administrator, as well as the interaction with the physical facilities, instructional materials, psychological and social environment. The classroom is the final bus stop for the implementation of quality assurance curriculum (Obasi, 2018). This article discussed the following: concept of quality; concept of quality assurance; concept of curriculum implementation; curriculum in education for quality assurance; factors enhancing curriculum implementation; challenges facing quality assurance in curriculum implementation; quality assurance strategies in curriculum implementation, Christian Religious Educators' Perspective.

(i) Concept of Quality

Quality can be defined as “fitness for use,” “customer satisfaction,” “doing things right the first time,” or “zero defects.” This definition is acceptable because quality can refer to degrees of excellence. Maduabuchi (2012), defined quality as “an inherent characteristic, property or attribute.” Quality can be defined as a characteristic of a product or process that can be measured. Quality is the ongoing process of building and sustaining relationships by assessing, anticipating, and fulfilling stated and implied needs.

Quality is a momentary perception that occurs when something in our environment interacts with us, in the pre-intellectual awareness that comes before rational thought takes over and begins establishing order. Judgment of the resulting order is then reported as good or bad quality value. Quality is doing the right things right and is uniquely defined by each individual. Quality is meeting the customer's needs in a way that exceeds the customer's expectations (Muhammed, 2014).

Jairus (2014) asserted that Quality education includes: Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities; Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities; Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and

peace; Processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities; Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for quality education and positive participation in the society.

(ii) Concept of Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance is a planned and systematic activities implemented in a system so that excellent requirements for a product or service will be fulfilled. The term quality assurance describes all the planned and systematic actions necessary to assure that a product or service will satisfy the specified requirements (Onocha 2012). Quality assurance refers to the processes and procedures that systematically monitor different aspects of a service, process or facility to detect, correct and ensure that quality standards are being met. Quality assurance helped us to eliminate defective products and increase customer satisfaction (Munachi, 2006).

The need for quality assurance in Nigerian schools cannot be overemphasized in order to ensure quality of teaching and learning. However, Munachi (2006) stated that the following are the major needs of quality assurance in our education system in Nigeria: To serve as indispensable component of quality control strategy in education, To ensure and maintain high standard of education at all levels; to assist in monitoring and supervision of education; to determine the quality of the teacher input; to determine the number of classrooms needed based on the average class size; to ensure quality control of education and to determine the level of adequacy of the facilities available for quality control. It would ensure how the financial resources available could be prudently and judiciously utilized. However, quality assurance strategies in education should be put in place to meet up with these major needs stated above.

(iii) Curriculum in Education for Quality Assurance.

Curriculum is the academic lessons and contents that are being taught in schools in a particular course or program for quality assurance. There are needs to provide a curriculum in every school or educational setup because it helps one to map out a specific time or period that suits a lesson or course. Quality curriculum is a planned lesson used by a teacher for classroom purposes with the intention to impart skills/knowledge to the students. Curriculum is basically pivoted on these designs: subject-centered approach, the learner-centered and problem-centered approaches. A quality assurance curriculum is incomplete without the teacher who is the chief implementer. It is a framework or a guide a teacher uses to convey knowledge /skills to the learner with the help of teaching materials like textbooks, improvise teaching aid, learning objects and others, (Melunga, 2018).

**Diagrammatic representation of 9-year Basic Education Curriculum
Table 1**

Lower Basic Education Curriculum	MIDDLE Basic Education Curriculum	Upper Basic Education Curriculum
PRIMARY 1-3	PRIMARY 4-6	JSS 1-3
Core compulsory subjects 1. English Language 2. One major Nigerian Language (Igbo, Yoruba or Hausa) 3. Mathematics 4. Basic Science and Technology 5. Social Studies 6. Civic Education 7. Cultural and Creative Arts 8. Christian Religious Studies//Islamic Studies 9. Physical & Health Education 10. Computer Studies/ICT	Core compulsory subjects 1. English Language 2. One major Nigerian Language (Igbo, Yoruba or Hausa) 3. Mathematics 4. Basic Science and Technology 5. Social Studies 6. Civic Education 7. Cultural and Creative Arts 8. Christian Religious Studies//Islamic Studies 9. Physical & Health Education 10. Computer Studies/ICT	Core Compulsory Subjects 1. English Language 2. One major Nigerian Language (Igbo, Yoruba or Hausa) 3. Mathematics 4. Basic Science and Technology 5. Social Studies 6. Civic Education 7. Cultural and Creative Arts 8. Christian Religious Studies//Islamic Studies 9. Physical & Health Education 10. Computer Studies/ICT
ELECTIVE SUBJECTS 1. Agriculture 2. Home Economics 3. Arabic Language	ELECTIVE SUBJECTS 1. Agriculture 2. Home Economics 3. Arabic Language.	ELECTIVE SUBJECTS 1. Agriculture 2. Home Economics 3. Arabic Language 4. Business Studies
NOTE Must offer 1 elective, but not more than 2	NOTE Must offer 1 elective, but not more than 2	NOTE Must offer 1 elective, but not more than 3

Source: Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) 2008.

(iv) Concept of Implementation

Implementation means to make decisions, policies or reforms to happen. It is the executives of the various courses of actions determined at the planning stage for the achievement of the purposes of the organization (Offem and Akpan, 2018). Alagbue (2013), stated that implementation equally means to carry or execute plan. In other words, no decision, policy or reform policies can exist without implementation.

(v) **Concept of Curriculum Implementation**

Curriculum is “a series of planned learning activities a child is exposed to in the course of his development. The aim is to make him or her develop fully his/her potentials so as to function effectively in the community”. It is a veritable roadmap for achieving a defined academic or educational goal and brings out the best in any intellectual enterprise one is engaged in (Salubuyi, 2019). According to Olabode (2014), implementation of the curriculum logically requires making sure that the learners benefit extensively from the values of the subject.

The curriculum implementation is the actual putting into practice of the planned curriculum. Ejeh, Obih and Azubuie (2019) define it as the process by which the teacher and the learner engage in worthwhile activities to achieve the stated educational goals. (Onyeachu and Ajero, 2017) describe curriculum implementation as the weaving together of subject matter and method to produce desired learning activities which lead to the relevant learning outcomes. Onyeachu and Ajero (2017) define curriculum implementation as a process of translating the curriculum theory to practice. The authors stress that it is putting into practice the curriculum document in the classroom through the combined effort of the teachers, learners, school administrators, parents and other stakeholders in education. Okebukola (2004) states that curriculum implementation process begins when the curriculum is handed to the teacher and ends when the students or the learners have learned the learning experiences prescribed in the document.

(vi) **Factors enhancing Curriculum Implementation for Quality Assurance**

Some of the factors that enhance quality assurance in curriculum implementation are as follows: teacher factor, learner factor, Administrative factor, and Instructional media resources

➤ **The Teacher Factor:** The person that imparts knowledge to the learners is the teacher because he is a more knowledgeable person particularly in the area he teaches (Okoro and Ali-Okoro, 2016). In the process of implementing curriculum, the teachers play major roles because implementing curriculum lies greatly in the hands of the teachers who determine what to teach and how to teach it.

➤ **The Learner Factor:** Any person to whom the content of curriculum is administered to, for the realization of his intellectual, social and physical needs is termed ‘the learner’. In other words, he is a less knowledgeable person. Before imparting any knowledge to the learner, his (the learner) attributes and characteristics must be considered fervently. When learners co-operate, effective curriculum implementation is achieved. Suffice it to say that feedback got from

the learners actually conditions the teacher in his instructional action (Okoro, Emenyonu and Akaraonye, 2012).

➤ **Administrative factor:** In the teaching learning environment, teachers are motivated to teach so that learning will be enhanced. According to Okoro and Ali Okoro (2016), the motivation of teachers teaching in schools is made by effective educational administrators especially in the ministry of education and the school management.

➤ **Instructional Media Resources:** In order to ensure adequate achievement of instructional objectives, media resources for instructional activities must be available because it is of utmost importance. Succinctly, instructional media resources are information carriers designed to accomplish objectives in a teaching learning situation (Kapp, 2012).

(vii) Challenges Facing Quality Assurance in Curriculum Implementation

Some of the challenges besetting quality assurance in curriculum implementation include:

❖ **Financial Constraints** A well planned curriculum can be affected negatively from being implemented effectively as a result of lack of funds. Unfavourable economic situation of a country gives rise to poor funding and this is the major problem that impedes the implementation of curriculum at oil levels of education in Nigeria. Succinctly, lack of teaching learning resources lack of infrastructure and non-payment of teachers' salaries contribute to poor effective curriculum implementation (Normad, 2007).

❖ **Assessment:** This can be seen as the form of examinations or tests used in evaluating students' efforts to know whether the teachers taught well. Assessment influences curriculum implementation tremendously because public examination certificates given by communities and schools are being given great value. This in turn has made teachers to concentrate on subjects that promote academic excellence in such examinations. Therefore, this action by the teacher can obviously affect the achievement of the broad goals and objectives of the curriculum (Okoro and Ali- Okoro, 2016).

❖ **Teacher quality, quantity and variety:** The quality of an implemented curriculum depends on the quality of the teacher in question. Most times, students perform poorly in most external examinations due to poor quality of teachers. There should be variety of teachers in various school systems as cited in Okoro and Ali-Okoro (2016). They opined that evidences have shown that teachers of mathematics, physics, chemistry, basic science and technology have been in short supply. This is as a result of inadequate motivation for teachers which consequently result in high attrition among teachers.

❖ **Government policies:** Policies made by government that are inaccurate, inarticulate, affect the implementation of curriculum. Sometimes, allocations budgeted for education are being tampered with by the wrong hands that do not know the value of education, and this affects the quality assurance in

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implementation of curriculum grossly in schools at all levels of education (Mkpa, 2015).

❖ **School Environment:** The school environment is another factor that influences quality assurance in curriculum implementation. There are schools located in rich socio-economic environments and those located at poor economic environments. According to Okoro and Ali-Okoro (2016), schools located in socio-economic environments may have adequate human and material resources, and these schools with these resources can implement the quality curriculum to a large extent than those schools located in poor economic environments.

❖ **Instructional supervision:** Quality assurance in curriculum implementation can only be achieved when thorough supervision is carried out. The major personnel in the school management who carries out the instructional supervision is the school head and his functions among others include: deploying staff according to the areas of specialization; allocation of time to subjects taught at the school; provision of teaching and learning materials and creation of an atmosphere that is conducive for effective teaching and learning. Succinctly, effective curriculum Implementation does not take place in a school where the head is incapable of executing supervisory functions. (Okoro, Emenyonu and Akaraonye, 2017).

(viii) Quality Assurance Strategies in Curriculum Implementation

Quality assurance is a mechanism for ensuring an appropriate learning process; be it a degree of control over what is permitted as an education experience, ensuring that the institution complies with basic requirements. It is also accountable to its stakeholders, including funders and students, to enhance the learning process. The strategies used for quality assurance in education include: monitoring, evaluation, supervision, inspection, quality control, access and equity (Munachi, 2006).

Monitoring: It refers to the process of collecting data at intervals about ongoing projects or programmes within the school system. The aim is to constantly assess the level of performance with a view of finding out how far a set objectives are being met (Ehinder, 2001).

Evaluation: This is a formal process carried out within a school setting. It is based on available data which are used to form conclusions. It could be formative or summative. The aim of evaluation as a quality assurance strategy is to see how the system can be assisted to improve on the present level of performance formative (Ijaiya, 2001).

Supervision: Supervision might involve inspection, but it goes beyond inspection and includes attempt at bringing about improvement in the quality of instruction. It involves staff as essential part of the process. It is a way of advising, refreshing, encouraging and stimulating staff (Onocha, 2012).

Inspection: Usually involves an assessment of available facilities and resources in an Institution with a view to establishing how for a particular institution has met prescribed standards, it is more of an assessment rather than an improvement induced exercise (Munachi, 2006).

Quality control: The issue of quality control cannot be over-emphasized. It is One of the strategies for establishing quality assurance in the interior education system at all levels. Ojedele (2007) views that; quality control should be of concerns to the country in its drive towards technological development. For this to be successfully carried out, there is need to examine the qualification of teachers, teachers by gender, the adequacy of the curriculum, availability of equipment in the required number as well as the proper use of the processes involved in the various skills to ensure that the finished products are of high standard.

Access and equity: Ojedele (2007) asserts that the trend of students transiting from the junior secondary school to other level of education has not been encouraging as it has been falling short of the expectation. He argued further that, the issue at the tertiary level presents a situation that calls for concerns in terms of variation in access at the Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of education and in terms of gender disparity. Implementing quality assurance strategies in education engenders a successful administration in school environment.

(ix) Christian Religious Educators' Perspective.

In Nigeria, Christian Religious Education is viewed as a subject that helps to streamline students' thought, character, morality and aspiration. It fosters morals among students, teaching them to live in the world guided by moral ideas of loyalty to God, charity and justice to their fellow human beings. It inculcates in students positive attitudes and moral values such as humility, respect, love, kindness and spirit of forgiveness (Ikechukwu and Ugwuozor, 2014).

Onyekakeyah (2013) stresses that Christian religious education was expected to fulfill the student's great solemn mission of making spiritual values the principle of permanence in this world of change, the wellspring of sanctity in the midst of evil, the beacon of idealism in an age of cynicism and a ground hope in the face of discouragement and mounting fear. According to Lemu, (2015), there is no gain saying that teaching of morality and discipline is taught through Christian religious education in accordance to the principles of God creation. This will play a great role towards quality assurance in curriculum implementation. It is the full understanding of these principles by man that will engender good democratic environment devoid of character assassination, killings and bickering.

Conclusion

Quality assurance relates to the achievement of educational program standards established by institutions, professional organizations, government, and/or standard-setting bodies established by government. Quality assurance is the means through which an institution ensures and confirms that the conditions are in place for students to achieve the standards set by it or by another awarding body. Curriculum implementation has been described from different point of views, as the transmitting of the curriculum document by the teacher and other participants to the learner using current technology and 21st century skills.

Recommendations

Based on the above, the following recommendations are made:

- ❖ Federal and State Ministries of Education should train and retrain teachers on curriculum implementation in quality assurance in schools;
- ❖ Teachers should be involved in the development of instructional materials for quality education;
- ❖ Federal and State Government should provide enough money for effective implementation of the curriculum;
- ❖ Objectives of the curriculum should be well stated for proper implementation geared towards quality assurance;
- ❖ Quality control should be one of the strategies for establishing quality assurance in curriculum implementation;
- ❖ Current learning resources should be provided in students' learning packages for quality curriculum and
- ❖ Religious teachers educators should be involved in curriculum implementation

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