

Teachers' Perception on New Restructured 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) in Ekiti- State, Nigeria

Adebayo Lawrence OJO

Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), Sheda-Abuja

Abstract: *This study sought to determine the teachers' perception on new restructured 9-year BEC in Ekiti State, Nigeria especially with respect to the teachers' awareness and availability of the curriculum. A sample of 720 respondents comprises Principals, Headmasters and Teachers in public primary and junior secondary schools were selected through stratified random sampling technique. Respondents selected covered all subjects offered in 9-year BEC. The major instrument for this study was a researcher-structured questionnaire titled "Teachers' Perception on New Restructured 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum (TPNR9YBEC)" were used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by experts in Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, Abuja for vetting so as to determine its appropriateness, relevance and clarity and the relevant reliability co-efficient was established. Data collected were analyzed using mean score for research questions. A mean score of 2.5 & above is considered adequate, t-test statistic was used to analyze the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that teachers aware about 9-year BEC in Ekiti State and it was not available for proper implementation to meet the mandate of the curriculum. The finding also revealed that there is no significant difference in the awareness and availability of the curriculum in Urban and Rural primary and junior secondary schools in Ekiti State. The t-calculated of 1.47 is lesser than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance therefore the teachers' perception was not different in urban and rural. These findings were discussed with far reaching implications and recommendations were made among others that there should be a general awareness campaign on the 9-year BEC to teachers. This could be achieved through seminars and workshops. Conclusively, it can be concluded that much still needs to be done for effective implementation of the 9-year BEC curriculum in Nigeria at large.*

Keywords: *Education, Curriculum, Teacher, Awareness, Availability.*

I. Introduction

Education is a process of teaching the members of the society how they are expected to behave in a variety of selected situations. This means that education deals with the development of the changes in human behavior. It is a cultural process, the way in which each new born human infant is transformed into a full member of a specific human society. Hence, education is a process by which societies perpetuate or renew themselves. Education is the process of providing information to a person to help him or her develop mentally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, politically and economically (Offorma, 2009). Tanner and Tanner (2007) opined that education is a reconstruction of knowledge and experience that enables the learner to grow in exercising intelligent control of subsequent knowledge and experience

Curriculum of any course content has something to do with the learner, the teacher who executes this course programmes the parents as well as the society. Utulu (2010) viewed that a good curriculum takes cognizance of how human beings learn which should be valid, reliable, well integrated and relevant. Curriculum content is an organization pattern of subject matter which addresses the needs, desires, values and dreams of the society (Abono, 2007). The behavior modification by every student depends on what he/she been exposed to and the level of exposure to such a learning materials (Agogo and Ode, 2011). They further posited that education for sustainable development allows learners to acquire the right skills, capacities, values and knowledge that help to make the beneficiaries self-sustaining.

The basic education curriculum is an innovation in Nigerian education system. It was developed by the NERDC (Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council) following a directive it received from the NCE (National Council on Education) in 2005 to restructure and re-align the existing primary and junior secondary school curricula to meet the targets of the 9-year basic education. The needs to investigate teachers' knowledge of the policy as well as evaluate their perceptions of the awareness and achievability of its contents may be influenced by their levels of academic qualification, teaching experience, number of workshops attended and the type of employer. For instance, teachers employed by government are expected to attend workshop under the sponsorship of the state government, perhaps more than their counterparts employed in the private schools.

The former six years of primary, three years of junior secondary, three years of senior secondary and four years of university (6-3-3-4) education structure was re-aligned into 9 years of formal schooling consisting

of 3 years of Lower Basic (primary 1-3), 3 years of Middle Basic (primary 1-4) and 3 years of Upper Basic (Junior Secondary School) and 4 years of University Education (9-3-4). This structure emphasizes Basic Education Curriculum (BEC), which is one of the innovation programs of the Federal Government of Nigeria today. According to the National Policy on Education, (2004) section 3, the 9 years basic education comprising of 6 years of primary and 3 years of Junior Secondary and it shall be a Free and compulsory education; Adult and non-formal education programs at primary and Junior Secondary Levels and Education for adults and out of school youths. All the existing subjects curricular for primary and junior secondary schools were reviewed, re-structured and re-aligned into a 9 year Basic Education Curriculum (UBEC, 2008).

Teachers view 9-year BEC as a quality education in term of outcome. First, they focus on learning as a means of achieving student individual goals, good result and performance as a means for skill development and achieving employability. Teachers also understand new restructured curriculum in terms of fulfilling the needs of the community and the nation at large. They describe socially acceptable behavior and community commitment as important to the vision of education. Teachers emphasize that students should have good manners, be responsible and become good citizen. Also, another important quality related factor is the availability of resources, having sufficient educational resources and teaching materials in the classrooms are crucial to promote 9-year BEC as a quality of education.

Most studies on 9-year curriculum has focused exclusively on social studies, basic science and technology, 9-year universal basic education and many more (Nwaubani and Azuh, 2014, Odili, Ebisine and Ajuar, 2011, Uzomh and Okereke, 2010). No studies have attempted to view the teachers' perception on 9-year BEC. This paper tremendously focus on teachers' perception on 9-year BEC particularly the level of awareness and availability of the newly restructured 9-year BEC in public primary and junior secondary schools in the covered area of study.

II. Statement of the problem

One of the objectives of the Nigerian government in introducing free and compulsory BEC programme in 2006 is to provide equal opportunity for all Nigerian children especially at the primary school level as a means of eradicating illiteracy and minimizing the problem of educational imbalance. The level of sensitization of this 9-year BEC was not visualized due to the level awareness, inadequate and availability of their objective in the covered area. Specifically, are copies of the document available in schools, does teachers able to identify and aware the objectives of the curriculum as well as identify teachers and pupils activities for a given topic.

Purpose of the study

This study is to ascertain the status of implementation of curriculum innovation on 9-year Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) in both primary and junior secondary schools in Ekiti State. It aimed to find out the availability of the curriculum document in the schools, and the extent teachers are conversant with its provision.

Research questions

1. To what extent is the level of awareness on the 9-year BEC among the teachers in Ekiti State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent is the availability of the 9-year BEC at schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria

Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant difference in the teachers' perception on new restructured Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) in the urban and rural schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Significance of the study

This study will provide information on teachers' in implementation of 9-year BEC in primary and junior secondary schools. It will provide feedback to authority concern on the results of some of the actions taken so far in the implementation of the 9-year BEC programme. It will guide government and her agencies in identifying areas of intervention in the successful implementation of the 9-year BEC. Also, teacher will be sensitized on the enquire about the 9-year BEC and increase the level of awareness on the proper implementation of the curriculum.

Scope of the study.

The study was carried out in both public primary and junior secondary schools in Ekiti State. It focused on all subjects of the 9-year BEC.

Research design

The descriptive survey design was employed by the researcher. It is capable of collecting data that describe the status of implementation of the 9-year BEC in both public primary and junior secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Population

The population for this study comprises all Principals, Headmasters and Teachers in public primary and junior secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. A total population of seventeen thousand (17,000) was focused for the study.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for this study was seven hundred and twenty (720) respondents selected across the State from public primary and junior secondary schools. Ekiti State was made up of sixteen (16) Local Government. Purposive sampling technique was used to group the State in terms of Senatorial district that is North, Central and South. Moba, Ido/Osi, Ilejemeje, Oye & Ikole Local Government forms Ekiti North ; Ijero, Efon, Ekiti West (Aramoko), Irepodun/Ifelodun, & Ado Local Government forms Ekiti Central while Ekiti South (Ilawe), Ikere, Ise/Orun, Emure, Gbonyin & Ekiti East (Omuo) Local Government forms Ekiti South. Random sampling technique was used to select three (3) Local Government each from the district. Viz: Ikere, Emure & Ekiti East (Omuo) for South; Ijero, Irepodun/Ifelodun, & Ado for Central while Moba, Ilejemeje, & Oye for North equal to nine (9) Local Government selected. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select four (4) schools in each Local Government selected equal to thirty six (36) schools and headquarters was recognized as urban while other towns refers as rural. It shows that two (2) schools in urban and two (2) schools in rural, one primary and one junior secondary school each. Stratified sampling technique was used to select twenty (20) respondents from each schools selected in all the Local Government respectively. Eighty (80) respondents was selected in nine (9) Local Government equal to seven hundred and twenty (720) respondents. Respondents selected covered all subjects offered in 9-yearBEC.

Instrument, Validity, Reliability, Data collection and Analysis.

The major instrument for this study is a researcher-structured questionnaire title: "Teachers' Perception on New Restructured 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum (TPNR9YBEC)". The instrument was divided into two sections. Section (A) deals with demographic information while section (B) focuses on the level of awareness; availability of 9-year BEC in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The instrument was structured after the modified 4 point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The value attached to these responses are 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The content and construct validity approach was adopted in which the self-structure questionnaire was referred to experts in Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, Abuja for vetting so as to determine its appropriateness, relevance and clarity. The reliability of the instrument was also estimated by test-retest method and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and a coefficient of 0.87 was got indicating that the instrument is reliable. The copies of the questionnaire were administered over a period of eight (8) weeks. A total of seven hundred and twenty (720) questionnaires were administered and retrieved immediately. Research questions were answered using the mean score. A mean score of 2.5 & above is considered adequate, t-test statistic was used to analyze the hypothesis with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

III. Results and Discussions

Section A: Demographic Information.

Gender: 332 (46.11%) were male while 388 (53.89%) were female. **Age distribution:** 104 (14.44%) of the respondents were below 20years; 196 (27.22%) of the respondents were between 21-30 years; 264 (36.67%) of the respondents were between 31-40 years while 156 (21.67%) were 41 years and above. **Working experience in years:** 154 (21.39%) were below 10 years; 162 (22.5%) were between 11-20 years; 226 (31.39%) were between 21-30 years; while 178 (24.72%) were between 31 years above. **Qualifications:** 238 (33.06%) of the respondents holding NCE; 342 (47.5%) of the respondents holding B.SC (Ed)/B.A and 140 (19.44%) holding of M.Ed/M.SC/Ph.D . **Marital status of the respondents:** 262 (36.39%) were single; 408 (56.67%) were married; while 50 (6.94%) were alone.

Table 1: Mean response on awareness of the 9-year BEC among the teachers in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

S/N	Items statement	N	Mean	Decision
1	Teacher aware about 9-year BEC	720	2.72	Agree
2	Teacher aware about 9-year BEC through media or other means	720	2.68	Agree
3	Teacher aware that 9-year BEC is a complied subject in elementary education	720	2.54	Agree

4	Teacher aware that 9-year BEC provide solution to elementary education	720	2.62	Agree
5	Teacher aware that 9-year BEC relevant to elementary education	720	2.55	Agree
6	Do teacher aware that previous curriculum and 9-year BEC are different	720	2.83	Agree

Table 2: Mean response on the availability of the 9-Year BEC at schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria

S/N	Items statement	N	Mean	Decision
1	Does 9-year BEC available in this school	720	1.86	Un agree
2	Does government provide 9-year BEC in this school	720	2.03	Un agree
3	Does teachers should apply for 9-year BEC at appropriate quarters	720	2.75	Agree
4	Does teachers sighted any of this 9-year BEC in the school	720	2.01	Un agree
5	Does a society value/recognized this 9-year BEC	720	2.00	Un agree
6	Does 9-year BEC would provide solution to unemployment if implemented	720	2.62	Agree

H0: There is no significant difference in the teachers' perception on new restructured Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) in the urban and rural schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Table 3:

Location of Schools	Mean	Standard deviation	Sample size	Df	t-calculated	t-critical
Urban	2.87	.42	360	6	1.47	1.96
Rural	2.96	.39	360	6		

The table 3 above shows that t-calculated of 1.47 is lesser than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance indicating that there is no significant difference in the teachers' perception on new restructured Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) in the urban and rural schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Hence, the null hypothesis was therefore accepted.

IV. Discussion

The finding on table 1 revealed that teachers aware about 9-year BEC in Ekiti State. This result was an agreement with the finding of Madsen (1996) emphasized the concept that awareness is the ultimate driving force that stimulates knowledge. Athman and Monroe (2000) stated that awareness and knowledge of curriculum processes and systems play an important role in implementation. Nwadiani (1995; 2007), Nwokocho (2007) and Ereh (2005) were consistent in the opinion that teachers' awareness and knowledge of the curriculum is very essential for its successful implementation. Teachers' lacks of awareness and knowledge of the curriculum mean that the new document cannot be successfully implemented in Nigeria. An important feature of the 9-year Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) its emphasis on process skills like enquiry, manipulation, intellectual and societal values. The curriculum presents these skills so as to relate learning to the immediate environment of the learner. A teacher without adequate awareness of the curriculum will not be able to present learning in a way as to achieve these skills in pupils. This finding was also in line with the opinion of Okpala, (2006), Zwalchir, (2008), Maduwesi, (2005), Ibukun, (2009) have shown that the lack of adequate human and material resources are the two critical problems that could hinder the successful implementation of 9-year BEC.

Table 2 reveals that the document is not available in schools in Ekiti State. Only item 3 and 6 agree that teacher should applied for the new curriculum and it provide solution to unemployment. The study revealed that teachers were not guided by the curriculum in planning lesson for pupils. Even in the schools where the document is available teachers' responses showed that it does not guide them in lesson preparation. It implied that teachers are teaching out of context or expectations of NCE. The 9-year BEC was developed to meet the millennial needs of primary education in Nigeria (Obioma, 2008; National Planning Commission, 2004). The non-utilization by teachers implies that the goals of EFA (education for all) and the MDGs may not be achieved in Nigeria. According to Asher (1976) cited by Odili, Ebisine, Ajuar (2011) that the curriculum document is an essential element for effective implementation of any new programme. It tells what is expected of the teachers as well as the activities needed to achieve the set objectives. The absence of this document means that the 9-year BEC has not taken-off in the majority of the sampled schools. Ayodeji, (2004) lamented that the demand of education is growing higher everyday but the available resources are not keeping pace in terms of the development. In support of this, UNESCO's Education for all (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (2005) provides a detailed analysis of factors influencing the quality of education in several regions of the world, which it says could prevent many countries from achieving EFA goals by 2015. These include lack of human and material resources for schools, number of years and their training, facilities etc. In curriculum implementation teachers are the heart beat or key implementers. It is in view of these observations that this study sets out to assess the availability of these curriculum as an instructional materials in the implementation of the 9-year BEC in Ekiti State.

The study also revealed that there is no significant difference in the awareness and availability of the curriculum in Urban and Rural primary and junior secondary schools in Ekiti State as indicate by the t-test

analysis in Table 3. However, my observation as a researcher is that teachers are still using the traditional method of teaching, where a teacher is regarded as the only source of information and the learners as the vessels that need to be filled with knowledge or learning material. Teachers must be willing to apply the new approach and must be able to articulate their ideas so as to make a meaningful contribution to the new curriculum implementation. The implementation of the new curriculum did not merely involve the direct and straight-forward application of plans. It was a dynamic organizational process that was shaped over time by interactions between projects, goals and methods and the institutional setting (Gultig, Hoadley, and Jansen, 2002). Morris (2002) indicates that for educators to be self-motivated and committed to their objectives, the mutual relationship between teachers should be promoted, all stakeholders should be involved in planning the curriculum, and there should be opportunities for growth and more innovative and effective teaching methods. What becomes clear is the need for teacher education and for educators to grasp the challenges and opportunities to assert their power over shaping the curriculum process that will produce competent, confident teachers (Kruss, 2009). Implementation of the curriculum was hampered by the fact that the authorities seemed to be always chopping and changing the curriculum. An increase in administrative work on the part of teachers was also a challenge. In addition, managers were not well trained to manage the transition to the new curriculum. The educators were afraid of change, they feared the unknown, they lacked knowledge and understanding and as such they faced enormous challenges in implementing the new curriculum. The instructional leadership challenge to the principals in the implementation of the curriculum to help educators in their day-to-day teaching practice was daunting. The principal as an instructional leader should lead the implementation of the new curriculum in a school. According to Hoy and Miskel (2008), instructional leadership encompasses those actions the principal takes and delegates to others to promote growth in student learning.

V. Conclusion

The perception of teachers on the 9-year BEC has been investigated. It was found that there was low perception of teachers on the 9-year BEC programme as an education reform in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It can be concluded that much still needs to be done for effective implementation of the 9-year BEC curriculum in Nigeria at large.

VI. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made from the findings of the study:

- There should be a general awareness campaign on the 9-year BEC to teachers. This could be achieved through seminars and workshops
- The 9-year BEC should be effectively implemented
- Enough teachers should be recruited for the 9 year BEC
- The facilities for the 9 year BEC should be provided by Ministry of Education to all states.

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