



Curriculum for adult and non-formal education in the colleges of education in Nigeria: An appraisal

Joseph Chukwutobe Chieke¹, Johnson Nnadi Ewelum^{2*}, Luke Chidiebele Ogbaka³

¹ Ph.D, Senior Lecturer, Department of Adult and Continuing Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

² Ph.D, Professor, Department of Adult and Continuing Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

³ Lecturer, Department of Adult and Continuing Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

Abstract

This paper critically examined the NCCE 2012 minimum standards for adult and non-formal education in the colleges of education in Nigeria. Also, its strength and weaknesses were exposed. The meaning and types of curriculum were explained. The importance of curriculum was also highlighted. Factors that affect curriculum development were adequately discussed. Based on the findings, conclusion was made and it was recommended among others, that the minimum qualification for academic staff in the colleges of education should be masters in adult education.

Keywords: curriculum, adult, non-formal, education, appraisal

Introduction

The current curriculum for adult and non-formal education in the colleges of education in Nigeria was documented in the NCCE 2012 minimum standards. NCCE stands for National Commission for Colleges of Education. NCCE 2012 was drawn since the year, 2012 without review, appropriately 11 years now. A curriculum should be reviewed every 3 years to make it in line with the current socio-economic and cultural realities. This means that NCCE 2012 is overdue for review. A curriculum is considered as the heart of any learning institution. This means that schools, colleges or universities cannot exist without a curriculum. Curriculum for adult and non-formal education in colleges of education should not be limited to teaching skills only. Adult education is a discipline that prepares people for adult life. Adult and non-formal education should expose its recipients to real practical skills which will enable them to be self-reliant after school and help them to fit in the 21st century world of work.

Meaning of curriculum

There is no one accepted definition of curriculum as it concerns education. Curriculum has been used in various ways. In some cases, it has been used to mean (a) a school's written courses of study (b) the subject matter taught in schools (c) The courses offered in a school (d) the planned experiences of the learners under the guidance of a school. Bilbao, Luado, Irrigan, and Javier (2008) [3] defined curriculum as the total learning experiences of individuals, not only in school but society as well. The term, curriculum was derived from the Latin word, *currere*, which means 'race course' or a course through which people have to run in order to get to a set goal. By implication, a curriculum in an education system is supposed to be a planned sequence of learning experience through which specific Behavioural changes will be achieved for students within a given learning setting. If curriculum is what it is supposed to be as

explained above, it follows that curriculum should be a dependent variable, changing with the needs of the learner. According to UNESCO (2017) [14], some people see curriculum entirely in terms of subjects one taught in schools and as set out within the set of textbooks, and forget the wider goals of competences and personal development. Continuing further, UNESCO maintained that clear, inspired and motivational curriculum documents and materials play an important role in ensuring education quality. The body stressed that the involvement of stakeholders and especially teachers in the development of the written curriculum is of paramount importance for ensuring ownership and sustainability of curriculum process.

Obidiegwu, Obiozor, and Okafor (2016) [9] believed that the country's educational system has been wastefully inefficient and technologically backward, thus, producing unemployable graduates. This, they said is an indictment on the curriculum of the educational system which is characterized as not functional and hence deficient. Uwaifo (2010) [15] noted that the educational curriculum in Nigeria (including those of colleges of education) is poor and inadequate. The NCCE 2012 [4] minimum standards appears to have lacked the capacity to make educator trainee relevant to the labour market, that is, training that meets employer's need and expectations. Onyia and Esomonu (2012) [10] emphasized that trainees should be trained with machines, tools and equipment, similar, to what they will find in the world of work. The NCCE 2012 [4] minimum standards for adult and non-formal education seems to be more theoretical than practical. The credit hour allotted to life skills (ANFE 118) is only 1 hour in 100 level only. Equally, entrepreneurship training (GSE 224) is allotted 1 hour in 200 level only (NCCE 2012) [4]. Entrepreneurship, which is running or starting a business or businesses, does not necessarily involve a specific school subject, rather, it requires a way of teaching in which experiential learning and work-related skills impact the life of the learner.

To help educator trainee develop an enterprising attitude, adult educators need a wide range of competences related to creativity and entrepreneurship; they require a school environment where creativity and risk-taking are encouraged, mistakes seen as a learning opportunity (Ogbuagu, Obidiegwu, Obiozor & Okafor (2016) ^[9]. Ogbuagu *et al* defined entrepreneurship educations as all forms of knowledge delivery which seeks to empower an individual to create wealth in the economic sector. Albert, Sciscia and Poli (2004) ^[1] maintained that entrepreneurship is a field of study that seeks to provide learners with the knowledge, skills and motivation to engage and encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. This view, highlights the importance and seriousness of entrepreneurship and life skills as courses to be taken in the colleges of education. In the researcher’s view point, it should not be allotted only one credit hour if learners should be expected to be self-employed and self-reliant after graduation.

The NCCE 2012 ^[4] minimum standards has it that adult and non-formal education in the colleges of education in Nigeria should-be offered as double major, meaning that, adult and non-formal education should be studied alone by the learners not along with teaching subjects. This implies that graduates of adult and non-formal education in the colleges of education cannot teach in primary or secondary schools in Nigeria because they did not do any teaching courses, for example, economics, marketing and accounting, among

others, during their training periods. They will only work as adult educators in different education organizations in Nigeria. This, to the researcher’s mind, limits their employability opportunities in the Nigeria labour markets. This, equally may account for the low admission of learners into the Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education in the Colleges of Education in Nigeria. In universities in Nigeria, for example, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Department of Adult and Continuing Education offers teaching courses as specialization areas. For instance, Adult Education/ Mass Communication, Adult Education/ Economics, Adult Education/ Accounting, Adult Education/ Marketing and Adult Education/Political Science among others. This offers student’s variety of opportunities on graduation, a trainee educator can work as an adult educator in any organization or a teacher in primary or secondary schools. Presently, some graduates of adult education from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka work as accountants, presenters of programs and marketing agents in different firms and broadcasting organizations. Some of them decides to be self-reliant. That is the major reason, an adult education graduate from the University system can hardly be jobless in Nigeria after graduation, unless the person chose to be lazy.

Talking on admission of students into colleges of education in Nigeria. It is very alarming that the admission of students into the department of adult and non-formal education in Nigeria is still poor and deteriorating, as shown below

Table 1: Students admission into Alvan Ikoku College of Education Owerri

Year	No. of students
2015	34
2016	4
2017	14
2018	Nil
2019	Nil

Source: School Records, 2019

Table 2: Students admission into Collage of Education (Technical) Umunze

Year	No. of students
2015	27
2016	38
2017	13
2018	14
2019	13

Source: School Records, 2019

What is responsible for the low admission? Is it that the admission requirements are too strict or that the curriculum for adult and non-formal education in the colleges of education is outdated and no more appealing to the students? This question is part of the problem this study intends to tackle. To the researcher’s mind, the curriculum for adult and non-formal education in the colleges of education in Nigeria needs to be reviewed so as to meet the expectations and aspirations of Nigerian people and society. The gaps needs to be filled. The researcher equally believed that the admission requirements into colleges of education in Nigeria should be relaxed to attract students into the system. In Nigeria, it takes 4 credit passes in four subjects including English language and Mathematics in WAEC or its equivalent, to get admission into colleges of education while in Ghana it is only passes in six subjects including

English language and Mathematics (Ghana Web Solution, 2009) ^[6].

On academic qualification to become a lecturer in colleges of education in Nigeria, the NCCE 2012 minimum standards stipulates that the would-be lecturer must possess at least a bachelor’s degree (1st degree) to qualify. To the researcher’s perspective, the minimum qualification for academic staff in the colleges of education should be master’s degree in adult and non-formal education. It is a known fact that no nation can rise beyond the quality of its teachers, and education is known to be the bed rock of every development. On the list of courses taught in the department of adult and non-formal education, some relevant courses need to be added to it, such as ecology, adult education administration, literacy education, computer science education, poultry, nomadic education and industrial relations, among others. This is in line with a research carried out in Nigeria by Chieke (2021) ^[4], who opined that the inclusion of these courses will enrich the department of adult and non-formal education and makes it more colorful. The author postulated that these relevant courses will help attract more students to the department.

Again, the NCCE 2012 ^[4] should contain a clause that says that every school of adult and non-formal education in the colleges of education in Nigeria shall be a degree awarding institution. Hitherto, most of them are Nigerian Certificate

in Education (NCE) awarding institution or at best affiliated to a university to be able to award degrees to their students, with all of its inconveniences both financial, material and human resources. The era of NCE in Nigeria is phasing out. Everybody wants to be a degree holder. Colleges of education in Nigeria should be allowed and empowered to award degrees themselves to their various subscribers. In addition, National Assembly should enact a law backing them to do so. Being a degree awarding institutions will uplift their status and encourage and motivate students to seek admission in them.

Types of curriculum

There are three types of curriculum

Explicit or stated curriculum; Hidden or Unofficial, and Null or absent curriculum (Sharpe, 2013) ^[12]. Explicit or stated curriculum is what is intentionally presented as the basic material of schooling. Explicit curriculum consists of the courses, lessons, and learning activities students participate in, as well as, the knowledge and skills educators intentionally teach to students. It entails the lesson plans to follow, their sequence and their objectives. Hidden curriculum is a side-effect of an education. It includes lessons which are learned but not openly intended, such as transmission of norms, values and beliefs conveyed in the classroom and the social environment. It is the unintended outcomes that occur as the explicit curriculum is implemented. The sources of hidden curriculum are but not limited to, social structures of the classroom, teacher's exercise of authority, rules governing the relationship between teachers and students. Null or absent curriculum is those subject matters that are not taught. It is the curriculum aspect that is exchanged (either intentionally or unintentionally) for classroom instruction. Null curriculum is not teaching some particular ideas or set of ideas in the classroom. It may be due to mandate from higher authorities or teacher's lack of knowledge or due to deeply ingrained assumption and biases. For example, teachers and schools may be under pressure not to teach evolution due to religious beliefs.

Similarly, UNESCO (2017) ^[14], opined that curriculum can be envisaged from different perspectives. What societies envisage as important teaching and learning constitutes the intended curriculum. Since it is usually presented in official documents, it may also be called 'written' and or official curriculum. However, at the classroom level, this intended curriculum may be altered through a range of complex classroom interactions, and what is actually delivered can be considered the implemented curriculum. What learners actually learn (that is, what can be assessed and can be demonstrated as learning outcome/learning competencies) constitutes the achieved" or "learned" curriculum. In addition, UNESCO believed that curriculum may be hidden, that is, the unintended development of personal values and beliefs of learners, teachers and communities; unexpected impact of a curriculum or unforeseen aspects of a learning process. UNESCO advised that those who develop the intended curriculum should have all these different dimensions of the curriculum in view. It went further to say that written curriculum is important because it represents the vision of the society.

Importance of curriculum

1. A curriculum is important in an educational system. It helps one plan the education process or procedures for a given period of time, say, a term, semester, session and lesson period. It guides and directs learners and facilitators aright. Hence, for a society to advance its educational goals, it needs a curriculum that is functional and relevant to its needs, because curriculum is expected to reflect the needs, expectations and aspirations of the society.
2. Curriculum equally contributes to thinking skills, creative and acquisition of relevant knowledge skills, attitudes that is applicable to daily life activities. It also supports the learner's personal development by enhancing their self-respect, confidence, motivation and aspirations (Quora, 2018) ^[11].
3. Curriculum is also important in education because it helps teachers/ facilitators to deliver an effective and quality lecture. A curriculum sets standards, goals and learning outcomes for learners that enable teachers/facilitators to judge whether or not learners are able to move to the next level (Ullah, 2018) ^[13].
4. Curriculum also provides answers or solutions to the world's pressing conditions and problems such as, environment, politics, poverty, climate change (Alvior, 2014; Chouhan, 2015) ^[2, 5]. Curriculum developers may decide to include global warning and climate change in the curriculum of secondary and tertiary institutions thereby raising answers and providing solutions to the negative effects of global warning and climate change.
5. If universities develop curriculum that are creative and innovative, many students even from foreign countries will enroll. A higher number of enrollees would mean high income on the part of the universities which will be used for funding research and putting up school facilities such as libraries and laboratories.
6. Curriculum plays a vital role in improving the economy of a country. For example, if a particular skill is on high demand in the market, curriculum developers may wish to include it in the curriculum so that graduates coming out of school will be equipped with such employable skills thereby improving the economy (Chouhan, 2015) ^[5]. A practical example is the Information Computer and Technology (ICT) skills. Because ICT skills are needed in the Nigerian labour market today, many institutions in Nigeria are including ICT curriculum in their various educational programmes and equipping their graduates with ICT skills and employable skills, thereby stimulating the economy of the country.
7. The school curriculum, particularly, in higher education in Nigeria must be designed to preserve the country's national identity and to ensure its economic growth, development, and stability.

Factors that affect the curriculum development

According to Chouhan (2015) ^[5], there are many factors that influence curriculum development, such as politics/government, society, economy, among others.

1. Politics/Government

Politics influence curriculum development in the sense that it determines what courses are to be taught in schools, who teaches them and how much they will be paid as salary. For example, recently, the Federal government of Nigeria under President Mohamadu Buhari reinstated teaching of History into the curriculum of secondary schools in Nigeria and recruited teachers to teach it

2. Society

Society influences curriculum development because curriculum seeks to reflect the needs, expectations and aspirations of the society. Society has its own expectations in relation to the aims and objectives that should be considered when designing curriculum. It has also a perception of the quality of the products of the society. It is therefore necessary for curriculum designers to take into account these societal considerations.

3. Economy

Depending on the demand for certain skills in the market and technology available to the public, curriculum could be used to prepare children learners for the workforce of the future. For instance, because of high demand for computer literacy skills in the Nigerian market today many schools in Nigeria has included computer education in their curriculum to meet up with the societal and economic demand.

4. Age

Age and category of adult learners influence curriculum development. The curriculum of older illiterate adult learners in the adult literacy centres in Nigeria is designed, taking into consideration the way they can learn best. Their curriculum is more of picture books, drawings and charts while their counterparts in the colleges of education are taught the core and relevant courses in adult and non-formal education.

Conclusion

The importance of curriculum in educational establishment cannot be overemphasized. Curriculum does not only concerned with the development of schools, learners and teachers but also about the development of society in general. The colleges of education in Nigeria should, as matter of urgency, review the NCCE 2012 ^[4] minimum standards for adult and non-formal education to bring it up to speed with the current needs of the learners and the society. That is the only way to enhance admission of students into colleges of education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were made:

1. The minimum academic qualification for academic staff in the colleges of education in Nigeria should be raised from first degree to master's in adult education. This will help raise the standard and quality of education in these institutions.
2. The admission requirements in the colleges of education should be relaxed to four passes in 4 subject (including English and Mathematics). This will help boost admission enrolments into colleges of education in Nigeria.
3. Entrepreneurship (GSE, 224) and life skills (ANFE, 118) should be increased to two credits hour courses. This will help students acquire necessary practical skills that will enable them to be self-reliant after graduation.
4. The school of adult and non-formal education in the colleges of education should be developed and expanded to include more relevant courses such as

ecology, poultry, literacy education and nomadic education, among others, in their curriculum. This will help attract more students to the department.

5. Teaching courses should be embedded in the curriculum of adult and non-formal education in the colleges of education to give room for varieties and enhance employability opportunities of graduates of adult and non-formal education.

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