



Education Administrators' Perceived Political Influence On Curriculum Development in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study explored Education Administrators' Perceived Political Influence on Curriculum Development in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi State, Nigeria. The study adopted qualitative research approach using case study design. Three specific objectives and three research questions were used to guide the study. The population consisted of senior administrators from all the state tertiary institutions in the three geo-political zones in Bauchi State. The study had sample of respondents drawn from the population using purposive sampling technique. The numbers that constituted the sample size were five and drawn from College of Education Azare, College for Legal and Islamic Studies Misau and College of Education Kangere within the three educational zones of Bauchi state. Area of the study is Bauchi state. Semi-structured interview, observation and document analysis were used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using content and thematic analyses to answer the research questions of this study. The results of the study were discussed in details from interviews and triangulated with the findings made from observations and documents. Based on the findings, it was concluded that politics affects curriculum development positively. It was recommended among others that politics of curriculum development should be done bearing in mind rationale economic calculus for educational development of tertiary institutions. Politics of curriculum development should be intended to improved sustainable tertiary institutions development and not the other way round. In spite of these, the politics of curriculum development has made it difficult to properly plans and administer educational policies and management which has affected the enrolments, federal character policies, control of education among others.

Keywords: Curriculum development, Tertiary institution, Educational development

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Introduction

Tertiary institutions play a crucial role in the supply of high level manpower for the socio-political and economic development of a state. Public policies are simply principles and rules of action for achieving specific institutional goals via curriculum (Murtala, 2018). Tertiary institution serves as an avenue for a child to acquire additional education beyond the primary and secondary education. It can equip a student with additional knowledge, skills and values, which can enable him/her live comfortably within the society, as well as contribute more to its progress. The desire of many parents is to ensure that their children attend tertiary

institution, so as to enjoy the devidents of tertiary education (Aghenta, 2015). Evidences in support of the political interference in curriculum development of tertiary institutions and their gravities were gathered from literature. To make public tertiary institutions worthwhile for students via curriculum development and redeem the lost glory of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, rules of establishment as well as the provisions of the needs of institutions' administrators and academic staff are recommended to be given more consideration (John, 2019).

Tertiary education could be an important part of the solutions to the ills of the society. As



noted earlier, how much a nation progresses have a lot to do with the quality of tertiary education and tertiary educational attainment of its citizen. That is why, Nigeria has to change the system of curriculum development and invest more on tertiary education which is the intellectual laboratory of any society (Oladeji, 2012).

Curriculum development is a chief concern to educators, governments and parents, and both have relevance and impact on the development of communities and prosperity. The fundamental purpose of curriculum development is to ensure that students receive integrated and coherent learning experiences that contribute towards their personal, academic and professional learning and development (Okeke, 2018).

There are depressants (real or imagined) that stand against the political skills of the schoolmen in the execution of teaching, learning and curriculum functions. The depressants include religious bodies, private agencies, linguistic groups, localism, conservative politicians (through press report), and competing demands at given time and place, executive conservatism; splintered schoolmen (with many independent associations). They really act in unison. These depressants affect and condition the design of the policy-making process of curriculum development (Nina, 2014; Okeke, 2018).

Curriculum development constitutes a road block to press. Education policies on curriculum result from different levels of politics. They are affected by decisions both public and private which lie outside the authority of the board of education. Curriculum content (course description, course outline, books instructional equipments, etc.), course allocation, and admission and placement of students are internal issues that do not require extensive negotiation with the elements in the political stratum not primarily concerned with the public institutions. Though, the head of institution and the staff concern and aggregate influence in these areas, the powers are limited by the demands of the external examinations and aspirations of the parents and students. The local boards are also required by law to see that policies made by the legislation in these areas are enforced.

Nevertheless, informal groups-publishers, press, and old-line families influence curriculum development (Hamza, 2016; Omoregim, 2016; Chinelo, 2017).

Curriculum is expected to be responsive to the socio-cultural, economic, political, science and technological needs and aspirations of the Nigeria society. Curriculum changes had been enormous since the advent of school education. In the colonial era, the scope and education content of the school curriculum approximated to slave education and the environment became a grave-yard of all abilities. The self-government and post-independence era provided suitable climate for positive changes in the school curricular. Change offers the possibilities of choice among competing alternative. The unprecedented for school education in the developing nations makes the choice more difficult amidst limited resources. The enhanced economic and social development broadened the interests and aspirations of people as well as the desire for change. The unforeseen arrival of the future also makes demands for change in the school curriculum (Undie, 2016; Yusuf, 2019). The seminary and convent schools operated by Christians do not run uniform curricular with the state and federal government schools, as a result, there are web of politics in our educational system. Each interest group tries to control the thinking of the people through the curriculum. The curriculum content may be such that it will encourage the development of instrumental behaviour on part of students (Nwadiani, 2015; Okeke, 2018).

Therefore, the focus of this study is therefore on the education administrators' perceived influence of curriculum development on tertiary institutions for sustainable development in Bauchi State as observed over time. However, the teachers, methods of teaching, programmes of study and classes are not the primary focus of this study. Rather, the interest is in tracing areas of political interference which tend to improve curriculum development of tertiary institutions in Bauchi state.

The question is not whether there is politics in the determination of curriculum and learning in the school setting in the heterogeneous society but rather how. The trust is on the management, processes of



control, governance and decision-making methods in the sphere of curriculum and learning (Akangbou, 2015). What should be taught in the schools; the course content who should teach in our schools; admission and promotion of students; what manuscripts should be published, selection of textbooks; mark description, pattern and cut-off mark for pass/fail grades, etc broader essentially on political decisions (Akangbou, 2015). The change from elitist to mass education had profound effect on the school curriculum. The introduction of indigenous languages, social studies, integrated approach; pre-vocational programmes, etc. were innovations in the developing nations deemed relevant to curriculum development. Moreover, current efforts to effect changes in social sciences, sciences and humanities since independence were intended to attain qualitative targets (Fafunwa, 1983; Williams, 2012; Nwadiani, 2015; Okeke, 2018). In the following paragraphs, the key related variables of this study are briefly discussed; In formulating policy, the challenge lies in the discourse on the form, context, aims and goals of curriculum, often refers to as curriculum orientation (Joseph, 2011). Curriculum development and learning today presents a strategic process, as well as policy challenge. For example, should the policy aim to teach what is of value, as embodied in subject disciplines, and for deep understanding in preparation for competition in the global economy? Or should the policy aim for a personalized curriculum that recognizes students as active partners in their learning and develops their potentials (Kernan, 2013). Nevertheless, a major challenge for curriculum development is to define the components that will comprise the curriculum and the three major planning elements involve content, purpose and organization of learning (Uvah, 2015; Vans, 2017).

Who controls curriculum decision making? No one. Who influences curriculum decision making? Nearly any organization, at any level, that has a concern. Curriculum development is a monumental task. In a politically active community, it is like treating water in a hurricane while wearing concrete boots. Parents who one supported schools with bake sales now demand impact

on substantial issues affecting their children's education (Nwagwu, 2013; Francis, 2014; Ngwu, 2014).

Interest groups on education, teachers, organizations, religious groups and traditional influences curriculum development in various sorts. It is even more common in the developing world that technical decisions are often influenced by conservative elements like religion and traditions. This sort of political interference happens in Nigeria and eventually influenced the curriculum development of tertiary institutions in the country.

To the general public, curriculum development has become too important not to be left solely for curriculum planners and curriculum administrators. Conflict and politics are separate twins which permitted the governance of curriculum development in a state. The increased demand for tertiary education focused public and political attention on a national policy for education (Macukoww & Witkowski, 2012; Yusuf, 2019; Igbuzor, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

There is little or no research focusing on perceived impact of politics of curriculum development on educational development of tertiary institutions in Bauchi state. This study therefore aims to unpack the perceived politics of geo-political balancing and its influences on educational development in Bauchi state. Over the years, politics has been interfering with curriculum implementation in tertiary institutions. It has been noted in the literature (Osuji, 2011) that, politics of curriculum development is the topmost factor behind the challenges faced by the tertiary institutions in the state. According to Okeke (2018), politics of curriculum development in the context of Nigerian educational system is a situation where political consideration is given preference rather than due process in which case, the running of education is influenced by the wishes of those in power and authority rather than by established guidelines. Therefore, it may be necessary to find out the areas in which impact of politics of curriculum development tends to improve tertiary institutions development in Bauchi state.



Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to explore the perceived impact of politics of curriculum development on tertiary institutions development in Bauchi state. Specifically, the study sought to explore the following objectives;

- i. To explore the perception of higher educational administrators on politics of curriculum development and its impact on educational development of tertiary institutions in Bauchi state.
- ii. To explore the perception of higher educational administrators on politics of curriculum development as a factor to be considered in establishing tertiary institutions in Bauchi state.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives identified above, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study;

- i. How does the politics of curriculum development as perceived by higher educational administrators influenced the development of tertiary institutions in Bauchi state?
- ii. How does the politics of curriculum development as perceived by higher educational administrators as a factor to be considered in establishing tertiary institutions in Bauchi state?

Methodology

Qualitative research method was purely employed for this study using case study design. Qualitative research is a method of inquiry employed in many different academic disciplines, including social sciences, education and natural sciences (Ogunbameru, 2010). Qualitative methods examine the why and how of decision making, not just what, where, when, or who (Awotunde & Ugodulunwa, 2014). In this study, exploratory study approach was employed.

In consideration of the nature of the research and the research questions, the semi structured interview, observation and documents were adopted for the study. The methods were deemed appropriate as it involved the collection of extensive and cross-sectional data for the purpose of investigating and interpreting an existing situation under study (Sambo, 2004; Auwal,

2010; Enaohwo & Eferakaya, 2017; Aderonunmu & Ehiametalor, 2014).

The study in terms of content was restricted to Education Administrators' Perceived Political Influence on Curriculum Development in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi State, Nigeria. In terms of geographical locale, the study covered all the Bauchi State's owned tertiary institutions. This study focuses Bauchi state located in the North-eastern geo-political zone of Nigeria. The study was conducted in State own tertiary institutions of Bauchi State. The population consisted of senior educational administrators from all state tertiary institutions in Bauchi state. The number that constituted the population were nine (9) and constituted the heads of the state tertiary institutions. The study had a sample of respondents drawn from the population using purposive sampling technique selected. The numbers that constituted the sample size were five (5) participants/interviewees. The sample was agreed with the idea of Guetterman (2015) and Creswell (2013). These authors maintained that in case study design, the sample size is no more than four to five participants for indepth of the case phenomenon. And this was also agreed with the idea of Nastasi (2015), rules of thumb based on approach and data collection method using case study design. According to this author, a researcher can use only one participant/interviewee in qualitative case study design for indepth of the phenomenon. The researcher chose the five participants to give detailed and greater insights into areas of politics of curriculum development that impacted tertiary institutions development in Bauchi state. These five participants comprised the final participants for the study. The researcher adopted the purposive sampling technique for the selection of sample that appears to him as being the one that would provide much in-depth data to answer research questions for the study. Due to the area covered in this study, interview protocol was used for data collection. The instrument used for collection of data for the study was developed by the researcher. The instrument was made to collect data for the study. Therefore, before the interview was administered, it was given to trained researchers for observation and vetting. It



was scrutinized by two experts in the field of measurement and evaluation to ensure its suitability and otherwise, after they made the necessary corrections and offered suggestions in the questions that were used in the final interview, then it was administered to the respondents.

Data collection was taken in one phases: the phase one was data collection through interviews. The researcher used smart phone (Tecno LA7) to interview the participants and triangulated with the findings from literature as method of data collection for the study. Data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis to answer the research questions of this study.

Results

The following tables describe the result of the research findings for the study. These

findings were related to the research questions that initially guided the study. Data analysed were used to identify and described the level of perceived politics of curriculum development on tertiary institutions for sustainable development in Bauchi state. Data were obtained from administered interview protocol, observation and document analysis. Furthermore, it describes how the data collected for this study were analyzed in two stages and discusses how the data were interpreted.

Table 1 presents the summary of participant A responses according to the construct that form the basis of the research questions for the study. **RQ:** How does the politics of curriculum development as perceived by higher educational administrators as a factor to be considered in establishing tertiary institutions in Bauchi state?

Table 1: Summary of participant A response on the research questions of the study

Constructs	Commentary
Curriculum development	<p>The curriculum is a very important and a good factor to be considered and designed in such a way as to suit the purpose of what we are today with the view to be revisited from time to time. However, it does not consider cultural peculiarities.</p> <p>Going by the law of education, curriculum need to be reviewed in every five years. When it is reviewed, it captured the current development of education. Without review the curriculum, we are not able to capture within the modern society. In most of the Universities in Nigeria, if likely say the fact, the pen of students is done manually. Therefore, it has to be review to provide an avenue whereby we can now make use of the current system of education, the global current way of research and so on. When there are changes in the new curriculum, normally we do apply to the management of the institution.</p> <p>Curriculum development is a huge and important factor to be considered in establishing tertiary education institution to the extent that the curriculum need to be revised and updated periodically within the shortage possible time to inculcate the recent development in education. Also, it has other trends that are happening in other parts of the country as well as other part of the globe. It should not be isolated but try to expand.</p>

Looking at the construct, participant A opined that curriculum development was highly satisfied in relation to development of tertiary institutions in Bauchi state. However, there are mixed opinions in relation to development of tertiary institutions in Bauchi state. Drawing from this analysis, participant A indicated satisfactory perception on the construct: curriculum development. This is

evident in the utterances as indicated in Table 1 above.

Table 2 presents the summary of participant B responses according to the construct that form the basis of the research questions for the study. **RQ:** How does the politics of curriculum development as perceived by higher educational administrators influenced the development of tertiary institutions in Bauchi state?



Table 2: Summary of participant B response on the research questions of the study

Constructs	Commentary
Curriculum development	<p>Curriculum used is very relevant in the development of education in Bauchi state. Whatever we do in terms of teaching, we have to stick to the curriculum. We don't create gap in that aspect, we followed the guidelines (minimum standard) because it is the federal government that gives us the curriculum and we have to stick to the curriculum.</p> <p>The curriculum being designed is very well. There is need for re-visitation for those things in the curriculum to ensure that the facilities are there so that programme can run very effective. We try as much as possible to cooperate to ensure that the curriculum though is not 100% academics but some local contents are being added. However, strict adherence should be 90% to the main educational content while 10% could be other aspect of the culture and tradition of the people should be incorporated into the curriculum.</p> <p>The curriculum development affected the philosophy programmes in the institution due to consideration to what we called value added in term of local content. The philosophy in the school is built upon the mission and vision of the school which is only to educate students but to make them self-sufficient and self-reliable. Based on this philosophy, we try to see in the curriculum what contents are we going to add to ensure that students have technical knowledge and are well equipped.</p>

Looking at the constructs, participant B opined that politics of curriculum development was highly satisfied in relation to development of tertiary institutions in Bauchi state. Moreover, politics of curriculum development indicate element of satisfaction in relation to development of tertiary institutions in Bauchi state. Drawing from this analysis, participant B indicated satisfactory perception on the construct:

curriculum development. This is evident in the utterances as indicated in Table 2 above. Table 3 presents the summary of participant C responses according to the construct that form the basis of the research questions for the study.

RQ: How does the politics of curriculum development as perceived by higher educational administrators influenced the development of tertiary institutions in Bauchi state?

Table 3: Summary of participant C response on the research questions of the study

Constructs	Commentary
Curriculum development	<p>That curriculum is the epicenter. What is tailored the learning of students? And, it plays a vital role in the direction to which the knowledge impacted on the students. If the curriculum is adherence to what is expected the students to understand, they can really understand. However, in a situation whereby the curriculum is updated, then, what is expected as the learning of the students can actually take place.</p> <p>In addition, curriculum is changes within 2 to 3 years that has affected the education very poor and it brought about even the teachers cannot conceptualize the objectives of the curriculum. Before you know it, another one is brought. Obviously, it affects the quality of education negatively. More so, it is somehow weak because; some of these curriculums are poorly planned and implemented by lecturers, teachers and institutional management as a whole.</p> <p>To get update in a new version of curriculum or the trend, whatever changes that took place it should kept appraise through the research been conducted by the educationists or academics in the institutions. The problem here is that we are not visible. Visible in the sense that World is now a global village and we are not on the internet. Therefore, we are not on the high-great publications.</p>



Looking at the constructs, participant C opined that curriculum development indicate dissatisfaction in relation to curriculum development tertiary institutions in Bauchi state. Drawing from this analysis, participant C indicated dissatisfactory perception on the construct: curriculum development. This is evident in the utterances as indicated in Table 3. Based on the summary of the constructs and level of satisfaction by the participants, the researcher identified emerging themes as the result findings of this research study.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the findings from interview for this study, it was discovered that, curriculum development influence tertiary institution development in Bauchi state. This finding obviously gave birth to impact of curriculum development and educational development in Bauchi state. It has short-comings as a result of new curriculum development. It is a good practice in Bauchi state. It is the structure and guide on how programmes of the study are taking place. However, it affects the quality of education very negative. It does not consider cultural peculiarities because the curriculum itself is poorly planned and implemented in Bauchi state.

It was observed that curriculum is extramendous to the development of education in Bauchi state. No educational institution that can run its activities successfully without a sound curriculum. It was also observed that some of the hindrances of the curriculum development are poor planning process and lack of involvement of all stakeholders in the development of curriculum. It is not meeting our economic and educational realities of the present situation. It has to do with the specific needs of people of the state.

This result agreed with the findings of Okeke (1998) and Lavin (2007), the fundamental purpose of curriculum development is to ensure that students received integrated, coherent learning experiences that contribute towards their personal, academic and professional learning and development. Educational system of Bauchi state is more complex and as such Bauchi state government has attempted to make large-scale changes, curriculum development has become less of an activity in its own right and

renewal has become part of a broader strategy for development in education. The findings clearly show that a matter of basic problem does not hinge on institutional management, but is the political issues as to what should be taught and read in our tertiary institutions; the curriculum content and methods; who should teach what? These issues beg for socio-political solution in Bauchi state. This finding also agreed with the findings of Oluwuo (2003); there are depressants that stand against the political skills of the schoolmen in the execution of teaching, learning and curriculum functions.

Partisan politics is at its worst when dressed up as public concern. There are good educational reasons for the curriculum review. We must ensure it genuinely meets students' needs, matches parents' expectations and drives education quality. It is, of course, not the only driver of quality, but it is an important one. There are serious doubts that the national curriculum, in its present form, is meeting those policy demands. The development of curriculum is an open, independent public inquiry. The nation's curriculum policy must not be captured by any fad, by any vested interest group, or by those pursuing political or narrow agendas. It must be balanced, ensuring students are exposed to a full array of ideas; up-to-date, relevant and help students develop the appropriate critical skills so they can make their own choices about what they want to believe or support. The national curriculum is a work in progress. Curriculum review and development is not a diversion, rather part of the main game of developing a quality education system (Christopher, 2014).

Conclusion

Politics of curriculum development influenced the development of tertiary institutions in Bauchi state and it should be carried out with cautions bearing in mind the unsterilized nature of the economy which makes it necessary for educational planners and administrators to prudently manage the educational resources effectively and efficiently so as to avoid unnecessary waste of resources. This is because the curriculum development has created high enrolments, adequate facilities, and renovated structures,



among others which have contributed positively to development of tertiary institutions in Bauchi state. Therefore, the need for prudent management of the available resources become necessary and only way to sustains development in tertiary institutions at this political era of democracy.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions on the research questions and the interpreted data, as well as the findings of this research study, the following recommendations were made by this research study:

1. The political influence in the planning and administration of curriculum development should be discouraged. Moreso, educational administrators should be given a free hand to manage new curriculum development properly and professionally.
2. Political influence on curriculum development should be done and it should be intended to improved tertiary institutions development and not the other way round.

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