

## School Curriculum Planning/Execution: The Way Forward in the Information Age

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**Abstract:** The study attempt to identify the various stage/factors responsibility from school curriculum planning and innovation in Nigeria these authors observed that little less was achieved in the past because of opposition to the ideas and factors identified. The study opined that with globalisation, the school will flourish and highlighted some of its advantages. However, it is observed that liberal education al policies will bring about development in education of any nation with educational standards. Nations without standard may further be impoverished of their culture. This is because globalisation described as a process of rapid economic integration driven by the liberation of trade investment and capital inflow as well as by rapid economic change, influence by computer networking will open up the nation's cultural socio economic structure to the world visa avis the nation to the influences of the world/ developed nation's vices. Therefore, the need to evolve an education that will developed the basic skill in the information technology in the individual, which is enshrined in functional Science Technology and Mathematics (STM) subjects to facilitate the management of information in the globalisation struggles.

**Key words:** Curriculum planning, developing nation, globalise economy, STM, Nigeria

### INTRODUCTION

School curriculum planning in Nigeria has evolved through various stages, in attempt to meet up or bridged the gap of economic development existing within the developed and developed countries of the world. Developing nations of the world have suffered a lot from bad leadership and badly administered economic policies. In order to be relevant in the new trend in the global economic moves, their educational polices need be appraised. This is because education has been described as an instrument per excellence for effecting economic development of any nation. According to Meato Ruggiero the Direction of World Trade Organization (WTO), while there is great prosperity waiting any nation with well-planned economic on the other hand great dangers awaits badly planned economic nations. It is obvious that globalization requires. An education with strong science technology and mathematics base, which is required in the information technology.

Therefore, it is the intention of these writers to identify the trend in curriculum innovation in Nigeria and the various factors that should be properly harness in other to achieve the school curriculum that will help achieved the knowledge required in information technology in other to be relevant in the global moves sweeping round the globe.

Globalization the new trend in international trade has come to stay. The developed nations of the world with sound economic policies as a result of their Educational policies are in the lead of economic development. The implication of this on the developing nations is that they must streamline their economic system in order to be competitive in the global movement.

### EARLY DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF SCHOOL CURRICULUM

At one time of our education it was the indigenous education popularly called the apprenticeship. It nature was unstructured curriculum. At the other times it was the Islamic education; its curriculum was centred on the knowledge of the Koran and predominated in the northern part of the country. The Christian religious knowledge with its curriculum centring on the Bible gains its earlier root in the southern part of Nigeria. The failures of the missionary efforts of the 16th century in West African necessitate the policy of the mission in using education to facilitate evangelization.

For nearly half of a century the entire educational provision was dependent upon the efforts of the Christian mission. Government interest in education in this era was in the issue of laws, which sought to regulate the activities of private agencies involved in education and not in the day to day running of schools. Elaborating on this point stated that government action during this

Table 1: Ownership and control of school by voluntary agencies between 1952-72

Mission	Primary schools	Secondary schools	Teachers training
Roman Catholic mission	1910	10	21
Church mission society	1654	10	4
Wesley and Methodist	336	5	5
Baptist Mission	229	5	5
Church of Boot land Mission	175	2	2

Source: History of School for Nigerian students

period could be best described as lazier-fairs. Few schools were available (Table 1).

The curriculum of education was structured in line with the 1925 memorandum setting out the principle guidelines for education in British colonies in Africa.

The first era of military rule in Nigeria witnessed a revolutionary departure from the system of dual control and change in the school curriculum. From the 6:5:2:3 with emphasis on reading, writing and arithmetic popularly called the 3 R's to a more functional educational system the 6:3:3:4, which encourages science and technology system.

This is in recognition of the breakthroughs in science and technology in the developed nations seen in their industrial development. Scientific discovery in materials has aid the technological discovery up to the latest, which is the computer. It is worth to note that it was the development in this field that is responsible for Internet working which facilitate the globalization waves that is fast sweeping the socio economic activities of the entire globe. This agrees with the views shared by Olusi (2005a).

## CONCEPT OF GLOBALIZATION

Globalization has been used to describe the growing worldwide integration of people and countries Its activities refer to as the expansion of international trade finances and information technology in an integrated and liberalized national economic that depict Marshal McLennan global village (Douglaston *et al.*, 2002). According to Quereshi (1996), globalization altered the world economic land scope in fundamental ways, driven by a widespread push towards the liberalization of trade and capital market and increasing internalization of corporate production/distribution strategies and technology change, that is rapidly dismantling barriers to the international tradability of goods and services and the mobility of capitals. In the word of Kwanachie (1999) globalization is a process of increase integration of national economics with the rest of the world to create a more coherent global economy and connotes integrating economic decision making such as the consumption investment and saving process all across the world, hence could best be described as the great economic event of the era.

This is because, it enhances global communication system and in turn eases the integration of capital markets and more especially the flow of medium and long term capital, hence expanding economic growth through investment outlay.

According to, Obaseki (2000), though Nigeria is a late starter in this area, with the linkage of the Nigeria stock exchange with other major financial centres, it is expected that this will increase portfolio flow into the country. From the above it would be acceptable to say that globalization is focused on improving trade of goods and capital, through information technology. Education has been described as a tool per excellence for effecting any change. The implication of this on the various levels of school curriculum in developing nations like Nigeria will be enormous, hence some generalization of the development stages and development needs of human beings have been made by educators over time and in various climes, these generalizations of course assume certain irreducible environmental and motivational needs. Given these developmental stages and development needs certain development tasks need to be accomplished by the various levels of schools (Olorode, 2000).

Hillbrand (1976) defined development as common tasks each individual of a given age must master within a given society in order to understand the task it is necessary to underscore the fluidity of development tasks in society like Nigeria which is socially structured in urban centres and socially and culturally structured between say, urban and rural locations. This has implications for curriculum conception and execution of curriculum and character of people. In other words, the stage of development at all levels of school in developing nation like Nigeria is liken to the developmental stage of early childhood which needs mental, social and physical development. Developing nation must first realize and appreciate the importance of investing in education of its citizenry in a developmental stage approach. This investment is capital intensive as well as material. Unfortunately budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria is yet to meet the UNESCO suggestions of a minimum of 26% of GDP (Olorode, 2000). If this trend is not reversed or checked we may not be able to adequately prepare the schools in the rural and urban areas to benefit from the numerous advantages of globalization.

The school curriculum at the secondary school level should incorporate courses in the use of internet for business transactions. This should not be left in the hands of some few private business entrepreneurs. This is to avoid the wrong use of the internet usage.

**Educational opportunities in globalization:** It had become obvious that the contemporary global economy is information intensive rather than material intensive. Mansaray (2002) asserts that this development is a matter not only of the flow of capitals and trade but also access to knowledge. In other words, the amount of knowledge accessible to an individual/nation determines its level of development. The accessibility of every able individual therefore to information will be of a greater advantage. By implications the present day information explosion exemplified by the accessibility to school with Internet hardware services will aid the teaching/learning process. The students will be better informed as they can benefit from independent study. It will enhance the Open University student's to study at his or her own pace. It will help in reducing the shortage of teachers in special areas. This is because the student will be opportune to have contact with best brains in their fields of chosen career. The internet information facilities will reduce brain drain in academic and will enhance; Access to foreign aid assistance. Access to information, on best equipment/trade partners/investors. Access to expertise advice. Information on goods banned in other countries can be known in no record time and hence be avoided.

Despite the numerous opportunities in globalization as mentioned above fears has been expressed about the possibility of some of cultural imperialism fostered by accessibility to free information, through information technology. Mansaray (2002) opined that this new technology will not only exposed our young people to new cultural values but in fact help transmit and instills these values. The very novelty and glamour of those alien cultures can challenge and possibly overthrow much cherished traditional cultures (Pontifical Council For Social Communication, 2002). On the other hand there is the fear of financial fraud committed through internet facilities in developed world. In 1995 Heckler stole information said to worth 20 million Dollars as well 20,000 credit cards. Stealing through this technology is less likely risky and more profitable (Sola, 2002). Nigeria as a developing nation cannot afford to fall into this fraud web hence the importance of the knowledge of how to avoid it is vital. Social effect of globalization is another fear entertained (Dan, 1997). Globalization is associated with instability of out-puts and employment. The effect among others is job security. With the availability of technology that could affect human labour through information, its acquisition could affect these jobs. Anything that affect job is socially disruptive as it could bring to the fabric of the society (Olusi, 2005b). Despite all these fears the advantages earlier mentioned above out weighted the disadvantages and with good education the school can helped checked it by preparing people capable to handle the situation.

## **SCHOOL CURRICULUM PLANNING/EXECUTION**

Globalization requires an education with a strong science, technology and mathematics base, characterized with innovations at all levels of the school curriculum planning and execution. The school curriculum as an instrument of education for a society should adequately prepare to accommodate the dynamism in societal needs, values, yearning and aspirations. It is inconceivable that all the knowledge and skills needed for using information technology and communication technologies, as the engine of globalization could be acquired within the traditional institutions of learning. The school curriculum therefore should focus more on developing the capacity to learn than on teaching a specific body of facts and skills.

Emphases should be on critical thinking problem solving and communication in a global world of ever-changing technology and rapidly increasing knowledge. These qualities are entrenched in science, technology and mathematics. The entrenchment of science culture into the African school curriculum is an attempt to enhance progress in the global movement. According to Okecha (1998) when a society requires to be built, there is no use in attempting to rebuild it on the plain. The acquisition of scientific culture is an effective armour against ignorance because it bestows on man the ability to be critical of natural phenomena; it also confers on man the mental orientation, which encourages reasoning. Lack of science culture could affect our judgment and management of information received from others. To suggest approaches for accomplishing this goal therefore a review of some of the curriculum innovation in the past is imperative necessary.

Over the years, the school curriculums have witnessed a lot of innovations. Arising from the national conference reported by the Federal Ministry of education in Benin City on 6th-7th January 1977 then the federal military government decided to abolish the teaching of modern mathematics in that same year and replaced it with a new mathematics curriculum which eliminated set theory entirely. Logic in the abstract formation of modern mathematics was excluded. This development raised lot of criticisms; one of the more important criticisms was that the syllabus for the senior secondary school level did not cater for brighter students who would rather study mathematics as a major subject at the university or Engineering students (Urevbu, in Olusi, 2005a). This led to the Onitsha 1981 critique workshop, which recommended that further mathematics be developed for students who may require deeper knowledge of mathematics. The first draft was presented into a critique

Table 2: Percentage of Students who sat for WASC/GCE Examination for 3 years

Year	New mathematics	Pure mathematics	(%)
1992	366.196	15.043	4
1993	998.775	16.004	3.2
1994	526.525	13.312	2.53

Source: WASC statistics of entry of students

workshop, specially called for the purpose in Jos October 1984. The first copy included the following components for further mathematics and pure mathematics and statistics. The topic and concept to be taught under each of the identified areas were to be carefully selected to suit the immediate demands of the country for technological advancement. The effect of this optional approach of studying these relevant aspects of mathematics required for information technology/engineering is revealed in the few number of students who sat for WASC/GCE.

According to WASC, statistical report of entry for those subjects for 3 years out of 366.196, 998.775 and 525.525 for the year 1992, 1993 and 1994, respectively that sat for new mathematics only 150443, 16004 and 13312 sat for pure mathematics representing 4, 3.2 and 2.5% Table 2.

In African schools curriculum innovations have achieved little or less of the objectives for each innovation. This of course happened because materials for effecting the various innovations are not properly viewed within the cultural, socio-economic and political context of each nation.

### CULTURAL CONTEXTS

It is important to recognize the role of traditional thought system, this consists of those, ranges of belief that people share, the material in use that provides the basic view of the world and how they ought to act. In designing curriculum materials for schools in each state many things need be considered because most of these states that make up Nigeria are of heterogeneous communities with multi - cultural beliefs. Therefore, any attempt at designing a national school curriculum without this consideration in the selection of materials will be a mismatch and will, not achieve the desired objectives. The mistake of the past curriculum planners is prioritizing of one culture over others and totally accepting western ideas to detriment of traditional African beliefs and philosophy but from the study of Gay and Cole (1967) in Urevbu it is found out that there are no superior or inferior Culture. However cultures fails to meet the ideas put before it by people of other cultures. This failure is in part, the result of the specific condition put towards schools curriculum. The much of each the school curriculum consist of nonsense materials symbols drawings and formula, which do not relate to local ways of thinking.

Another aspect of African culture is language, most countries of the world are language and therefore take it for granted in designing curriculum Nigerian states are multilingual. Attempt at considering using the local languages at the primary school as developed by the institute of education university of Ife now Obafemi Awolowo University for primary 1 - 6 (the Ife language are project) failed to gain acceptability in other states. The federal government should be enshrined as the language of information in schools especially at the primary level interest working facilities.

**Socio-economic and political context:** The socio-economic of the various states that made up any country cannot be the same. Some states are more favoured by nature which invariably enhances their diversity in economies. These states are able to provide information gadget such as in internet facilities on selected schools in curriculum material these all local government areas. Therefore in the position\ of curriculum material these factors need be considered in order for the innovation to achieve the desired objectives. The government should be able to make up for any state with deficiencies that may negatively affect the benefits of global information. The political leaders recognizing the importance of school curriculum innovation in furthering national integration and development have shown the willingness and ability to satisfy the demands for new curriculum programme. This should be exploited now in the new political dispensation in the attempt to equipping the majority of the nation citizenry with science technology in the global struggle to enable individual exploitation of the wide-wide-west information.

**Religious context:** Most religions in Nigeria teach that exposure of the teeming population of its youths to free un-screen information through the net will further breakdown the standards of morals which has already dwindled to its lowest ebb (The Holy Bible Mathew 22; 14). A situation where the youths can through the net watch films of their desires including blue films, (pornographic) horror films etc, will further damage the efforts of our religious leaders at revamping the moral of its society. The government through appropriate body could do well to ensure that this is not allowed to happen through censorship of centres.

### CONCLUSION

The schools of developing nations like Nigeria will be better of if the advantages of globalization are properly harnessed. This calls for school curriculum innovation,

with the view of enriching it with functional Science, Technology And Mathematics (STM) based subjects, learning experiences which are the vehicle that moves global networking. Such factor like socio-economic, political and cultural and religious, which militate against school curriculum innovation in the past, should be considered to avoid failing into the past mistakes. The power of information is great enormous, so government should establish appropriate organs to coordinate inter-networking activities in Nigeria. This is to ensure that the die-hard criminals do not use the facilities to perpetuate fraud.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Government should establish Internet facilities in its entire Local head-quarters. Government should establish monitoring agency to regulate the activities of private internet authorities. Government should be responsive to arrest activities of fraudsters set up appropriate organs to censor film, tapes coming into Nigeria. Schools libraries should be equipped with Internet facilities especially in all higher institutions of learning.

School curriculum should include functional STM training form primary tertiary institution. Government in long time investment should launch its own satellite to reduce cost of embarking in the acquisition of internet facilities by private individuals.

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