



## AN EXAMINATION OF CURRICULUM PLANNING IN NIGERIA'S TEACHER EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

**Umar Ali Magaji**

Department of Educational Foundations  
Faculty of Education,  
Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State  
08031169423  
[magajiumar76@gmail.com](mailto:magajiumar76@gmail.com)

And

**Halima Maigari**

Department of Education  
Nasarawa State University, Keffi  
[Sadiyanmama69@gmail.com](mailto:Sadiyanmama69@gmail.com)

And

**Nafisat Saleh Umar**

Department of Social Sciences University of Jos  
[nafisatsalehumar@gmail.com](mailto:nafisatsalehumar@gmail.com)

And

**Badamasi Saleh Abdullahi**

Department of Educational Foundations  
Bayaro University Kano  
[badamasisalehabdullahi@gmail.com](mailto:badamasisalehabdullahi@gmail.com)

### Abstract

This study examines the challenges facing curriculum planning in Nigeria teacher education system and identifies strategies for improvement. The curriculum planning in Nigeria has been facing various challenges over the years, hindering its effectiveness and efficiency. The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the barriers to effective curriculum planning in Nigeria. The study reveals that the curriculum planning process is plagued by inadequate resources, poor infrastructure and a lack of expertise in curriculum design and development. The paper is a review paper that depend secondary data. The secondary data were collected from print and online publications. The paper identified poor funding, shortage of curriculum planning experts, poor capacity development of curriculum experts and lack of data on learners' information. This has resulted to poor curriculum planning in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the paper recommends that government should increase the funding of education, employ more curriculum planning experts, ensure accurate data generation and provide constant training and retraining program me for the planners.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, Planning, curriculum planning, teacher education, challenges.

### Introduction

Akudolu (2021), defined curriculum as covering educational goals, the content or fact to be learnt, the learning experiences, the outcome of learning encounters and the learning environment. For Igbokwe (2020),

a Curriculum is also referred to as a systematic and organized body of knowledge through which the goals of education can be achieved for the fulfilment of the needs and aspirations of any given society. Esu and Emah (2019) viewed



curriculum consists of knowledge, skills, values, activities and many more, which students learn through various school subjects. The curriculum is also defined by Offorma (2018) as the document, plan or blueprint for an instructional guide, which is used for teaching and learning to bring about positive and desirable learner behavioural change.

Kapoor, (2020) viewed curriculum as springboard that provides direction and impetus to student learning. It sets the requirements for student learning based on the state of society and its valued skills as well as the subject and age-appropriate proficiency in it. For a curriculum to have the desired outcome, it needs to be structured with due consideration to its purpose, goals, instruments or methods of learning, resources, and proof of its success.

Curriculum objectives are specific goals or targets that outline what students should know and be able to do by the end of a particular instructional period or course. They serve as a guide for teachers to design their lessons and assessments, and for students to understand what is expected of them. The realization of curriculum objectives depends on curriculum planning. Curriculum planning is a critical component of teacher education, as it provides the framework for preparing teachers to effectively teach and support student learning. In Nigeria, teacher education is a vital aspect of the country's education system, with numerous institutions offering various teacher training programs. However, despite the importance of curriculum planning in teacher education, Nigeria's teacher education system is plagued by numerous challenges that hinder the effective preparation of teachers.

According to the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013), teacher education is expected to produce highly motivated, sensitive and professional teachers who can effectively teach and support student learning. The curriculum planning process in Nigerian teacher education institutions is often characterized by inadequate resources, poor infrastructure and lack of expertise in curriculum design and development (Adeyinka, 2022).

The challenges facing curriculum planning in Nigeria's teacher education system are multifaceted. For instance, the curriculum is often developed without adequate input from stakeholders including teachers, employers, and the community (Oloruntegbe, 2020). This has resulted in a curriculum that is often irrelevant to the needs of the society and the teaching profession. Additionally, the curriculum planning process is often influenced by the external factors such as government policies and international agencies, which can undermine the autonomy of teacher education institutions (Adeyemi, 2017).

### **Concept of Curriculum Planning**

Curriculum planning refers to the creation of curriculum. Thus, a curriculum can help in the organization of various elements of curriculum, such as the core objectives (e.g. a competence to achieve), subjects, unit definitions, activities, assessments, and resources (Irewolede, 2024). Careful planning is required to ensure first, that the lessons actually touched on the required topic, and also that they meet school and governmental standards of basic education. A curriculum plan is one of the best ways for teachers to look objectively at what needs to be taught over the course of a semester or term or year, then organize an effective way to get from beginning to end. Curriculum planning develop well-coordinated, quality teaching, learning and assessment



programed which build students' knowledge, skills and behaviour in the disciplines, as well as their interdisciplinary and or physical, personal and social capacities (Kapoor, 2025).

Curriculum planning (also known as curriculum mapping) concerns itself with the second aspect in order to fulfill the first part – the end goal. It acts as the roadmap that enables educators to steer their students toward the attainment of the intended outcome. Curriculum Planning is the process of detailing what is learned, how it is learned, why it is learned, and when it is learned, in line with a defined goal and key milestones. Curriculum planning sets down a tiered approach to a subject for stage-wise and grade-wise learning. Starting at the top, a curriculum plan can have multiple stages of meticulously detailed actionable steps. Each stage charts out a plan of action to achieve the intermediate goal, adding up to the final learning outcome (Kapoor, 2020). Curriculum Planning is the process of building a program me of learning experiences calculated to result in the attainment of set goals for a particular people (Davidson 2020). Curriculum planning is the making of choice of learning experiences for a group of people which is appropriate and desirable for them. Curriculum planning puts educators in the driving seat to develop and execute an optimized learning strategy. It gives them the freedom to choose the best approach for this purpose, keeping in mind institutional values, preferred teaching styles and student needs. To achieve this, curriculum planning takes into account the goals for student learning, methods that can be utilized to achieve these goals, the material required to assist the learning process, formative assessment to gauge the learning and finally summative assessments that can measure the learning outcome (Kapoor, 2020).

The process of curriculum planning takes place in two phases – Strategic and Implementation. For the strategic phase of curriculum planning, educators first need to zero in on the goals in context to their grade, course or subject. Next, they need to outline the objectives. Objectives are different from the goal in that, that they are more detailed, time-bound and specific. They may include the various milestones that need to be achieved as the learning progresses. The implementation phase of curriculum planning includes finalizing the instructional design, learning materials, teaching methodologies formative assessment design a summative assessment (Kapoor, 2020).

### **Teacher Education Curriculum Planning in Nigeria**

Teacher education curriculum planning in Nigeria is a complex and multifaceted process that involves the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of teacher education programs. The curriculum planning process is expected to produce highly motivated sensitive and professional teachers who can effectively teach and support student learning (Ogunyemi, 2018).

In Nigeria, teacher education curriculum planning is the responsibility of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) (Adeyemi, 2017). These regulatory bodies are responsible for developing and implementing teacher education curriculum that meet international standards. However, studies have shown that the teacher education curriculum planning process in Nigeria is often characterized by inadequate resources, poor infrastructure and lack of expertise in curriculum design and development (Adeyinka, 2022). The



curriculum is often developed without adequate input from stakeholders including teachers, employers and the community. This has resulted in a curriculum that is often irrelevant to the needs of the society and the teaching profession.

The teacher education curriculum in Nigeria is often criticized for being outdated, rigid and disconnected from the needs of the 21st century classroom (Ogunyemi, 2018). The curriculum is often too theoretical with little emphasis on practical skills and competencies. The curriculum also lacks a clear focus on emerging issues such as ICT, entrepreneurship and community education (Davison, 2020). The regulatory bodies responsible for teacher education curriculum planning need to provide more resources and support for curriculum development and implementation.

### **The Benefits of Curriculum Planning**

According to Kapoor, (2020) includes;

**Helps Translate Learning Goals**

A thorough curriculum plan integrates various scheduled activities and learning milestones, providing a breakdown for aligned and conscious progress of the learning experiences. It offers clarity on the purpose of education to all stakeholders including educators, parents and students.

### **Structured Learning**

A curriculum plan provides the central structure for educators to design and organize their lesson plans. It plays a key role in standardizing the flow of the course. It assists educators in aligning teaching material and pedagogies making the teaching activity more efficient.

### **Promotes Coherence**

Curriculum planning makes different aspects of the learning experience consistent and coherent. It helps educators coordinate their efforts across different subjects, topics and grades to deliver learning continuity.

### **Effective Assessment**

Curriculum planning helps track student rate of progress compared to the mapped learning. Setting clear learning objectives guides the teachers' choice of formative and summative assessment to gauge student learning and growth.

### **Self-Evaluation**

Curriculum planning offers educators regular reference points to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching styles, instruction design and learning methodologies. It provides a source of corresponding feedback to make necessary adjustments to the teaching activity.

### **Facilitates Collaboration**

The process of curriculum planning helps teachers collaborate and leverage their shared experience, insights and expertise to design an efficient and supportive learning environment. It builds consistent instructional standards and helps reduce duplication of effort.

### **Aids Efficacy**

A curriculum plan offers immediate feedback and opportunities for sustained alignment with the learning goals. Educators can address learning gaps immediately and effectively, improving the efficacy of the teaching activity

### **Comparative Tool**

A curriculum plan provides teachers with a reference point to reflect and refine teaching strategies and instructional design to introduce suitable pedagogies year on year. Equipped with a comparative device, teachers can adjust their teaching practices to be more precise and deliver enhanced results.

### **Time Management**

With a well-thought-out strategy and blueprint in place, teachers are free to focus on their day- to-day lesson plans and formative assessments. A curriculum plan helps teachers plan, prioritise and allocate their time effectively. It supports the teaching-learning activity by ensuring all aspects receive the necessary attention.



### **Supports Different Learning Styles**

Designing a curriculum plan helps educators factor in resources, materials and teaching techniques to support different learning styles. This not only helps educators engage students better and improve the learning outcome but also reduces the demands of last-minute introductions in the lesson plan thus creating a joyful learning experience for all. A well-designed, thought-through curriculum plan creates optimal learning experiences, facilitating the reaching of a learning goal in an intentional and planned manner. Even though sometimes it might seem like a long and laborious process, curriculum planning is an exercise that aligns teaching efforts with learning outcomes. It provides teachers with a roadmap for higher teaching efficacy and improved learning results. These plans help keep all stakeholders on the same page, greatly assisting in saving time and ensuring consistency on a day-to-day basis (Kapoor, 2020).

### **Challenges Militating against Curriculum Planning in Nigeria**

The following are the challenges militating against effective planning of curriculum; poor funding, Shortage of Curriculum planning experts, poor capacity development of curriculum experts and lack of data on learners' information

#### **Inadequate Funding**

Inadequate funding is a very big problem facing curriculum planning in Nigeria. The budgetary allocation released by the government for the administration of education in Nigeria is inadequate. Curriculum planning in Nigeria drives its funding from the national budget of education that have been described by Ukpoju, (2020). As inadequate. The level of success of curriculum planning depends on availability of adequate funding.

Financial resources are needed for the effective Curriculum planning, funding has been identified as an indispensable instrument. This is because funding serves as the life-wire for the management and administration of Curriculum planning, development, implementation and evaluation. The high demand of funds in the educational administration which include the Curriculum planning was one of the reasons why UNESCO recommended that 26% of the annual budget of any nation should be set aside for the administration and management of the educational sector.

#### **Shortage of Curriculum experts**

Shortage of Curriculum planner or experts is a major problem facing the Curriculum planning in Nigeria. There is shortage of Curriculum specialist in all programmed offering in the Nigerian educational institutions. Curriculum specialists according to Online. Emporia, (2019) and Ukpoju *et al* (2020) provide support to teachers by helping create and revise materials used in the classroom. They analyze student data to assess and improve the school's implementation and evaluation of classroom material. Their job typically involves research and requires them to find appropriate textbooks and curricula in order to improve the learning outcomes of the school's student body. Educators with classroom experience find themselves well-suited for this role. Curriculum specialists apply primary research to developing appropriate teaching materials for students. Their knowledge and experience in classroom settings provides them with insight on the kinds of curricula, activities, and assignments most likely to raise the standards of learning while inspiring children to learn through new textbooks, helpful technologies, and unique teaching methods.

#### **Poor Capacity Development of Curriculum Experts**

Poor capacity of curriculum planners



working in the various agencies and commission in charge of Curriculum planning is affecting the curriculum planning programme in Nigeria. Training is very important for the development of Curriculum. Training helps planners to improve their skills and ability of Curriculum planning. The causes of poor quality output of Curriculum planners in Nigeria include: poor attendance of workshops, conferences, seminars, in-service, unpreparedness in terms of skills development. Curriculum planners should be motivated towards attending professional development programmes as to enhance planners' quality outputs. Therefore, making available opportunities for planners' intensive and continuous professional development programme will enhance quality Curriculum planning. The Curriculum planners in Nigerian public institutions do not enjoy staff development programme and this is affecting their productivity. Research has it that many civil servant working in the public institutions like Curriculum planning and development are not constantly going for training and retraining program and this is affecting their effectiveness and productivities (Ogunode & Ohibime 2021).

#### **Lack of Data on Learners Information**

Lack of learner' data/information is another big problem facing the Curriculum planning in Nigeria. Curriculum planners needs learners' information at every forms of educational system to able to plan a suitable Curriculum that will capture their interest and age. In Nigeria, these data on student information are not available for consideration for the Curriculum planning (Ogunode and Ohibime 2021). noted that during the process of curriculum planning, it is crucial to put the needs and interests of the learners first so as to design a curriculum that is efficient and achieves the goal. A well-designed curriculum

should cater to the needs of learners in various categories that is, gifted learners, slow learners, mentally retarded, etc. This means that a well-designed Nigerian school curriculum has to take the intellectual abilities and disabilities of the Nigerian students into consideration. In Nigeria, the disabilities and weaknesses of a child are often not regarded as something important and is neglected. You will find that the Nigerian curriculum does not cater for every child.

#### **Way Forward**

To move forward Nigeria's teacher education curriculum planning needs to adopt a more participatory and inclusive approach involving teachers, employers and the community (Akande, 2017). This can be achieved through the establishment of curriculum development committees that include representatives from various stakeholders, ensuring that the curriculum is relevant to the needs of the society and the teaching profession. Additionally, there is a need for more emphasis on practical skills and competencies as well as emerging issues such as entrepreneurship, environmental education, ICT.

The regulatory bodies responsible for teacher education curriculum planning need to provide more resources and implementation. This can include providing training for curriculum development training for teachers and infrastructure to support curriculum and implementation. The Nigerian government has initiated various reforms aimed at improving the quality of teacher education, including the introduction of the Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) and the establishment of the National Teachers' Institute (NTI). However, more needs to be done to address the challenges facing teacher education curriculum planning in Nigeria.



There is also need for more emphasis on research and development in teacher education curriculum planning (Okoro 2018). This can include conducting research on best practices in teacher education; evaluating the effectiveness of current curriculum and developing new and innovative approaches to teacher education.

To address these challenges, the Nigerian government needs to increase funding for teacher education curriculum planning and provide autonomy to regulatory bodies to manage their resources (Ogunyemi, 2018). Additionally, there is a need for more collaboration between regulatory bodies, teacher education institutions and other stakeholders to share best practices and resources.

The way forward also involves the integration of technology into teacher education curriculum planning (Okoro, 2018). This can include the use of e-learning platforms, digital resources, and other technology-based tools to enhance teaching and learning. The use of technology can help to increase access to teacher education; improve the quality of teaching and learning, and enhance the overall effectiveness of teacher education curriculum planning.

### Conclusion

The curriculum planning in Nigeria has been facing various challenges over the years, hindering its effectiveness and efficiency. The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the barriers to effective curriculum planning in Nigeria. Poor funding, shortage of curriculum planning experts, poor capacity development of curriculum experts and lack of data on learners' information were identified as the challenges militating against effective curriculum planning in Nigeria. This has resulted to poor curriculum planning in Nigeria.

Government should ensure accurate data generation in teacher education curriculum planning and implementation to inform decision-making and policy development.

### Recommendation

Based on the findings, the paper recommends that:

1. Government should ensure accurate data generation in teacher education curriculum planning and implementation to inform decision-making and policy development.
2. Government should prioritize the funding of education; allocating a significant percentage of the national budget to the education sector. This will enable educational institutions to have sufficient resources to invest in modern ...
3. Government should employ more curriculum planners and experts to support the development and implementation of effective curricula in teacher education institutions.
4. Government should provide constant training and retraining programs for curriculum planners to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to develop and implement effective curricula.

### References

- Adeyemi, K. (2017). Curriculum development and management in Nigerian schools. *Journal of Educational and Social research*, 6(2), 11-20.
- Adeyinka, A. A. (2022). Curriculum development in Nigeria: A historical perspective. *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching*, 3(1), 1-10.
- Akande, O. (2017). Teacher education and national development: The Nigerian experience. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(10).



- Akudolu, L.R (2011). The Formal, Non-formal and Informal Continuum in Peace Education Curriculum. *Journal of the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction Nigeria Chapter*, 8
- Davidson, K. (2025). *The Principles of Curriculum Development in Nigeria*. Snap Press ltd.
- Esu A. E. & Emah I. (2014). *Nature, purpose and process of the curriculum*. In Nwagwu, N.A. & Ivowi U.M.O. (eds). *Education in Nigeria: Development and Challenges*. Yaba,
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). National policy on Education. Abuja: NERDC Press.
- Okoro, O. (2018). Teacher education and the challenges of sustainable development in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*.
- Oloruntegbe, K. O. (2020). Stakeholder involvement in curriculum development in Nigeria: A review of literature. *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching*, 5(2).1 - 9. Lagos: *The CIBN Press Limited*.
- Igbokwe, U.L. (2009). *Overview of Curriculum in Classroom Management for Curriculum implementation: Applying Psychological principles*. Enugu: TIMEX.
- Irewolede A. O. (2014) Problems and Prospects of Curriculum Planning and Implementation In The Nigerian Educational System. *Journal of Teacher Perspective*, Volume 8 (2) ISSN: 2006 – 0173
- Kapoor, P. (2020). What is curriculum planning? <https://www.extramarks.com/blogs/schools/curriculum-planning/> Nigeria finder (undated) Problems of Curriculum Planning in Nigeria
- Offorma G. C. (2014). Approaches to Curriculum Development in Nwagwu, N. A. & Ivowi U. M. O. (eds.). *Education in Nigeria: Development and Challenges*. Yaba, Lagos: The CIBN Press Limited
- Ogunode, N., J & Ohiosumua, O. E. (2021). Curriculum Planning in Nigeria: Problems and Possible Solutions. *American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research*, 2(6), 3–9. <https://doi.org/10.31150/ajshr.v2i6.508>
- Olaitan, S.O Alli (1997): *The making of curriculum theory process, product and evaluation*. Onitsha, Cape Publishers International Limited.
- Online.emporium (2019). What Does a Curriculum Specialist Do? <https://online.emporium.edu/articles/education/what-does-a-curriculum-specialist-do.aspx>
- Ukpoju, B.O (2020). Curriculum Planning in Nigeria: *Journal of problems and possible solutions*. <https://nigerianfinder.com/problems-of-curriculum-planning-in-nigeria/>



Ukpoju, B.O., Abayomi, I.A. & Sunday, E., (2020). Curriculum Planning in Nigeria: Problems and Possible Solutions. *American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research*, 2(6), 3–9. <https://doi.org/10.31150/ajshr.v2i6.508>

UNESCO (undated) International Bureau of Education. <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/glossary-curriculum-terminology/c/curriculum-planning>