

Curriculum Implementation in Private Secondary Schools in an Insurgency Areamubi Educational Zone: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

Original Research Article

The study on the curriculum implementation in private secondary schools in an insurgency area: challenges and prospects were conducted in Mubi town of Adamawa State, North-East Nigeria. It was a descriptive survey designed to ascertain the challenges facing curriculum implementation in the private secondary schools. The study hinged on the devastation of education environment in the region by the Boko-Haram insurgents, causing exodus of many professional teachers from the region. Prior to the crisis, North-East consistently ranked among the most educationally backward regions of Nigeria states. The private secondary schools in Mubi appear to be the worst hit because of their seemingly, inability to restore infrastructures that were vandalized. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Simple percentage was used to analyse the data collected. While the hypotheses were tested using Cochran coefficient for validity. The result showed computed coefficient of 0.73. The results revealed among other issues, subdued tension that frequently increases at the slightest insecurity rumour. The private secondary schools rely heavily on the services of non-professional teachers, poor governmental supervision are among other myriad of challenges militating against the effective curriculum implementation. Hence, the prospect of effective implementation of the curriculum appears bleak. This means that the future of students being groomed in the prevailing circumstance is bleak and threatens the peace and development of the region. The researchers recommend among other things the inclusion of private school teachers in the interventions training workshops on education in the region; government/NGOs to assist the private school operators with soft loan facility to enable them improve the situation for better curriculum implementation.

Keywords: Curriculum, Curriculum Implementation, Private Secondary Schools, Insurgency.

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INTRODUCTION

Education in Nigeria has witnessed a lot of challenges that have made it difficult to fully implement the curriculum to the maximum benefit of the Nigerian child. Education in the North-East of Nigeria has been under siege, due to the activities of the Boko-Haram insurgency [1]. Many schools have been destroyed in the almost a decade long conflict. The private secondary schools play complimentary role in providing education services to the people in the face of ever dwindling fortune of the government-run schools and education in general. The education sector in the North-east of Nigeria is witnessing insecurity in terms of safety of human lives, infrastructure and the effective implementation of the education curriculum. Many of the private schools especially in Mubi education zones, at the present can best be described as unsafe for habitation and learning. The region has also witnessed mass exodus of professional teachers.

With all the above, the effective implementation of the secondary school curriculum is at risk since many of the young people are receiving education in these private schools. Agbola [2] submitted that effective curriculum implementation ensures the youth opportunity to acquire the necessary skills and economic empowerment. It therefore means that the society is at risk. This risk is most glaring when one pays a visit to the various private schools in the North-east. In Miseducation zone, the story is not different; the private schools appear to be most affected by the insurgent acts. Consequently, the situation has put the future of Nigerian's future leaders in great danger.

Agbola [2] suggested that contrary to the available records of better academic performance of private school students in standardised examinations, the implementation of the curriculum is in most cases, at risk of being undermined by the high work load on teachers with less pay in these private schools, even with professional teachers. Arthur [3] argued that there are

many factors that led to the prevailing situation today in the private schools. One of such problems is the use of amateurs instead of professionals, who have the skills, competence and character as members of highly trained professionals. It is common, just by simple observation to see these schools operate entirely with part-time, and non-professional, as well as massive use of the Youth Corps members; many of whom are not trained teachers.

Everything in education needs the touch of professionals to be successful. Managing a school requires the application of the professional touch in order to successfully implement the designed curriculum. Also, clarification of concepts in education most times needs effort of skilled teachers. Most of the private schools before the insurgent activities were not in the best of standard [4]. Now that many of the fragile infrastructures have been vandalised, the situation is now worse. Most worrisome is the fact that it seems there is no law restricting private school proprietors from opening schools even when they do not have professional training in education just like in the other professions such as Law and medicine. A scenario where the school owner is not an educationist and the bulk of the teachers also do not have professional training, it will be difficult to expect minimum pass mark in the attainment of set goals.

The *National Policy on Education* [5] provides room for the private sectors, religious groups, individual entrepreneurs and non-governmental organizations, to be involved in the provision of education services. However, glaring capitalist practices appear to be the driving force behind the establishment of the private schools rather than a service rendering institutions. It seems as if there is no regulatory framework for educational practice or that the enforcement of the existing regulations is weak.

Parents at all kinds of schools desire a broad and humanistic education for their children. But, the submission of Schneider [6] is that high tuition in private schools is often justified by the impression that it will produce a return, the end will justify the means on investment. The private schools, then, face tremendous pressure to provide students with an advantage over others, particularly on the standardized examinations. If the purpose of school is to give students an undue advantage over others, then the content of education is largely unacceptable.

The *National Policy on Education* [5] acknowledges that education is a capital intensive social service which requires adequate financial provisions. Despite that the private schools are divest from government business, that refuses to make funds available to the school owners that can help in the provision of quality infrastructure, even if it means soft or interest free loan, spread over some years. This could

give government additional leverage for effective supervision and regulatory advantage that will favour effective curriculum implementation. Watkins [1], applauded the World Bank for putting in place millions of dollars 'facilities to support education recovery in North-east region of Nigeria. But lamented that UN agencies and most donors have effectively scripted education out of the humanitarian appeal. If the world is eager to save people alive, it is understandable that one need to be alive before being educated. However, if the Nigerian government and the donor agencies should script out education or make it of low priority in the interventions, as Watkins alleged, the crises of the future in the region is most likely to be greater than what is being witnessed now.

Without the needed funds, the private schools cannot afford decent and adequate infrastructure conducive for teaching learning process. The state of infrastructure in the North east schools was described by Muhammadu Gana, Commandant-General, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corp (NSDC) and reported by media houses including News Agency of Nigeria [7] following the abduction of some school girls by insurgents in Dapchi village of Yobe as unfortunate situation. Gana who had toured some schools in recovered areas of the North-east to assess the security situation, decried that the level of infrastructure in some of the schools is so bad, adding that the observation would be communicated to relevant authorities for action, particularly for some infrastructure to be put in place to ensure children are safe and well secured.

It is pertinent therefore, to reiterate that it will be near impossible to expect a meaningful achievement in the implementation of the curriculum if the status quo is to remain unchecked. Ahmadi and Lukman [8], conducted a research to ascertain the impacts of instructional materials and effective curriculum implementation, emphatically concluded that there exists a strong relationship between availability, adequacy of instructional facilities, qualified staff and robust funding for students 'academic achievement, which is by extension the achievement of curriculum goals. These three most important factors in curriculum implementation are grossly missing in the private schools of the North-east of Nigeria. However, the Non-Governmental Organizations, foreign and local are making fantastic efforts to ameliorate the sufferings of the victims of insurgency. Efforts have also been seen in the area of restoring education in the region, but all efforts have been concentrated on the public schools with little or no attention given to the private schools.

The private school existence has come to stay and we cannot wish it away. The vast majority of teenagers with prospect are attending these private schools that ordinarily are supposed to be government responsibility, with such dilapidated infrastructure, untrained teachers' sharp practices that undermine the

effective implementation of the curriculum and a whole lot of others challenges are on the increase, making the implementation of the curriculum extremely difficult. These ranges from paucity of trained and qualified teachers, trained but not motivated, to low remuneration in the teaching job by the exploitative owners, which makes it unattractive to highly qualified teachers. Lynch [9] concluded that when schools are able to hire high-quality teachers, their education programmes are more likely to be effective. But school and learning effectiveness can also be influenced by the adequacy of other factors such as learning materials, and conducive learning environment.

From the studies of Schneider [6] and Ahmadi & Lukman [8], conducted to find solutions to ineffective teachers in implementation of the curriculum, high cost of private schools and commercialization of education among others, all geared at strengthening curriculum implementation for effectiveness in the empowerment of the youth with relevant skills and information for effective function in the society. But the missing link which this study hope to bridge is to provide information on the challenges of curriculum implementation in an insurgency or post insurgency environment, especially in private schools that receive no form of grants or loans for rebuilding the damaged infrastructures, so that prospects will be assured in the implementation or curriculum in the affected areas of the north-east, Nigeria [10].

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the challenges facing effective curriculum implementation in private secondary schools in an insurgency and post insurgency areas.

To enable the researchers, achieve the above purpose, the following specific objectives were pursued.

- To determine the effects of insurgency on curriculum implementation in private secondary schools.
- To determine the level of destruction done by insurgents' activities on the private secondary schools.
- To find out the extent of the Government/Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the support of the activities of private secondary schools.
- To identify challenges and proffer ways towards prospects of private secondary schools.

Research Questions

- What are the effects of insurgency on the implementation of curriculum in private secondary schools?

- What is the level of destruction done by insurgent acts to the private secondary schools?
- What are the Government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) commitment in supporting the activities of private secondary schools?
- What are the possible solutions to the identified problems?

Research Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between insurgency activities and the poor condition of infrastructure in private secondary schools in Mubi educational zone.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between security challenges and the scarcity of trained teachers in private secondary schools in Mubi educational zone.

Methodology

This work followed the descriptive survey design to find out the challenges created by insurgent acts in the private secondary schools in Mubi.

Population and Sample and sampling technique

The population of this study are teachers and proprietors of private secondary schools in Mubi. It was difficult to know the number of staff of private schools because many of the schools make use of mostly "itinerant part time teachers", whose name hardly appears on the staff list. The study therefore, made use of the people met on the spot during the data gathering exercise.

The sample of one hundred and twenty (120 respondents) was drawn from the registered schools in both Mubi North and South Local Government Areas. The researchers divided the town into four school districts and randomly chose two schools from each of the districts. This was to ensure a balance in the spread of the exercise in the metropolis.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The simple percentage formula is used for the questionnaire analysis to determine the disruptions of effective curriculum implementation in the private secondary schools in the metropolis. The instrument was scored using Likert's five-point scale. The researchers fused the acceptance group the strongly agree and the agreed scores as positive response, while strongly disagree and the disagreed scores as negative response to determine the views of the participants and then the undecided points. A score fifty (50%) percent and above is accepted as positive.

Analyses of Data

Table-1: Professional Level of Teachers in Mubi Town

SSCE	Ordinary Diploma	NCE	B.A/ B.Sc/ HND	B.A .Ed/ B.Sc Ed	M.A/ MSc.	M.A Ed/ M.Sc. Ed	PGDE	PhD	Total
3	29	26	27	12	8	6	9	0	120

The table on the professional assessment of secondary school teachers in Mubishows that only fifty-two teachers out of the 120 participants representing 43% in this study have professional training, while the rest do not. And of this number about half the number possesses only National Certificate in Education (NCE), which are the minimum professional requirements

approved for teaching. About a quarter of the teachers possess only ordinary national diploma (OND), and the other non-professional teachers make up 47% of the participants. Though hope is not lost if the other combined number 64 diploma and degree teachers representing 53% can be given in-house or sandwich professional training to help them perform better.

Table-2: Effects of Insurgency on Curriculum Implementation

S/No	Items	Response		
		Agreed	undecided	Disagreed
1	The displacement of teachers by the insurgent acts has effect on the implementation of curriculum in private secondary schools.	96	10	14
2	Displacement of community members has affected curriculum implementation.	103	5	12
3	Trauma experienced by both teachers and learners has effect on the curriculum implementation.	109	1	10
4	Insurgent activities have no negative impact on curriculum implementation.	14	6	98
5	Insurgent activities have effect on students' academic performance.	85	18	17

The result on the effects of insurgency activities on the implementation of the curriculum shows high level of displacement of teachers and learners affecting the implementation of the curriculum by 82% agreement. Up to 90% of the participants in this study thought that sense of trauma and poor academic

performance of the students have some correlation. In a nutshell, 75% of the participants in a general sense the insurgent activities impacted negatively on the implementation of the secondary school curriculum in the private schools.

Table-3: Level of Destruction Done by Insurgents Acts

S/No	Items	Response		
		Agreed	undecided	Disagreed
1	A lot of school structures were destroyed by the insurgents' acts in Mubi metropolis.	100	3	17
2	Instructional materials were vandalized.	83	1	26
3	Teachers and students come to school with the fear of unknown strike by Hoko Haram sects.	92	8	20
4	Fear of abduction witnessed by students and teachers have destructed school activities.	76	17	33
5	Fear of children abduction witnessed by parents during the insurgents activities made low academic activities in private secondary schools in Mubi.	80	24	16

The level of destruction done to infrastructure including destruction of instructional materials appear to be high 76% are in agreement and high sense of insecurity/abduction among other issues. Low academic activities witnessed as 66% of the participants in this study are of the view that the above also affected the

students' performance due to largely low academic activities in the private schools, perhaps due to the high school as fees charged by the private schools in the face of the impoverishment of the populace by the insurgency activities.

Table-4: Government/NGOs Support

S/No	Items	Response		
		Agreed	undecided	Disagreed
1	Government supports the funding of private secondary schools in Mubi.	1	12	93
2	Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) supports the funding of private secondary Schools in Mubi metropolis.	35	12	65
3	Government supervises the activities of private secondary schools.	60	12	48
4	The NGOs do not consider private secondary school in their special interventions.	99	9	12
5	Governments do not consider private secondary schools in their special interventions.	83	3	24
6	Governments and NGOs need to incorporate private secondary school teachers in their capacity building programmes	104	4	13

Table 4 shows that 50% of the agencies of Government responsible for the supervision of the private schools are doing the work, while 40% think otherwise. But, at the present, there is little or no evidence of government or NGOs support/funding of private secondary education in their various special interventions as 73% of the participants opined.

Seventy-eight (78%) percent of the participants also support the idea that the government and the Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) assisting victims of the Boko-Haram insurgency need to incorporate the private secondary school teachers in their capacity building programmes.

Table-5: Possible Solutions to the challenges identified

S/No	Items	Response		
		Agreed	undecided	Disagreed
1	Governments should take responsibilities for adequate security in private secondary schools.	73	16	31
2	Governments & NGOs to give support in terms of grants and loans to private Secondary Schools.	72	22	26
3	Government should improve on the supervision of the activities of private Secondary Schools.	91	10	9
4	Governments & NGOs need to incorporate the private secondary schools teachers in their capacity building programs.	106	5	9

The possible solutions to the challenges facing curriculum implementation in the insurgency area as given by participants to this study are the government should live up to its responsibility of providing security in general and in the private schools in particular was (61%). The governments and the NGOs should make available some form of grant and soft loans to the private schools operators to enable them provide or replace the infrastructures vandalised (60%). Other possible solution as the respondents agreed was improved supervision of the private schools to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum (75%). Finally, the Government and the NGOs interventions and capacity building programmes should incorporate the teachers in the private schools to help boost the workforce needed to implement the curriculum, representing the view of 88% of the participants.

CONCLUSION

Issues of effective curriculum implementation in an insurgency area cannot be left to chance, especially in the private schools, if the Nigerian education system is to realise its cardinal objectives. The private schools carter for a very large number of secondary school students. The insurgency in the North-east dealt heavy blow on education especially infrastructure were damaged. This report also shows that the private schools are not able to restore the little there was prior to the crises.

Atmosphere of fear and trauma have seriously affected the implementation of the curriculum in the private secondary schools. By implication, the prospect is bleak for secondary education, especially in the

private schools. Yet the glimmer of hope is that some of the private schools in the region have reopened, albeit in poor condition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the outcome of the study, the researchers make the following recommendations.

- Security of lives and property is one of the cardinal responsibilities of government. Therefore, governments should take responsibilities for adequate security in private secondary schools. This will go a long way in calming the sense of insecurity among teachers and learners.
- Governments & NGOs to give support in terms of grants and loans to private secondary schools. If this is done, surely the private secondary schools will improve on the infrastructure and be able to employ the services of qualified teachers who are key to the success of any curriculum implementation.
- Government should improve on the supervision of the activities of private Secondary Schools. Effective supervision has the capacity to improve the quality of education. However, the private schools controlling themselves without external oversight are not likely to help in the curriculum implementation.
- Governments and NGOs should incorporate the private secondary schools teachers in their capacity building programmes. This singular recommendation if implemented will ensure that teaching and learning will improve. And by extension, the effective curriculum implementation.
- Private school proprietors should be made to also have at least a minimum education qualification before being licenced to operate. This will hopefully equip the private school owner with the capacity to better handle operations in their schools
- Teachers teaching in the private secondary schools should be documented to enable government and other donor agencies know the number of people

involved in the art of teaching that need capacity building assistance.

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