



Curriculum Offerings and Self-Reliance Education in a Southwestern College of Education in Nigeria

Ibiwumi A. ALADE

*Department of Educational Foundations and Instructional Technology, Tai Solarin University of Education
Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria*

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Abstract: The curriculum offerings in higher education are part of the avenues to achieve the self-reliance education policy in Nigeria. But the available literature has not adequately addressed the extent to which the curriculum offerings across the subject disciplines in colleges of education prepare youths for self-employment. This study therefore examined the curriculum offerings and self-reliance education in a southwestern college of education in Nigeria. The study is a descriptive survey in which 262 final year college of education students were purposively sampled. Curriculum Offerings for Self-reliance Education Rating Scale (COSERS) was the instrument used for data collection. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics of t-test and analysis of variance were used for data analysis. The study found out that poor curriculum implementation over the years is one of the reasons why students fall short of self-reliance skills. Also, there is a significant difference in the competency needs for self-reliance possessed by students from the five schools in the college of education ($F_{5:261} = 2.907$; $P(0.022) < .05$). It is recommended that curriculum modification and pragmatic teaching methodologies along with adequate provision of resources would enable appreciable self-employment skills to be developed in the students passing through colleges of education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Curriculum, Offerings, Self-reliance, Skill.

1. INTRODUCTION

Curriculum offering of high quality is vital in the programme of economic vision in both developed and developing countries of the world. Such curriculum determines the strength of the skills essential for self-reliance and national progress. In realization of the need for a curriculum that would be geared towards producing people who are self-reliant, the colonial education curriculum which at various times produced subservient Nigerians who were tied to the apron string of white-collar jobs was debunked to give way to curriculum with Nigerian environment and economic welfare as its focus. The step in this direction was prompted by the 1969 curriculum conference in Nigeria. The conference gave the Nigerian education and all new look, direction and focus capable of meeting the aspiration of Nigeria as a newly the independent state to be technologically and scientifically self-reliant (Babalola & Kolawole, 2016). Similarly, the policy on education in Nigeria is geared towards the production of skilled manpower which is intended to replace the academically-oriented curriculum and which brings students nearer to the world of work (Datol and Lucy, 2000). The building of a united, strong

and self-reliant nation is one of the five main laudable national objectives in Nigeria as recorded in the National Policy of Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN 2014, revised).

With the conception in Nigeria that the possession of relevant self-reliant skills by the people is indispensable for economic growth, higher institutions, colleges of education inclusive have much roles to play. They are the avenues through which individuals and societies can be optimally developed and sustained since most of self-reliance skills development largely depends on them. However, for the products of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, there have been very critical comments on the unemployment resulting from unemployed graduates, a high rate of school dropouts, lack of requisite skills for emerging occupations, and non-utilization of dropouts from various educational institutions of learning. According to Terry (2013), unemployment occurs when a person who is willing and able to work is without a job. For instance, as at 2014, the underemployment and unemployment of tertiary institutions graduates in Nigeria are still alarming, the emphasis on the need for occupational and entrepreneurship skills acquisition and



competencies through the improved curricula notwithstanding (Alade & Agbonna, 2013).

To be specific, as reported by Alade (2006), the curriculum of colleges of education as a whole is being faulted for its ineffectiveness to provide learners with adequate intellectual and professional background, as well as practical skills for gainful employment. In fact, the quality of the products from colleges of education in recent years in Nigeria is disappointing both in theory and practice. This is obviously as a result of inadequate approaches to curriculum implementation. Also, the level of acquisition of self-reliance skills of colleges of education students in practical and vocational terms for economic reliance in the society which is still very imperative in a scientific and technological society has attracted much criticisms across the curriculum by some stakeholders of education in Nigeria. This is a problem that arises as a result of lack of adequate knowledge, skills and competences by the youths who are graduates (Agwi, 2016).

Curriculum offerings which are value-laden educational programmes installed in educational institutions thus determined the viability of colleges of education graduates to be self-reliance or gainful employed in the labour market. The effectiveness of such curriculum is largely determined on how it is implemented. As a result, Alade (2014) opined that for curriculum offerings to be effectively implemented, the mental development of the teacher and the pedagogy he holds must suit the activities to be carried out in the teaching process. Learners therefore should be helped to acquire requisite skills, knowledge and appropriate attitudes to function effectively in the society to which they belong and must return to after schooling (Mbakwem & Ukwuoma, 2016). This implies that learners are the pivot of curriculum offered in educational institutions, and all content and learning experiences are to cater for their needs and aspirations as well as their job-placement in the society. The self-reliance competencies of the products of the curriculum then become paramount. This determines to a proportionate extent the capacity of educational programmes for sustainable development.

Self-reliance, simply defined, means self-sustenance. The available literature provides various interpretations of self-reliance, which have implications for educational development. The following perspectives are thus inferred:

- i. It is the dependence on one's own abilities, technical skills competencies with minimum external aids.
- ii. Self-creative power to manage the available endowment and resources profitably.
- iii. The degree to which ones' entrepreneurial skills can sustain him/her.
- iv. The creation, sustenance and management of project effectively and comprehensively.
- v. Self-reliance covers the practical exhibition of both natural traits and acquired employability skills for the economic gain of an individual and social well-being of any society.

The need for Nigerian citizens to be self-reliant has become more urgent now than ever before (Aubulo, 2000). Skill development then becomes a necessity to be made more realistic in the Nigerian educational system. The curriculum vision for self-reliance is to provide a total experience to individuals in colleges of education and other educational institutions so that they can learn successfully how to carry on a gainful occupation. It is through thoroughbred individuals with special skills and attributes that a nation's economic environment can be well sustained and maintained. Skill development helps individual's self-discovery and the use of one's own talent effectively for the benefits of the individual and the society at large (Imran, 2003).

A healthy society results when the increasing national concern regarding skill development for economic self-reliance is given premium in the curriculum practice. This attitude further brings potential contributions to national development. Thus, skill education has now acquired the reputation of a necessity for all rather than the consolation of the poor masses (Alade, 2002). Skill is the power for economic self-reliance. Importantly curriculum offerings in colleges of education are expected to prepare students in training for the labour market where they will eventually work. Thus, in an emergent Nigeria, where higher institutions have the responsibility to serve the society, the educational programmes in term of curriculum offerings are to be a replica of the industrial sector and self employment needs in term of skills acquisition. Since one of the anchor points in human maturity is the ability to provide for self and family, and the provision goes with wages earned as an employee or self-employed individual, education in higher institutions are to promote self-reliance, self-actualization, freedom, recognition and self-esteem.

In the Nigeria of today, most trained persons hang around the street with no job to hold onto (Okala, 2004). Meanwhile, to ensure the realization of the values enshrined in the policy in Nigeria education like respect for the worth and dignity of the individual; faith in man's ability to make rational decision; moral and spiritual values; shared responsibility and respect for the dignity

of labour, the policy recommends that Nigeria education be geared towards self-realization, sound human interaction, efficiency of the individual at national level, loyalty to the nation, national integration, socio-cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress. With the policy recommendations, merit should be well ascribed to college of education curriculum as an avenue to promote education for self-reliance to ensure social survival and welfare. This makes education to be seen as a value-laden concept and its curriculum activities a comprehensive exercise. The value-laden conception of education within which self-reliance vision is subsumed is in agreement with the conception of Maduabum and Maduabum (2003), who see education as the transmission of worthwhile values of society to each succeeding generation in a manner that assumes the welfare of human beings and sustains progress.

One of the avenues to promote education with the self-reliance value-laden is to look inward to what the curriculum offerings at the college of education level offers in practice over the years. The apparent consequence would be to determine what should permeate the curriculum in every subject taught for the betterment of the nation. The old century had eventually folded away. The new millennium is already fast evolving. As we look inward and towards improving the curriculum at the college of education level, for a better repositioning and planning of self-reliance vision in all subject specializations with regard to the present and the future, using education as the potent tool, this study emerged.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The publication of the National Policy on Education is an integral part of education, and curriculum planners' attempt at revamping the curriculum for the preparation of creative and productive higher education graduates. But over the years, the issue of whether all avenues of learning in the colleges of education could make all colleges of education students to be self-reliant at the end of their programme has not been well addressed empirically. This study, therefore, examined the curriculum offerings and self-reliance education in a Southwestern College of Education in Nigeria. This is with the view to spelling out actions for curriculum improvement both in design and delivery.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study attempted to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. Do the curriculum offerings foster self-reliance education?

2. What are the relevant trade options/establishments that could result from the areas of specializations in the labour market?
3. Do the students in colleges of education have the competency needs for self-reliance?
4. What are the problems facing self-reliance education in the colleges of education?
5. What are the strategies for making the colleges of education curriculum offerings achieve self-reliance objective?

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were postulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance:

- Ho1:** There is no significant difference on male and female students' perception of the extent to which the curriculum offerings foster self-reliance.
- Ho2:** There is no significant difference on how students from various schools in the colleges of education (Arts and Social Sciences, Education, Languages, Sciences and Vocational/Technical Education) perceive the extent to which the curriculum offerings foster self-reliance.
- Ho3:** There is no significant difference in male and female students' competency needs for self-reliance.
- Ho4:** There is no significant difference in the competency needs of students from various schools (Arts and Social Sciences, Education, Languages, Sciences and Vocational/Technical education) in the college of education.

5. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Curriculum Offerings – These are value-laden educational programmes installed in higher institutions, and are offered to learners with a view to be functional individuals useful for themselves and the larger society.
- School Graduate – An individual who has successfully completed in programme of education in higher institution.
- Self-reliance Education – It is the education that equips trainees with the abilities and competencies to survive with minimum external aids.
- Skill – It refers to job-placement human and functional dexterity required of a student in the process of education.



6. METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive survey research design in which the researcher gathered relevant information which had already occurred without the manipulation of any variables upon which valid interpretations, explanations and recommendations were made in the study.

The target population consisted of all third year students of the College of Education, Lanlate, Oyo State. In all, the population consisted of about one thousand (1000) male and female students that have spent two years plus in the College of Education, Lanlate, Oyo State.

The study sample consisted of two hundred and sixty-two (262) 300 level students purposively sampled from the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Education, Languages, Sciences and Vocational/Technical Education in the College of Education. The criteria for the purposive sampling of the participants/respondents for the study are stated below:

1. Part three students who have covered at least 2/3 of the curriculum in their areas of specialization.
2. Only students with a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 3.50 out of a total CGPA of 5.00 which is an equivalent of 70.0% were sampled. The students in this category were assumed to be intelligent enough to provide relevant information on curriculum offerings and self-reliance education in respect of their areas of specializations.

One research instrument tagged Curriculum Offerings for Self-reliance Education Rating Scale (COSERS) consisting of six sections 1-6 was used for the study. Section 1 was directed to the respondents' bio-data like name of the college of education, school in the college, subject combination/area of specialization and gender. Section 2 to Section 6 contained items relevant to each of the research questions put forward in this study. In all, twenty-six (26) items were identified. The spread of responses expected and identified include Agree, Disagree, Yes, No, High Extent, Moderate Extent, Rarely, and free responses as appropriate. The instrument (COSERS) was face and content validated through experts' opinions and scrutiny in content, item-phrasing, the nature of the responses expected as relevant to the study, items selection, sequence and scope of coverage. Kuder-Richardson (KR-20) and Cronbach Alpha methods of reliability were used to determine the reliability value of 0.81 and 0.85 respectively.

The researcher with the assistance of some lecturers in the colleges of education were involved in the administration of the instrument (COSERS) to the 262

purposively sampled students. The data collection lasted for a period of about three weeks.

Descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentages and inferential statistics of t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were employed in the data analysis upon which the results were presented and discussed.

7. RESULTS

The results of the data collected are presented as follows.

Table 1a: Distribution of the Respondents on School Basis in the College of Education

School in the College of Education	Number of the Students Sampled	Percentage (%)
Arts and Social Sciences	116	44.3
Education	100	38.2
Languages	33	12.5
Sciences	5	1.9
Vocational Technical Education	8	3.1
Total	262	100.0

Table 1a presents the distribution of the respondents on school basis in the College of Education surveyed. School of Arts and Social Sciences had the highest percentage of final year students (44.3%) while Vocational Technical Education students are the least (3.1%). This might be as a result of students' preferences for course options in colleges of education in Nigeria.

Table 1b: Gender Distribution of the Students' Sampled

Gender	Number	Percentage (%)
Male	62	23.7
Female	200	76.3
Total	262	100.0

In table 1b, female respondents outnumber the male respondents with 76.3% and 23.7% respectively.

Research Question 1: Do the curriculum offerings foster self-reliance education?

Table 2: Students Responses on Curriculum Offerings and Self-reliance Education

S/N	Item	Agree	Disagree
1	My course combination/specialization equips me with the ability to be self-reliant	38 (14.5)	224 (85.5)
2	The curriculum of my area of specialization does not make provision for self-reliance	110 (42.0)	152 (58.0)



3	My course combination is more of theoretical topics than the provision of self-reliance skills	163 (62.2)	99 (37.8)
4	The curriculum in my course combination is more of practicals than theory in practice	121 (46.2)	141 (53.8)
5	The curriculum in my subject area could not equip me to be self-reliant because of poor implementation	173 (66.0)	89 (34.0)
Average		38.1%	61.8%

As indicated in table 2, a very low average of 38.1% is recorded for the extent to which the curriculum offerings in the Colleges of Education foster self-reliance while 61.9% of the respondents hold a contrary opinion.

Research Questions 2: What are the relevant trade options/establishments that could result from the areas of specializations in the labour market?

Table 3: Relevant Trade Options/ Establishments Emanating from the Curriculum Offerings in the College of Education

School in the College of Education	Possible Trade Options/Establishments in the Labour Market
Arts and Social Sciences	Political Organization; Journalism (Private).
Education	Private School Establishment; Educational Counseling Forum, Study Centres.
Languages	News Casting/Journalism (Private) Freelance Writing
Science	Local Production of Some Scientific items/Materials.
Vocational and Technical Education	Trading, Stock Broking, Farming, Poultry Keeping e.g. Turkey management, Fish Pond, Animal Husbandry e.g. Piggery and Rabbitory: Brick Laying; Horticulture; Textile: Wood working; Sculpture Making; Graphics and Arts; Painting.

As shown in table 3, students who pass through the School of Vocational and Technical Education in the College of Education have more trade options/establishments possible for them to lay their hands on in the market compared with their counterparts in the other schools.

Research Questions 3: Do the students in the colleges of education possess the competency needs for self-reliance?

Table 4: Students' Competency Needs for Self-reliance

S/N	Item	Yes	No
1.	I have been well taught and could conveniently set up a trade after graduation	44 (16.80)	218 (83.2)
2.	I do not have the ability to start a business/trade of my own after graduation	158 (60.3)	104 (39.7)
3.	I have been well equipped to create a job after graduation	64 (24.4)	198 (75.6)
4.	I need to undergo another training outside my college before I can set up a trade after graduation	138 (52.7)	124 (47.3)
Average (%)		32.1%	67.9%

A summary of the competency needs for self-reliance possessed by the students in the College of Education is just 32.1%. A percentage of 64% is recorded for those who lack the competency for self-reliance after graduating from the College of Education (Table 4).

Research Question 4: What are the problems facing self-reliance education in the Colleges of Education?

Table 5: Problems of Self-reliance Education

S/N	Item	High Extent	Moderate Extent	Rarely
a	Fund	138 (52.7)	88 (33.6)	36 (13.7)
b	Equipment and materials/facilities	98 (37.4)	110 (42.0)	54 (20.5)
c	Quality and quantity of lecturers	60 (22.9)	101 (38.5)	101 (38.6)
d	Teaching methods and strategies	109 (41.6)	111 (42.4)	42 (16.0)
e	Curriculum pattern/structure	63 (24.0)	117 (44.7)	82 (31.3)
f	Implementation of NCCE curriculum	154 (58.8)	86 (32.8)	22 (8.4)

The results in table 5 reveals that all the problems identified affect the effective actualization of self-reliance education through Nigerian Certificate in Education curriculum.

Research Question 5: What are the strategies for making college of education curriculum offerings achieve self-reliance objectives?

**Table 6: Strategies for Making College of Education Curriculum Achieve Self-reliance**

S/N	Item	Yes	No
1	Re-visioning/re-engineering of the curriculum offerings	187 (71.4)	75 (28.6)
2	Allocation of enough fund for students exposure to self-reliance education	184 (70.2)	78 (29.8)
3	Modification/change of teaching methods	149 (56.9)	113 (43.1)
4	Provision of relevant equipment/materials/ facilities	194 (74.0)	68 (26.0)
5	Improvement of the quality of lecturers/instructors who teach the courses	214 (81.7)	48 (18.3)
6	Re-visiting the implementation process	174 (66.4)	88 (33.6)
	Average (%)	70.1%	29.9%

The percentage of 70.1 of the students sampled responded positively to the strategies which could be employed for making college of education curriculum achieve self-reliance. (Table 6).

Ho₁: There is no significant difference on male and female students' perception of the extent to which the curriculum offerings foster self-reliance.

Table 7: T-test on Gender Perception of Curriculum Offerings and Self-reliance

Gender	N	Mean	Std Dev.	Df	t-val.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Male	62	12.484	1.2730	260	-1.817	0.07	Not Significant (NS)
Female	200	12.410	1.3970				

Table 7 shows that the mean difference of 0.3646 on gender perception of curriculum offerings and self-reliance is not significant (t-value = 1.817; df = 260; p > 0.05 thus, the null hypothesis 1 is not rejected.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference on how students from various schools in the college of education (Arts and Social Sciences, Education, Languages, Sciences and Vocational/Technical Education) perceive the extent to which the curriculum offerings foster self-reliance.

Table 8: Analysis of Variance on the Extent to Which the Curriculum Offerings Foster Self-reliance

Gender	Sun of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Remark
Variable	12.543	4	3.136	1.676	156	Not Sig. (NS)
Residual	480.880	257	1.871			
Total	40289.00	261				

The extent to which the curriculum offerings in the College of Education foster self-reliance is not

significant ($f_5; 261 = 1.676; p(.156) > 0.05$ (Table 8, therefore null hypothesis 2 is not rejected.

Ho₃: There is no significant difference in male and female students' competency needs for self-reliance.

Table 9: T-test on Gender Perception of Students' Possession of Competency Needs for Self-reliance

Gender	N	Mean	Std Dev.	Df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Male	62	6.5161	98749	260	0.043	.966	Not Sig. (NS)
Female	200	8.5100	.97707				

Since the mean difference of 1.9939 is not significant (t-value = 0.043; df = 260; p > 966 (Table 9), null hypothesis 3 is not rejected.

Ho₄: There is no significant difference in the competency needs of students from various schools (Arts and Social Sciences, Education, Languages, Sciences and Vocational/Technical education) in the college of education.

Table 10: Analysis of Variance on the Competency Needs for Self-reliance Possessed by Students from the Five Schools in the College.

Gender	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Variables	10.800	4	2.700	2.7907	0.22	Sig. dif.
Residual	238.665	257	.929			
Total	11358.00	261				

* Significant at p>.05

The competency needs possessed by students from the five schools in the College of Education as perceived by the respondents is significant ($f_5 261 = 2.907; p (.022) < .05$ (Table 10), on this ground, null hypothesis is rejected.

8. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study reveal that the curriculum offerings at the college of education level are yet to adequately foster self-reliance education. It is recorded that most of the courses in content are more theoretically-based instead of providing for self-reliance skills (Table 2). Fifty-eight percent (58.0%) of the respondents disagreed with the fact that the curriculum in their respective area of specialization does not make provision for self-reliance, but, it is made clear that the problem is with the poor implementation of the curriculum (Table 2). This is what makes the students at college of education level to fall short of self-reliant skills.

Also, vocational and technical education curriculum in the college of education make provision for some trade options/establishments in the labour market for



self-sufficient whereas students passing through arts and social sciences, education, languages and science could not identify at least three possible trade options/establishment which they could lay their hands on in the labour market (Table 3). Their self-reliance opportunities through their areas of specializations are very limited. On competency needs for self-reliance, 60.3% of the respondents could not stand on their own after graduation from the college while 52.7% declared that there is the need to undergo another training outside their college before they can conveniently set up a trade after their National Certificate in Education (N.C.E.) programme (Table 4). The study further discovered that fund, equipment, facilities, teaching methods, and strategies, curriculum pattern/structure and irregularities in NCE curriculum implementation hinder the curriculum offerings from adequate provision of self-reliance education to the recipients (Table 5).

In table 6, among the strategies suggested are curriculum re-visioning, provision of enough fund, modification and changes of teaching methods along with the provision of adequate human and non-human resources, and re-visitation of the implementation process of college of education curriculum of each course option. No significant difference in gender perception on curriculum offerings in the college of education is a clear indication that both male and female students have similar views on the strength and weaknesses of the course options in respect of self-reliance. The same apply to the views of students from the five schools in the College of Education (Table 7 and Table 8). However, the competency needs possessed by the students from the five schools in the College are significantly and variedly perceived. This perhaps might be as a result of areas of specialization.

The dream about self-reliance education in colleges of education can only be realized if practical competency and employability skills development are fostered in the curriculum practices of both the implementers of the curriculum, policy makers and providers of relevant resources. It should be added that as a panacea, curriculum offerings should not be prepared in the absence of the teacher or without adequate preparation of professional teachers (Alade, 2014). This makes such curriculum to be more goal-oriented both in design and implementation. It is on this ground that abilities necessary for self-employment and creativity would be encouraged, enhanced and become a reality rather than theory.

Furthermore, it becomes crystal clear that curriculum offering is a major determinant of job-placement of higher institutions graduates after graduation. However, where inadequacies persist in curriculum design and implementation in Nigerian higher institutions as found

out in this study, the stress and frustration facing Nigerian youths in the labour market may remain unabated. It is when the curriculum meets the labour market demands on graduates in term of relevant knowledge and skills that they can be self-reliance and up to the task in meeting the economic and social challenges in the dynamic society.

9. CONCLUSION

The author of this paper has brought to the fore the need to foster self-reliance education through all the curriculum offerings in tertiary institutions. Real self-reliance education is curriculum offering in practical terms – curriculum offerings not limited to paper policy, nor mostly of the academic type, long on theory, bookish and short on saleable facts and skills, but self-reliance education which would give the recipients the understanding and practical experiences of the realities of the labour world where in self-employment would not be a mirage but an attainable end”. It is only when practical skills acquisition and related knowledge are fostered that the curriculum in respective course specialization at the college of education level can be more productive in preparing the students for the labour market as employable college of education graduates as well as empowered graduates that can be viable job creators for self-reliance.

As a matter of urgency, it is paramount to address the present weaknesses found out in the present curriculum offerings at the college of education level in Nigeria. This is with a view to improving the quality of graduates from the existing higher institutions in Nigeria for functional living in the society after graduation.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order that college of education curriculum might be more virile, the following recommendations are inferred from the study:

1. There is the need for continuous curriculum modification in terms of market demand and self-employment needs of students trainees in Nigerian colleges of education.
2. Modern/Teaching methods which are more practical-based (pragmatic) should be employed by curriculum implementers (lecturers and instructors) for practical exposition of the subject matter of the curriculum in respective course specializations.
3. The implementation process of colleges of education curriculum needs to be more adequate by ensuring that what is taught is a replica of what is required for job placement/job creation in the society.



4. Provision of human and non-human resources in terms of relevance, adequacy, quantity and quality should be given more attention by stakeholders of education in Nigeria.

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