



## **Poor Curriculum Planning as a Debacle to Secondary Education in Gombe State: Quest for Innovative Solution**

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### **Abstract**

*This study sought to investigate poor curriculum planning as a debacle to secondary education in Gombe state: quest for innovative solution. This study adopted a descriptive survey design. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The sample for this study consisted of 244 respondents made up of 200 teachers and 44 principals selected from public secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was researcher's developed questionnaire which was structured on a 4-point rating scale of strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The research questions were answered using mean scores and standard deviation, while the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test. The findings of this study showed that the causes of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state have the following consequences: It derails the intellectual abilities of students, contributes to students' poor academic performance, erodes the cultural and moral values of students among others. The findings of the study also shows that the innovative solutions to the poor curriculum planning in Gombe State are: Redesigning the secondary school curriculum, school organization and teacher preparation programs, forming professional learning communities among others. The study recommended that the government should make an adequate financial support for curriculum planning; there should be a mutual team work; high quality of human and material resources for curriculum planning.*

**Keywords:** Assessment, Students' Participation, Security Matters, Management, Universities.

### **Introduction**

Education is a process by which individuals are assisted formally through proper direction and guidance to develop their capacities for their own benefit and that of the society. It is focused towards developing the individuals for them to live effectively and efficiently in the society and to contribute to its advancement and upliftment. Hence, through education the behaviour patterns of the citizens could be changed in the desired direction. Okeke (2013) stated that with sound education, people will start to understand and appreciate one another better and try to restore the dignity of man. Hence, we have to recognize the role education plays in equipping individuals with requisite knowledge and skills for survival and societal progress. The importance of secondary education in educational system cannot be overemphasized. Apart from serving as the link between primary and tertiary education, it provides opportunity for a child to acquire additional knowledge, skills, and traits beyond the primary level. Ige (2011) asserted that a major factor that necessitates the acquisition of secondary education in Nigeria is that the education being provided at the primary level is proving to be insufficient for a child to acquire permanent literacy, communicative, and numeracy skills expected from him/her at the end of the training. Such education is provided in secondary school, which can be owned by government (state or federal), individuals or community and it is divided into junior secondary phase and senior secondary phase. Each of these phases is driven by a curriculum.

The term **curriculum** refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program. Yusuf (2012) defined a curriculum as the totality of student experiences that occur in the educational process. The term often refers specifically to a planned sequence of instruction, or to a view of the student's experiences in terms of the educator's or schools instructional goals. Luciano (2017) argues that curriculum is the total learning experiences of individuals not only in school but society as well. It is seen as all the learning experiences which are planned and guided by the school whether carried out in groups or individually. It can be said to be the sum total of activities which is planned and directed by the school for the attainment of educational goals. Olaitan and Alli (2007) stated that curriculum involves all the activities that a student has under the auspices or direction of the school. It comprises the sum total of the school's effort to influence learning, whether in the classroom, on the playground or out of school. Curriculum of a school is the formal and informal content and process by which learners gain understanding, develop skills, and alter attitudes, appreciations, and values under the auspices of that school. However, a curriculum can only be effective if it is well planned.

Curriculum planning refers to the creation of a curriculum. Amon (2018) defined curriculum planning as the process of structuring academic experiences, using expertise knowledge of the teacher. It is the activity which teachers get involved in before the actual implementation. Meduna (2016) defined curriculum planning as a complex activity involving the interplay of ideas from the curriculum field and other related disciplines. However, the ultimate purpose of curriculum planning is to describe the learning opportunities available to students. Thus, curriculum planning is ultimately concerned with the experiences of learners. Faria (2021) stated that the phrase curriculum planning" can mean one of two related things: either the process of an individual teacher to build a class curriculum, or the means through which school boards coordinate the various curricula being used by teachers in order to achieve uniform goals. On its own, a *curriculum* is basically a lesson plan that functions as a map for learning. Careful planning is required to ensure first that the lessons actually touch on all required topics, and also that they meet school or governmental standards of basic education.

Curriculum planning is concerned with making decisions about what to learn, why, and how to organize the teaching and learning process taking into account existing curriculum requirements and the resources available. At the general level, it often results in the definition of a broad curriculum framework, as well as a syllabus for each subject to be used as reference by individual schools. At the school level, it involves developing course and assessment plans for different subjects. At the classroom level, it involves developing more detailed plans for learning units, individual lessons and lesson sequences. In any teaching/learning situation, however, the concern is not only with what students ought to learn, but also with how they are going to learn it. Curriculum plans that define concepts or ideas without considering action, are incomplete since learning must eventually involve the application of what has been learned. In the same way, plans that merely describe action without considering purposes are also incomplete since otherwise, learning activity runs the risk of being aimless. This relationship of content and process accentuates the need to consider curriculum and instruction not as distinct entities, but rather as interdependent concepts in the planning process. Therefore, curriculum planning involves decisions about both content and process.

The idea of having a curriculum for education in Nigeria's educational system dates back to the year 1969 when a National Curriculum Conference was inaugurated, sequel to public criticisms of the educational system inherited from the colonial governments (Ogunnu, 2000). Since that time, the curriculum of education has been undergoing review and improvements. Even though secondary education curriculum had undergone a lot of review and improvements over the years, the curriculum is still laden with shortcomings and has been a subject of criticisms because of poor planning (Ukpai & Okoro, 2011). Arguments against secondary education curriculum planning in Nigeria and Gombe



state in particular have been that the curriculum is overloaded, content driven, not relevant, fails to give regards to vocational training as a major component of a child's development, irrelevant to the needs of the society, too wide in scope, does not take care of teachers' qualification and training, as well as laying too much emphasis on intellectual development of a child.

Secondary education in Gombe state has been riddled with crises of poor curriculum planning and this has posed as an obstacle to secondary education in this state. Aminu (2018) lamented that the following challenges have impeded curriculum planning in Gombe state: inadequate supervision, time mismatch with school calendar, lack of financial and material support, and negative attitudes of teachers towards the new curriculum. Noah (2015) disclosed that poor curriculum planning has dampen the enthusiasm of students to learn, derailed their intellectual abilities and contributed to students' poor academic performance in Gombe state secondary schools, this ugly trend has made the achievement of educational goals a mirage. However, Ismail (2019) is of the view that some innovative measure can be adopted to curb these challenges. They include: tightening the teacher accountability system, forming professional learning communities, redesigning the secondary school curriculum, school organization and teacher preparation programs.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Secondary education curriculum in Gombe state is still laden with shortcomings and has been a subject of criticisms due to poor curriculum planning. Arguments against secondary education curriculum planning in Gombe state have been that the curriculum is overloaded, content driven, not relevant, fails to give regards to vocational training as a major component of a child's development, irrelevant to the needs of the society, too wide in scope, does not take care of teachers' qualification and training, as well as laying too much emphasis on intellectual development of a child. Secondary education in Gombe state has been riddled with crises of poor curriculum planning and this has posed as an obstacle to secondary education in this state. Curriculum planning in Gombe state has been impeded by inadequate supervision, time mismatch with school calendar, lack of financial and material support, and negative attitudes of teachers towards the new curriculum. In addition, the procedures for curriculum planning in Gombe state were complex and tedious. This ugly trend may have been responsible for the derails on the intellectual abilities of students, students' poor academic performance and dwindling cultural and moral values of students in Gombe state. It is against this backdrop that the researcher deemed it fit to investigate poor curriculum planning as a obstacle to secondary education in Gombe state: Quest for innovative solution.

### **Objective of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate poor curriculum planning as a obstacle to secondary education in Gombe state: quest for innovative solution. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the causes of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state.
2. Determine the effects of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state
3. Find out the innovative solution to the poor curriculum planning in Gombe State

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the causes of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state?
2. What are the effects of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state?
3. What are the innovative solutions to the poor curriculum planning in Gombe State?

## Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses formulated guided the study, and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the causes of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the effects of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the innovative solution to the poor curriculum planning in Gombe State.

## Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population for this study was four thousand three hundred and sixty-one (4361) respondents made up of 66 principals and 4295 teachers from the 66 public secondary schools in Gombe State (Source: Post Primary Schools Management Board (*PPSMB*) Gombe, 2019). The reason for choosing principals and teachers was because they were the categories of people that can give correct information with respect to the subject matter in this study. The sample of this study was drawn from principals and teachers in the public secondary schools through a stratified random sampling technique. The state was stratified along the 11 local government areas and four public secondary schools were randomly selected from each local government area, thus, making a total of 44 secondary schools. From the 44 secondary schools, 44 principals and 200 teachers were randomly selected for the study. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire structured on a 4 – point rating of Strongly Agree (SA) 4 points, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (DA) 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point. The instrument was face validated by two experts from the Department of Educational Foundations, one expert from Measurement and Evaluation, Federal University Kashere, Gombe State. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha formula. The reliability coefficient value yielded 0.86 on average which was considered adequate for the study. The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researcher and three research assistants. A total of 244 copies of the questionnaires were administered and collected on the spot from the respondents. Data obtained were analyzed using mean score and standard deviation. In addition, the null hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. Any mean score lower than 2.50 implied disagree while equal to or higher than 2.50 implied agree to the items. Similarly, for the testing of null hypotheses if the t-calculated values are less than critical t-value, null hypotheses were accepted, but if the t-calculated values are more than critical t-value, null hypotheses were rejected.

## Results

The results of the data analyses were presented based on research questions and hypotheses in tables.

### Research Question One

What are the causes of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state?



**Table 1**

**Mean ratings on the causes of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state**

S/N	ITEMS	Distribution of Response	Principal			Teacher		
			$\bar{X}$	SD	REM	$\bar{X}$	SD	REM
1	Negative attitudes of teachers towards the new curriculum	SA – 4points	3.11	0.80	A	3.07	0.77	A
2	Time mismatch with school calendar	A - 3points	3.22	0.85	A	3.01	0.89	A
3	Lack of financial support	DA - 2points	2.73	1.09	A	2.99	1.07	A
4	Low quality of human and material resources	SD – 1point	2.84	0.93	A	2.92	0.82	A
5	Lack of mutual team work		2.88	0.94	A	2.86	0.50	A

$\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, rem = Remark

The result in Table 1 shows that the mean ratings of the principals for item numbers 1-5 are 3.11, 3.22, 2.73, 2.84, and 2.88 with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.80, 0.85, 1.09, 0.93, and 0.94 respectively. On the other hand, the mean ratings of the teachers on the above items are 3.07, 3.01, 2.99, 2.92 and 2.86 with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.77, 0.89, 1.07, 0.82 and 0.50 respectively. This shows that the respondents agree that items in the Table 1 above are the causes of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the causes of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state.

**Table 2**

**t-test of the two groups on the causes of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state**

S/N	Group	No.	Mean	SD	DF	t.cal	t-value	Decision
1	PRINCIPAL	44	2.96	0.92	242	1.54	1.96	Not significant
2	TEACHER	200	2.97	0.81				

In the table above, the t-calculated value of each item was obtained; the degree of freedom of all items was 242, while the critical t-table of 1.96 was obtained at 0.05 level of significance. From the table, it can be seen that the t-calculated values for all items were less than critical t-value. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the causes of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state was accepted. This position indicates that there is no significant difference between principals and teachers on the causes of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state.

**Research Question Two**

What are the effects of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state?



**Table 3**  
**Mean Ratings on the Effects of poor Curriculum Planning in Secondary Education in Gombe State**

S/N	ITEMS	Distribution of Response	Principal			Teacher		
			$\bar{X}$	SD	REM	$\bar{X}$	SD	REM
6	It derails the intellectual abilities of students	SA – 4points	3.23	0.62	A	3.18	0.18	A
7	It contributes to students’ poor academic performance	A - 3points	3.04	0.68	A	3.21	0.15	A
8	It erodes the cultural and moral values of students	DA - 2points	3.15	0.14	A	2.91	0.16	A
9	It makes the achievement of educational goals a mirage	SD – 1point	3.39	0.17	A	3.17	0.13	A
10	It dampens the enthusiasm of students to learn		2.24	0.23	DA	2.14	0.47	DA

$\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, rem = Remark

The result in table 3 shows that the mean ratings of the principals for item numbers 6-10 are 3.23, 3.04, 3.15, 3.39 and 2.24 with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.62, 0.68, 0.14, 0.17 and 0.23 respectively. On the other hand, the mean ratings of the teachers on the above items are 3.18, 3.21, 2.91, 3.17 and 2.14 with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.18, 0.15, 0.16, 0.13 and 0.47 respectively. This shows that the respondents agree that items in the Table 3 above are the effects of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the debacles of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state.

**Table 4**  
**t-test of the two groups on the Effects of Poor Curriculum Planning in Secondary Education in Gombe State**

S/N	Group	No.	Mean	SD	DF	t.cal	t-value	Decision
1	PRINCIPAL	44	3.01	0.37	242	1.68	1.96	Not significant
2	TEACHER	200	2.92	0.22				

In the table above, the t-calculated value of each item was obtained; the degree of freedom of all items was 242, while the critical t-table of 1.96 was obtained at 0.05 level of significance. From the table, it can be seen that the t-calculated values for all items were less than critical t-value. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the effects of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state was accepted. This position indicates that there is no significant difference between principals and teachers on the debacles of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state.

### Research Question Three

What are the innovative solutions to the poor curriculum planning in Gombe State



**Table 5**  
**Mean ratings on the innovative solution to the poor curriculum planning in Gombe State**

S/N	ITEMS	Distribution of Response	Principal			Teacher		
			$\bar{X}$	SD	REM	$\bar{X}$	SD	REM
11	Redesigning the secondary school curriculum and school organization	SA – 4points	3.54	0.50	SA	3.64	0.42	SA
12	Redesigning secondary school teacher preparation programs	A - 3points	2.98	0.61	A	2.86	0.59	A
13	Forming professional learning communities	DA - 2points	3.14	0.18	A	3.31	0.16	A
14	Tightening the teacher accountability system	SD – 1point	2.61	1.51	A	2.68	0.47	A
15	Identifying factors of teacher motivation		3.21	0.17	A	3.24	0.19	A

$\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, rem = Remark

The result in Table 5 shows that the mean ratings of the principals for item numbers 11-15 are 3.54, 2.98, 3.14, 2.61 and 3.21 with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.50, 0.61, 0.18, 1.51 and 0.17 respectively. On the other hand, the mean ratings of the teachers on the above items are 3.61, 2.86, 3.31, 2.68 and 3.24 with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.42, 0.59, 0.16, 0.47 and 0.19 respectively. This shows that the respondents agree that items in the Table 5 above are the innovative solutions to the poor curriculum planning in Gombe State.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the innovative solutions to the poor curriculum planning in Gombe State.

**Table 6:**  
**t-test of the two groups on the innovative solutions to the poor curriculum planning in Gombe State**

S/N	Group	No.	Mean	SD	DF	t.cal	t-value	Decision
1	PRINCIPAL	44	3.10	0.59	242	1.54	1.96	Not significant
2	TEACHER	200	3.15	0.37				

In the table above, the t-calculated value of each item was obtained; the degree of freedom of all items was 242, while the critical t-table of 1.96 was obtained at 0.05 level of significance. From the table, it can be seen that the t-calculated values for all items were less than critical t-value. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the innovative solutions to the poor curriculum planning in Gombe State was accepted. This position indicates that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the innovative solutions to the poor curriculum planning in Gombe State.

## **Discussion of Findings**

The findings with respect to research question one and hypothesis one show that principals and teachers have similar view on the causes of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state. They agreed that the causes of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state include: Negative attitudes of teachers towards the new curriculum, Time mismatch with school calendar, Lack of financial and material support and Lack of mutual team work. This finding is in consonance with the lamentation of Aminu (2018) that the following challenges have impeded curriculum planning in Gombe state: inadequate supervision, time mismatch with school calendar, lack of financial and material support, and negative attitudes of teachers towards the new curriculum.

The result with respect to research question two and hypothesis two shows that both principals and teachers share or have a similar view on the debacles of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state. They agreed that the effects of poor curriculum planning in secondary education in Gombe state are: It derails the intellectual abilities of students, it contributes to students' poor academic performance, it erodes the cultural and moral values of students and it makes the achievement of educational goals a mirage. This finding is in consonance with the disclosure made by Noah (2015) that poor curriculum planning has dampen the enthusiasm of students to learn, derailed their intellectual abilities and contributed to students' poor academic performance in Gombe state secondary schools, this ugly trend has made the achievement of educational goals a mirage.

The findings with respect to research question three and hypothesis three shows that the principals and teachers have similar view on the innovative solutions to the poor curriculum planning in Gombe State. They agreed that the innovative solutions to the poor curriculum planning in Gombe State are: Redesigning the secondary school curriculum and school organization, redesigning secondary school teacher preparation programs, forming professional learning communities, tightening the teacher accountability system and identifying factors of teacher motivation. This finding is in concord with the view of Ismail (2019) that some innovative measure can be adopted to curb these challenges; they include: tightening the teacher accountability system, forming professional learning communities, redesigning the secondary school curriculum, school organization and teacher preparation programs.

## **Conclusion**

Curriculum planning is a continuous process which involves activities characterized by interrelationships among individuals and groups as they work together in studying, planning, developing and improving the curriculum which is total environment planned by the school. Effective curriculum planning and decision-making process is key to the success of educational programs. It develops well-coordinated, quality teaching, learning and assessment programmes which build students' knowledge, skills and behaviours in the disciplines, as well as their interdisciplinary and or physical, personal and social capacities. However, some cogent factors have led to poor curriculum planning. This has resulted in a grave obstacle to secondary education. However, some innovative measures can be put in place to check this ugly trend before it gets out of hand.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study:

1. Enlightenment programmes on curriculum should be organized for teachers to enable them develop a positive attitude towards new curriculum.
2. There should be a proper consultation with school authorities during curriculum planning to avoid time mismatch with school calendar.





3. The government should make an adequate financial support for curriculum planning.
4. There should be high quality of human and material resources for curriculum planning
5. There should be a mutual team work in curriculum planning.

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