

The School Level Factors Influence of Curriculum Implementation in The Case of Middle Education, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The purpose of this article was to examine problems of curriculum implementation in the case of selected primary schools in Ethiopia and to provide suggestions for further improvement. Research methodology adopted was qualitative case study. Population of the study were purposely selected teachers who were teaching upper grades in primary schools, principals, supervisors and representatives of students and parents. Data of the study was collected by using interviews, open-ended questionnaires, focus group discussion and document analysis. Findings of research indicated that factors related with human resource (teachers, students, parents, and principals of school), curriculum and schools influenced the process of curriculum implementation in different ways. More specifically, teacher related factors like professional competency, attitude towards teaching and knowledge of context of instruction influenced the reform of curriculum recommended. As critical challenges, triangulation of data analysis and overall findings revealed limitations in all stakeholders in their roles and weak cooperation and collaboration among school level stakeholders to solve issues related with students' learning. Based on major findings of the study strategies to improve practices of curriculum implementation was forwarded.

Keywords: curriculum implementation, teacher professional development, instructional process, instructional supervision, and curriculum implementer

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Introduction

Formal education curriculum, especially KG-12 (general education) has used the procedure or planning of curriculum development. Depending up on model/s country accepted to develop national curriculum it has included or passes through problem identification, need assessment or diagnosis of need, formulation of objectives, selecting and organizing contents and learning experience (curriculum organization/design), piloting in selected schools (testing curriculum implementation), evaluating piloted program and maintaining, implementing curriculum entirely, evaluating curriculum, and modify/change curriculum. It seems linear or cyclic but practicality is based on school level implementer commitment and competency. This study emphasized on curriculum implementation in selected schools to investigate critical challenges and good practices.

1. Background of the Study

Pinar and Irwin (2005:118-120) stated that curriculum implementation can be understood from two matters, namely curriculum implementation as instrumental action and as situational praxis. Curriculum implementation as instrumental action shows as program implementation can be found in producer-consumer paradigm. In other words, this paradigm views the implementation in a one-way angle in which a specialist produces something for an ordinary person as his consumer and curriculum implementation as situational praxis. This is based on experiences in a class situation, and this proves to be the world of teachers' experiences with their students.

Similarly, there are two kinds of basic understandings which are essential to curriculum implementation. The first one was an understanding of organizational change and how information and ideas fit into a real-world context. The second one was an understanding of the relationship between curricula and the social- institutional contexts into which they are to be introduced (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009, 250). One's view of the social-institutional context is influenced by whether one perceives the world of education as technical (modern) or nontechnical (postmodern). Those with a technical, modern, view believe that implementation can be planned down to specifics; those with a nontechnical, postmodern, view hold that implementation is fluid and emergent. They believe that the most productive stance regarding implementation is to view it as a combination of technical (modern) and nontechnical (postmodern) aspects.

Successful curriculum implementation results from careful planning, which focuses on three factors: people, programs, and processes (*ibid*, 252). To implement a curriculum change, educators must get people to change some of their habits and, possibly, views. Many school districts failed to implement their programs because they

ignored the people factor and spent time and money modifying only the program or process. However, focusing on the new program provides people with new ways to meet the objectives of the school's programs. Organizational processes, too, are important (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009, 257)

The mandated curriculum was organized by one-size-fits-all objectives and standards intended for designated grade level instruction. Incongruence occurs when designers of mandated curriculum presume students have the prerequisite skills necessary to introduce new skills. Not only are prerequisite skills disregarded, but also a delinquency within the mandated curriculum to revisit skills taught previously in lieu of maintaining a pace so "coverage" occurs. Teachers navigate the incongruence using one or more strategies (Tomlinson, 2002). The mandated curriculum perpetuates maximum coverage of material, breadth over depth, with greater amounts of surface knowledge leading to a mastery of subject knowledge.

Therefore, to reduce problems teachers should find ways to adapt and supplement the curriculum to balance the perceived deficiencies of curriculum. Some strategies for modifying the curriculum included clarifications/connections of concepts or adjusting the pacing schedule, completely or in part, for students and modifying curricula. The contentious part of the planning and pacing timeline is that teachers are expected to teach in a way leading to high achievement

on the state test and only have problems achieving national and international goals like quality primary education for all.

Moreover, understanding the influence of perspectives of curriculum development has its own merits. Three different perspectives of curriculum implementation: fidelity, mutual adaptation and curriculum enactment (Oliva, 2004). The fidelity approach to implementation is concerned strictly with the degree of exactness between the planned curriculum and the implemented experience. The second approach to implementation is known as mutual adaptation where the teacher has freedom to make necessary changes to the planned curriculum during implementation in line with the existing school situations. The last perspective to implementation is known as curriculum enactment which represents the polar opposite of the fidelity approach. It puts a great deal of priority on the classroom-based (micro-curricular) movement in the school experience. It is also known with a name school based curriculum development (SBCD). From their perspectives of curriculum implementation appropriate and relevant will be based on the way educational policy formulated and curricular materials preparation conducted.

2. Statement of the Problems

Ornstein and Hunkins' (2009) identification of curriculum as a production process of implementation can be seen as applying the product that has been created in classrooms and schools. Both Tyler (1949) and Taba (1962) see curriculum implementation as the final destination for curriculum; that is in the classroom. Of particular emphasis is that curriculum implementation is a change process which can be fraught by a variety of factors which can affect the implementation process. Fullan and Pomfret (1977) suggest "effective implementation of innovations requires time, personal interaction and contacts, in-service training and other forms of people-based support" (p. 391). Furthermore, Mitchell (2015) stated that resources need to be in place and in-service professional development training needs to be provided to teachers and all associated staff that need expertise in both a new, revised or re-energized curriculum and the supporting teaching and learning tools and resources in its implementation.

Cobbold (2017) discussed that the final destination of any curriculum is the classroom where teachers and students translate plans and intentions into activities and actions. Implementing the curriculum is therefore the most crucial and sometimes the most difficult phase of the educational change process. Inability to manage the difficulty often results in implementation failure, which has been a characteristic of most innovations and reforms in education. Implementation failure refers to a situation where an initiated or planned change does not happen in practice. This has been attributed to a number of factors including dogmatic resistance, lack of clarity about the programme in terms of its goals and means of achieving them, and in terms of teacher roles; lack of required resources; teacher unpreparedness; and lack of support from leaders at the central administration, district and school levels.

Students' attitude towards learning mathematics was conducted by Mazana *et al.* (2019) revealed that students' learning of and performance in mathematics is affected by a number of factors, including students' attitude towards the subject, teachers instructional practices, and school environment. Donga (2019) conducted research on the effects of attitude and motivation towards students' English basic knowledge. Findings of the study implied that there are various ways of education and learning including learners educating them. The exposure of education was presented as:

Education is the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Educational methods include storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, and directed research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators; however learners may also educate themselves. Education can take place in formal or informal settings and any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational.

This study was designed to explore issues at micro level in the case of curriculum implementation and trying to

conduct transferable to similar contexts.

3. Basic Research Questions

1. What are problems related with the attitudes and roles of stakeholders towards curriculum implementation in selected primary schools in the case of middle education? And how do their attitudes influence the practice?
2. How factors related to school and curriculum enable or hinder curriculum implementation of middle education in the case of selected schools?
3. What will be strategies to improve curriculum implementation in primary education in general and middle education in particular?

4. Objectives of the Research

The general objective of the article was to examine current practice of curriculum implementation and to analyze corresponding problems to suggest possible strategies to improve the process of curriculum implementation. Based on general objectives of study specific objectives were also stated. Research was intended to:

- identify attitude and roles stakeholders towards curriculum implementation
- review factors related curriculum and school contribution in curriculum implementation
- provide possible suggestions/recommendations to the implementation of curriculum

5. The Scope of the Study

In order to make the study more manageable, it was delimited geographically and conceptually. Geographically, the study was delimited to four primary schools which have middle education in Southern Ethiopia at Wolaita zone. Here middle education represents the educational structure of general education in Ethiopia to the standard age of learners 13 and 14 year or grade 7 and grade 8. The study considered internal stakeholders of four schools (teachers teaching grade 7 and 8, school principals, supervisors and representatives of students and parents). Conceptually, the study is delimited to the constructs curriculum implementation and factors influencing curriculum implementation. These were curriculum and other related programs of education/school programs contribute practice of curriculum; schools and school climate; human resources of the school and their role in the activities like teaching and learning, professional development strategies, assessment, and overall interaction of school level stakeholders.

6. Methods and Materials

To investigate issues critically qualitative case study methodology was adopted. Qualitative case study methodology enables researchers to conduct an in-depth exploration of intricate phenomena within some specific context. According to Yin (2014), Case study research scientifically investigates into a real-life phenomenon in-depth and within its environmental context. Such a case can be an individual, a group, an organization, an event, a problem, or an anomaly. Method of data collection was both primary data (interview, observation, open-ended questionnaire and FGD generated data) and qualitative document review.

The target population of the study were primary school teachers, vice principals, principal, supervisors and representatives of students and parents. It was believed that they were the appropriate sources of information for the issue under investigation. For this case study research methodology suggested, four schools were selected purposive from Wolaita zone, Southern Ethiopia and sampling techniques of population from each school was purposive, snowball and availability. Participants of the research were 28 teachers, 6 school heads, 3 supervisors, 7 students and 8 parents and teachers association members.

This study used both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data sources were teachers, principals, supervisors, and representatives of students and teachers through interviews and open-ended questionnaires; and department heads through FGD; and observation of school and classroom instructional process. The secondary data sources were related documents such as instructional materials review, minutes on curriculum evaluation activities, and records or documents on the files in the pedagogic center.

7. Result and Discussion

Findings of the study data collected from informants of the study (response of open ended questionnaire items and interview of teachers, school principals, students representative and focus group discussion of teachers), observation of classroom instructional accomplishments and school resources and qualitative document review were employed to investigate actual practice and challenges of curriculum implementation in the case of middle education for study selected four upper primary schools. Accordingly, some good practices identified and challenges examined and shared with major parts of defendants and most frequently stated were summarized in this study.

Themes of findings and discussion of data were presented into four interrelated dimensions. Thus, curriculum

implementation problems of middle education in study conducted selected four primary schools were categorized as factors related to teacher, students, principals/supervisors, parents, curriculum itself or program of schooling, and school/s. enabling or success and hindering factors or challenges of curriculum implementation was reported from selected school level stakeholders. Four factors enabling or hindering the implementation curriculum were reported and discussed with research participants and most commonly shared and frequently raised findings of study were summarized in the following paragraphs.

A. Curriculum Implementation Problems Related To Teachers

Triangulating findings of primary and secondary sources of data investigation was made. Thus curriculum implementation problems related to teachers were categorized into four. These are problems related with content and pedagogical knowledge and skills, contextualization of curricular activities, assessment of students learning and instructional/curricular materials, attitude towards profession and students, professional development, understanding current ideology of curriculum, and external pressure or factors. According to findings, hindering and success factors of curriculum implementation process vary within and across schools depending on nature of subject matter, competency of teachers and school climate or culture.

Problems related with professional development were lack of professional development for major parts of school subjects out of school training; teachers' inability to interpret curriculum; teacher's not understanding curriculum; differences between teachers' beliefs and underlying ideology of proposed curriculum; and refusal to attend CPD. Secondly, problems related with content and pedagogic knowledge and skills reported were lack of content knowledge, insufficient teaching skills, inability to prepare inclusive lesson plan, adherence to traditional teaching methods; lack of ability for choosing materials; teachers' problems related to teaching and learning process; teachers' inability of using alternative assessment methods; teachers' inability of using authentic assessment approach; and deficiency of ability for choosing materials. Thirdly, attitude: lack of teacher motivation/self-confidence, teachers beliefs and attitudes; and uncertainty of teachers' about whether to continue working or not. Fourthly, Context related issues like teacher's inability to translate curriculum intentions into reality; and lack of appreciation by experts and administrators.

Findings of the study were corroborated to some areas of previously conducted studies. The importance of the involvement of teachers in the curriculum development process will have its own advantages for implementation of curriculum and research. Thus, Alsubaie (2016) study revealed that without doubt, the most important person in the curriculum implementation process is the teacher. Better teachers support better learning because they are most knowledgeable about the practice of teaching and are responsible for introducing the curriculum in the classroom. He suggested that teacher involvement is important for successful and meaningful curriculum development and teachers being the implementers are part of the last stage of the curriculum development process.

Some investigations focus on duties and responsibilities of teachers as factors hindering or enabling the development and implementation of curriculum. Implementing the curriculum is the most critical and sometimes the most challenging phase of the curriculum development process. The teachers are the key to the success of curriculum implementation because their knowledge, beliefs, and perception plays a significant role in implementing the effective changes. According to these categories, teachers who accept the change of curriculum will change their perception and improve their pedagogical practice. Therefore, what teachers assumed as the goal in curriculum change is very important to the success of curriculum implementation (Ghunu, 2022: 20). It requires professionally empowered teachers.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2017:2) conceptualized effective professional development and professional learning. Accordingly, effective professional development as structured professional learning that results in changes to teacher knowledge and practices, and improvements in student learning outcomes. It positively affects the development and implementation of curriculum. Chaudhary (2015) stated that teachers must be involved in curriculum planning and development so that they can implement and modify the curriculum for the benefit of their learners. These all have demonstrated as evidence how to make the curriculum development process aligned with teachers' professional development.

Contextualization of curriculum or instructional activities was identified as one factor related to teachers in the case of curriculum implementation. It was also the effects of analyzing perspectives/models of curriculum implementation and fidelity of implementation of curriculum. Intensive qualitative case study of research was revealed the following factors hindered fidelity of implementation in the case of teachers' role (Onurkan-Aliusta, & Ozder, 2022). The major issues investigated were perceiving the curriculum as the textbook; and teachers still possess traditional teacher roles using teacher-centered approach/methods more than learner/student-centered or constructivist approach.

Here lastly explained the factor which hinders fidelity of implementation was as issue or challenges investigated in Ethiopia and abroad (example China and Kenya). Findings of the studies were discussed as follows:

Controversial issue in quantitative measurement concerning teaching to the test versus teaching curriculum was researched (Styron and Styron, 2012). Finding of the study revealed that:

...the authors of this research studies are inconclusive with no clear indication of whether or not there is an advantage or disadvantage to the practice of teaching to the test. But most notably, the actual issue connected to this debate may be the lack of understanding of item-teaching and curricular teaching. In the mind of many educators, item teaching, curriculum teaching and teaching to the test are synonymous.

According to (Wondifraw, 2021:1) there are many problems investigated concerning assessment of learning. The study findings secondary schools revealed that the majority of students are actively engaged in most academic cheating behaviors with a prevalence rate of about 80%. It was also found that the majority of students exhibit higher tolerance for most forms of academic cheating behaviors which were evidenced by their lower perceptions of the seriousness of the behaviors. The causes of unethical activity according to him were less probability of being caught and the absence of severe punishment were found to be the major reasons that students gave to justify their engagement in academic cheating. So, this implies students' attitude towards assessment is one hindering factor of curriculum implementation.

Wafubwa (2021) researched the challenges of Kenya curriculum reform of basic education concerning assessment. The findings of the study showed that the Kenyan assessment framework is too sketchy and cannot give clear guidance to teachers. There was also a lack of an assessment culture that could enable teachers to effectively carry out formative assessment practices. Based on findings, researchers recommended the need for curriculum developers to provide a clear and elaborate assessment framework for teachers, train teachers on constructive assessment use, and offer teachers with an effective support system.

B. Curriculum Implementation Problems Related To Students

Teachers, principals and students agreed on some of the problems related with students which hinder or enhance the effects of implementation of curriculum in middle education. Most frequently discussed problems related with students in the curriculum implementation in the personal interview, focus group discussion and reported in open ended questionnaire items were summarized as below.

- Students' diverse characteristics (age, gender, location like rural and urban, economic activity of parents, educational level of parents and students learning difficulty and learning style);
- Insufficient students' motivation (motivation for learning, attitude and skills towards study at home and library, interest to make positive relationship with other students and teachers to improve academic performance by cooperation and collaboration);
- Lack of student encouragement (absence of future oriented vision that makes students involvement in school curriculum weak, creating boundary between school curriculum and socioeconomic and cultural activities); and
- Students negative attitudes towards schooling poor attendance.

According to the study of Ozcan(2021), factors affecting students' academic achievement are family education level, intellectual and motivation dimensions, school's physical conditions of students, motivation and creativity; school management; school environment, social effects and socio-economic effects; teacher affects students' academic success in terms professional competence, communication, attitude, motivation and guidance. To some extent these are consistent with findings of this study identified issues in the case of curriculum implementation effects. In short, factors affecting academic achievement also affect the effects of implementation of curriculum called learning outcome.

C. Curriculum Implementation Problems Related To Curriculum

Curriculum implementation problems related to curriculum was consequential from conceptualization of curriculum, practice related with instructional activities, models in which curriculum developed, the manner in which we conceptualize implementation of curriculum. Research conducted schools were used nationally developed curriculum and regionally or in the case of some subjects nationally prepared/developed textbooks at school level. The summary of response of study participated at school level stakeholders with little difference and major commonalities explained problems related to curriculum. These are shortage of textbooks and teachers guide (absence of teacher guide subjects for some subjects in each school); alignment issues between contents included in textbook and period allowed per week/year or (time restriction for curriculum implementation); alignment between teachers professional development and curriculum development; absence of formally written school curriculum policy; low level parents involvement in government/public schools; and giving more attention to prepare students for national examinations.

There are studies which verify or complement the findings of this study with some degree of differences. Areas of the study are curriculum materials development, accessibility of instructional resources, and theory of learning. According previous studies, the availability and quality of resource material and the availability of appropriate facilities have a great influence on curriculum implementation (Chaudhary, 2015); using comprehensive principles of curricular materials development (Fan ,2010); implication for school curriculum policy importance of content inclusion from local and national context (Sisay & Enguda, 2022), and applying constructivist theory of learning in curriculum implementation improve learning outcome (Majiwa, 2020:115). These all are aspects of curriculum and it has shown that there are various activities expected from

school level implementers and national curriculum policy developers.

There are external contextual influences during times of curriculum reform for teachers regarding curriculum use. Curriculum reform is often described as being dependent on teachers' advancement of reform principles. There are four distinct influences on their curriculum use: the provision of professional development; curriculum and leadership roles; use of alternative or additional materials; and schools' prioritization of particular learning areas (Bradfield and Exley, 2020: 757). The findings demonstrate that the consistent use of these curriculum materials, as intended by designers, was appreciably influenced by factors external to the teachers. Findings of the study will have implications for curriculum designers to include the need for greater consideration of external contextual influences, such as: opportunities for teachers to access professional development, consideration of curriculum roles within schools, the thoughtful provision of additional or alternate curriculum materials, and recognition of the prioritization of particular learning areas by schools.

D . Curriculum implementation problems related to schools.

Common things in the case of formal curriculum wherever curriculum develops (national, regional, district and school), its implementation's final destination is school and classroom. So, the school level human and nonhuman resource and interaction between resources will play a very great role in the implementation of curriculum. Although the levels of problems related to school in the implementation of curriculum differ there are some similarities with status variation. The observation of school facilities, resources and discussion with each study participant school teachers and principals revealed some of the problems shared among four schools.

School related factors hindering or enabling curriculum implementation in the case of selected primary schools were schools' deficiency of resources, lack of materials, and lack of facilities; inadequate financial support for training; external pressures on curriculum implementation (church, politics, state etc.); low involvement teachers in curriculum development (similar in all schools study conducted); shortage of communities support (similar in all schools study conducted); inadequate infrastructure in schools (variation among schools); high teacher turn over (variations in the case of rural and urban schools); and influence of hidden curriculum manifestation (differentiating instruction to reduce issues related with learning style, disability, and other form of diversity).

The research findings of effects of extracurricular or co-curricular activities on students' motivation to learn were implied that the more students participate in extra-curricular activities, the more their learning motivation increases. Therefore, participation in extracurricular activities enhanced the learning motivation for students in schools under investigation. (Machunde and Ilomo, 2022: P89). But their practices at study conducted schools were low. In general, the findings of this study are consistent with school related factors hindering the implementation of curriculum conducted by Asrat (2020).

Challenges of this study were also similarity with china curriculum reform in the case of assessment of learning. The examination-oriented education system was conducted in China which was dominant in previous times and currently practically most of the countries educational practice has not detached from it including my country Ethiopia. According to (Linyuan, 2012:88), teaching and learning in Chinese schools has traditionally focused on helping students achieve good exam scores in standardized tests at various levels. The emphasis on exams contributed to the content-oriented and teacher-centered nature of educational practices in China and left a lasting effect on teachers' professional identities. It is traditionally believed by Chinese people that knowledge lay in the teacher and the texts, and the teacher's role was that of expert and lecturer, giving definitive interpretations of the texts. Students are expected to obtain all the required knowledge and skills from teachers and the texts. But theoretically in Ethiopia, continuous formative assessment, learner-centered method of teaching and reforms like competency based curriculum models have been extensively discussed in different documents more than decade but practically the study revealed still now there is confusion.

With this study making a base it is possible to remedial action to improve practice for further improvement of curricular process in the study employed schools. Thus, the problems were determined and necessary measures should be taken by teachers, educators and administrators to improve the learning outcome of students which is the effects of curriculum implementation.

E-Problems Related to Instructional Leadership and Supervision

One of factors influencing the effectiveness of curriculum development in general and curriculum implementation in particular is instructional supervision at school and classroom level. It can be employed by senior teachers of department/stream, school level inbuilt instructional supervision committee, cluster supervisor and educators assigned to supervise from districts and higher educational structure like ministry of education.

Data collected by using open-ended questionnaire items, interviews and FGD with selected school teachers, school principals and cluster supervisors implied some good practices and challenges regarding the areas of supervision and preparation to supervise. Most frequently discussed and reported importance and area of attachment were teaching learning process problem-solving skills; improving communication skills; skills in building upon strengths of staff members; skills in how to perceive teachers in the classroom; skill how to develop instruments to evaluate curricular and instructional materials and its actual practice; identifying the relationship

between teaching and learning; how to analyses teaching; and developing skills to solve complex problems related with instruction.

Purpose of instructional supervision will be directly or indirectly to contribute some effects in pedagogical practices at school and classroom level. The school level document review indicated that there are different structured supervision mechanisms; check-list for supervision; and documents or file of feedback provided to school from educators after supervising/monitoring school performance. Study participant teachers were reported on their views on classroom observations in case of limitations or low level of supervision. Some of areas regarding instructional supervision discussed as challenges in study showed that schools were: limitations on senior or head teachers observing junior teachers process of teaching; weak tendencies in the giving immediate feedback after the lesson observation; and culture of discussion before observation and after observation classroom instructional process to improve practices.

Findings of the study were consistent with previously conducted study in the case of instructional leadership and supervision. The school principal is the pivot of curriculum and instructional process in the school (Osman and Mukuna, 2013). The principal's instructional leadership behavior should have much more immediate influence on the internal structure of the school than the external. Teshome and Endale (2019) were conducted in Ethiopia, selecting secondary schools concerning instructional supervision. The findings of the study indicated that supervisory activity was not employed as expected. On the other hand, instructional supervisors faced different challenges that influenced effective implementation of supervision. These were: problem in selecting and assigning right persons as instructional supervisor, lack of supervision manuals, lack of adequate budget, facilities and materials, resistance of teachers to supervision due to lack of awareness for teachers in importance of supervision, excessive workloads of principals and lack of right training for supervisors.

Similar study conducted regarding instructional supervision in Ethiopia primary schools has also shown similar gaps. Results showed deficiencies in supports provided by supervisors to teachers in the three areas (teaching principles, teaching methods, and professional development) The study suggests that in teaching and learning activities, supervisory support plays a very significant role in empowering teachers and contributing to improvements (Eshetu, 2020). So, the quality of teaching depends to some extent on the quality of supervision practices.

But at school level there were strengths in the case of teachers' role even if there were differences among schools and teachers. Teachers' views on portfolio supervision were discussed with teachers. Some strong sides were heads of department who always review the lesson plans weekly; heads of department usually moderate the tests and examinations; head teacher usually reviews the record of students' marks; CPD coordinator regularly reviews record of work or portfolio; and questions prepared for grade 8 students tutorial provision.

Teachers' perceptions on their pedagogical practices have a great role in the implementation of curriculum. At school level teachers' involvement have its own contribution wherever the curricula are prepared/developed because they are first line implementers. The summary of open ended questionnaire items report and interview response of teachers indicated major activities of curriculum and instruction done by teachers in good approaches. These are preparing yearly and weekly (some subjects' daily/session) lesson plan; considering student's prior knowledge before beginning new lesson; using real life examples to teach and relating lessons with daily experience of community; and revising homework exercises with students;

Thus the activities of teachers incorporated planning, instructional method, using locally available resources and knowledge as instructional media, and assessment of learning. But classroom observation of some selected teachers indicated that there are weaknesses in the implementation or actual practice in the classroom. For instance, from 28 classroom teaching learning observations seven teachers tried to contextualize instruction effectively and the other or 75% were more attempted to teach what was included in the textbook as it was based on a rigidity approach. Although teachers reported that they employed various methods of teaching, the low level of students involvement and few students participation reveal that active learning methods were not practiced as expected and recommended at policy level.

Instructional leadership is one of factors supporting or hampering the implementation of curriculum. In the case of primary and secondary schools most of the time in Ethiopia the duties and responsibilities of instructional leadership has been considered as principals and vice or deputy principals' activities but existing practice implies several other sub-committee of teachers are components of instructional leadership. At school level the style of leadership and theory of leadership applied has its own contribution to run educational processes in general and curricular activities in particular.

Principals and vice principals roles were discussed with informants of the research. Some of the performances conducted by principals who improve the practice of curriculum were discussed with purposely selected teachers and principals. Some of most frequently reported were included that principal meets monthly with entire teaching staff to discuss instructional improvement or lack of it; principal monitors lesson plans; principal uses appropriate supervisory techniques like classroom visitation to ensure improved teaching and learning; principal meets with student directly to discuss instructional techniques and related challenges; and principals discuss informally and

formally with teachers success and challenges related with curriculum.

According to Ambissa (2014:50) school principals have an immense role to play in making sure that the curriculum is adapted to the situation of the child. For instance, the school principal's primary responsibility is to promote the learning and success of all students. Important among the roles educational leaderships at various levels play in curriculum contextualization is providing policy back-up and professional support for teachers. In fact, it can be argued that teachers' role in effectively contextualizing the curriculum is largely a function of effective leadership support. And both contextualization and fidelity of implementation are highly related with teachers' professional competency and belief.

F. Curriculum Implementation Problems Related to Parents

School principals and teachers explained their opinion concerning parental involvement in curriculum implementation. According to research participants report the roles expected from parents and actually involvements have very great gaps. Summary of discussion was implied that major parts of parents have limitations in monitoring students to study at home and doing assignments; visiting school to observe how students learn and deficiency of resources; giving positive feedback and gaining teachers and the principal for effective curriculum delivery and providing suggestions in the areas of weaknesses evaluated; and low tendencies in making discussion under students learning outcomes like academic achievement, disciplinary issues and strategies to improve quality of education.

Previously conducted study findings abroad corroborate the findings disclosed in this study concerning parental involvement. Effective curriculum implementation requires the concerted efforts of schools and associations especially the Parents. The study of Nigeria schools reveals that parents make very little involvement in curriculum implementation (Olibie, 2013:49). The Findings of the study researcher suggested some ways to improve parents' involvement. These are designing and implementing strategies that will result in improved parental involvement; mobilizing the parents towards participating in schools' curriculum implementation; making meetings and conferences on the need for their interest in schools; and curriculum implementation and sponsoring schools' extracurricular activities.

On the other hand, parents' understanding about curriculum reform also hinders their involvement in the curriculum implementation. The research finding of study in the involvement of parents in thematic curriculum implementation implied there are challenges in remote area schools of Indonesia. The study found that the teachers' lack of understanding of thematic curriculum and the lack of parental involvement are the main challenges of this curriculum implementation (Ghunu, 2022:9). This study suggests that providing teachers' learning environment and creating PTA meetings might maximize the potential of thematic curriculum implementation in elementary schools in remote areas. Accordingly, the thematic curriculum is defined as a learning method that integrates attitudes, skills, knowledge, learning value, and creative thinking using themes in the learning process.

Observation of Classroom Instructional Process

Prior to the observations, the researchers came together to discuss and clarify the focus of the observations with each teacher according to schedule. At the outset, it was made clear that the researchers would take detailed notes of the whole teaching and learning process, but pay extra attention to teaching and learning methods/techniques, teacher and student roles, analyzing lesson or elements of lesson with daily experience of students, interaction, use of instructional media and materials and finally the distribution of power which are considered as the main dimensions of student-centered learning approach. After the observations, the field notes were compared and further discussed by the researchers.

All teachers have a similar status with some degree of variation in activities like preparing lesson plans, arranging the objectives of learning, applying all steps on scientific approach, few students participation asking and answering questions, and using government books as the main source of curriculum delivery. From total teachers observed one-third were tried to adapt lessons by giving local examples and relating educational experience with community socio-economic activity, using local materials as teaching aids and illustrating the lesson to surrounding things. Finally, all teachers' sessions were observed as weaknesses in the case of saying some related to modern technologies output integration. The method/s of teaching implemented was more inclined to the teacher-centered method which contradicts their acceptance of active learning methods and presented in lesson plan.

Empirical evidence of classroom instruction observation indicated that still now major parts of teachers employ lecture or explanation methods of teaching. There are study findings that validate it. Implementation of inquiry-based practical activities in primary schools was researched. The study showed that inquiry-based practical activities in science subjects are not implemented; teachers and students are not aware of the implementation of practical activities through inquiry-based strategies (Azeb, et, al., 2022). . Some of reasons were explored by researchers as hindering factors for practice were lack of professional training for teachers and laboratory technicians; lack of materials and facilities, absence of motivation and guiding of students learning, lack of teachers' commitment; and absence of science and technology companies to see the practice were found to be the major factors affecting the implementation of practical activities in science classes in the primary schools under the study.

Conclusions and Implications

Major findings of the study implied that the implementation of curriculum did not attain its purpose as expected in the case of study conducted schools. According to triangulated analysis of data and overall finding of data, problems related to human resources (teachers, students, principals, parents and leaders or supervisors of schools), curriculum and schools influenced the status of curriculum implementation. This will be implied to solve challenges of human and materials resources of the school to improve relevance and quality of curriculum implementation by making cooperation and collaboration among school level stakeholders.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors in the case of this research activity

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