ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION OF CCMAS CURRICULUM OF BUSINESS EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of government in implementation of CCMAS curriculum of Business Education and Entrepreneurship Education in the South-East region of Nigeria. The study used secondary data. The secondary data were collected from both print and online publications. Content analysis was used to analyze the selection of literature for the study. The paper concluded that adequate funding of CCMAS, provision of modern infrastructure facilities, training and retraining of academic staff, supervision and motivation of academic staff are identified as the roles of the government in the implementation of CCMAS in Nigerian universities. Based on the findings of this study, the paper recommends among other things that the Federal Government of Nigeria should ensure effective supervision of human and material resources for effective implementation of CCMAS in all public universities in South-East Nigeria.

Keywords: *Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS), Government, Curriculum, Business Education, Entrepreneurship Education, Public universities.*

Introduction

University education is more than the next level in the learning process; it is a critical component of human development worldwide. University education is an advanced education in teaching, research and community service. The role of university education is germane in enhancing the socio-economic development of society. According to Ogunode, Ayeni, and Ogwuche (2024), university education is post-secondary school education that embraces advanced teaching, research and community service. According to Emeasoba and Nwatalari (2021), Business Education at university level is concerned mainly with the development of relevant saleable skills and knowledge that would enable an individual to function effectively in the world of works. The goals of university education according to the FGN National Policy on Education (2014), shall be to: contribute to national development through high-level manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; provide high-quality career counselling and lifelong learning programme that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of

work; reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market; promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service; forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction. This development enhances effectiveness in both an organization and in society. Consequent upon the noble role of university education to national development, the National Universities Commission is a commission of the Federal Government of Nigeria empowered to regulate and formulate policies for the universities in Nigeria. To strengthen the curriculum of Nigerian universities, the commission has introduced different forms of curriculum for the past three decades. Minimum Academic Standards (MAS forthwith), Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS forthwith) and CCMAS are some of the curricula developed so far.

Curriculum development and implementation are central to achieving educational goals and national development objectives. In Nigeria, the recent introduction of the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) by the National Universities Commission (NUC) marks a significant reform in higher education, aimed at ensuring uniformity, relevance and quality in academic programmes across universities (NUC, 2022). In keeping with its mandate of making university education in Nigeria more responsive to the needs of society, the National Universities Commission commenced the journey to restructure the BMAS in 2018, introducing in its place, the CCMAS, to reflect the 21st-century realities, in the existing and new disciplines and programmes in the Nigerian University System. The CCMAS framework was developed to replace the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS), with a more flexible structure that allows universities to adapt up to 30% of the content to local and institutional needs while ensuring that 70% of the curriculum is standardized nationally (Eze, 2023).The new CCMAS is a product of sustained stakeholder interactions over two years.

According to Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards for the Nigerian University System (CCMAS) (2023) Business Education is offered through four distinct options: Accounting, Marketing/distributive, Office Management and Entrepreneurship. Office Management Education is an integral component of Business Education programme offered in colleges of education, polytechnics and universities primarily to educate and train students to become competent office managers as well as Business Educators. Office Management Education is a productive and functional form of education which leads to self-employment, self-reliance and self-realisation. It came into being to replace secretarial students programme when it is found to be inadequate for the demand of information age. It equips graduates to manage the electronic drive office, equipped with secretarial and office skills for employment in various fields of endeavor, enable students to understand electronic data processing systems and demonstrating working knowledge of different modern telecommunication equipment, exposes students to and its functions, organization structure such as handing of mails, communication in the office, helps recipients in document processing in order to develop speed and accuracy by using computer to create and format documents. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) stated that Office Technology and Management education is an aspect of vocational and technical education which demands that students must demonstrate appropriate skills. This behoves on Business Educators to use the right competency in teaching and learning so that the graduates of OTM will be knowledgeable and skillful.

Accounting as a discipline is offered at different levels of tertiary institutions with the aim of equipping the recipients with skills required for teaching, working as accounting officers or accountants or auditors and/or self-practicing accountant. Accounting finds application in almost all fields of endeavor where resources are committed to the pursuit of specific objectives. Accounting aids the fulfillment of organization objectives to promote efficiency by periodic financial information which improves and impacts on decision making (CCMAS, 2023). Marketing or Distributive education is a programme of occupational instruction in marketing and distribution. Distributive and marketing occupation are present in all retail, wholesale and manufacturing enterprises in personal and business service firms, in finance, real estate, transportation and communication business. It helps in development of marketable skills which will lead to successful employment upon graduation, acquire personal characteristics to be a successful worker or business man, providing and occupational orientation to the business world and the Nigerian economic

system through a combination of classroom instruction and direct experience. Entrepreneurial is a programme that exposes students to the characteristics of an entrepreneur, opportunity seeking, new value creation, risk taking and importance of small and medium size businesses in wealth creation, employment and financial independence, elements in innovation, enterprise formation, partnerships and networking businesses, basic principles of electronic business and electronic commerce (CCMAS, 2023).

The frequent urge to change university education curricula in line with the global best practices and the current level of tertiary education informs the current study. Business Education and Entrepreneurship Education occupy strategic positions within this reform, as both are vital in producing graduates equipped with the skills, knowledge, and entrepreneurial competencies necessary for self-reliance, innovation, and contributions to the nation's socio-economic development (Okoye & Ezenwafor, 2021). The effective implementation of the CCMAS curriculum in these disciplines requires a combination of policy support, adequate funding, infrastructural development, professional training for lecturers, and monitoring mechanisms. These responsibilities largely rest with the government, which acts through the NUC, the Federal Ministry of Education, and other relevant agencies (Abubakar, 2023).

Government plays a critical role in the effective implementation of the CCMAS not only as the regulator but also as a provider of funding, infrastructure, training, and policy direction. Through the NUC and relevant ministries, government oversight ensures that public universities adopt the revised curriculum, upgrade instructional facilities, and provide professional development for lecturers to deliver the new content effectively (Onah & Chijioke, 2023). In the context of Business and Entrepreneurship Education, this role is particularly important because these fields require both theoretical knowledge and practical, hands-on experiences to develop entrepreneurial competencies (Adebayo & Oladipo, 2023).

In South East Nigeria, the implementation of the CCMAS curriculum faces unique opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, the region is known for its strong entrepreneurial culture and vibrant commercial activities, which could provide practical platforms for embedding entrepreneurship skills in university programmes (Ike & Nwosu, 2022). On the other hand, public universities in the region often grapple with inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, irregular policy execution, and limited access to modern teaching resources, which may hinder the intended impact of the curriculum (Okafor & Ume, 2023). Moreover, successful implementation demands a coordinated approach where government policies translate into actionable support for universities, including the provision of ICT facilities, modern laboratories, industry linkages, and continuous curriculum review mechanisms.

In the context of South East Nigeria, public universities face unique challenges in implementing curriculum reforms. These include inadequate funding, shortage of qualified personnel, limited access to modern teaching facilities, bureaucratic delays, and inconsistent policy enforcement (Okafor & Nwankwo, 2022). The government's role becomes even more critical, as its actions—or inactions—directly influence the quality of curriculum delivery, availability of resources, and capacity-building initiatives for academic staff. The success of the CCMAS in Business and Entrepreneurship Education therefore depends on sustained governmental commitment in areas such as curriculum dissemination, provision of ICT infrastructure, lecturer retraining, and quality assurance (Ezenwafor & Ezeani, 2023).

The CCMAS also requires a shift in pedagogical approaches—from traditional lecture-based delivery to active, student-centered, and project-based learning. For this shift to occur, government intervention is essential in organizing regular training and capacity-building programmes for academic staff in Business and Entrepreneurship Education (Onwumere & Eze, 2024). Without such interventions, the curriculum may remain on paper, with little impact on graduates' readiness for self-employment and job creation. This study is necessitated by the fact that the National Universities Commission started the implementation of the CCMAS in the 2023/2024 academic session in all Nigerian universities. It is important to examine the roles

of the government in the implementation of the CCMAS in universities in South-East Nigeria to assure its effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

The National Universities Commission (NUC) recently replaced the old Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) with the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) to make university programmes more responsive to 21st-century skills. This is to reflect the 21st Century realities, in the existing and new disciplines and programmes in the Nigerian University System. The aim of Business Education programme is to equip its recipients with relevant business and innovative skills in order to make them self-reliant in today's business world, complete globally with its counterparts and succeed in it. The CCMAS rollout represents a major national reform intended to standardize learning outcomes, ensure industry relevance and strengthen graduate employability across Nigerian universities. Despite these national ambitions, early evidence from Nigerian higher-education contexts indicates a substantial gap between CCMAS policy intent and on-the-ground implementation—especially for vocationally oriented programmes such as Business Education and Entrepreneurship Education. Studies across the country have repeatedly documented practical barriers: inadequate physical and technological infrastructure, shortages of trained academic staff, insufficient funding, weak industry linkage for experiential learning, a predominance of theoretical instruction over practical skill development, and resistance to curricular change among staff and institutions (Bremer et al, 2023) These constraints have limited the capacity of universities to deliver business and entrepreneurship education that actually produces job creators rather than job seekers. Many of its graduates are unemployed roaming around the streets when they are supposed to be entrepreneurs contributing to sustainable development.

In the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria—an area with a strong culture of small- and medium-scale enterprise and a pressing need to convert graduate numbers into productive employment—the challenge is particularly acute. Recent empirical work on the new Business Education curriculum in the South-East found that alignment with current industry needs, outdated infrastructure, limited funding, inadequate staffing and resistance to change are among the most significant obstacles to effective curriculum implementation of CCMAS (Nebolisa, 2024). The critical unanswered question is: what specific roles of government actors (federal, state and supervisory agencies) facilitate effective CCMAS implementation in these programmes at public universities in South-East Nigeria? Without clear empirical answers to this question, policymakers risk persisting with reforms that remain policy on paper, while students continue to graduate with skills-gaps and limited entrepreneurial capacity. Thus, the objective of this study is to investigate the role of government in the implementation of the CCMAS in public universities in South East Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework:

This study employed social role theory. Role theory was propounded by Ralf Dahrendorf, Robert K Merton and Gorge Herbert Mead in 1956. Role theory proposes that human behavior is guided by expectations held by both the individual and other people (Osadebe, 2014). A social role refers to the behaviors and responsibilities expected of individuals in society. In terms of gender, social roles prescribe certain behaviors to men and women. These roles are known as gender roles. Women's gender roles, or social roles for women, include mother, caretaker, and helper. Men's gender roles or social roles for men include breadwinner, protector, and leader. Role theory is the theory that an individual's behavior is the performance of roles that are organized into categories defined by society. Individuals aim to meet these

roles, which encompass certain expectations, responsibilities, and behaviors. People perform gender roles daily, meaning that their behaviors are shaped by societal expectations for them depending on their gender. The implication of this theory in this study is that the government has a specific role to play in ensuring the full implementation of the new CCMAS in all the universities as planned. The government has a specific role of providing adequate funding, infrastructure facilities, supervision and training for the implementer of the curriculum in the universities. Scholars have argued that the inability of the governance system or structure to perform its roles is also hurting the educational system (Ogunode et al., 2024. Actors of governance are public officeholders who carry out government functions.

The theory is relevant to this study because a government that plays a prominent role in the implementation of CCMAS are people in the society that are expected to perform certain roles for the socio-economic development of the society.

Method

The role of the Nigerian government in the implementation of CCMAS in South-east Nigerian Public universities is a position paper. Secondary data were adopted for the study. The systematic review method was used to select literature online and on print materials. The study utilized content analysis to select literature for the final study.

Roles of the government in the implementation of the CCMAS in Nigerian universities include:

i. **Adequate funding of CCMAS**: One of the roles of the federal and state governments in the implementation of CCMAS in Public universities in South-East Nigeria is to provide adequate funds. The reason is that money is the lifeblood of every organization or society (Ayeni,et al, 2018). Ogunode et al. (2023) maintained that adequate funding is critical for the development of any public institution. Adequate funding is the key to the achievement of the institution's goals. Adequate funding is the life wire of any organization. No meaningful impact institutions can attain without adequate funding. Studies have shown that public institutions exceed their mandate when they are adequately funded by the government (Ayeni et al., 2018).Implementing CCMAS effectively in all universities requires a lot of financial commitment. So, the government have a critical role in providing funds for the procurement of both human and material resources that have been outlined in the policy guidelines for the implementation of the CCMAS. Ogunode et al. (2023) observed that the government must improve the funding of the universities for smooth implementation of the CCMAS to realize its objectives. Musa (2023) noted that the only way to implement the CCMAS as planned is for the government should implement the UNESCO 15% - 20% recommendation for developing countries like Nigeria.

ii. **Provision of modern infrastructure facilities**: Massive infrastructural development provides a suitable environment and support for the development of entrepreneurship skills and industrialization (Ayeni et al., 2022; Emeasoba, 2018).Infrastructural facilities are facilities aiding the delivery of academic and non-academic services in educational institutions. Infrastructural facilities include; libraries, laboratories, halls, offices, administrative blocks, hostels, road facilities, water, electricity, internet among others. The availability of infrastructural facilities in adequate quantities will support the effective administration of educational institutions. The above is being validated by the fact that infrastructural development enhances human security (Ayeni et al., 2022). Therefore, the government must also provide adequate modern infrastructure facilities in all the universities if the CCMAS are to be fully and well implemented as planned and designed in all the universities Ogunode et al 2023) viewed infrastructure facilities refer to social capital within the

school environment. They include school buildings/complexes such as classrooms, tables, exam halls, chairs, auditoria, desks, staff offices, seminar/conference/board rooms, laboratories, workshops, studios, farms, gymnasia, central libraries, specialized/professional libraries, faculty libraries, departmental libraries, among others. Institute/centers' specialized facilities e.g. ICT infrastructure, special laboratories, conference facilities, and Boards e.g. interactive, magnetic, screen and chalk, etc., ICT that is computer laboratories and services, network connectivity, multimedia system, public address system, slide, and video projectors, and Ergonomics furnishing in laboratories, libraries, and lecture rooms/theatres, moot courts, and studios. Ogunode et al. (2023) opined that curriculum implementation needs adequate infrastructure facilities for smooth implementation. The foregoing is on the premise that infrastructural development has intended and unintended benefits to the youth (Ayeni et al., 2022). The government must ensure all facilities needed for the implementation of the CCMAS in all South-East Public universities are provided for effective implementation. Musa (2023) observed that CCMAS is a blended curriculum model, so, the government should ensure the provision of ICT, digital facilities and infrastructure facilities in all the universities across the country. Abubakar (2023) maintained that the government must also ensure the provision of quality internet services because the implementation of CCMAS requires hybrid learning. Even though the role of infrastructure in the implementation of CCMAS in Nigerian universities is inevitable, there is doubt if the federal government of Nigeria can provide the needed infrastructural facilities for the implementation of CCMAS.

iii. **Training and retraining of academic staff:** Training and retraining programmes are very important in the implementation of new curricula in higher institutions like universities. Ogunode et al. (2022) defined staff training as a program that is designed to equip employees with the knowledge and skills that they need to perform their jobs and improve their performance. It often occurs when new staff join an organization (also known as the onboarding process) but can also be part of a commitment to ongoing training and development that many organizations offer their employees. According to Amana, Edinoh and Zulaihatu (2024), training and retraining programme is a very critical aspects of curriculum implementation. The study concluded that training and retraining programmes are vital for the effective implementation of CCMAS in all the universities in Nigeria. The objectives of training according to Ogunode et al. (2023) include; to erupt teachers, non-teaching staff and school administrators with intellectual knowledge, manual skills and problem-solving skills. Generally, training is meant to improve staff professional skills and knowledge. Training enables staff to gain the knowledge required to perform their duties while contributing to organizational development. These can be achieved through access to education that is expected to empower people to enable them to provide for their basic needs (Ayeni et al., 2019; Emeasoba & Nwatarali, 2021). These training programs are designed to help staff learn different skill sets to perform their daily tasks efficiently, improve overall performance, develop efficiency in their job, and avoid violations of laws and regulations. By providing comprehensive training and support, schools can ensure that teachers are productive and engaged, which leads to greater retention and job satisfaction over time. The government through the National Universities Commission should ensure the various training planned for all academic staff in the universities are executed as planned because without adequate training the new CCMAS cannot be effectively been implemented. The government through the NUC should ensure that academic staff are well-trained for the implementation of the new CCMAS in all Nigerian universities. Monday (2022) stated that

the government should ensure an effective capacity development programme for the implementer of the new CCMAS.

iv. **Supervision:** Supervision is dependent on leadership. Thus, scholars have posited that the extent of success or failure of any human society or organization has its roots in leadership at all levels (Muhammed & Ayeni, 2018). The government also has the role of ensuring effective supervision of the implementation of the new CCMAS in all the universities. Supervision is an organized programme meant to give direction, guidance and control to an individual, organization, or institution to improve their performance and ensure they are doing the right things. Supervision is carried out in all forms of educational institutions including higher institutions. Higher institution supervision is more advanced and complex because the institutions are advanced institutions that deal with teaching, researching and provision of community services. University supervision according to Ogunode et al (2022) is the process of improving the performance of the universities through the provision of professional guidance to school administrators and academics. University supervision is the process of helping universities realize their objectives through the formulation of policies and ensuring the implementation of such policies. Universities supervision deals with ensuring that universities comply with the various policies and directives for the development of the universities. The objectives of university supervision include: realizing the objectives of the universities, ensuring the delivery of quality education, guiding the university administrators and managers, helping improve the university system ranking and ensuring quality assurance in the system. The supervision of the Universities in Nigeria takes two forms. The external and the internal supervision. The external is through the National Universities Commission while the internal is through the school administrators. For effective implementation of the CCMAS in the universities, the government must take the issue of supervision seriously. The government should ensure NUCs are adequately funded to supervise the implementation of the CCMAS in all universities. Supervision is very important for the implementation of the new curriculum like the CCMAS. The NUC should ensure all universities adhere to the policies and guidelines for the implementation of the CCMAS in all universities. The Vice-Chancellor, Deans and head of department also have a critical role in ensuring proper supervision of the CCMAS in all the universities, faculties and departments.

v. **Motivation of academic staff:** Another role the government has to play in the successful implementation of CCMAS in the universities across Nigeria is to motivate the academic staff to implement the new CCMAS. The academic staff are the implementers of the curriculum in the universities. According to Ogunode et al. (2023), the functions of the academic staff include; commitment to academic research, commitment to high-quality teaching and fostering a positive learning environment for students, commitment to continuous professional development and commitment to public communication. The professional skills of academic staff also include; excellent interpersonal, oral and written communication skills; the ability to conduct high-quality research which is reflected in the authorship of high quality; publications, or other research outputs, in the areas of computer science; ability to manage time and work to strict deadlines and ability to teach and to supervise academic work by undergraduates, masters' and doctoral students. Monday (2022) observed motivation of staff is very important in the implementation of new curricula like CCMAS. Abubakar (2023) ascertained that motivated staff will be willing to do everything legally to ensure programmes committed into their hands are well executed. Ogunode et al. (2023) opined that motivated staff can sacrifice a lot to ensure the implementation of the institutional programme.

So, the government should ensure academic staff are properly motivated by increasing their salaries, prompt payment of their salaries and earned allowances and promotion allowances. The government need to motivate all staff in the university system to aid effective implementation of the new CCMAS.

Findings:

The study showed that adequate funding of CCMAS, provision of modern infrastructure facilities, training and retraining of academic staff, supervision and motivation of academic staff are identified are the roles of the government in the implementation of CCMAS in the Nigerian universities.

Conclusion:

This paper examined the role of the government in the implementation of CCMAS in Public Universities in South-East Nigeria. The secondary data were gathered from print materials and online publications. The National Universities Commission saddled with the responsibilities of external supervision of the Universities in 2019 started the process of developing a new curriculum for the Nigerian universities which led to the development of CCMAS. The implementation of the CCMAS is designed to commence in the 2022/2023 academic session in all Nigerian universities. The implementation of the CCMAS is designed to involve critical stakeholders like the students, non-academic staff, academic staff, international institutions and the government.

The study identified adequate funding of the CCMAS, provision of modern infrastructure facilities, training and retraining of academic staff, and supervision and motivation of academic staff as the roles of the government in the implementation of CCMAS in Nigerian universities.

Suggestions:

Based on the findings of this study, the following suggestions were made:

i. The public universities in South-East region should be adequately funded by government to enable them in the implementation of the CCMAS.
ii. The National Universities Commission (NUC) should ensure every training and retraining programme planned is fully implemented at the national level and individual university levels for the smooth implementation of the CCMAS.
iii. The Federal Government of Nigeria through NUC should ensure effective supervision of the implementation of CCMAS in public universities in South-East Nigeria.

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