

**CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA UNIVERSITIES: THE  
PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS TOWARD ITS IMPACT ON COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT**

By

**FAMADE OLADIRAN AFOLAYAN**

*Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council*

*Lokoja-Kaduna Road Sheda Abuja*

*Email: [famadeoladiran@gmail.com](mailto:famadeoladiran@gmail.com)*

*Tel: +2347032162129*

**Abstract**

*Curriculum development, as a word and a concept, is an integral part of education systems. It is a sequence or series of coursework, within a particular area or content focus. The development of curriculum remains a value-laden process of determining what “should” be taught within the institutions of schools, given the social, cultural, political, and environmental influences upon the curriculum development process. Therefore, because university education assists the improvement of institutional, community and societal development through the training of competent and responsible professionals needed for sound macroeconomic and public sector management, it’s the focus of this paper to investigate teachers perception of university education Curriculum development and its’ Impact on Community Development. A descriptive research design was adopted while using a research instrument titled “Teachers Perception on the Impact of Tertiary Education Curriculum on Community Development Questionnaire (TPITECCDQ)” for data collection. Data were analyzed using simple percentages and Mean. The study revealed among others that in university education curriculum design structure, more emphasis should be tailored towards the content and delivery strategy which has greater chances of achieving the desired objective of a program. The paper came up with some relevant recommendations.*

**Keywords:** Curriculum Development, Nigerian Universities, Teachers, Community Development

---

**Introduction**

Education should not be considered a rare privileged but a right of every living being on the face of the earth. This is because it has lots of positive influence on the community where the receiver of education was born, the nation and the world at large. It is therefore a matter of necessity for all parents and guidance in any community to channel the mind of their wards to education because of its huge importance to community development; this could be either at the primary, toward secondary and finally the university level (Famade 2015). Therefore, in this paper emphasis will be placed on Curriculum Development in Nigerian University: the perception of teachers towards its Impact on Community Development.

University education has a critical role in supporting knowledge-driven economic growth strategies and the construction of democratic, socially cohesive societies. It assists the improvement of the institutional regime through the training of competent and responsible professionals needed for sound macroeconomic and public sector management. It’s academic and research activities provide crucial support for the national innovation system. It also constitutes the backbone of a country’s information infrastructure, in their role as repositories and conduits of information (through libraries and the like), computer network hosts, and Internet service providers. In addition, the norms, values, attitudes, and

ethics that university impart on students are the foundation of the social capital necessary for constructing healthy civil societies and cohesive cultures—the very bedrock of good governance and democratic political systems (Harrison and Huntington 2000). Harrison and Huntington further maintained that for University education to successfully fulfill their educational, research, and informational functions in the 21st century, it needs to be able to respond effectively to changing education and training needs, adapt to a rapidly shifting tertiary education landscape, and adopt more flexible modes of organization and operation.

### **University Education and Curriculum Development**

University education is a specialized and higher form of 'Education'. To properly define University education, we have to highlight the '*Essence of Education*', and '*University, including its purpose, traditions and sustaining values*'. The essence of informal and formal education is to produce a person who will be a useful member of a community and society at large. It must engender in the individual a disposition of personal autonomy, responsibility and relevant forms of life thought and action. It involves cultivating individual interest and potential since autonomy stands for ability to judge, act and think accurately as well as rationally (Babatola 2015).

Lockwood and Davies (1985) and Sanda (1992) stressed that the university is an organization being essentially, "a social grouping of human beings whose activities are coordinated and directed towards the achievement of specific goals". Kast and Rosenweig (1982) hold identical view when they perceive the university as "an ivory tower, with artificial barriers to interaction with the wider society". However, to Babatola (2015), he said traditionally, a University is not a business or profit-oriented organization because it differs from other forms of organizations. It is an academic community of students, teaching staff and non-teaching staff. It is an organization empowered by enabling law to manage its activities. Technically, the University enjoys a long standing tradition of academic freedom and operational autonomy and its enabling law is structured to guarantee same.

In discussing the University further, Christine Shrinn (1989) asserts that the culture and tradition of academic freedom and institutional autonomy are universally entrenched and cherished values, without which it is impossible for the university to achieve its customary goals of creating knowledge, transmitting knowledge, preserving knowledge and performing public service roles.' Babatola went further to assert that University is an academy of scholars, the highest and largest form of human and educational organization with traditions and models of excellence and expertise in faculties and specialization. Three distinguishing values of University tradition globally revolve around autonomy, teaching-learning and culture (character), which have a very big influence on the community and its development.

University education is therefore an input and end-product of highly endowed scholarship and well organized academic instruction to knowledge, science (methods) and culture. It is tailored by the largest forms of specialized human organization for the sole aim of having a better world through community development. Therefore for all these to be achieved, it must be through a well structured curriculum that is capable of delivering the mandate of university education system.

Curriculum development on the other hand as a word and a concept, is an integral part of the nations' education system, used with varying connotations and interpretations. It can be associated with state standards or developed by committees of teachers and administrators at the national level. Regardless of the "official" origin of the curriculum as a document or the exact definition of curriculum applied, curriculum or courses of study in Nigeria universities and their development are not unique to all institutions, the curricula that is actually delivered at the classroom level is directly associated with the classroom teacher/ lecturer in question in a particular institution. Even if the same course is to be taught in another session by another lecturer, the only thing that remains constant is the course outline while the structure, content, teaching method and the delivery techniques changes day in day out. Whereas

according to (Dawn 2003) Curriculum is defined as a sequence or series of coursework, its method of teaching and the delivery terminologies within a particular area or content focus. The development of curriculum becomes a value-laden process of determining what “should” be taught, the structure, content and the teaching method remain important within the institution, given the social, cultural, political, and environmental influences upon this curriculum development process.

Beauchamp (1982) supports this notion of curriculum when he states that curriculum can be a “written plan depicting the scope and arrangement of the projected education program for a school and the basic environmental structure from which teachers are to develop teaching strategies for specific classroom groups. It is at this point we can begin to see the cultural (Community) and political (Government) influences upon curriculum by the value judgments placed upon what “should” be taught. As Chandler (1992) asserts, that the word “should” is a valued based decision” Hence, we see the duality of curriculum. First, its contents are based upon developers’ value judgments, and second, its delivery and reception is based upon the values of the teachers (lecturers), students, and community in question. Therefore since teachers’ perception is based upon the values of the teachers, their perception towards the implementation of this curriculum and its attendant impact on the community development will be the focus of this study.

Teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process revealed that they have perceptions of the technical aspects and the affective aspects of the curriculum development process. The first two technical aspects of the curriculum development process are that curriculum development as it has been influenced by external and internal factors. Whereas the third is about how teachers’ perceive the process to contain elements of negotiation and deliberation. Lastly, the perception emerged that the curriculum development process includes a series of steps; steps that are not always sequential or linear. Collectively, these are the teachers’ perceptions of the technical aspects of the curriculum development process.

On the other hand, teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process also include affective aspects. The first aspect entertained the connectivity of higher education curriculum planers and the need for concentration on the community to enhance development, how policy makers/stakeholders in charge of University education in Nigeria are not adequately prepared to address community development in their curriculum design and also how University education curricula are just highlighting factual subject matter rather than practical of each discipline that has the rudiment to enhance community development, why there is no regular changes in the structure of University curriculum to accommodate changes in the society, the issue of non dynamic curriculum to deal with issue of youth restiveness and unemployment and the perception of teachers towards how innovation in higher education curriculum is capable of enhancing community peaceful co-existence etc needs a thorough consideration as stated by Wagner (2013) when he asserted that no community can develop without first developing the curriculum that is used to teach members of those community as the resultant effect of what is learnt in the university is what is felt in the society. It is this phenomenon of the curriculum development process and the varying perspective of the teachers to ascertain curriculum impact on the community that forms the topic of this study

The four basic dimensions of any educational program are;

- i. the goals or function
- ii. the content
- iii. the structure
- iv. the methods

If an approach is to be effective, all four dimensions must be functionally integrated, and consistent with the underlying processes through which they interact to form a whole. That is, each

dimension must be mutually reinforcing of each of the other dimensions if the total educational experience is to be cumulative and integrative for the students in order to achieve such sound, unified interrelatedness which requires close attention to underlying processes of education curriculum (Lam, 2012). This brought us to the necessity of the concept of university education curriculum. Although conventionally it refers to the "scope and sequence" of the subject-matter conveyed in a school. Curriculum development, therefore, generally focuses on the selection and organization of specific knowledge and skills to fit particular developmental needs of the student and the unique operational structure of the school (Amadi & Emene 2016). As indicated above however, content, context and process are all intertwined, so that any one dimension can be affected by cultural variables and thus affect the outcome of the educational process.

In the context of this discussion, curriculum development will, therefore, encompass all discernible dimensions that enter into the determination and implementation of the directed learning experiences by the school which will lead to the remodeling of the grandaunts of such institution in contributing meaningfully to the society they belong and as that enhance community and national development. The question now is that are the Nigerian university education curriculum design in this way? The answer is "NO" Therefore this brings the need for remodeling the Nigerian University education curriculum for uniformity in content, sequence and structures. Even though there is a general goal and little bit of unified content in each of these courses offered in the university education, the whole content, structure and methods of teaching keeps changing from one University to another in Nigeria. This was emphasized by Dawn (2003) when he maintained that in curriculum design for development, effort and more importance should be placed on the content and how it is been delivered as anything short of this will spell doom to the entire design of the curriculum. But sadly, currently the only uniform thing in Nigerian university Education system as regards courses to be taught in each level is the course outlines. Whereas the most important side which is the content sequence, the structure of how the content is scheduled and the method of delivery differs across all university in the country for instance, in University of Abuja, at the department of Science and Environmental Education a course Code/ Name: EED 109/ Media and Community Environmental Education Services has the below course outlines:

- Meaning of Community
- The concept of community and environmental education
- Models of community environmental education
- Environmental education practice in community life
- Influence of environment in community development
- Disconnection of interactions between the community and the environment
- Environmental problems associated with rural community life
- Disseminating environmental education information within the rural sector agencies
- Environmental extension services
- Environmental sustenance

It is worthy to note that even though these course outlines are uniform across the university that offered environmental education at this level in Nigeria, the way it is taught, the content, how robust, the sequence, model and structure varies largely from one university to another. Therefore, the goal (5, 6, 7) of tertiary education that aimed at promoting and encouraging scholarship, entrepreneurship and community services; forge and cement national Unity; and promote national and international understanding (FGN, 2013,) will be defeated if university Education is not sequentially and uniformly tailored towards a learning process that is capable of bringing positive change to the community where the learners comes from. Therefore, for easy understanding of the benefit of well sequenced curriculum

content, structure and methods, the highlight below on the process-oriented curriculum design will be considered to guide our university curriculum structures in order to guarantee an effective curriculum for community development.

### **A process-oriented curriculum**

One approach to the alleviation of some of the problems of a subject-oriented curriculum in minority education becomes evident when we rephrase the core curriculum development issue of "What should the schools teach?" to "How do the students learn?" The emphasis is immediately shifted from content to process and from the school to the student. Such a shift does not negate the need for content, but recasts it as a means, rather than an end, and it establishes the student's need to learn as the determinant of the instructional process. We must, therefore, anticipate the varied and changing needs of the student, and provide a curriculum that can accommodate these needs. If students are to be prepared to cope with new and changing conditions, they must be exposed to more than current factual knowledge and occupational skills. They must be familiar with the generalized processes by which such knowledge and skills are acquired and utilized under new and unforeseen conditions. They must learn, for example, how to think, communicate, organize, interact, make decisions, solve problems, and assign priorities, but most importantly "*learn*" how to "*learn*".

A curriculum design built around processes such as these can, in addition to better preparing a student to encounter the unknown, accommodate a wider range of patterns by which an understanding of present and future conditions may be acquired and utilized. An open-ended, process-oriented curriculum is potentially less culture-bound, and thus may be more readily adapted to alternative settings without intruding on their cultural and situational variability. If appropriately conceived, process skills can be taught by building on those patterns indigenous of the background of the student, and then extending the processes to include the patterns of the wider community. To the extent that a minority student is able to employ such process skills in his/her daily encounters within his/her own and the larger society, she/he will be better able to blend those encounters into a lifestyle and world view that will contribute to the goal of cultural eclecticism that will snowball into Community development.

### **Three Broad Activity of University Education that are geared towards Community Development**

Tertiary education institutions assist the construction of democratic, knowledge-driven societies by:

- i. Supporting innovation by generating new knowledge, accessing global stores of knowledge, and adapting knowledge to local use
- ii. Contributing to human capital formation by training a qualified and adaptable labor force, including high-level scientists, professionals, technicians, basic and secondary education teachers, and future government, civil service, and business leaders
- iii. Providing the foundation for democracy, nation building, and social cohesion.

All these activity of University education are mainly to create a new environment that is more safe and habitable for the people, in fact to say but the least, they are all geared toward community and societal development. It is therefore the intention of this paper to gather teacher's perception on how tertiary education curriculum development is capable of bringing a desired developmental change to the community and the Nation at large.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to:

- i. Finds out what aspect of curriculum design and structure need more concentration



- ii. Finds out teachers perception on the readiness of University Education to cope with 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum development
- iii. Finds out teachers perception towards how the curriculum of University Education is capable of bringing a desired development to the community

### Research Questions

The study sought answers to the following questions:

- i. What aspect of Curriculum design and structure need more concentration?
- ii. What are teachers' perceptions on the readiness of University Education to cope with 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum development?
- iii. What are teachers' perceptions on how the curriculum of University Education is capable of bringing a desired development to the community?

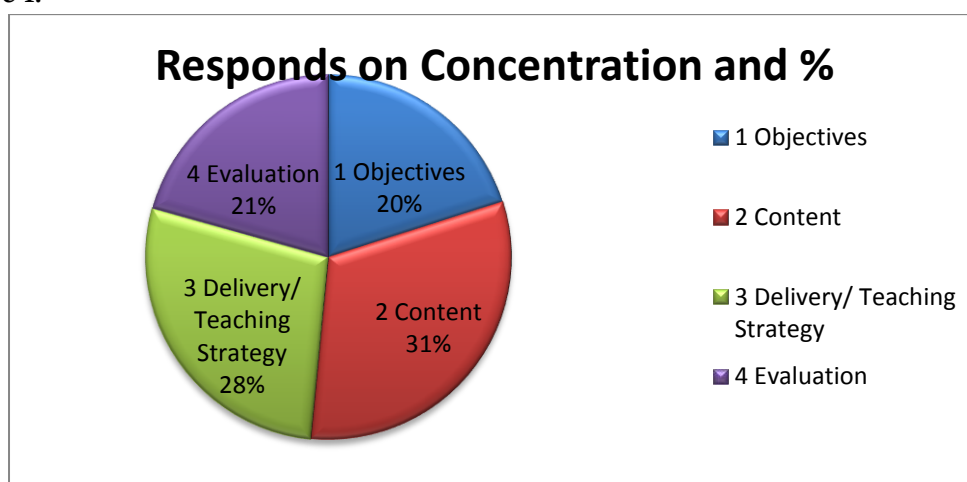
### Method

A Survey research design was adopted for this study because the collected data were analyzed using a few Subjects considered to be a good representative of the entire population. The entire population comprises of all lecturers of university of Abuja in Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria. Sample of forty five (45) lectures were randomly selected from the nine (9) faculties of the university of which 5 lectures from each of the faculty were chosen to responds to the questionnaire on the subject matter, this constitute the distribution of forty five questionnaire to these sample respondents, all the 45 questionnaires were completed and returned and these constitute the numbers used for the Study. A questionnaire named "Teachers Perception on the Impact of Tertiary Education Curriculum on Community Development Questionnaire (TPITECCDQ)" was used for data collection. Two experts both in test and measurements validated the instrument. The questionnaire was divided into 2 sections (A,B,) Section A was on Demographic information of the selected teachers (Lecturers), Section B ask questions about the general salient question about teachers perception on how curriculum of higher education can positively affect community development. The data were analyzed using percentages and Mean

### Results and Findings

**Question One:** What aspect of Curriculum design and structure need more concentration?

**Figure 1.**

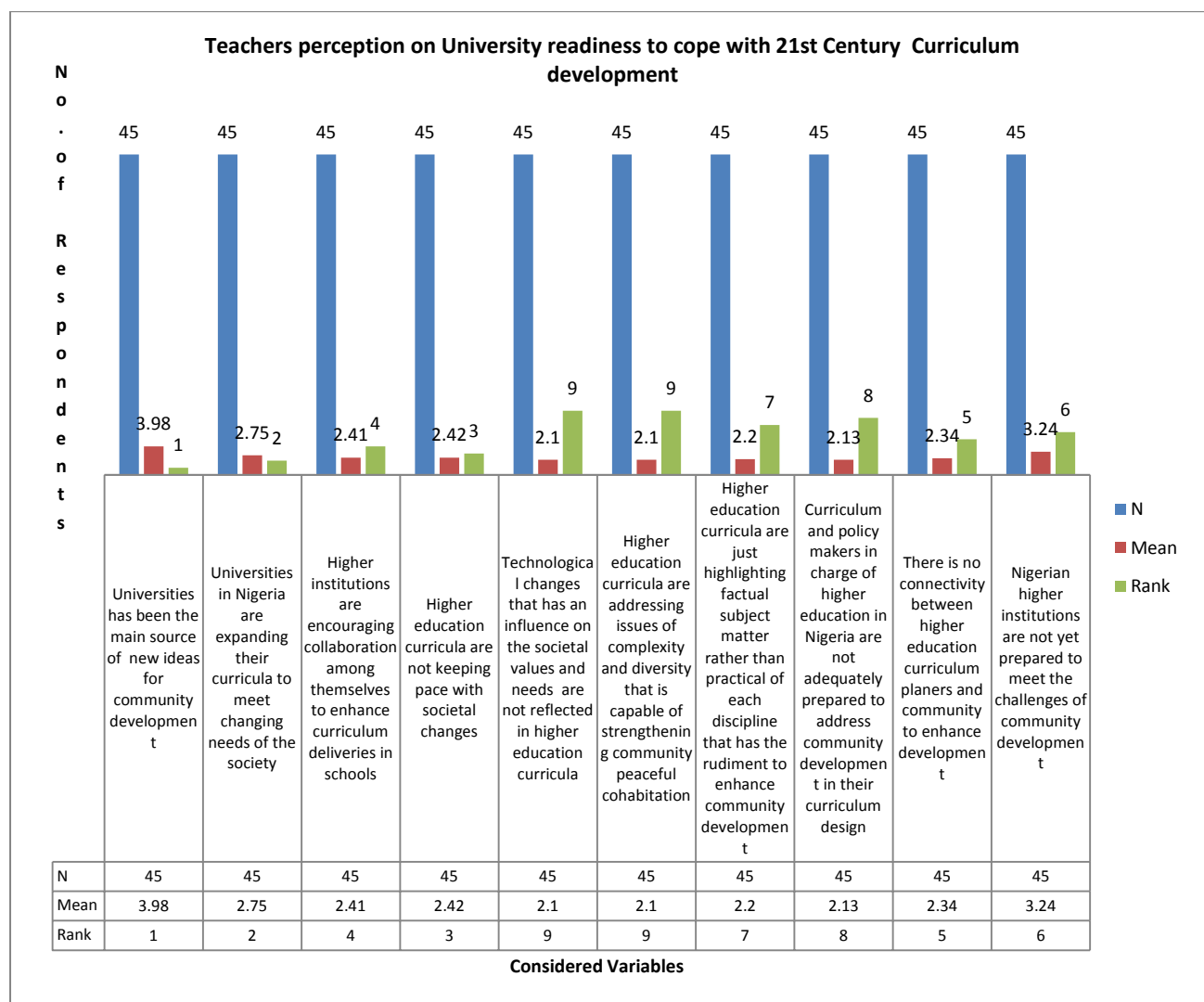


**Figure 1** above shows that teacher's opinion on what should be concentrated upon in curriculum design and structure is the content which has 31% followed by the delivery/teaching strategy with 28% this was

in tandem with Dawn (2003) when he maintained that in curriculum design for development, effort and more importance should be placed on the content and how it is been delivered as anything short of this will spell doom to the entire design of the curriculum.

**Question Two:** What are teachers' perceptions on the readiness of University Education to cope with 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum development?

**Table 1.**



**Table 1** above shows that the general perception of teachers toward university curriculum development to cope with the 21<sup>st</sup> century is in the negative. The highest mean is 3.98 which is Universities has been the main source of new ideas for community development while the lowest is 2.1 which is: Technological changes that has an influence on the societal values and needs are not reflected in University education curricula, and university education curricula are not addressing issues of complexity and diversity that is capable of strengthening community peaceful cohabitation respectively. This was Lincoln & Guba (2012) view on University education for 21<sup>st</sup> Century, they maintained that Nigerian University curriculum development are not putting into consideration the societal changes and the dynamism of the world which changes as technological invention grows, this has thereby made Nigerian university to keep recycling same ideas that are somehow outdated with modern days reality which is capable of developing the community and the world at large.

**Question 3:** What are teacher's perceptions on how the university curriculum is capable of bringing a desired development to the community?

**Table 2.**

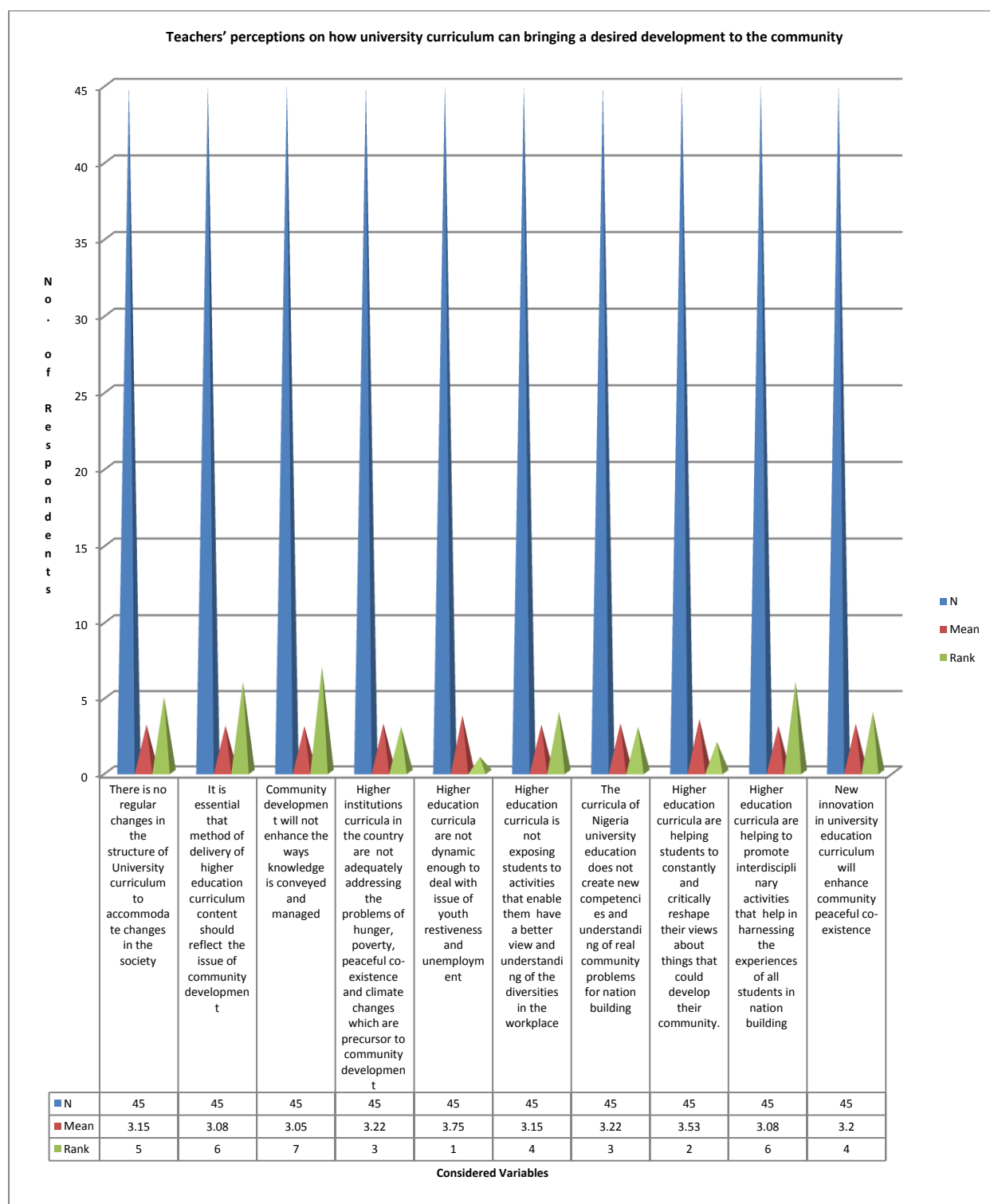


Table 2 above shows that all the items listed are barriers of university education curriculum for community development. This is because the entire mean are above 3.00. However the greatest barrier is the non dynamic of university education curricula to deal with issue of youth restiveness and



unemployment with a mean of 3.75, while the least barrier is the capability of community development to enhance the ways knowledge is conveyed and managed with mean of 3.05. This in summary means that variables like; changes in the structure of University curriculum to accommodate changes in the society, method of delivery of higher education curriculum content to reflect the issue of community development, how new innovation in university education curriculum could enhance community peaceful co-existence, the need for university education curricula to exposing students to activities that enable them have a better view and understanding of the diversities in the workplace and how University education curricula is capable of helping students to constantly and critically reshape their views about things that could develop their community remain very important. This was corroborated Wagner (2013) when he asserted that no community can develop without first developing the curriculum that is used to teach members of these communities as the resultant effect of what is learnt in the university is what is felt in the society.

### **Discussion**

The analysis above has made some far reaching discovery from the data gathered for the study, it revealed that in university education curriculum design structure, more emphasis should be tailored towards the content and delivery strategy which has greater chances of achieving the desired objective of a program, this revealed the same opinion of Dawn (2003) when he maintained that in curriculum design for development, effort and more importance should be placed on the content and how it is been delivered as anything short of this will spell doom to the entire design of the curriculum .

The paper also revealed that the greatest barrier to community development is the non dynamic of university education curricula to deal with issue of youth restiveness and unemployment and went further to highlight that variables like; changes in the structure of University curriculum to accommodate the changes in the society, method of delivery of higher education curriculum content to reflect the issue of community development, how new innovation in university education curriculum will enhance community peaceful co-existence, the need for university education curricula to exposing students to activities that will enable them have a better view and understanding of the diversities in the workplace and how University education curricula are capable of helping students to constantly and critically reshape their views about things that could develop their community remain very important. This is same as the opinion of Wagner (2013) when he asserted that no community can develop without first developing the curriculum that is used to teach members of that community as the resultant effect of what is learnt in the university is what is felt in the society.

### **Conclusion**

It is a fact that no community can develop more than the quality of education received from the university system of the nation where such community is situated. University education has a heavy responsibility of accounting to the community with regard to their purposes of existence. It has to make pacts with the community in order to establish their relevance and account for the public funds they receive to execute their mandate. Government coordination efforts must be focused and sustained toward evolving a knowledge driven economy that foster re-orientating University education into transforming actively in developing the engine of social, community and nation development.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

- i. The University educators must negotiate and agree on the major elements of curriculum structure that deserve more emphasis to enhance community development.

- ii. Nigerian University Commission (NUC) should effectively sensitizing all stakeholders involved in its curriculum development to foster harmonization of ideas which will enhance the vision in University education for community development.
- iii. Nigerian University Commission (NUC) should instill active participation of all relevant stakeholders involved in its curriculum development to concentrate on development driven curricula.
- iv. Nigerian University Commission (NUC) should encourage the provision of professional incentives for university educators which is solely linked to performance.
- v. Nigerian University Commission (NUC) should develop in its capacity building, consultation and advocacy to involve stakeholders in the community for development.
- vi. Government should encourage and fund research and innovation in the university system and other educational research institutions and provide a measurable monitoring and evaluation system that could enhance community development.

## References

- Amadi, M. N. & Emene, P. (2016). Re-Thinking Higher Education Curriculum in Nigeria to Meet Global Challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- Babatola Jadesola (2015). University education and national development: the role of alumni: Maiden lecture delivered at inaugural ceremony of the Alumni Association, Federal University, Oye-Ekiti on Tuesday, 22nd September, 2015
- Beauchamp, G. (1982). Basic components of a curriculum theory. In H. Giroux (Ed.), Curriculum and instruction. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.
- Chandler, S. (1992). Learning for what purposes? Questions when viewing learning from a socio-cultural perspective. In H. Marshall (Ed.), Redefining student learning: Roots of educational change (pp. 33-58). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation
- Dawn, A. L. (2003). What are Teachers' Perceptions of the Curriculum Development Process? Dissertation Presented In Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy In the Graduate School of Ohio State University
- Famade, O.A (2015). Funding University Education in Nigeria, Publication of International Organization of Scientific Research (IOSR); *International Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)* Volume 5, Issue 1 Ver. I (Jan - Feb. 2015), PP 63- 68. [www.iosrjournals.org](http://www.iosrjournals.org).
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). National Policy on Education. Lagos: NERDC
- Shrinn ("Whose University": 1989) in Universities, Education and National Economy - Michael Stephens (ed), Routledge, asserted
- Kast, F. and Rosenweig J. (1982) Organization and Management; A Systems and Contingency Approach London, McGraw Hill
- Lam, Y. Y. (2012). The impact of globalization on higher education: An empirical study of education in Hong Kong. *International Education Studies* 3(4), 73 – 85.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2012). Coping with 21<sup>st</sup> Century approach on Nigerian University education Curriculum development : a need for concern . Handbook of qualitative research . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sanda A. O. (1992) Managing Nigerian Universities, Ibadan, Spectrum Books.
- Shim Christine (1989). Whose University in Micheal D. Stephens (ed) Universities, Education and the National Economy, London Routledge.
- Wagner, T. (2009). Reinventing schools-from the bottom up latest version. In E. Clinchy (Ed.), Transforming public education: A new course for American future. New York Teachers Press Ltd.