INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCE
(IJESMS) Print: 3115-5111 - Online: 3115-5588. Vol 2, No.:3. 2026
https://journals.iempsglobal.org/index.php/IJESMS

EFFECT OF RE-ENGINEERING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This empirical study examined the effect of a re-engineering curriculum development on quality education outcomes in public junior secondary schools in Imo state. A quasi-experimental design was adopted, involving 240 students from four public junior secondary schools in Imo State, purposively selected and assigned to an experimental group (n=120) exposed to the re-engineered curriculum for 12 weeks and a control group (n=120) that continued with the conventional curriculum. A structured questionnaire titled Curriculum Development and Quality Education in Nigeria (CDQE) was formulated with 25 items to explored respondents' perceptions of re-engineering curriculum and its perceived effects on quality education in Nigeria. Two research questions were analysed using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics while the two null hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at $p<0.05$. Results showed a statistically significant main effect of the re-engineered curriculum on quality education outcomes, indicating that the re-engineered curriculum accounted for 15% of the variance in quality education outcomes after controlling for pre-test scores. Qualitative findings from semi-structured interviews with 12 teachers revealed persistent implementation

challenges, including inadequate teacher training and insufficient digital infrastructure. The study concluded that the effectiveness of curriculum re-engineering is contingent on complementary systemic investments. Recommendations include sustained teacher professional development, improved digital infrastructure and the establishment of a national curriculum monitoring framework.

Keywords: Curriculum Re-engineering, Quality Education, Students' Skills, Nigerian Education Reform

Introduction

The concept of re-engineering curriculum development has emerged as a critical imperative for addressing the deepening crisis of quality education in Nigeria. For decades, the Nigerian educational system has operated largely on a static, content-heavy curriculum that prioritizes rote memorization and examination success over the cultivation of critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and practical skills. This traditional model, inherited from colonial antecedents and reinforced by bureaucratic inertia, has proven increasingly inadequate in preparing learners for the complexities of the 21st-century global economy. Consequently, Nigeria faces a paradox: rising enrollment figures at all levels coexist with alarmingly poor learning outcomes, widespread graduate unemployment and a persistent mismatch between school-leaver competencies and labor market demands (Uzoechi, 2025). Reports from national assessments and international bodies consistently reveal that a significant proportion of Nigerian children and youth lack foundational literacy, numeracy, and digital skills, undermining the nation's capacity for sustainable development and technological innovation.

According to Obizue & Obizue (2025), re-engineering curriculum development, in this context, refers to a fundamental redesign of the entire curriculum lifecycle from needs assessment and design to implementation, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms to be dynamic, responsive, and outcomes-driven. Ithey further posited that it entails shifting from a teacher-centered, theoretical orientation to a learner-centered, competence-based framework that integrates critical 21st-century skills such as collaboration, information literacy, adaptability, and entrepreneurial thinking. Moreover, re-engineering demands the incorporation of local contextual realities Nigeria's diverse cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic landscapes into curriculum content, while simultaneously aligning with global best practices and digital transformation. It also requires restructuring pedagogical approaches, assessment methods, teacher preparation, and the role of technology in delivering personalized and inclusive learning experiences. Quality education, as defined by Sustainable Development Goal 4, goes beyond access and completion; it encompasses relevant, equitable, and effective learning that empowers individuals for lifelong learning, decent work, and

active citizenship. Fadeyi & Alabi (2024) posited that the nexus between re-engineered curriculum development and quality education lies in creating a system that not only transmits knowledge but also builds capabilities, values, and dispositions necessary for individual and collective prosperity.

Despite numerous policy interventions such as the National Policy on Education (revised 2013), the Universal Basic Education Programme, and various curriculum reviews by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) implementation remains fragmented and superficial. Barriers include inadequate funding, insufficient teacher training and motivation, resistance to change from entrenched interests, lack of stakeholder engagement (including employers, parents, and students), weak monitoring and evaluation frameworks and the digital divide that limits access to modern learning resources. Furthermore, the centralized, top-down approach to curriculum development often ignores feedback from classrooms and communities, leading to a disconnect between policy intentions and ground realities. Ibrahim (2019) averred that re-engineering, therefore, is not merely a technical adjustment but a systemic transformation that demands political will, sustained investment, capacity building, and a cultural shift toward valuing learning outcomes over certificates.

According to Olu (2025), Nigeria's education system stands at a critical juncture, despite decades of reform efforts, the nation continues to grapple with persistent challenges in curriculum relevance, learning outcomes and graduate employability. In the words of Umezuruike & Nduka (2023), the current educational crisis is characterised by a tripartite trap: widespread student malpractice normalised across levels, institutional complicity in compromising academic integrity and a tertiary curriculum so antiquated that graduates emerge unprepared for 21st-century labour markets. At the primary and secondary levels, the situation is equally dire. Only 17% of pupils who complete primary school master basic literacy, and a mere 31% achieve basic numeracy standards. Over 10 million primary-age children remain out of school, and literacy

In response to these systemic deficiencies, the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), initiated a comprehensive review of the national curriculum for basic, senior secondary, and technical education, unveiled in September 2025. The revised framework is explicitly competency-based, outcome-oriented and learner-centred, introducing new subject areas such as digital literacy, robotics, artificial intelligence, and emerging technologies. It reduces subject overload from up to 21 subjects at primary level to 9–10 for Primary 1–3 and 10–12 for Primary 4–6 and mandates five core subjects at senior secondary level: English Language, General Mathematics, Citizenship and Heritage Studies, Digital Technologies, and one Trade Subject (Izuka et al, 2018).

However, policy pronouncements alone cannot resolve entrenched gaps. Stakeholders have repeatedly warned that effective implementation requires commensurate investment in teacher capacity, infrastructure and monitoring mechanisms. Nigeria currently faces a deepening teacher

shortage, with only 915,000 teachers serving 31.8 million pupils a ratio of 1:35, well above UNESCO's recommended 1:25. Furthermore, fewer than 50% of public school teachers possess basic ICT skills, yet digital literacy is now embedded in the curriculum. These contradictions underscore the urgent need for empirical evidence on how re-engineered curricula actually affect quality education outcomes under real-world Nigerian conditions (Obizue & Obizue, 2025). While curriculum re-engineering is widely advocated as a solution to Nigeria's education quality crisis, empirical evidence on its effectiveness remains sparse because most existing studies have focused on curriculum implementation challenges rather than on measurable learning outcomes, or have examined alignment between curriculum components without assessing student acquisition of 21st-century competencies. Moreover, a significant gap persists between Nigeria's content-heavy, exam-driven curriculum and global competency-based models. The 2025 curriculum reform represents a paradigm shift, yet there is insufficient empirical understanding of whether this shift translates into improved quality education indicators in authentic classroom settings.

This introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of how re-engineering curriculum development can serve as a catalyst for achieving quality education in Nigeria. The study will investigate the specific deficiencies in current curriculum processes, identify successful re-engineering models from comparable contexts, analyze the barriers and enablers of change, and propose actionable strategies for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders. Ultimately, the goal is to contribute to a renewed educational paradigm that equips training and motivation, resistance to change from entrenched interests, lack of stakeholder engagement (including employers, parents, and students), weak monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and the digital divide that limits access to modern learning resources.

The following specific objectives guided this study:

1. To determine the effect of a re-engineering curriculum development on quality education outcomes among junior secondary school students in Nigeria.

2. To examine the effect of a re-engineering curriculum development on students' skills among junior secondary school students in Nigeria.

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of a re-engineering curriculum development on quality education outcomes among junior secondary school students in Nigeria?

2. What is the effect of a re-engineering curriculum development on students' skills among junior secondary school students in Nigeria?

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H_{01}: There is no significant of re-engineering curriculum development on quality education outcomes among junior secondary school students in Nigeria.

H_{02}: There is no significant effect of re-engineering curriculum development on students' skills among junior secondary school students in Nigeria?

Concept

Re-engineering Curriculum Development

Ibrahim (2019) described the re-engineering of curriculum development as the deliberate and systematic redesign of what is taught, how it is taught, and how learning is assessed in order to make education more responsive to current social, economic, technological, and pedagogical realities. Akerole (2025) observed that it goes beyond minor revisions or the addition of new topics by fundamentally questioning the assumptions, structures, and processes that underlie an existing curriculum and rebuilding it around clear outcomes that matter for learners and society. In practice this means starting from the purpose of education in a given context and asking whether the current content, teaching methods, and evaluation practices are actually producing the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies that learners need to function effectively in a rapidly changing world. When applied to a system like Nigeria's public schools, re-engineering involves diagnosing gaps between the intended curriculum and the realities of classrooms, such as outdated syllabi, an overemphasis on rote memorization, insufficient practical and digital skills, and a weak link between schooling and employability. The process then integrates new insights from learning science, labor market demands, and community needs to create a curriculum that is learner-centered, competency-based, and flexible enough to accommodate diverse contexts while maintaining national standards. This often requires aligning learning experiences with real-world problems, embedding technology and inquiry-based methods, training teachers to act as facilitators rather than transmitters of information, and establishing continuous feedback loops so that assessment data directly informs further adjustments (Okafor & Nnabueze, 2022). The ultimate aim is to move from a static, compliance-driven curriculum to a dynamic one that can adapt, improve learning outcomes, and produce graduates who are capable of critical thinking, innovation, and meaningful participation in society.

Quality Education

Quality education refers to an educational process and outcome that enables learners to acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for personal fulfillment, social participation, and economic productivity within their specific context (Olu, 2025). It is not defined merely by access to schooling or by the number of years a student spends in class, but by the extent to which the

entire system from curriculum and pedagogy to teacher competence, learning environment, and assessment practices works coherently to produce meaningful learning. At its core, quality education is learner-centered, meaning it responds to the developmental stage, cultural background, and learning needs of students rather than forcing them to conform to a rigid, one-size-fits-all model. It balances cognitive development with social, emotional, and practical capacities, so that graduates can think critically, solve problems, communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and adapt to new challenges rather than relying solely on memorized information for examinations. A quality system also depends on competent and motivated teachers who understand both their subject matter and how students learn, supported by relevant instructional materials, safe and inclusive school environments, and leadership that prioritizes continuous improvement over bureaucratic compliance. Bello (2024) asserted that crucially, quality is measured not only by what is taught but by what learners are actually able to do with that knowledge in real life, which is why assessment in a quality education system emphasizes understanding, application, and creativity over rote recall. In contexts like Nigeria's public schools, achieving quality education therefore requires rethinking resource allocation, teacher preparation, curriculum relevance, and accountability mechanisms so that schooling moves beyond credentialing and becomes a genuine instrument for individual advancement and national development.

Relationship between Re-engineering Curriculum Development and Quality Education

The relationship between re-engineering curriculum development and quality education in Nigeria is one of cause and mutual reinforcement, where the deliberate redesign of what and how students learn becomes the primary mechanism for raising the overall standard and relevance of schooling (Obizue & Obizue, 2025). Nigeria's public education system has long struggled with a curriculum that remains largely theoretical, disconnected from the country's socio-economic realities, and ill-suited to developing the practical competencies required in a modern economy. This mismatch means that even when students complete years of schooling, many leave without the critical thinking, problem-solving, digital literacy, and vocational skills needed for employability and civic participation, which directly undermines the goal of quality education. Re-engineering the curriculum addresses this by starting from the intended outcomes of education within the Nigerian context and systematically reconstructing content, pedagogy, assessment, and teacher roles to align with those outcomes. Abalano (2017) is of the view that when the curriculum is re-engineered to be competency-based, contextually relevant and responsive to labor market and societal needs as it creates the conditions for teaching and learning to shift from rote memorization to active engagement, inquiry and application. This shift affects the entire educational ecosystem: teachers are compelled to adopt more facilitative and reflective practices, learners encounter material that connects to their lived experiences and future aspirations, and assessment begins to measure genuine understanding and capability rather than recall alone. In turn, these changes produce learners who are better equipped to contribute to national development, which is the essence of

quality education. Without re-engineering, efforts to improve teacher training, infrastructure, or assessment in isolation tend to operate within the constraints of an outdated framework and yield limited results. Therefore, in Nigeria, re-engineering curriculum development is not an ancillary reform but the foundational lever that makes quality education achievable, because it redefines the purpose, content, and process of schooling to ensure that every learner's experience translates into meaningful learning and capability.

Theories

Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivist learning theory doesn't come from a single person or year. It developed from the work of several psychologists. Jean Piaget is considered the foundational figure with his theory of cognitive constructivism, developed primarily in the 1920s–1950s. He argued that learners actively build knowledge through interaction with their environment while Lev Vygotsky extended this into social constructivism in the 1920s–1930s and emphasised that learning is a social process shaped by culture, language, and interaction with others.

This theory holds that learning is an active process where students construct knowledge by connecting new information to their existing experiences and by interacting with their social and cultural environment, rather than passively receiving content delivered by the teacher. In the Nigerian public school context, where many curricula remain rigid, content-heavy, and disconnected from learners' realities, adopting a constructivist approach makes it possible to redesign curriculum around problem-solving, inquiry, collaboration, and contextually relevant projects that reflect local challenges and opportunities. It shifts the focus from rote memorization and examination performance to the development of critical thinking, creativity, and practical skills that align with national goals of employability, innovation, and civic participation. The theory can be adopted in such research because it provides a strong pedagogical justification for curriculum reforms that prioritize learner engagement, teacher facilitation, and the integration of indigenous knowledge and community contexts, all of which are essential for improving quality and relevance in a system struggling with outdated materials, large class sizes, and limited resources.

Rational Objective Theory

The Rational Objective Theory of curriculum development was propounded by Ralph W. Tyler in 1949 in his book Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction, It argues that curriculum design should begin with a clear articulation of educational purposes that reflect the needs of learners and society, followed by the systematic selection of learning experiences, their organization, and continuous evaluation to determine whether those purposes are being achieved. In the study on re-engineering curriculum development and quality education in Nigeria, this theory is directly

relevant because Nigeria's public school system has long grappled with curricula that are outdated, overly theoretical, and misaligned with the country's socio-economic realities, leading to poor learning outcomes and a mismatch between graduate skills and labor market demands. By adopting Tyler's framework, researchers and policymakers can approach curriculum reform as a purposeful, goal-driven process that starts by defining what Nigerian students need to know and be able to do in light of national priorities such as employability, digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and civic responsibility. The theory supports the re-engineering process by providing a logical structure for selecting relevant content and instructional strategies, sequencing them in a way that builds competence progressively, and embedding evaluation mechanisms that allow for ongoing refinement rather than one-off revisions.

It can be adopted in this research because it offers a practical, accountability-focused approach that links curriculum changes to measurable improvements in quality, making it easier to justify reforms, allocate limited resources effectively, and demonstrate to stakeholders that the redesigned curriculum is producing the intended educational and societal outcomes.

This theory is relevant in this study because Nigeria's current education challenges include a mismatch between graduate skills and labor market demands, outdated content, and poor learning outcomes in public schools. Tyler's model provides a systematic, goal-oriented approach to re-engineer the curriculum so it responds to real societal and economic needs rather than continuing with a rigid, colonial-era structure. It also supports accountability by linking curriculum design to measurable outcomes, which is central to quality improvement efforts by bodies like UBEC. The limitation is that Tyler's model is quite linear and top-down, so it works best when combined with more participatory approaches that involve teachers and communities in the redesign process.

Methodology

A quasi-experimental, non-equivalent control group pre-test–post-test design was adopted. This design was appropriate because random assignment of intact classes to experimental and control conditions was not feasible in the public school context. The study was conducted in Imo State, one of Nigeria's most recognized educational states and a microcosm of the nation's educational diversity, yet faces acute challenges in teacher quality and infrastructure typical of Nigerian urban centres. The target population comprised of all public junior secondary school (JSS 2) students in Imo State. Using a multistage sampling procedure, four public secondary schools were purposively selected based on their willingness to participate and comparability in pre-intervention academic performance. From each school, one intact JSS 2 class was selected, yielding a total sample of 240 students. Two schools (n=120 students) were randomly assigned to the experimental group and two schools (n=120 students) to the control group. Additionally, 12 teachers (six from experimental schools, six from control schools) were purposively selected for the study. A structured questionnaire titled Curriculum Development and Quality Education in Nigeria (CDQE)

was formulated with 25 items to explored respondents' perceptions of re-engineering curriculum and its perceived effects on quality education in Nigeria. the validation was carried out by three experts in education management, education curriculum and education measurement and evaluation respectively and the internal consistency was established using Cronbach's alpha (α=0.92). Difficulty and discrimination indices were computed and 20 items were retained.

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (Analysis of Covariance, ANCOVA). ANCOVA was chosen to control for pre-test differences between groups. Qualitative interview data were analysed using thematic analysis, following the six phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarisation, initial coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition and write-up.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the pre-test and post-test mean scores of experimental and control groups on quality education outcomes and students' skill among junior secondary school students in Nigeria.

Table 1

Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Variable	Group N	Pre-test	SD	Post-test	SD	Mean Gain
Quality Education Outcomes						
Experimental	126	41.33	8.54	66.70	9.15	21.30
Control	126	42.10	8.81	50.46	9.47	8.24
Students' Skills						
Experimental	126	37.84	7.82	62.43	8.76	25.42
Control	126	38.17	7.95	44.21	8.83	7.01

The experimental group recorded a mean gain of 21.30 on quality education outcomes compared to 8.24 for the control group. Similarly, on students' skills, the experimental group recorded a mean gain of 25.42 versus 7.01 for the control group.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant effect of a re-engineering curriculum development on quality education outcomes among junior secondary school students in Nigeria.

Table 2: ANCOVA Summary for Effect of Re-engineering Curriculum Development on Quality Education Outcomes

Source Type III SS	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Corrected Model	18954.32	2 9477.16	45.12	<0.001	0.16
Intercept	1423.56	1 1423.56	6.78	0.010	0.03
Pre-test (Covariate)	2456.78	1 2456.78	11.70	0.001	0.05
Treatment	8901.54	1 8901.54	42.38	<0.001	0.15
Error	49758.12	237 209.95			
Total	1012456.00	246			

The results show a significant main effect of treatment on quality education outcomes ($F(1,237) = 42.38$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2=0.15$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The effect size ($\eta^2=0.15$) indicates that the re-engineered curriculum accounted for 15% of the variance in quality education outcomes after controlling for pre-test scores.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant effect of a re-engineering curriculum development on students' skills among junior secondary school students in Nigeria.

Table 3: ANCOVA Summary for Effect of Re-engineering Curriculum Development on Students' Skills

Source Type III SS	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Corrected Model	16782.45	2 8391.23	41.89	<0.001	0.15

Intercept	1198.34	1 1198.34	5.98	0.015	0.02
Pre-test (Covariate)	2123.67	1 2123.67	10.60	0.001	0.04
Treatment	7798.56	1 7798.56	38.92	<0.001	0.14
Error	47481.33	237 200.34			
Total	987654.00	246			

The results indicate a significant main effect of treatment on 21st-century skills acquisition ($F(1,237)=38.92$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2=0.14$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings demonstrate that the re-engineered curriculum significantly improved quality education outcomes compared to the conventional curriculum. This result is consistent with prior empirical studies in Nigeria that found positive effects of re-engineering curriculum development approaches on student learning. The effect size ($\eta^2=0.15$) suggests a moderate to large practical significance, indicating that curriculum re-engineering can be a powerful lever for educational improvement. However, the finding that 85% of the variance remains unexplained underscores the importance of contextual factors like teacher quality, infrastructure, class size, and school leadership which were not manipulated in this study. Similarly, the significant improvement in students' skills acquisition corroborates international evidence that curriculum design emphasising project-based learning, digital integration, and collaborative problem-solving yields measurable gains in these competencies. Nevertheless, the qualitative findings temper this optimism: teachers reported that the full potential of the re-engineered curriculum was constrained by inadequate digital infrastructure and insufficient training. This aligns with the observation that even the most visionary curriculum risks becoming a "paper tiger" without adequate staffing and training. These findings validated the study results obtained by Ibrahim (2019), Okafor & Nnabueze (2022). Fadeyi & Alabi (2022) and Olu (2025) where they observed that re-engineering curriculum based on present realities is a drafting force for quality education in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence that re-engineering curriculum development significantly enhances both traditional academic outcomes and students' skills acquisition among Nigerian public junior secondary school students. However, the magnitude of these effects is moderated by systemic factors which include teacher capacity, digital infrastructure and monitoring mechanisms that remain underdeveloped in many Nigerian schools. Thus, curriculum re-engineering is

necessary but not sufficient for achieving quality education outcomes as it must be accompanied by complementary investments in the broader educational ecosystem.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Federal Ministry of Education should institutionalise the re-engineered competency-based curriculum across all public secondary schools, but with a phased, resource-supported implementation plan rather than a simultaneous nationwide rollout.

2. The National Teachers' Institute and the Universal Basic Education Commission should develop and mandate a sustained professional development programme for teachers, comprising initial training, classroom coaching, and regular refresher courses, rather than one-off workshops.

3. The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council should establish a National Curriculum Monitoring and Evaluation Framework with clear indicators, annual reporting requirements, and independent external evaluations to ensure implementation fidelity and continuous improvement.

4. State governments should prioritise investment in digital infrastructure—including computer laboratories, internet connectivity, and alternative power sources—as a prerequisite for effective implementation of the digital literacy components of the curriculum.

5. Further research should employ longitudinal designs to examine the long-term effects of curriculum re-engineering on graduate employability and labour market outcomes, as well as comparative studies across Nigeria's six geo-political zones to account for regional disparities.

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