Assessment of Curriculum Load of the National Commission for colleges of Education’s Minimum standard for Nigeria Certificate in Education

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ABSTRACT
This study was executed with a view to finding out how appropriately loaded is the Minimum Standards curriculum for Colleges of Education in Nigeria. Four research questions were posited to guide the study. The data for the study were collected using two questionnaires named “NCE Course Load Assessment Rating Scale (NCE CLARS) and Lecturers’ Workload Assessment Questionnaire (LWLAQ)” administered to students and lecturers respectively. These questionnaires were constructed by the researchers and validated by experts in measurement and evaluation and curriculum studies respectively. The area of the study was the south- south geo-political zone of Nigeria. Five colleges of education was randomly selected (one from each state) out of a population of 11 federal and state colleges of education located in five out of the six states in the zone. Five hundred students and 250 lecturers were randomly drawn from the five colleges for the study. The data so collected were analysed using descriptive statistics. The result of the analysis revealed inter alia that the NCCE minimum standard is overloaded with many courses. Consequently, it was recommended among other things that the move towards the revision of the current edition of the minimum standards should be intensified with a view to reducing the number of courses offered by student.

Key words: Curriculum–curriculum load–Minimum standards–Assessment

1 INTRODUCTION
In order to check the absence of a uniform standards among Advanced Teachers’ Training Colleges (now Colleges of Education) that existed when the academic standard of each of these colleges was determined by its affiliate University, the Federal Government of Nigeria establishment in 1989 the National Commission for Colleges of education (NCCE). The mandate given to the NCCE included laying down minimum standard for all programmes of teacher education and accrediting their certificates and other academic awards after obtaining thereof prior approval of the Minister, [1].

Among the areas of teacher education programme that the NCCE focussed attention was the curriculum component. Its focus in this area was to determine the curriculum content which the student teachers will have to be exposed to and which will be considered adequate enough to enable them enter or re-enter the teaching profession with confidence in their ability to perform creditably as anticipated. Consequently, the NCCE produces the minimum standards for Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE). This minimum standards is defined as the minimum the teacher educators should know and be able to do as well as their expected minimum dispositions towards their work if they must remain/progress in their career [2]. This document inter alia, stipulates the curricular contents below which no college is allowed to operate.

Twenty eight years after the first edition of the minimum standards was published in 1990, it has undergone several revisions. Accompanying these revisions is either the introduction of new courses in the Minimum Standards or addition of more topics into the already existing courses. The General Studies Education (GSE) component of the curriculum is one spectacular area where new courses have continuously been introduced into the minimum standards without regard to the likely impact on teachers and learners. For instance, at the Federal College of Education, Obudu, this
component of the curriculum consisted of 2 courses (General English 100 and 200 respectively) as at 1984/85 academic session. With the emergence of the NCCE in 1989, the first minimum standard published in 1990 contained 9 GSE courses; the third edition of minimum standard of 2002 contained 13 GSE courses, whereas the fifth (2012) edition contained 18 courses. Similarly more topics have been added in the scope of already existing courses. Examples of such courses include Research Methods and Measurement and Evaluation.

As good and genuine as the pressure to add new courses or topics into the curriculum may appear there is the need to guide against the Nigerian society becoming one of those societies described by Rosa (as cited in [3]) that modern societies are suffering from the effect of constant acceleration, increasing complexity and never ending claims that this or that new reform, technology or technique is the best thing since the last best thing before it. Moreover, as observed by [4], adding content to an already jam-packed syllabus puts the people in a race to the course finish line. Such addition leads to curriculum overload, that is a situation whereby there are so many curriculum contents to be covered than the available resources can conveniently carry.

The continuous increase in the number of courses and the expansion of the scope of other existing courses in the NCCE Minimum Standard may result in curriculum overload which according to The [5] is a mismatch between capacity and load. Capacity as referred here includes both human and material resources for teaching and learning. Overloading the curriculum has the tendency to affect negatively the quality of education and therefore must be guided against.

The absence of any known study dealing with the loading of the curriculum for Colleges of Education in Nigeria necessitates an investigation of this nature in order to determine how balanced the curriculum content is vis-a-vis the available human and material resources needed to implement it. The problem of this study therefore when posed in question form is: Given the available human and material resources, student/teacher ratio, and the school/lecture hours/time table, how appropriately loaded is the NCE minimum standards curriculum?

This study is significant in that its findings will help to redress whatever imbalance that happens to exist between curriculum demand and available resources. The findings will also serve as a basis for curriculum planners to endeavor to strike a balance between available resources and curriculum content whenever they are reviewing the minimum standards.

It was therefore the purpose of this study to determine if there is a balance between the NCE minimum standards curriculum and the available human and material resources needed to implement it as well as determine if the curriculum provides for lecturers’ effectiveness and learners’ convenience. In other words, this study aims at determining the extent to which the content selection took cognizance of the feasibility criterion. Specifically, the study was designed to:

1. Compare the NCE minimum standards with the minimum academic standards for other tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
2. Assess what basic material resources are available in the Colleges of Education for the implementation of the minimum standards.
3. Assess the work load on lecturers in the Colleges of education
4. Examine the lecture timetable and its effect on students’ learning.

In order to achieve these objectives, the study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. How does the NCE minimum standards compare with the Minimum Academic Standards in the Universities and Polytechnics respectively?
2. How adequate are the material resources available for the implementation of the NCE minimum standards?
3. What is the average workload of the lecturers in the Colleges of education?
4. How does lecture timetable impact on students’ recreation and leisure time?

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The curriculum has been defined as all the learning which is planned and guided by the school. According to [6], depending on how broadly educators define or employ the term, curriculum typically refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn which includes the learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet, the units and lessons that teachers teach, the assignments and projects given to students, the books, materials, video presentations and readings used in a course, and the tests, assessments and other methods used to evaluate students learning.

Curriculum load therefore refers to the aggregate of courses, assignments, projects, tests, assignments, researches etc stipulated for learners in particular programme of study to undertake and pass before they are awarded the expected certificate.

The [7] defined curriculum content as the totality of what is to be taught in a school. These include the facts, principles and concepts. According to [8], curriculum could be looked at from the perspective of prescription (intended curriculum) and practice (implemented curriculum). A difference usually occurs between these two perspectives when the curriculum is overloaded with many courses or when the topics included in a course/subject are so many. This is the import of the feasibility criterion for content selection of which [9] explains as meaning that content should be learned within the time allowed, resources available, expertise of the teacher and nature of the learner. This requirement implies that curriculum planners should aim at an ideal situation in their planning. Obanya [8] has it that in ideal situations there would be a perfect match between what is prescribed, what is practiced, and consequently what is achieved (outcome).

It is possible to achieve a perfect match in terms of course distribution, only to have some implementation factors in-
terfer with the sustenance of this perfect match. [10] men-
tioned unavailability of school facilities and equipment like
classrooms, libraries, resource centres, offices, desks, schools
halls as some of these implementation factors. Others fac-
tors he mentioned are teaching and learning resources, qual-
ity and quantity of teaching staff, poor time management
by school administrators and teachers.

Remarks from different quarters seem to suggest that it
is a common phenomenon to include many subjects in the
curriculum of Nigerian schools and colleges. Thus, the birth
of the new Basic Education Curriculum for junior secondary
schools in Nigeria was according to the Executive Secretary
of the Nigerian Research and Development Council Profes-
sor Godwin Obioma, [11] sequel to the overload of the for-
ter curriculum. Consequently, Obioma, disclosed the in-
tention of council to reduce the number of subjects from
twenty to nine in what he said will become the new Basic
Education Curriculum. This he further said was because a
study carried out by the council showed that the old cur-
criculum was over-loaded in terms of subjects being offered
at both the primary and Junior Secondary School levels.

In the same line of thought, [12] observed that average
Nigerian student spends a minimum of eight hours in school
daily, just as teachers spend minimum of nine hours to en-
sure they cover the overloaded curriculum of 20 subjects on
or before the end of a term. Continuing, Adesulu said;

Our findings further revealed that in a quest for teach-
ers and parents to assist students cover the syllabus within
three months, the available options are for class teachers
and parents to engage students for additional hours after
school, as parents also employ the services of lesson teach-
ers after school. The scenario has since snowballed into stu-
dents spending the most of the day, moving from one lesson
to another, with little or no time for themselves. Siesta for
students is now a thing of the past.

The above findings and observations are not peculiar to
the primary and secondary schools. They also seem to be
true of the minimum standards for colleges of education
in Nigeria. This minimum standards according to the Na-
the minimum the teacher educators should know and be
able to do as well as their expected minimum dispositions
towards their work if they must remain/progress in their
ability to do as well as their expected minimum dispositions.
In addition to the curriculum content, the minimum
standards stipulates the material resources required for the
implementation of the curriculum. These include library fa-
cilities, staff offices, centre for educational technology, and
vehicles for teaching practice supervision [2].

A comparison of the most recent edition of the minimum
standard with the earlier editions shows that more courses
and topics have been added to it. Different reasons could
account for such additions. [4] for instance observed that as
new materials emerge in every academic discipline, teach-
ers not only feel tremendous responsibility to stay current
themselves but also to ensure that the learners are up to
date on the most recent findings. Another reason is politi-
cal considerations. [13] attested to this when she remarked
that the addition of new programmes to the 2012 revised
edition of the minimum standards by the NCCE was done in
response to the transformation agenda of the then admin-
istration and the said widespread criticism that the then
existing NCE programme was tunnel visioned.

Studies have shown that most of these materials needed
to implement the minimum standards are not sufficiently
available in some of the colleges. [14] for example reported
inadequacy of physical facilities in colleges of education
south east, Nigeria. On the part of lecture time table which
plays a crucial role in the delivery of the content, [15] faulted
the scheduling of lecture by reporting that lecture schedule
(time table) affected students’ attendance to lecture and
resulted in their absconding from lecture, and lateness to
lecture. [16] equally remarked that sufficient time is not al-
located to practical activities in physical and health educa-
tion.

The fact that the minimum standard might have been
overloaded is evident in the following statement by professor
Yakubu Mohammad Auna [17] that findings have shown
that college of education students offer more courses than
university students and so they are overloaded with courses.

It is however not enough to conclude that the curriculum
is overloaded based on the fact that college of education stu-
dents offer more courses than their university counterparts.
A comprehensive study which in addition to the number
of courses offered takes cognizance of such other factors as
availability of human and material resources, ease of con-
tent delivery, teaching effectiveness, learners’ convenience,
time tablingetc is needed to determine if the curriculum is
actually overloaded. This is necessary in order to avoid mak-
ing a hasty decision that may not serve well the purposes
of teacher education. This study is designed to accomplish
this objective.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study was aimed at collecting data on, and describing
in a systematic manner the characteristics of a given pop-
ulation. Its design therefore is the descriptive survey. The
study was executed in the south-south geo-political zone of
Nigeria. The zone is made up of the following six states: Ak-
walbom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and River States.
Each of these states has at least one approved college of edu-
cation. There are eleven approved colleges of education in
the six states as at 2015 [18].

The research population comprised all the approved
eleven colleges of education in the zone. The stratified ran-
dom sampling was used to constitute a sample of five col-
leges of education. The stratification was done on state ba-
sis. The simple random sampling was used to draw one col-
lege of education from each state. However Bayelsa state
was deliberately left out as the only college of education
in that state was relatively newly established and as such
could afford some of the required data. Thus, the follow-
ing colleges constituted the sample: College of Education
AfahaNsit (Akwalbom state), College of Education Agbor
(Delta State), College of Education Igueben (Edo State),

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Federal College of Education Obudu (Cross River State), and Federal College of Education Technical Omoku (River State).

The research instruments are the NCE Course Load Assessment Rating Scale (NCE CLARS) administered to students, and the Lecturers’ Workload Assessment Questionnaire (LWLAQ) administered to lecturers. The students’ questionnaire was a researchers’ constructed four-point rating scale. The lecturers’ questionnaire was also constructed by the researchers and used to obtain information on lecturers’ workload and availability of some basic material resources. The research instruments were validated by experts in measurement and evaluation and in curriculum studies. A Crombach Alpha reliability index of 0.63 was computed for the rating scale. The researchers with the assistance of four research assistants collected the research data by administering the questionnaires to the respondents. Data obtained with the above instruments were analysed using such descriptive statistics as the bar chart, simple percentage, and arithmetic mean.

4 RESULTS

The result of the study are presented in this chapter according to the research questions and hypotheses.

Research question 1: How does the NCCE minimum standards compare with the minimum academic standards for degree programme in Nigerian universities and that of the OND programme in Nigerian polytechnics?

Figures 1 and 2 present the academic load of degree programme in education from years one to three of the four year degree programme and the academic load of three year Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) in terms of total number of courses offered and total number of credit hours assigned to the courses respectively. Similarly, figures 3 and 4 present the two years academic load of the OND programme and that of the first two years of the three years NCE programme in terms of number of courses offered and number of credit hours assigned to the courses respectively.

Figure 1. Number of courses offered for the first three years of a 4 year degree programme in education and a three year NCE programme in Nigeria respectively.

Figure 2. Number of credit hours from years 1-3 of education degree programme and that of a three year NCE programme in Nigeria.

Sources of Data: - Faculty of Education University of Calabar, 2018-2019, [19]
- Eastern Polytechnic Accountancy Department, 2017-2018 [20]

Figure 3. Number of courses offered in two years OND programme and that of years 1-2 of the NCE programme in Nigeria respectively

Figure 4. Number of credit hours in years 1-2 of education degree programme and that of two years NCE programme in Nigeria.

- Federal College of Education Obudu (Cross River State), and Federal College of Education Technical Omoku (River State).

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counterparts in both years one and two. Generally, whereas the NCE students offer a total of 62 courses within their first and second year, an OND student offers a total of 41 courses within his two years of study.

Figure 4. Number of credit hours for the two years OND programme and that of years 1-2 of the NCE programme in Nigeria respectively.

Sources: - Eastern Polytechnic Accountancy Department, 2017-2018 [20]

Figure 4 reveals that the OND student carries a total credit load of 115 during his two year programme as against 91 carried by the NCE student in his first two years of study. This shows that in terms of number of courses, the NCE programme is more loaded than the OND programme whereas the reverse is the case from the point of view of credit hours.

Research Question 2: How adequate are the material resources available in the colleges for the implementation of the NCCE minimum standards?

Since it was not easy to assess the needed material resources in all the departments, attention was focused on the stipulated resources for the school of education which offer courses to every student in the colleges in order to answer this question. Table 1 shows the responses of the lecturers in this respect.

Table 1. Lecturers’ view on the Adequacy/Inadequacy of Some Material Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>ADEQUATE</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>INADEQUATE</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lecture theatre</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Classrooms</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Staff offices</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>68.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Centre for Edutech</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>60.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Counselling Centre</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Vehicle for T.P</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>83.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that three out of the seven items assessed are adjudged to be adequate by the lecturers whereas four of the items are adjudged inadequate. It stands to reason therefore that there is a shortage of the needed material resources for the implementation of the minimum standards curriculum in the colleges.

Research Question 3: What is the average workload of Lecturers in colleges of education in south-south Nigeria?

In order to answer this question, lecturers were required to indicate their number of hours of lecturing per week, number of courses per semester, and number of research projects they supervise per year. Their responses are shown in tables 2, 3 and 4 respectively.

Table 2. Lecturers’ Workload in Terms of Number of Hours of Lecture per Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours per Week</th>
<th>No of Lecturers</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>58.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average = 8 hours approximately</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that only 2.72% of the lecturers have more than 15 hours of lecture per week whereas 97% of the lecturers lecture for less than 16 hours per week. The average number of hours of lecture per week based on the above data is approximately 8.

Table 3. Number of Courses Taught per Semester by Lectures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Courses</th>
<th>Number of Lecturers</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average = approximately 4 courses per lecturer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that most of the lecturers teach between one and three courses per semester whereas very few (5.5%) teach between seven and nine courses per semester. Their average workload is 4 courses per lecturer per semester.

Table 4. Number of Research Projects Supervised per Lecturers per session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Projects</th>
<th>No. of Lecturers</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>63.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average = approximately 5 projects per lecturer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows that 36.2 percent of the lecturers supervise more than five research projects per session whereas 63.8 percent supervise less than six projects per session. On the average, a lecturer supervises five projects per session.

Research Question 4: How does Lecture time-table impact on students’ recreation and leisure time?

The answer to this question is provided by students’ responses to “NCE Course load Assessment Rating Scale” (NCE CLARS). The result of this is shown in Table 5.
Table 5. Students’ View of the Impact of their Lecture time table on their Performance of their Academic Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD*</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The NCE curriculum is so crowded that we are meant to offer more than 12 courses per semester</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The time table is consequently overloaded</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The following are the result of the overload:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>We hardly have time for recreation and extra-curricular activities</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sometimes we start lecturers as early as 7.00 am and end at 6.00 pm</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I find it difficult to complete the assignments given by lecturers due to lack of time</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I find it difficult to attend all the lectures everyday</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I feel so exhausted after lectures that I find it difficult to read at night</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I do not have time to make use of the library</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Students carrying over some courses do not have time to attend lectures in such courses</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The examination time table is also so overcrowded that students carrying over some courses are meant to write two courses at a time</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows that the students see their lecture time table as overcrowded. As a result of this, they have no time to carry out most of the activities that make for effective learning and good performance.

5 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Based on the analysed data, the following findings were made:

1. The NCCE Minimum Standards Curriculum for Nigerian Colleges of Education is loaded with too many courses when compared with both the NUC’s Basic Minimum Academic Standards for degree programmes in Nigerian Universities and the NBTE’s Curriculum and Course Specification for National Diploma in Nigerian Polytechnics.

2. Most of the material resources needed for the implementation of the NCCE Minimum Standards are not adequately available in the colleges.

3. A college of education lecturer teaches for an average of 8 hours per week, supervises 5 research projects per year, and teaches 4 courses per semester.

4. Some of the lecturers do not teach all the topics outlined in their various courses due to insufficient time.

5. The students see their lecturer time table as so much over crowded that it adversely affects their learning and participation in extra-curricular activities.

6 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first research question investigated how the NCCE minimum standards compares with the minimum academic standards for the degree programmes in Nigerian universities and the course specification for OND programmes in the polytechnics in terms of course loads. The finding in this regards shows that the number of courses offered for the three years NCE programme far outnumber those offered in the first three years of a four year degree programme. This is especially the case in the general studies component of the programme that contains 18 courses as against 9 for degree programme. It was also found that the number of courses offered within the first two years of the NCE programme is quite higher than the number offered for a two year OND programme.

On the other hand the number of credit hours assigned to the first three years of the degree programme (120) is almost at per with that of the NCE programme (118) whereas that of the two year OND programme outweighs that of first the first two years of the NCE programme. This can be ascribed to the assignment of one credit unit to most of the NCE courses especially the general studies courses irrespective of the number of topics outlined for these courses. This notwithstanding, a consideration of the number of continuous assessment exercises associated with the many courses as well as the number of topics spanned by each of these courses shows that the NCE minimum standards is comparatively highly loaded with many courses but minimally weighted in terms of credit hours. This finding agrees with the comment by the Provost of one of these colleges Professor Yakubu Mohammad Auna [17] that college of education students offer more courses than the university students and so they are overloaded with courses.

The second research question investigated the adequacy or otherwise of some of the material resources needed for the implementation of the minimum standards. Since it was a cumbersome task to carry out this investigation into the various departments, attention was focussed on school of education that offers courses to every NCE student. The finding in this regard shows that some of the resources are inadequate in the colleges. This finding is in tandem with [14]
who reported inadequacy of physical facilities in colleges of education in south east, Nigeria.

It was also found that a good number of the lecturers do not teach exhaustively all the topics outlined in the course content due to insufficiency of time. This finding is not surprising as some of the courses are assigned a weight of one credit load which means that such courses are taught for one hour a week and this makes it difficult to cover the topics.

Another findings was that lecturers on the average teach for about 8 hours per week, about 4 courses per semester, and supervise about 5 projects per session. Also, about 25% of the lecturers assess students with only one technique of assessment per course due to insufficient time. Although none of these statistics appears to suggest too much workload on a lecturer, the fact that ideally, teaching four courses per semester entails a administering and scoring a minimum of 8 continuous assessment exercises implies heavy workload. Moreover, considering the large class sizes especially in general courses, amount of time required to administer, score continuous assessments and examination papers, prepare results in these courses, read and correct students research projects as well as carry out researches and attend academic conferences as required of lectures, one is bound to describe the reported workload as a case of mismatch between capacity and load and hence, to conclude that the curriculum is overloaded [5].

The finding that lecture time table is so jam-packed with lectures that the students have no time to do all that is expected of learners for effective learning as well as have time for recreation shows that the curriculum is overloaded. This is so as almost all of the students agreed that the time table did not give them room to attend lectures regularly, complete all the assignments given, partake effectively in extra-curricular activities, make use of the library, and to read privately at night due to exhaustion after each day’s lectures. [15] made similar finding when he reported that lecture schedule (time table) affected students’ attendance to lecture, and thus resulting in absconding from lecture, and lateness to lecture. This finding supports [16] who remarked that sufficient time is not allocated to practical activities in physical and health education. Worse still is the finding that examination timetable is also so compact to the extent that students who are carrying over some courses are meant to write examinations in such courses at the same time that they are writing examinations in regular courses.

7 CONCLUSION

The present edition of the NCCE minimum standards curriculum for colleges of education in Nigeria is overloaded with too many courses. This overload is evident in terms of number of courses offered, availability of resources for delivering the curriculum, effect of the lecture time table on students’ execution of learning activities, and their participation in extra-curricular activities. This overload of the curriculum content is especially seen in the area of general studies and the education component of the curriculum respectively. Such overload does not make room for effective study on the part of the students and has affected students’ performance adversely.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The current move to review the minimum standards should be vigorously pursued.
2. The number of General Studies and Education courses currently listed for and offered by NCE students should be drastically reduced.
3. The current practice of assigning one credit load to courses should be changed and courses assigned a minimum of 2 credit units.
4. Time table planners should make provision for students’ recreation and other private academic work.
5. The level of education where products of the NCE programme are expected to teach should be taken into consideration while reviewing the minimum standards to avoid overloading the curriculum with irrelevant courses.
6. The government should make adequate financial provision to the colleges to enable them procure the necessary material resources as specified in the minimum standards.

REFERENCES

Assessment of Curriculum Load of the National Commission for colleges of Education’s Minimum standard for Nigeria Certificate in Education
