

QUALITY TEACHING PERSONNEL AND THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING THE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

by

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Abstract

The study was designed to establish the relevance of quality teachers in coping with the challenges of implementing the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in schools in Anambra State. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 924 public primary school head teachers and 227 public junior secondary school head teachers in Anambra state, with sample sizes of 400 and 100 respectively which were randomly drawn, bringing the total sample size to 500. Two research questions and one hypothesis guided the study, while a 16-item questionnaire designed on a 4 – point-scale response, supplied the data for the study. Mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics were used to analyze data. Findings revealed that, lack of competent teachers, inadequate sponsorship for seminars, workshop, conferences, fund, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poorly equipped laboratories among others, pose serious challenges to the implementation of UBE in the state. Based on the findings recommendations were made and conclusion drawn.

Introduction

In her efforts to enhance national development, the Federal Government of Nigeria has introduced several reforms, all aimed at providing quality education for Nigerian citizens. One of such reforms is the launching of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in November 1999 by President Olusegun Obasanjo. The UBE scheme is designed among others, to redress access and quality education for all children of school age, to facilitate the standard of literacy and improve national development (Obanya, 2000). The UBE is a nine-year programme that covers six years of primary education and three years of

junior secondary school.

As stated by Ojiah (2003), the Universal Basic Education (UBE) has the following objectives:

1. Developing in the citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
2. The provision of free universal basic education to every Nigerian child of school age.
3. Reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency.

4. Catering for drop-outs and drop-out-of school children/adolescent through various forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
5. Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative and life skills (as well as the ethical moral and civic values) needed for laying a solid foundation for life- long learning.

More often than not, laudable educational programmes in Nigeria are not achieved due to some factors, of which the most crucial is lack of qualified personnel to handle such programmes. The quality of teacher obviously determines the quality of the products (NPE, 2004:39). The problems in the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria range from fundamental, ie the grassroots, which is classroom teaching. It is the teacher that translates educational policies into practice, and programmes into reality in the classroom, during teaching and learning session, hence what goes on in the classroom should be taken seriously for the success of any educational programme.

However, observations have shown that despite these laudable objectives, the UBE seems to be falling short of expectations due to some constraints. The fear now is that history is about to repeat itself as in the case of Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1976 which did not register any result.

The purpose of this study therefore, was to empirically establish the need for professionally equipped teachers to handle the UBE and also identify the challenges that negate proper implementation of the

programme in schools in Anamrba state.

Research Questions

1. To what extent are teachers in public Primary and junior secondary schools in Anambrastate professionally equipped to implement the UBE programme?
2. What are the challenges negating proper implementation of UBE in public primary andjunior secondary schools in Anambra state?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of primary and junior secondary school head-teachers in public schools on the extent teachers are professionally equipped and the challenges that negate proper implementation of the UBE in the state.

Research Design

The study adopted descriptive survey design. As posited by Akuezulo and Agu (2003), descriptive design helps to elicit people's opinions and ideas on current issues.

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Anambra state.

Population of the Study.

The population of the study comprised all the 924 primary school head teachers and 227 head teachers in public junior secondary schools in the state. (Source: Planning Research and Statistics, Department Anambra State Universal Basic Education (ASUBEB, 2007).

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the sample for the study. 400 primary school head teachers and 100 junior secondary school head teachers, randomly drawn, form the sample of the study, bringing

the total sample size to 500.

Instrument for Data Collection

A -16- item questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data. The items of the questionnaire were structured on a 4-point scale response of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 2 points and Disagree (D) = 1 point.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was face – validated by four specialists in the departments of Educational Administration and Planning and Measurement and Evaluation, University of Nigeria Nsukka. Their input helped in restructuring and modification of the questionnaire items, in terms of language and suitability.

Reliability of the Instrument

In order to determine the reliability of the test instrument used for the study, the researcher administered the instrument to 10 head teachers of primary schools and 10 junior secondary school head teachers in the neighbouring state, Delta. The essence of this was to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. A test re-test reliability estimate was computed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The reliability coefficient value obtained was 0.86. This value was considered high enough to conclude that the instrument was reliable.

Administration of the Instrument

The researcher employed direct delivery techniques in administering the copies of the questionnaire and with the help of 5 research assistants, 500 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and retrieved from the respondents. This implies 100% return of the test instrument.

Data Analyses

Mean ratings and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected. The hypothesis was tested using t-test at 0.05 significant level, while the acceptance level of the mean scores was 2.50 and above. Mean scores below 2.50 was regarded as disagree.

Presentation of Results

The results of the findings were presented in the tables 1 and 2, in order of the two research questions that guided the study. Table 3 contained the test of hypothesis.

Table 1: Mean Scores And Standard Deviation On The Extent The Teachers In Public Primary And Junior Secondary Schools Are Professionally Equipped To Implement UBE in the Schools.

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Lack of competent teachers to implement the UBE programme	3.33	0.91	SA.
2.	Inadequate sponsorship for seminars, workshops, conferences and in- service trainings for teachers involved in the programe.	3.59	0.68	SA
3.	Most teachers involved in the UBE programme are not aware of the objectives.	3.34	0.63	SA
4.	Adequate teaching aides eg. Textual materials have been provided for the programme.	2.05	1.01	Disagree
5.	Government should provide opportunities for over-sea training for teachers.	3.85	0.94	SA
6.	Lack of adequate ICT facilities eg computers in schools.	3.18	0.88	SA
7.	Poor library services for research by the implementers of UBE.	3.17	0.99	SA
8.	Inadequate provision of standard workshops, equipment, facilities and materials for practical.	3.76	0.58	SA
	Grand total	3.28		

Results in table 1 showed that all the listed items; 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, which indicated professional handicaps of the teachers attracted mean scores well above the acceptable range of 2.50 from the respondents (head teachers). This shows that the respondents agreed that teachers are not professionally equipped to implement the Universal Basic Education

in schools. Item 4, which says that adequate teaching aids/textual materials have been provided for the implementation of UBE, attracted negative response from the respondents with a mean score of 2.05 which is below the acceptable range, indicating the respondents' disagreement.

Table 2: Mean Scores And The Standard Deviation On The Challenges That Negate Proper Implementation of UBE in School in Anambra State.

S/N	Items	Mean X ⁻	SD	Decision
9.	Schools do not have sufficient textbooks for all subjects being offered.	3.44	0.68	SA
10.	Insufficient classroom blocks and offices for teachers.	3.12	0.65	SA
11.	Inadequate motivation of teachers in terms of salary. (salaries are not paid as and when due).	3.21	0.58	SA
12.	Inadequate funding of the schools by the government.	3.19	0.67	SA
13.	Inadequate supervision and monitoring of the schools.	2.36	0.44	D
14.	Poor management of schools.	1.94	0.91	D
15.	Poorly equipped laboratories, for science subjects, ICT and introductory technologies	3.56	0.78	SA
16.	Unavailability of qualified teachers in various subjects areas in schools.	3.75	0.58	SA.
	Grant total	3.07		

Results in table 2 indicated that the respondents reacted positively to items 9, 10, 11, 12, 15 and 16 with mean scores above 2.50 acceptable level, showing their endorsement of the items as factors that negate proper implementation of Universal Basic Education Programme in schools. The items include among others, schools not having sufficient text books for all the subjects offered, insufficient classroom blocks, inadequate motivation of teachers in terms of salary etc. However, the respondents reacted negatively to items 13 and 14 which have inadequate supervision and monitoring

of the schools. These items attracted mean scores of 2.36 and 1.94 respectively which are below the decision rule of 2.50. The probable reason for the respondents' negative responses could be that they share equal blame with the government on these two items, because as head teachers they supposed to supervise and monitor what goes on in their schools, especially as it concerns teaching and learning. They are also expected to see to the effective management of their schools, but sometime the head teachers are guilty of mismanagement and misappropriation of fund.

Table 3: Summary of T-Test Analysis of The Mean Ratings of Primary And Junior Secondary School Head Teacher on The Extent Teachers Are Professionally Equipped And The Challenges That Negate Proper Implementation of Ube in Schools.

Variables	N	Mean X ⁻	SD	DF	Cal-x	Crit-t	Decision
Primary school head teachers	400	3.28	0.38	498	.286	1.96	NS
Junior secondary school head teachers	100	3.07	0.40				

NS = Not significant at 0.05 level.

Data in table 3 indicated that the calculated t-value is 286, while the critical t-value is 1.96 since the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value the hypothesis is accepted. This shows that there is no significant difference in the opinions of the head teachers of both primary and junior secondary schools, on the extent teachers are professionally equipped to implement the UBE, as well as the challenges involved in the implementation of the programme.

The above findings correspond with the views of Adeniji (2003), who opined that measures to be adopted for effective implementation of UBE include, improved funding, provision of infrastructural facilities, motivation of teachers among others. Contributing also to this, Olugbemi (2003), posited that if the goals of UBE must be achieved, there must be radical improvement in teachers' education and their working conditions for them to be committed to their duty for the success of the UBE programme.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government both state and federal, apart from funding UBE adequately, should ensure that credible persons are involved in the implementation of the programme.
2. Periodic and relevant in-service trainings, seminars workshops and refresher courses should be organized for teachers involved in UBE, to enable them update their knowledge and competencies so as to coop with the challenges of the programme.
3. The UBE teachers should be adequately motivated to ensure their commitment.
4. Infrastructural facilities should be provided to ensure conducive

teaching and learning in schools.

Conclusion

Concluding this study, the researcher borrowed leaf from Ikegbune (2002), who posited that the Universal Basic Education (UBE) is not likely to succeed, unless the constraints that led to the collapse of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1976, are tacked and check-mated. The government should pay priority attention to some logistic issues. For instance, there should be proper articulation of UBE financial involvement, effective monitoring and supervision, as well as adequate provision of infrastructural facilities in schools. When all these are put in place, the UBE will definitely achieve its aims and objectives.

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