

Full length Research Paper

Teacher factors in the implementation of universal basic education programme in junior secondary schools in the south senatorial district of Delta State, Nigeria

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The study is an empirical research on teachers' factors in the implementation of universal basic education (UBE) Programme. There were three research questions and three hypotheses to guide the study. As a descriptive survey, 205 teachers were sampled from a target population of 2,040 teachers in 120 junior secondary schools. Questionnaire was used to generate data. Data were analyzed using the mean and z-test statistic. It was found that urban teachers' implementation of the UBE programme was significant to those in the rural areas. Also, the experienced teachers' implementation of the programme did not differ from the less experienced teachers. In addition, the perceptions of professional and non-professional teachers in the implementation of the programme did not differ. It was recommended among others that since there is need for community recruitment of teachers, government should recruit professional teachers into the schools for students to achieve permanent literacy and communicate effectively. Seminars and workshops to be organized for teachers and government should intensify more efforts in effective supervision of teachers to acquaint them with new ideas in the implementation of the universal basic education programme.

Key words: Teachers perception, universal basic education, junior secondary schools, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of universal education was first mooted in 1955 when the universal primary education scheme was inaugurated by the government of Western Nigeria. The Eastern Nigeria government launched its own universal primary education in 1957. In Northern Nigeria, education was provided free by government in a bid to make children attend school (Adeyemi, 2007). Thus, at its onset, the universal primary education scheme had been undertaken by regional government. There was no Federal Government intervention until 1976 when the universal primary education (UPE) was launched to cover the whole country.

The period of universal primary education (UPE) marks the unprecedented growth at all levels of education which includes primary, secondary and tertiary education in Nigeria. The Murtala Mohammed/Obasanjo military regime launched the UPE scheme in October 1976. The

regime made primary education programme free. Universal Basic Education (UBE) is actually an expansion of UPE. Instead of ending it in primary 6, it now extended to the first three years of secondary education which is junior secondary school.

In 1990, a world conference on education was held in Jomtien, Thailand, which was popularly called education for all (EFA), the outcome of this world conference on education was to be adopted by all countries in a bid to reduce drop out and illiteracy rates in every society. For Nigeria to be in line with this recommendation, the UBE programme was launched by the federal government on 30th September, 1999 in Sokoto with Obanya as National Coordinator (Federal Ministry of Education, 2000).

The objectives of the UBE include among other things, the provision of universal access to basic education, the provision of a conducive learning environment,

eradication of illiteracy as well as the ability to communicate effectively. The objectives also include laying of sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking, development of sound attitudes, giving every child the opportunity of developing manipulative skills that would enable him or her function effectively in the society (Babalola, 2000). Since the UBE scheme includes the junior secondary schools, the national policy on education stipulated the objectives of junior secondary schools to include effective thinking, communication skills, making of relevant judgment, making the pupil a useful member of one's family, understanding basic facts about health and sanitation, understanding and appreciating one's role as a useful member of the country (Babalola, 2000). These objectives are more likely achieved in Junior Secondary Schools than at the end of the six years primary school level. For UBE or any educational programme or policy or innovation to be translated into reality and success, it must reach the classroom, the heart of teaching. Teachers, in our present day reality hold the key, thus, they can either unlock the classroom door for the programme, if they are well disposed to and enthusiastic about it or slam the door against it, carrying on as if nothing has changed, no educational planner should underrate the teachers' factors in any programme before it takes off (Ijaiya, 1997). There is great need therefore to carry out this study so as to find out whether UBE has been implemented or not in junior secondary schools in the south senatorial district of Delta State.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised in the study.

1. Do the urban teachers implement UBE programme more than the rural teachers in junior secondary schools in the south senatorial district of Delta State?
2. Do the more experienced teachers implement UBE programme more than the less experienced teachers in junior secondary schools in the south senatorial district of Delta State?
3. Do professional teachers implement UBE programme more than the non-professional teachers in junior secondary schools teachers in the south senatorial district of Delta State?

Research hypotheses

To achieve the objective of this study, the following three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant difference between urban and rural teachers' implementation of UBE programme in junior secondary schools.

2. There is no significant difference between experienced and less experienced teachers' implementation of the UBE programme in junior secondary schools.
3. There is no significant difference between the professional and non-professional teachers' implementation of UBE programme in junior secondary schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Universal Basic Education is a programme aimed at addressing problems of access, quality and equity in primary and junior secondary schools. It is a 9-year educational programme of six years duration for the primary segment and three years of junior secondary. These two levels of basic education are universal free and compulsory for all Nigerian children aged 6 to 15. The Universal Basic Education programme also stimulate learning from the early years of 3 to 5+ which is called early child care development and education (ECCDE) (Universal Basic Education Training Manual, 2000).

The Federal Government of Nigeria's implementation blue print of universal basic education (2000) defines Universal Basic Education as the foundation of sustainable life long learning. It provides reading, writing, and numeracy skills. It comprises a wide variety of formal and non-formal educational activities and programmes designed to enable learners acquire functional literacy.

Quoting (Obasanjo, 1999) "The Universal Basic Education programme is almost the same as the old UPE scheme, free and universal like before but in addition now, it will be compulsory". He further explained that the new programme would extend to all children from age six to fifteen years and embrace both primary school and junior secondary school education.

In the work of Aluede (2006), universal means the whole people without exception. Basic means that on which anything rests. It is the root or bottom or the foundation from which other parts gets support, while education will be interpreted to mean the act of bringing up or training of a child through instruction and in the process bring about the strengthening of his powers of body and mind to be able to understand his culture.

The Federal Ministry of Education (2007), section 3 of the National Policy on Education defines basic education as a type of education comprising 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary school. The policy stipulates that education shall be free and compulsory. This scheme shall include adult and non-formal educational programmes at primary and junior secondary school levels for both adults and out of school youths.

The teacher and Universal Basic Education (UBE)

The importance of teachers in any educational

programme cannot be over stressed, especially in the implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme. The success or failure of it will depend upon the teachers because of the nature of the programme.

The number and quality must be meticulously planned to ensure adequacy of the teachers quantitatively and qualitatively. Aghenta (2000) further stressed that as a result of the comprehensive UBE programme the usual one teacher for a class/ arm will not be enough.

Adamaechi and Romaine (2000) are of the view that the short supply of teachers led to the employment of "market women" half barked individuals. This view reinforced by Ezeocha (1990) as reported in the work of Odo (2000) noted that the crash programmes of the UPE attracted the wrong caliber of people into the teaching profession, people who neither had the make up nor commitment to do the job. Nevertheless, in spite of such crash programmes and subsequent recruitment of mediocres sub-standard teachers, teachers were still grossly inadequate. Dareng and Attah (2000) quoting (Lassa, 1996) said teachers are nation builders and as such their training will equip them for laying a solid educational foundation right from the primary level.

Location

Anyaegbu et al. (2004) opined that rural education is the key to rural development and an essential building block of national development; that poverty cannot be eradicated without eliminating illiteracy among the rural populace and raise their level of knowledge. Abidogun (2006) emphasized rural areas as having greater challenges concerning educational development than the urban centers, due to the peculiar socioeconomic and institutional structures of the rural areas. Some of these challenges according to Anyaegbu (2003) are:

1. Lack of zeal and interest by teachers due to poor and delayed salaries and poor condition of work.
2. Frequent strike actions by the teachers.

Based on these, Abidogun (2006) reports that many teachers therefore reject posting into the rural areas while those that do, treat their presence in such areas as part time assignment. Edho (2009) said that some of the constraints that affect the success rates of the UBE programme in the rural communities is teachers inadequacy and their unwillingness to be posted to rural communities.

Arubayi (2005) complains also about the walking distance of pupils to school, that it affects their performance and overall success of the UBE in the state. He added that the distance travelled has some relationship to school attendance, punctuality and absenteeism to school and that some schools in the state are located so far from pupils as they travel more than 5 km to get to school.

Certain factors affect the distribution of teachers in schools, these include: gender, social status, qualification, area of specialization, government policy, cultural and religious belief (Edho, 2009). It is a common practice that married female teachers serve in their husband's stations and these affect even distribution of teachers. Rural schools suffer more from this gender influence on teachers' distribution, since most married women serve in urban schools. Parents complain of poor quality instruction especially in rural schools. Qualitative instruction resulting into qualitative education can only be achieved through even distribution of available teachers (Ikoya, 2008).

Experience

Enueme (2002) is in the line with UNICEF recommendation that child friendly school is influenced by the teachers teaching experience that those with high teaching experience accepted the UNICEF recommendation for child-friendly school; more specifically, she said the acceptance level of teachers with 26 years of experience and above is highest. Adamaechi and Romaine (2000) feels it is very wrong to isolate planners from those who will implement the programme and advocate that experienced teachers be given the opportunity to help in the planning and implementation phase for the UBE to succeed.

Imogie (2000), believe that if UBE makes it compulsory for teachers to be involved in in-service training, workshop of different kinds in related areas and conferences, national and international, they will update their knowledge and expand their scope of experiences, as this experience in turn will benefit the students.

Mkpa (2000) also thinks mentoring is very efficient and cost-effective approach to staff development. The less experience teacher who is attached to the mentor consults the later, on all matters, and is properly guided in her professional activities. Enoch and Okpede's (2000) opinion is that teachers who are in the field are expected to implement the UBE scheme. Also, they have to be trained for different educational purposes, so that when they are required to implement this new scheme, they can cope because they lack experience.

Uwameiye and Osunde (2000) worry over the fact that teaches who constitute part of the stakeholders and primary implementers of the programme cannot conceptualize what the UBE programme is all about and do not possess the training for the implementation of UBE programme. They therefore implore the government to encourage in-service training.

Professionalism

Adebimpe (2001) opined that for the UBE to succeed, adequate provision should be made to produce sufficient

qualified teachers and make them relevant within the limit of their area of specialization. Coombs (1968) as cited in Nwagwu (2000) had emphasized the importance of teachers in the education enterprise. He said that teachers next to students were the largest and most expensive inputs. They are required in large numbers but there is also the critical need to have the right quality.

Odo (2000) says that in a bid to meet up with the increased demands for teachers, government may recruit those much less qualified to teach. As a matter of facts, this is already happening in the system. At present, some non-professionals are being specially employed for the purposes of the UBE scheme with the hope that quick orientation / training will be given to them after which they will serve as teachers under the scheme. The implication of this is that teachers will either be overloaded, or they may not be of the right caliber in terms of training and experience.

It could appear that the administrators have opted to recruit and hurriedly train emergency teachers. Nwagwu (2000) is of the opinion that organizers and managers of the UBE programme phase the implementation and respect the policy's decision in the National Policy on Education that national certificate of education (NCE) should be the minimum qualification for teaching.

The National policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2007: section 63) stipulates that the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession at any level in the Nigerian school system should be the Nigeria certificate in Education (N.C.E.). However, the NCE teachers have limited subjects' specialization where the teacher trainees are trained in two basic teaching subjects.

Mkpa (2000) thinks the mistake of the past must not be repeated in this new dispensation where quality of teachers recruited for the programme was grossly defective since the quality of teachers is a major determinant of the degree of success of the Universal Basic Education. Ogunu (2000) laments the rate of many teachers in our school still teaching courses without any specialized knowledge and skills in the subjects.

Related works to the present study

As far as the provision of human and material resources are concerned, Adebimpe (2001) in his work opined that for UBE to succeed, adequate provision should be made to produce sufficient qualified teachers and make them relevant within the limit of their area of specialization. Salaries need to be paid as at when due because it serves as a motivation factor towards productivity. In a related work, Ijaiya (1997) acclaims that the real implementers of UBE programme are the teachers. She says that teachers are important in their implementation of the programme. That it has been sufficiently demonstrated in Nigeria that no amount of planning or

funding will ensure the success of Universal Basic Education unless teachers implement it effectively in schools; her stand being that most of the discussions about teachers have centered on number rather than quality or the welfare of teachers.

Notwithstanding the laudable objectives of UBE, Enueme (2002) reported that one of the several limitations to the implementation of the programme was the long absence of an enabling law since 1999 when the programme was launched. He argued that the effect of this long delay is the refusal of the government to employ teachers for the programme. Since its inception in 1999, available infrastructural activities, teaching and learning materials as well as qualified teachers are perhaps grossly inadequate in schools.

Ogbuka (2000) reported for instance that out of 21 million children of primary school age in 1996, only about 14 million were enrolled in schools. The completion rate was 64.1% while rate of transition to the junior secondary school was 39.8%. According to him, the situation in junior secondary schools was not better. He said out of the total population of 7.2 million children of 12 to 14 years old in Nigeria, only 2.4 million pupils were enrolled in school. This was manifested at the sight of so many children of school age roaming the streets in many Nigerian cities during school hours.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The research design used in this study is an ex-post facto design employing the descriptive survey.

The population

The population of this study is made up of 2,040 teachers in 120 Junior Secondary Schools in the south senatorial district of Delta State.

Sample and sampling technique

A total of 120 junior secondary schools in the south senatorial district of Delta State were randomly selected from the population. The sampling technique is stratified random sampling. Samples of 10% of the teachers (irrespective of gender) were selected randomly from urban and rural schools in each Local Government Area. As a result, sampled teachers were 205 out of 2,040. Table 1 shows total number of teachers in the south senatorial district of Delta State and 10% of sampled teachers in their male and female proportions.

Research instrument

A structured questionnaire consisting of 24 items was constructed. The questionnaire is grouped into sections A and B. Section A is the teachers' background information while section B is the 24 itemed questions constructed on a 4 point Likert rating scale. Respondents respond as: strongly agreed (4), agreed (3) disagreed

Table 1. Sample size according to L.G.A.

L.G.A	Total no. of teachers	Rural	Urban	Teachers sampled
Isoko North	256	12	14	26
Isoko South	258	13	13	26
Bomadi	230	13	10	23
Patani	246	12	13	25
Burutu	246	15	10	25
Warri North	268	14	13	27
Warri South	284	12	16	28
Warri South West	252	10	15	25
Total	2,040	101	104	205

Source: Delta State post-Primary Education Board, Asaba, Nigeria

Table 2. Analysis of implementation of UBE programme based on location of teachers.

Group	N	X	$\bar{X}$	Level
Urban teachers	105	8665	82.52	High
Rural teachers	100	3000	30.00	Low
Total	205			

Table 3. Analysis of implementation of UBE programme based on teachers' experience.

Group	N	X	$\bar{X}$	Level
More experienced teachers	77	4594	59.66	High
Less experienced teachers	128	7190	56.17	Low
Total	205			

(2) strongly disagreed (1).

Validity of the instrument

The questionnaire was validated by the researcher and other experts in universal basic education (UBE) who critically examined the face and content values of the instrument. They made necessary corrections for the improvement of the instrument.

Reliability of the instrument

In this study, the test re-test method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Test re-test reliability is concerned with the internal consistency of an instrument. The method has the advantage of being administered twice to one group of respondents. The 24 item questionnaire was administered to some teachers in junior secondary schools in the south senatorial district of Delta State outside the sample of the study. The two data collected were tested and correlated by applying the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient "r". A reliability coefficient of 0.90 was yielded, which shows that the research instrument has a high internal consistency.

Administration of instrument

To ensure high percentage return of the research instrument, the researcher administered the questionnaire personally to the respondents and retrieved them instantly. This was repeated to the same respondents after one week.

Method of data analysis

The research questions were analyzed using the mean, while the z-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The analysis and presentation of results are organized around the research questions and null hypotheses formulated in this study.

Research question 1

Do the urban teachers implement UBE programme more than rural teachers in junior secondary schools in the south senatorial district of Delta State?

Table 2 shows that urban teachers do implement UBE programme more than the rural teachers. This is as a result of the urban teachers' mean of 82.52 which is higher than the mean of the rural teachers with 30.00.

Research question 2

Do the experienced teachers implement UBE programme more than the less experienced teachers in junior secondary schools in the south senatorial district of Delta State?

The result of Table 3 shows that experienced teachers do implement UBE programme with a mean of 59.66, and the less experienced teachers with a mean of 56.17 in almost equal manner.

Table 4. Analysis of implementation of UBE programme based on teachers' profession.

Group	N	X	$\bar{X}$	Level
Professional teachers	158	9290	58.80	High
Non-professional teachers	47	1950	41.49	Low
Total	205			

Table 5. Z-test analysis of the implementation of UBE programme based on location of teachers.

Group	N	X	$\bar{X}$	DF	Level	Z CAL	Z CRI	Decision
Urban teachers	105	8665	82.52					
Rural teachers	100	3000	30	203	0.05	0.59	1.96	Not significant
Total	205							

Table 6. Z-test analysis of the implementation of UBE programme based on teachers' experience.

Group	N	X	$\bar{X}$	DF	Level	Z CAL	Z CRI	Decision
More experienced teachers	77	4594	59.66					
Less experienced teachers	128	7190	56.17	203	0.05	0.04	1.96	Not significant
Total	205							

Research question 3

Do professional teachers implement UBE programme more than the non-professional teachers in the south senatorial district of Delta State?

From the result in Table 4, the professional teachers do implement UBE programme have a mean of 58.80 more than the non-professional teachers whose mean is 41.49.

Hypotheses testing

H₁: There is no significant difference between urban teachers and rural teachers' implementation of Universal Basic Education programme. The mean scores of the two groups were subjected to z – test analysis. The result is presented in Table 5.

The result presented in Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference between the urban and rural teachers implementation of UBE programme. This is because the z calculated (0.59) is lesser than the z-critical 1.96. This implies that the hypothesis is accepted.

H₂: There is no significant difference between experienced and less experienced teachers implementation of UBE programme. The mean score of the group was subjected to z- test analysis. The result is presented in Table 6.

From the result presented in Table 5 the null hypothesis

of no significant difference is accepted. This is because the z calculated value of 0.04 is less than the z-critical 1.96. This implies that there is no significant difference between experienced teachers and less experienced teachers' implementation of the UBE programme in junior secondary schools.

H₃: There is no significant difference between professional teachers and non- professional teachers in their implementation of UBE programme. The mean scores of the two groups were subjected to z-test statistic. The result is presented in Table 7.

From the result presented in Table 7, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in implementation of Universal Basic Education programme between the professional teachers and Non-professional teachers is accepted. This is because z calculated (0.19) is less than z – critical value of 1.96 which shows that there is no significant difference between professional teachers and non-professional teachers in the implementation of UBE Programme.

DISCUSSION

The study was aimed at analyzing teacher factors in the implementation of universal basic education (UBE) programme in junior secondary schools in the south senatorial district of Delta State, Nigeria, and the findings are discussed under the following:

Table 7. Z-test analysis of the implementation of UBE programme based on teachers' profession.

Group	N	X	$\bar{X}$	DF	Level	Z CAL	Z CRI	Decision
Professional teachers	158	9290	58.80	203	0.05	0.19	1.96	Not significant
Non- professional teachers	47	1950	41.49					
Total	205							

1. Urban and rural teachers' implementation of UBE programme.
2. More experienced and less experience teachers' implementation of the UBE programme.
3. Professional and non-professional teachers' implementation of UBE programme.

Urban and rural teachers' implementation of UBE programme

From research question 1 and hypothesis one implies that the hypothesis was accepted that there is no significant difference between urban and rural teachers implementation of UBE programme. These findings are as a result of the following reasons: First, the urban teachers are more in number compared to the rural teachers; secondly, there is no significant difference because the rural teachers are content to practice UBE as their focus in their years of training.

Experienced and less experience teacher's implementation of UBE programme

From the mean of the respondents on research question 2 in Table 3, comparing the more experienced and the less experience teachers on the implementation of the UBE programme, there is no significant difference. Equally, from Table 7, the hypothesis shows that there is no significant difference in their implementation between experienced and less experienced teachers in the schools. Hence, the acceptance of the null hypothesis, that there is no significant difference between experienced and less experienced teachers in the implementation of the UBE programme in the schools.

The absence of significant difference is due to the fact that both the experienced and less experienced teachers teach together in the same school making use of the same scheme of work as well as attending the same seminars and workshops, and coordinating both internal and external examinations at the junior secondary schools is in south senatorial district in Delta State. All these are to enhance teaching and learning process.

Professional and non-professional teachers' implementation of UBE programme

Result from research question 3 as shown in Table 4

shows that the mean response of the professional teachers is higher than that of the non-professional teachers. The professional teachers are into the implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme objectives more than the non – professional teachers.

From the statistical test of hypothesis 3, Table 7 shows that the z - calculated value of 0.19 is less than z – critical 1.69, hence the acceptance of the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference between the professional and non-professional teachers implementation of UBE programme.

Conclusion

The following conclusions have been drawn on the basis of the findings of the study:

1. That there is no significant difference between urban and rural teachers' implementation of UBE programme. This is because, the urban teachers are more in number compared to the rural teachers and their mean response is higher than that of the rural teachers.
2. That there is no significant difference between the more experienced and the less experienced teachers' implementation of the UBE programme in junior secondary schools. This is because both the more experienced and less experienced teachers teach together in the same school making use of the same scheme of work as well as attending the same seminars and workshops.
3. That there is no significant difference between the professional and non-professional teachers implementation of UBE programme. This is due to the fact that the professional teachers are into the implementation of the UBE programme objectives more than the non-professional teachers in junior secondary schools in the south senatorial district of Delta State, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

1. Community recruitment of teachers in the rural areas of the state is also recommended as teachers posted to these areas do reject their postings.
2. The state government also should recruit professional teachers into the primary and junior secondary schools in the state in order to enable the pupils to achieve

permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively.

3. Teachers should be allowed to attend seminars and workshop to acquaint themselves of new ideas and methods of teaching for the UBE programme.

4. Teachers should be sent for in-service training to enable them acquire more skills and competence in their job performances.

5. The state ministry of education should intensify more efforts in the effective supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the UBE programme in the state.

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