



CHALLENGES AGAINST SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study was carried out to identify challenges against successful implementation of universal basic education in Nigeria. To achieve this objective, two research questions were developed and answered while one null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. A 24 items structured questionnaire was developed from the literature reviewed for the study and utilized in collecting data. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The sample for the study was 328 respondents made up of 89 LGA UBE staff and 239 UBE teachers. The structured questionnaire was face-validated by 5 experts in UBE programme and measurement and evaluation. The Cronbach alpha method was used to compute the reliability of the questionnaire to obtain a co-efficient of 0.86. The questionnaire was administered on 328 respondents; 317 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and analyzed. The weighted mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis. The results showed that there are lots of challenges ranging from faulty planning process to lack or inadequacy of human and material resources that are against implementation of UBE programme. The study further found

out that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of LGA UBE staff and UBE teachers on the challenges against successful implementation of UBE scheme. It was therefore recommended that the UBE program should be properly financed to provide necessary human and material resources and the ministries in charge of UBE should also be adequately financed and properly staffed to enable them perform their traditional functions of school supervision and monitoring.

Introduction

Since independence, there has been a strong desire to develop a relevant education system that would serve as a tool for accelerating national growth and development. The opportunity for a National Policy on Education came in 1969 as a result of the national curriculum conference, which was a culmination of expression of general dissatisfaction with the existing education system that was considered to be irrelevant to national needs, aspirations and goals of the society. In 1973, a committee of expert drawn from a wide range of interests was convened. The outcome of the convention was a draft document which led to the final document called the national policy on education published in 1977 after due contributions from the states and other interest groups. The national policy also streamlined the education into what is popularly referred as the 6-3-3-4 (6 years in primary, 3 years in junior secondary, 3 years in senior secondary and 4 years in tertiary institution) system of education in Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

The universal basic education (UBE) which is a 9 year programme was launched on September 21st 1999 in Sokoto by the former president of Nigeria, Chief Aremu Olusegun Obasanjo. The objective of the programme is to provide free and compulsory universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school going age (Federal Government of Nigeria). The U.B.E consist of a compulsory primary school and junior secondary school (JSS) level of education thereby making it different from other similar attempted programmes such as the universal free primary education (UPE) in 1955, 1957 and 1976. The programme also caters for the rural population, nomadic population, persons in physical isolated settlements, urban slum, adult illiterates, Almajiri/street children (Obanja, 2000). The three components to the UBE scheme include provision for formal basic education for the first nine

years of schooling (6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary education) for all children; nomadic education for school going age children for pastoral nomads and migrant fisherman and literacy and non formal education for out of school children.

During the launching, the President assured the nation that extensive consultation would be held on the implementation of the UBE programme. Consequently, a three day mini-summit on the implementation of the programme was held in Abuja between 29th November and 1st December, 1999. The purpose of the mini-summit according to Williams (2000) was to:

- (1) Create further public awareness for the scheme
- (2) Elicit the support and inputs of all stakeholders in education
- (3) Critique the draft implementation blue print prepared by the Federal Ministry of Education.
- (4) Enrich the perception of the implementers and stakeholders of the UBE
- (5) Provide a forum for the cross fertilization of ideas on the scheme.

Williams (2000) also noted that the summit brought together the entire stakeholders in the education sectors, namely: Federal, State and Local government representatives, educationists, bureaucrats, national and international donor agencies, non-governmental organizations, community leaders, Nigeria Union of Teachers, Parent Teachers Associations and National Association of Nigerian Students. Altogether, there were 230 participants at the summit. The summit was held in four plenary sessions. The draft implementation blue print was presented during which the discussants, led discussion in ten critical areas of concern to the scheme. These areas according to him, include community and NGO participation, teacher, curriculum, quality control, funding, girl child education, almajiri/children, and phenomenon of boys dropout, nomadic education, adult education and special education.

But the possibilities of free and compulsory education for Nigerian children and national development through UBE depend to a large extent, on the implementation of the system. Reports from the media and individuals have indicated that the scheme is presently faced with a lot of challenges that include inadequacy of facilities, overcrowdings, lack of adequate teachers and other supporting personnel, site and location of the schools, problem of funding and among others arising from poor implementation. This

study therefore, investigated the challenges against successful implementation of Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of all the effort made by Nigerian governments on UBE programme aimed at providing free and compulsory basic education for every Nigerian child of school going age, the implementation of the programme are still facing a lot of challenges ranging from lack of quality personnel, infrastructural facilities to instructional materials. And this has made it difficult for the objective of the programme to be achieved. The objective of introducing UBE programme can only be achieved through effective and successful implementation. This research work therefore, intended to find out the challenges against successful implementation of UBE programme in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been designed for the research work to be carried out effectively;

- (1) What are the challenges facing the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria?
- (2) How far have these challenges been affecting implementation of the programme?

Null Hypothesis

In line with the research questions, the under listed hypothesis was formulated

HO₁ There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Local Government Authority (LGA) UBE staff and UBE teachers on the challenges facing the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a survey research design in carrying out the investigation.

Population and Sample

The population for the study consisted of 125 LGA UBE staff and 2520 UBE Teachers. Of this population, 85 LGA UBE staff and 232 UBE teachers were selected through simple random sampling technique.

Research Instrument

The major instrument used for the study was a set of questionnaires containing a total of Thirty Four (34) items statement which were administered on the Local Government Area Universal Basic Education Board staff and UBE teachers, using the four likert scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Validity of the instrument

The research instrument was validated through consultation with experts in UBE programme, LGA UBE Staff, teachers and also measurement and evaluation. The corrections suggested by the validators led to a modification of some items in the questionnaire.

Reliability of the instrument

The Reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.86 established by Cronbach alpha formula; this value suggests that the instrument was reliable.

Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using mean (\bar{x}) to answer research questions. The decision point was put at 2.5. This therefore, implies that a mean rating of less than 2.5 is "disagree" while a mean rating of 2.5 and above is "agree." The hypothesis formulated was tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results were presented according to research questions in tables 1 and 2 while the test of the hypothesis was presented in table 3.

Research Question 1

What are the challenges facing the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the challenges facing implementation of Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria.

SN	ITEM STATEMENT	LGA UBE STAFF RESPONDENTS N= 85			TEACHERS RESPONDENTS N = 232		
		\bar{X}	SD	DECISION	\bar{X}	SD	DECISION
1.	Non availability of infrastructural facilities to implement UBE programme.	3.22	0.75	Agreed	3.12	0.67	Agreed
2.	Non availability of instructional materials to implement UBE programme.	2.80	0.66	Agreed	3.21	0.84	Agreed
3.	The curriculum of UBE programme is too complex and difficult to implement	2.14	0.58	Disagreed	1.71	0.44	Disagreed
4.	Political instability which has served as a setback to implementation of educational plans.	2.52	0.73	Agreed	2.73	0.82	Agreed
5.	Overcrowdings of pupils in the classroom.	2.92	0.88	Agreed	3.41	0.66	Agreed
6.	The location of some UBE schools is too far from the pupils.	2.63	0.81	Agreed	2.79	0.74	Agreed
7.	Lack of adequate fund to purchase the necessary equipment and pay for other services in UBE programme.	2.97	0.67	Agreed	3.23	0.89	Agreed
8.	Poor attitude of government, school administrator and the society toward UBE	2.95	0.72	Agreed	2.82	0.78	Agreed

	programme.			
9.	Absence of authentic statistical data	2.87	0.71	Agreed
10.	Government policies toward implementation of UBE programme are not encouraging.	2.45	0.69	Disagreed
11.	Faulty planning process.	3.18	0.78	Agreed
12.	Lack of textual materials for the pupils.	2.11	0.44	Disagreed
13.	Poor attitude of the pupils toward UBE programme.	2.65	0.67	Agreed
14.	Lack of qualifying teachers and personnel to teach and manage the programme effectively.	3.17	0.77	Agreed
15.	Most of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are not supporting UBE programme in Nigeria	2.96	0.56	Agreed
16.	The methods used in teaching UBE pupils make its curriculum implementation difficult.	2.46	0.67	Disagreed
17.	Parents do not encourage their children to attend UBE schools	2.86	0.79	Agreed
18.	The UBE teachers are not properly motivated.	3.33	0.87	Agreed
	.GRAND MEAN \bar{x}	2.77	0.70	Agreed

Key

***N* = No of the respondents.**

\bar{x} = Mean

***SD* = Standard Deviation**

From table 1, item 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16 have mean ratings above the cut-off point of 2.50 for the respondents. Thus the respondents were perceived to agree with the statement/items on the questionnaire. However, items 3, 9, 10 and 14 have mean ratings below cut-off point of 2.50 for the two groups of respondents respectively. Thus the respondents were perceived to disagree with the statement/items on the questionnaire.

Research Question 2

How far have these challenges been affecting implementation of the programme?

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the extent to which these challenges affect performance of the pupils.

SN	ITEM STATEMENT	LGA UBE STAFF N = 85			UBE TEACHERS N = 232		
		\bar{x}	SD	DECISION	\bar{x}	SD	DECISION
19	Non availability of infrastructural facilities has made implementation of UBE programme difficult	3.41	0.95	Agreed	3.12	0.73	Agreed
20	Faulty Planning process has made it impossible to effectively plan for implementation of UBE.	2.97	0.76	Agreed	3.09	0.66	Agreed
21	Non availability of instructional material has made teachers of UBE programme to be ineffective.	2.88	0.83	Agreed	3,02	0.62	Agreed
22	Political instability has made policies formulated for implementation of UBE programme inconsistent.	2.76	0.67	Agreed	3.17	0.71	Agreed

23	The complex curriculum of UBE programme has made coverage of topics in all the subjects impossible.	1.97 0.65 Disagreed	1.21 0.48 Disagreed
24	Lack of textbooks makes the enrollment of pupils in the programme low.	2.13 0.68 Disagreed	2.22 0.58 Disagreed
25	Overcrowding of pupils in the classroom make it difficult for teachers to be effective, thereby responsible for poor performance of pupils.	2.85 0.95 Agreed	3.21 0.88 Agreed
26	Absence of authentic statistical data has made planning for effective implementation of UBE difficult.	2.78 0.72 Agreed	2.99 0.93 Agreed
27	The location of some UBE schools is discouraging pupils from attending the schools.	3.37 0.64 Agreed	2.79 0.94 Agreed
28	Lack of adequate fund to purchase the necessary equipment and pay for other services is responsible for poor quality of teaching in UBE schools.	3.28 0.77 Agreed	3.25 0.61 Agreed
29	Poor attitude of government, school administrator and the society toward UBE programme is responsible for poor performance of the pupils.	2.63 0.60 Agreed	2.95 0.69 Agreed
30	Government policies toward implementation of UBE programme are not encouraging NGOs and other private organization to	2.07 0.86 Disagreed	2.32 0.76 Disagreed

	participate in UBE programme.		
31	Lack of qualifying teachers and personnel to teach and manage the programme effectively has made its implementation difficult.	3.20 0.80 Agreed	2.94 0.72 Agreed
32	The methods used in teaching UBE pupils are not encouraging thereby responsible for poor performance of pupils in most UBE schools.	1.89 0.76 Disagreed	2.22 0.56 Disagreed
33	The attitude of parents not encouraging their children to attend UBE schools resulted in low enrolment.	2.67 0.87 Agreed	3.07 0.66 Agreed
34	Lack of motivation and non-payment of salaries has made the best teachers to leave teaching thereby, resulted to lack of teachers in UBE schools.	3.01 0.93 Agreed	2.96 0.78 Agreed
	GRAND MEAN \bar{x}	2.72 0.79 Agreed	2.81 0.69 Agreed

Key***N = No of the respondents.*** ***\bar{x} = Mean******SD = Standard Deviation***

From table 2, the mean ratings of items 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 28 and 29 for the two groups of respondents were above the cut-off point of 2.50, thus the respondents agreed with the statements as those factors that have affected the performance of the pupils. However, items 19, 20, 25 and 27 have mean ratings below cut-off point of 2.50 for the two groups of respondents. Thus the respondents were perceived to disagree with the statement/items on the questionnaire.

Hypothesis

Table 3: t-test on the mean responses of LGA UBE Staff and Teachers on the challenges facing implementation of UBE programme in Nigeria.

Group	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	P < 0.05
LGA UBE staff	85	2.77	0.70	315	0.888	1.96	Not significant
UBE Teachers	232	2.69	0.74				

Key

\bar{x} = Mean

SD = Stand Deviation

N = Number of respondent

Df = Degree of freedom

Table 3 showed that t-calculated is 0.888 as against t-critical which is 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is not rejected. There is no statistically significant difference between the mean response of LGA UBE staff and UBE Teachers on the challenges facing implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria.

Discussion

The findings of this study showed that LGA UBE staff and UBE teachers agreed that there are lots of challenges facing implementation of UBE in Nigeria. This is in consonance with the opinion of Bulama (2000), who opined that UBE programme in Nigeria is faced with implementation problem. The study also revealed that faulty planning process and lack of statistical data has made effective implementation difficult due to lack of facts and figure that can be used to project and predict future and also allocate resources. This was also in agreement with Udoh and Akpan (2001), who asserted that the implication of a plan derived from Nigerian planning approach is that the plan not only gets struck along the line but fairly remain impracticable because it is founded on an unrealistic framework.

The findings of this study also identified among other things gross inadequacy or lack of resources both human and materials as major

challenges hindering effective implementation of UBE programme in Nigeria. This is also in line with Udoh and AKpan (2000) that stated that the major challenges facing UBE is inadequacy of human and capital resources. Bulama (2000) also reported that the major problem facing education system in Nigeria is that of deplorable state of physical facilities in our schools. Pupils are having classes under the trees and broken down buildings or those who have to sit on the floor for lack of furniture are familiar. Crowding as a consequence of the inadequacies in facilities will definitely have a negative effect on teaching and learning.

The result of this study further showed that these challenges to great extent affected the implementation of UBE programme. Some of the major negative effects include: lack of qualified teachers, poor teaching quality and poor performance of the pupils and non participation of NGOs. And lastly, the study revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean response of L.G.A UBE Staff and teachers on the challenges facing UBE programme in Nigeria.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The UBE program should be de-centralized for proper supervision. For schools to be properly supervised and cater for, local and state ministry of education should play major roles. The ministries should be adequately financed and properly staffed to enable them perform their traditional functions of supervising and monitoring of schools. More importantly, for the UBE program to succeed, the government should haste and 'address the diminishing status of teachers' by providing them with adequate remuneration and training. How can a human being work effectively under an unappreciative and stressful condition without improving their state? Even the most pious and dedicated among the teachers would give up.

The quality of education a nation gives to its children determines the future of that nation. The present state of UBE implementation shows that there is room for improvement. Although the challenges are quite daunting, but with adequate planning and funding, provision of qualified personnel, effective supervision and intelligent intervention, the UBE programme can be effectively implemented and meet the objective of providing free and compulsory universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school-going age.

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