PERCEPTION OF HEAD MASTERS/MISTRESS AND PRINCIPALS ON THE EXTENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE) PROGRAMME IN AWKA NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ANAMBRA STATE

By

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Abstract
The study evaluated the perception of Head Masters/Mistress and Principals on the Extent of implementation of Universal Basic Education (U.B.E) programme in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra state with a view to achieving the aims and objectives of the UBE programme in Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. The population consisted of Twenty (20) Head Masters/Mistress and Principals in Public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka North L.G.A. The Census sampling techniques was adopted since the population was manageable. Data were collected using questionnaire with well-structured fifteen items derived from three research questions formulated to guide the study. Face and content validation was done by three experts. A test-retest method and Spearman`s Product Moment Correlation Co-Efficient was used in testing the reliability of instrument in which score of 0.83 was obtained. The data generated were analyzed using mean in answering the research questions. One of the findings of this study revealed that there was low extent in provision of educational facilities, with respect to staffrooms and classrooms, in public primary and junior secondary schools leading to slow implementation and achievement of UBE programme objectives. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that adequate provision of educational facilities, through government and philanthropist contributions, should be place on ground in order to attain 100% desired literacy, numeracy and enlightenment (as contained in the aims and objectives of UBE) in Awka north L.G.A.

Keywords: Head Masters/Mistress, Principals, Implementation, Universal Basic Education (U.B.E) programme

Introduction

Education is a weapon for combating ignorance, poverty and disease. According to Asiegbu, Okorji & Bosah (2015) Education is the totality of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops his abilities, attitude and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he/she lives. This shows that education is not just the acquisition of knowledge, but also the utilization of the acquired knowledge. In order to meet-up with the educational demand of the nation, the federal government of Nigeria has introduced a lot of programmes of which the UBE is one of them. The current Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria is a product of an earlier educational programme, universal primary education (UPE). It is an offshoot of previous programme, which could be said to have been bedeviled by problems and which the present Universal Basic Education was meant to correct (Adeniran, 2000).

Historically, the 1950 Macpherson constitution created regional houses that were responsible to the central government in Lagos. The constitution also empowered the regional houses to make laws on

education. The effect of this was that regions grew differently in educational provisions (Osahon & Osahon, 2006). It should, however, be noted that educational development in the Northern region lagged behind in what was being experienced in Lagos and other regions, because, while the Western and the Eastern regions were struggling hard to surpass each other in the south, the Northern region did not come to terms with the challenges of the time.

Knowing that education is the greatest tool for human development, the Federal Government of Nigeria became conscious of the dangers of disparity in educational development in the country and therefore introduced the UPE programme throughout the federation in 1976. Thereafter, there was the regularization of primary education system throughout Nigeria. The differences that had existed in the different regions were checked by the Federal Government's decision that all states of the federation must run similar programme (Itedjere, 1997). This notwithstanding, could not actualize the demands of education for all children, then the need for Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme arose.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) was launched in Sokoto by president Olusegun Obasanjo on 30th September, 1999. The programme this time will cover pupils of primary schools and students of junior secondary schools and would henceforth be known as the U.B.E programme (Adamechi & Romaine, 2008). The recent launching of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme would suggest that after the failure of the earlier programme UPE scheme, and a careful analysis of the factors that brought about the failure of the earlier scheme, a better scheme would surface.

In addition to playing the noble role of cultural transmission in the modern society today, especially in rural areas (Awka North L.G.A inclusive), UBE programme was designed and introduced to provide universal literacy, numeracy and enlightenment. The desire to inculcate in children the skills of literacy, numeracy and the ability to communicate made the UBE programme worthwhile (Aboyi, 2004), most especially in Awka North L.G.A where children are mostly drop out and illiterate.

Apart from the above, there is the need to lay a solid foundation for scientific and reflective thinking, character and moral training and the development of sound attitude, and above all, develop in the children of Awka North L.G.A, the ability to adapt to their changing environment. UBE is an educational reform programme of the Nigerian Government that provides free, compulsory, and continuous 9-year education at two levels, 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary education for all school aged children.

There are three components of the UBE programme and these are: Early Childhood Care and Development Education (ECCDE), 6 years primary Education, and 3 years Junior Secondary School Education (JSS) (UBE, 2005). The goals of the UBE scheme are to universalize access to basic education, engender a conducive learning environment and eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria within the shortest possible time. The specific objectives of the programme are to:

i. Develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
ii. Provide free and compulsory universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school-going age.
iii. Reduce drastically drop-out rate from the formal school system through improved relevance and efficiency.
iv. Cater for drop-outs and out-of-school children/adolescent through various forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
v. Ensure 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 the foundation for life-long learning.

Here in Anambra State, Awka North inclusive, the enabling law for the implementation of compulsory, free universal Basic Education was formally signed into law on the 10th of June 2005 by Dr. Chris Nwabueze Ngige, the former Governor of Anambra State (Anambra State Universal Basic

Education law, 2005). Under the existing 6-years secondary school arrangement, Junior Secondary School (JSS) is separated from the Senior Secondary School (SSS) and this is referred to as disarticulation UBE Adamechi and Romaine (2008. In other words, the two levels should be run by two separate administrations and eventually have separate locations and infrastructures.
Critically observing the local government area one would find out that it suffers huge setback due to lack of proper planning and implementation of the UBE programme which resulted to inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, shortage of quantitative and qualitative tutorial staff, poor remuneration and no plan of in-service programme, non-provision of enabling environment for teaching and learning.

There is also poor curriculum which lack current information like cultures, histories, trends and ICT used in tutoring students yearly, and if this trend goes on unabated, it may be tantamount to achieving the set objectives of Universal Basic Education programme. It is in the light of these, that this study was necessitated.

Purpose of the Study
The main purpose of this study is to examine principal's perception on the extent of implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Awka North Local Government Area, Anambra State. Specifically, this study was set to examine the extent:

1. availability of educational facilities in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka north Local Government Area leads to the implementation of UBE programme.
2. teachers' participation in staff development programme in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka north Local Government Area leads to the implementation of UBE programme.
3. monitoring and evaluation of activities in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka north Local Government Area leads to the implementation of UBE programme.

Significance of the Study
This study will be of immense benefit to UBE students and teachers, head masters\mistress, principals, policy makers, UBE programme managers, the government, and future researchers.

Research Questions
The following research questions were raised:

1. To what extent does availability of educational facilities in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka north local government area leads to the implementation of UBE programme?
2. To what extent does teacher`s participation in staff development programmes in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka north local government area leads to the implementation of UBE programme?
3. To what extent does monitoring and evaluation of the activities in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka north local government area leads to the implementation of UBE programme?

Method
This study employed a descriptive survey research design in which the researchers used structured questionnaire to gather information from respondents. The study was carried out in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. The population consist of twenty (20) Head Masters/Mistress and Principals in the Ten (10) public primary and ten (10) public junior secondary schools in Awka north L.G.A. (Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board, Awka, July 2023). A Census sampling technique was adopted since the population is manageable. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire structured on a four-point scale of Very High Extent = VHE; High Extent = HE; Low Extent = LE; and Very Low Extent = VLE. This instrument was subjected to validation by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was obtained through Spearman`s Product Moment Correlation Co-Efficient. A score of 0.83 was obtained, which assumed to be high enough for the instrument to be reliable for the study. 20 copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents by the researchers with the help of two research assistants using Direct Delivery

Approach (DDA). This enabled the researchers to obtain 100% return rate. For the analysis of data, the researchers used the arithmetic mean (x) to answer the research questions.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The presentation was done sequentially in tables starting from research question 1 to research question 3.

Research Question 1: To what extent does availability of educational facilities in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka north local government area leads to the implementation of UBE programme?

Table 1: Mean response of Respondents on extent availability of educational facilities in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka north local government area leads to the implementation of UBE programme.

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean (x)	Remark
1	Availability of well-equipped staffrooms.	39	49	82	75	**2.21**	Low Extent
2	Availability of well-equipped classrooms	39	44	78	84	**2.16**	Low Extent
3	Provision of adequate instructional materials	105	85	30	25	**3.10**	High Extent
4	Availability of Well-equipped libraries with modern facilities.	111	93	19	22	**3.11**	High Extent
5	Availability of Functional toilets facilities.	13	17	97	118	**1.69**	Low Extent
	Grand Mean					**2.45**	Low Extent

From table 1 above, the researcher found out that the respondents agreed with items 3 and 4 which implies that provision of adequate instructional materials, and well-equipped libraries with modern facilities were of high extent in their respective schools with mean scores of 3.10 and 3.11 respectively while respondents identified with items 1, 2 and 5 which indicate that well-equipped staffrooms, well-equipped classrooms and functional toilets facilities were of low extent in their various schools with mean scores of 2.21, 2.16 and 1.69 respectively. Above all, with a grand mean of 2.45, availability of educational resources was rated a low extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does teacher`s participation in staff development programmes in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka north local government area leads to the implementation of UBE programme?

Table 2: Mean response of respondents on extent teacher`s participation in staff development programmes in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka north local government area leads to the implementation of UBE programme.

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean (x)	Remark
6	Teachers participate in UBE cluster training programme	94	87	35	29	**3.00**	High Extent
7	Teachers participate in seminars for upgrading knowledge	86	84	36	39	**2.89**	High Extent
8	Teachers participate in local and international conferences	89	77	42	37	**2.07**	Low Extent
9	Teachers participate in workshops and trainings	18	23	87	117	**1.76**	Low Extent
10	Teachers upgrade their qualifications through different University programmes	88	71	44	42	**2.84**	High Extent
	Grand Mean					**2.51**	High Extent

From table 2 above, the researchers found out that the respondents agreed with items 6, 7 and 10 which indicate that there was high extent to which teachers participate in UBE cluster training, teachers participate in seminars and teachers upgrade their qualifications through different university programmes with mean scores of 3.00, 2.89 and 2.84 respectively. The respondents were of the view on items 8 and 9 that there was low extent to which teachers participate in local and international

conferences and to which teachers participate in workshops and trainings with mean scores of 2.07 and 1.76 respectively. Above all, with a grand mean of 2.51, teacher`s participation in staff development was rated high extent.

Research Question 3: To what extent does the monitoring and evaluation of activities in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka North Local Government Area leads to the implementation of UBE programme?

Table 3: Mean response of respondents on the extent monitoring and evaluation of activities in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka north local government area leads to the implementation of UBE programme.

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean (x)	Remark
11	Monitoring to ensure that statutory records for supervision kept	97	94	28	26	**3.02**	High Extent
12	Monitoring to ensure that non-statutory records for supervision are kept	94	90	27	34	**2.80**	High Extent
13	Adequate clinical supervision by ASUBEB supervisory officials.	87	70	41	47	**2.80**	High Extent
14	Adequate Supervision by Anambra state ministry of education Personnel.	90	85	34	26	**2.93**	High Extent
15	Adequate Supervision by Awka North Local Government Education Authority.	38	31	97	89	**1.99**	Low Extent
	Grand Mean					**2.71**	High Extent

From table 3 above, the researchers discovered that the respondents rated items 11, 12, 13 and 14, high extent, with mean scores of 3.02, 2.80, 2.80 and 2.93 respectively. The items include; monitoring to ensure that statutory records for supervision are kept, monitoring to ensure that non-statutory records for supervision are kept, adequate clinical supervision by ASUBEB supervisory officials and adequate supervision by Anambra state ministry of education personnel. The respondents weren't comfortable with item 15 and rated it low extent which indicates that adequate supervision by Awka north local government Education Authority was of low with mean scores of 1.99. Above all, with a grand mean of 2.71, monitoring and evaluation of activities was rated high extent.

Summary of Findings

The responses to the questionnaire, which was based on the research questions, demonstrated the following;

1. There is low extent to which educational facilities, such as equipped staffrooms, classrooms, and functional toilets in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka North LGA, leads to effective implementation of UBE programme.
2. There is high extent to which teacher`s participation in staff development programmes, such as UBE cluster training, seminars, and upgrading of teachers' qualification in public primary and secondary schools in Awka North LGA, leads to effective implementation of UBE programme.
3. There is high extent to which monitoring and evaluation of activities, such as; monitoring of statutory and non-statutory records, adequate supervision by ASUBEB and Ministry of Education in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka north LGA, leads to effective implementation of UBE programme.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings will be discussed in-line with the sequence of the research questions, presented as tables. The result of table 1 revealed that availability of educational facilities promotes the implementation of UBE programme in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka North Local Government Area. The respondents agreed to enough provision of adequate instructional materials for effective teaching and learning and equipped libraries with modern text books in their various schools. The finding was in line with Kadir, Yusuf and Rasheed (2014) who identified provision of durable sufficient instructional materials and enabling libraries for education to be friendly to learners which will enhance speedy achievement of UBE programme.

The result of table 2 revealed that teachers' participation in staff development programmes enhances implementation of UBE programme in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka north local government area. The respondents agreed with participating in UBE cluster training, seminars and workshops, enrolling in different University programme to upgrade their qualifications. The finding was in line with Omosidi (2014) who identified teachers' continuous attendance of seminars, conferences and workshops in updating their knowledge's enhances effective implementation of UBE programme in line with achievement of its aims. Omenyi (2008) stresses that no student knowledge can be more than his/her teachers' knowledge in the sense that a teacher cannot deliver what he/she lacks. Therefore, quality teachers begot great nations.

The result of table 3 revealed that monitoring and evaluation of activities boost up implementation of UBE programme in public primary and junior secondary schools in Awka north Local Government. The respondents agreed with monitoring of statutory records and non- statutory records for supervision in their various schools, adequate clinical supervision by ASUBEB supervisory officials and adequate Supervision by Anambra state ministry of education personnel. The finding was in line with krotee (2002) who opined that both statutory and non- statutory records must be put on check by educational officers on regular basics. Ikpema (2004) opined that in order to achieve maximum objective of any programme/project regular inspection and supervision must be carried out on it, in other words the activities and steps should be checkmated.

Conclusion

This study is all about evaluation of extent of implementation of UBE programme in Awka North Local Government Area. Based on the results of this study. It was found out that, although, availability of educational facilities, teacher`s participation in staff development programmes, and monitoring and evaluation of activities are significant factors that leads to effective implementation of UBE programmes, yet, some items were rated low extent (not leading to effective implementation of UBE programmes). Since these factors have been identified, it is therefore proper to harness them towards the achievement of UBE aims and objectives.

Recommendations

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

1. The mass mobilization department of state universal basic education board (SUBEB) should embark on an aggressive awareness programme that will lead to an increased involvement of both government and philanthropist to contribute towards the provision of educational facilities.
2. The Anambra state universal basic education board (ASUBEB) should embark on periodic seminars, conferences, and workshops in order to promote staff development and sensitize them in the latest development in their profession.
3. The federal/state government should use the blue print of this research to monitor and evaluate the condition of the schools throughout the federation, especially in rural areas, with a view to realize its set out objectives

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