



FACTORS INFLUENCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UBE SCHEME IN THE SOUTH EAST STATES

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Abstract: Funding of education in Nigeria today has become a topical issue as basic education in Nigeria has experienced mixed performance. On the positive side, school enrolment has increased and gender disparity in primary education has been reduced significantly in line with MDGs targets. However, educational outcomes remain weak on various indicators of quality and equity. This study, assess the factors influencing funding of the UBE scheme in the south East States. Survey research design was adopted in conducting the study. The study was carried out in among 6,360 made up of 500 management staff of the State Universal Basic Education Board of the five States in the South East zone and 5860 head teachers of primary schools in the study area. The study instrument was face and content validated by two experts in Educational Administration and Management and one expert in Science and Computer Education. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive table of Mean and standard deviation while the t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significant level. The result of the study shows that UBE officials and head teachers did not differ significantly in their opinions of the identified factors posing major constraints to proper funding of UBE programme in South East States. It was concluded that UBE officials and head teachers considered Educational wastage hampers, Over-reliance on a single sources of revenue, corruption and Bureaucratic bottlenecks hampers the successful implementation of UBE scheme in South East Nigeria. The study recommended that the federal government should come up with laws that will ensure direct investment in the education of children since the future of the country depends on the quality of its children. Without quality education for children, Nigeria may find it difficult to compete favourably with other countries of the world. The laws should take care of children's education whether the person is poor or not.

Keywords: Universal Basic Education, Factors, Implementation, South East States

Introduction

Nigeria's educational system has witnessed a catalogue of changes in policy and programmes within the last decades. In September, 1976, the Federal Government of Nigeria launched the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme which was well received by many scholars in Nigeria however, its inefficiency led to it been abandoned. Consequently, under the leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999, the present Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was launched. Universal Basic Education, is an educational system designed to give basic education of a 9-year duration to all Nigerians who do not

have access to formal education. The scope of the educational system entails, a six-year primary education and three-year junior secondary education for children of school age (Ocho, 2005). The vision of UBE according UBEC (2012), is to ensure nine years of continuous education, in which every child should acquire appropriate and relevant skills and values and be employable in order to contribute his or her quota to National Development. Oni, (2008.) identified that UBE basically provide free and compulsory nine years universal and basic education for every Nigerian child of school-age with the aim of, reducing drastically the incidence of dropout from the

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formal school system, through improved relevance, quality and efficiency; ensuring the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills, as well as the ethical, moral and civic values. These are to ensure a solid foundation for lifelong learning. All over the world, the concept of primary education has been regarded as the most important social device for societal development as such the most patronized by people, which perhaps may be due to the fact that it is the foundation of the whole educational pursuit, which is expected to provide literacy and enlightenment to the citizens (Oladimeji and Ogunyebi, 2019), hence Nigeria adoption of UBE as an instrument par excellence for national development (FGN, 2004) and this is reflected in the National Policy on Education. Although the UBE is homegrown, it has its roots in trends arid development in education in the global community. It is a commitment to basic principles of several universal articles of understanding and agreements of which Nigeria is a signatory and subscribes to. Obanya (2002), and Igwe (2004) maintained that these international antecedents include the 1990 Jomtien Declaration on the promotion of basic education for all and the Goal two of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which stipulate that by 2015, all children of school age should have free, affordable and accessible education.

The establishment of UBE was marked with detail planning in an attempt to avoid the problems which impeded the realization of the objectives of the past educational programmes, as the government from inception of the UBE programmes outlined the basic implementation guidelines which includes; public enlightenment and social mobilization for full community involvement, data collection and analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation, teacher education, recruitment, retraining and motivation, provision of infrastructural facilities, enriched curricula text books instructional materials, improved funding, and that the Educational programme should be universal, free and compulsory

(Patrick, 2010). However, scholars within the educational system have raised doubt over the successful implementation of the audacious objectives and goals of Universal Basic Education. Ehindero (2000) and Adesina (2000) observed that there is a growing rate of poverty which is an indicator of problems in the system, and suggested that the programme be restructured for individual to be equipped to perform some life roles; roles as an individual, as a producer, citizen, national consumer and as a family members. Further, Adebimpe (2001) opined that for the UBE programme to succeed, adequate provision should be made to produce sufficient qualified teachers to serve within their areas of specialization with adequate salaries and incentives.

Over the years, the implementation of basic education programme in Nigeria has been facing lots of constraints, and it seems like the problem of the Nigeria educational programme does not always lie with adequate knowledge and policies, but the effective implementation of the programme. The Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme which is one of the basic education programmes introduced in the country in the past seems to have failed due to several factors, and such factors were attributed to non-availability of fund, lack of trained teachers, lack of infrastructural facilities, poor supervision of the programme, inadequate instructional materials, among others. There also seem to be lots of obstacles affecting the implementation of the current Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme primary schools in Nigeria. Furthermore, report by UNESCO/UNICEF, (2016) indicated that Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children," found that the world missed its 2015 target of universal primary education, and as of 2016, there were 58 million children of primary school age who were out of school worldwide. This study therefore attempts to examine the factors that influences the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria,



Purpose of the Study

The study was designed to investigate factors influencing the implementation of the UBE scheme in the south east states

Research Questions

- This research questions guided the work:

To what extent do identified factors constitute major constraints to proper implementation of the UBE programme in the South East States?

Hypotheses

The null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho: Significant difference does not exist between the mean perception scores of UBE officials and Head teachers on the factors militating against proper funding of the UBE programme in the South East States.

Research Method

The various process utilized in carrying out this study was outlined in this section

Research Design

A survey research design was adopted. The design was very apt for this study because the authors worked with a sample of the head teachers.

Area of the Study

This study was conducted in the South-East States of Nigeria.

These comprise the following: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. The states not only share the same group history but also similar characteristics (Ajayi & Crowther, 1991). They constituted the former East Central State which was created in 1967 from the Old Eastern Region of Nigeria. According to Bello (2003), it was in the East Central 90 State of Nigeria that government takeover of schools was first experienced in Nigeria. Eemenike (2004) noted that the takeover was effected through public Education Edict of 1970.

The South-East states are predominantly Igbo-speaking and in the words of Ocho (2005), the Igbos are noted for their insatiable quest for knowledge, their robust

enterprising spirit, their irritating confidence in their ability even in the face of formidable obstacles, their republican equalitarianism, their belief that the world is large enough to accommodate everybody and their impatience to achieve commendable success as quickly as possible. All these attributes, which capture the philosophy of Ndigbo have brought the Igbos intellectual and material success but in turn have fueled suspicion, envy bordering on hatred and persecution on the part of their neighbours, far and near. Ocho (2005) cited one example of structural marginalization of Ndigbo, a weapon to keep them down perpetually and permanently. As highlighted in Ocho (2005), among the six geopolitical zones in the country, the South-East has the least number of states and the least number of local governments.

While the South-West, South-South, North-East and North Central geo-political zones, have six states each and the North-West seven, the South-East has only five. The local government picture is even worse. While the South-West, South-South, North-East, North Central and North-West have 137, 123, 123, 106 and 184 local government respectively, the South- East has only 95 (Ocho 2005).

Therefore, when one notes that the Federal Government shares revenue from the Federation account among states and local governments, it will perhaps not be difficult to see the possible limitations of South-East States to be conveniently disposed towards fully fulfilling their expectations in the area of funding of the Universal Basic Education programme in their states.

Population for the Study

The population for this study was 6,360 made up of 500 management staff of the State Universal Basic Education Board of the five States in the South East zone and 5860 head teachers of primary schools in the study area (UBEC 2019). The authors considered the population suitable for the study because the respondents were in the best position to supply the much needed information for the study.



Sample and Sampling Techniques

There was no sampling for the UBE officials because the population was small and manageable. The entire 500 UBE officials were used for the study. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to draw 10% of the population of the head teachers. Uzoagulu (1998) noted that 10% sample is appropriate for a population that is up to 5000 or a little above.

Table 1

Population and sample size of head teachers of primary schools in the south east zone

| States | 976 | Sample size 10% |
|-----------------|------|-----------------|
| Abia | 1275 | 98 |
| Anambra | 974 | 128 |
| Ebonyi | 1163 | 97 |
| Enugu | 1472 | 116 |
| Imo | 5860 | 147 |
| South east zone | | 586 |

Source: . UBEC 2020

Thus, from the above table, a sum total of 1086 respondents were used for the study. These included 500 UBE officials and 586 primary school head teachers.

Instrument for Data Collection

A self-developed questionnaire titled Extent of Funding the Universal Basic Education Programme Questionnaire (EFUBEPQ) was used in collecting data for the study. Both the UBE officials and Head teachers responded to the same items in the questionnaire. The questionnaire had three sections. Section A dealt with biodata of the Respondents, section B dealt with the constraints to effective implementation of the UBE programme in the South East States with 8 items.

A four-point scale of Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (GE) Little Extent (LE) and Very Little Extent (VLE) was used as the response categories. The responses were assigned values of 4,3,2 and 1 respectively.

Validation of the Instrument

In order to ensure the validity of the instrument, copies of the instrument were sent to two experts in Educational

Administration and Management and one expert in Science and Computer Education, all in the Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) Agbani. The experts were specifically requested to validate or examine the instrument in terms of clarity of instructions, technicality in terms of words and grammar used, appropriateness and adequacy of the items in addressing the purpose and problem of the study. Eventually, when the researcher received the vetted instrument, the necessary corrections.

Reliability of the Instrument

The researcher used Cronbach Alpha to determine the reliability coefficient. 20 copies of the instrument were administered to UBE officials and another 30 copies were also distributed to head teachers from the South South zone of Nigeria. South-South was chosen because, the geo-political zone is very close to South East and both zones share similar characteristics. The reliability coefficients of the instrument, vis-à-vis clusters, after analysis, were found to be 0.73, 0.76, 0.83, and 0.84 respectively, while the overall reliability coefficient was 0.79 indicating high reliability of the instrument. Cronbach Alpha was appropriate because the questionnaire items were polychotomous and in essay form. A polychotomous instrument does not lend itself to “yes” or “no”: response.

Method of Data Collection

The authors employed the services of five graduate research assistants in distributing and collecting the questionnaire to and from the respondents. The research assistants were trained by the authors in a two-day meeting. During the training programmes, the authors acquainted them with the purpose of the study, the nature of the respondents and how to administer and collect the instrument. The process of administering and retrieving the questionnaire lasted for 3 weeks and a hundred percent return rate was recorded.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean with standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while the t-test was used to test the



hypotheses at 0.05 significant level. The t-test was apt for testing the hypotheses because it could be used for both small and large samples.

Decision Rule: The decision rule adopted was the upper and lower limits of the mean for the research questions. thus:

3.50 - 4.00 = Very Great Extent (VGE)

2.50 - 3.49 = Great Extent (GE)

1.50 - 2.49 = Low Extent (LE)

Below 1.50 = Very Low Extent (VLE)

For the hypotheses, if the t-value as calculated was less than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis was not rejected. However, if the calculated t-value was equal to,

TABLE 2:

| S/N | Availability of physical facilities | UBE Officials | | | Head Teachers | | |
|-----|---|---------------|------|----------|---------------|------|----------|
| | | -x | SD | Decision | x | SD | Decision |
| 37 | lack of political will is affecting the proper funding of the UBE programme | 2.77 | 0.44 | GE | 3.06 | 0.66 | GE |
| 38 | Corruption is a militating factor against effective funding | 2.99 | 0.09 | GE | 3.44 | 0.65 | GE |
| 39 | Global economic meltdown is affecting the funding of UBE | 3.59 | 0.65 | VGE | 3.34 | 0.70 | GE |
| 40 | Misappropriation of funds by the operators and custodians of the programme militates against proper funding of the UBE | 2.06 | 0.60 | LE | 3.48 | 0.63 | GE |
| 41 | Bureaucratic bottlenecks in releasing funds hamper UBE funding mechanisms | 1.93 | 0.69 | LE | 3.41 | 0.68 | GE |
| 42 | Inadequate fund supervision through careless monitoring of programme implementation and sources utilization in order to check waste hampers UBE funding | 2.25 | 0.80 | LE | 3.29 | 0.82 | GE |
| 43 | Over-reliance on a single sources of revenue is a problem to UBE funding . | 3.49 | 0.50 | GE | 3.37 | 0.86 | GE |
| 44 | Educational wastage hampers proper funding of UBE programme | 3.60 | 0.49 | VGE | 3.44 | 0.62 | GE |
| | Grand Mean | 2.84 | 0.70 | GE | 3.36 | 0.13 | GE |

Table 2 shows that UBE officials considered two out of the eight Items to a very great extent as major constraints to proper funding of the UBE programme (ie. Items 39 and 44), three items to a great extent (i. e. items 37, 38, and 43)

or greater than, the critical value, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Result Presentation

To what extent do identified factors constitute major constraints to proper funding of the UBE programme in the South East States?

The result of answering Research Question is presented on Table 2:

Table 2: Mean Responses and Standard Deviation of UBE officials and head teachers on the extent identified factors constitute major constraints to proper funding of the UBE programme.

and three items to a little extent (I. e. items 40, 41, and 42). On the other hand, head teachers perceived all the eight items to a great extent as major constraints to proper funding of the UBE programme. It is interesting to note



that while the head teachers consider misappropriation of funds as the greatest obstacle to proper funding of the UBE (Mean 3.48) the UBE officials consider educational wastage (Mean 3.60) as the greatest. The overall and respective standard deviation values indicated the closeness of the respondents to the mean and one another in their responses.

Test of hypotheses

Null Hypothesis

Ho: Significant difference ones not exist between the means opinion scores of UBE officials and head teachers on the factors militating against proper funding of the UBE programme in the South East states.

The result of testing this null hypothesis is presented on table 3:

Table 3: t- test Analysis of the means opinion scores of UBE officials and head teachers on the constraints to proper funding of UBE programme.

| Variable | N | x | SD | Df | t-cal | t-critical | Result |
|---------------|-----|------|------|-------|-------|------------|------------|
| UBE officials | 500 | 2.84 | 0.70 | | | | |
| Head teachers | 586 | 3.36 | 0.13 | 1.084 | 0.009 | 1.960 | Accept H0. |

Result in table 3 reveal that the calculated t- value (1.009) is less than the critical t- value (1.960) at 0.05 level of significance and at 1.084 degree o freedom. The results indicate that there is no significant difference in the use opinion of both UBE officials and head teachers on the constraints to proper funding of UBE programme in the South East States. The implication is that the null hypothesis (h04) is not rejected since the calculated t- value (1.009) is less than the critical t- value 1.960). This means that the null hypothesis (Ho4) is accepted. Therefore, the researcher concludes that both UBE officials and head teachers perceived all the eight identified factors to a great extent as constraints to the proper funding of UBE programme in the South East States.

Discussion of Findings

It was found in the study that both UBE officials and head teachers generally considered similar factors as major constraints to proper funding of the UBE programme in the South East States. This finding agrees with Obanya (2001) who enumerated lack of political will, corruption, global economic recession and a host of others as some of the militating factors against effective implementation of the UBE programme In Nigeria. This finding is not surprising for in the words of Bello (2003), it is obvious that the UBE programme has enormous financial challenges and the reasons for this scenario are certain. The hypothesis revealed that both UBE officials and head teachers agreed that certain factors militate against effective funding of the UBE scheme in South East States of Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that, a lot of factors have been found to be the major constraints to effective funding of the UBE programme in the South East States of Nigeria. The factors includes lack of Bureaucratic bottlenecks political will, Corruption, Global economic meltdown, Misappropriation of funds and Over-reliance on a single sources of revenue

Educational Implications of the Findings

The findings of the present study have Implications for the funding of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria since the factors which militate against effective funding of UBE programme in the South East States have been identified, the objectives of the UBE programme will be met if adequate actions are take by relevant authorities to tackle them. Conversely, the objective of the scheme may never be realized if such identified factors are not properly addressed to effect a smooth funding of the scheme.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and implications of the study highlighted the study therefore recommended that



1. Government should isolate education from party politics and accord it its prime position in the scheme of things.

Government should remove all the obstacles which militate against effective funding of education in the South East States in particular, and Nigeria in general.

2. Desk officers in charge of accessing UBE grants should be strictly supervised and monitored to ensure that each year, all UBE grants meant for their states and organizations are accessed. In addition, appropriate account of the utilization of such grants to match the provisions on the ground must be ensured through periodic inspection by the appropriate bodies. Where there are any discrepancies, commensurate sanctions must be meted out to defaulting states, organizations or officers. The current practice of awarding prizes to best performing states on implementation of UBE programmes should be sustained and even extended to organizations.
3. Federal government should come up with laws that will ensure direct investment in the education of children since the future of the country depends on the quality of its children. Without quality education for children, Nigeria may find it difficult to compete favourably with other countries of the world. The laws should take care of children's education whether the person is poor or not.

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