



THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM IN IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE) IN UMUAHIA NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ABIA STATE

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Abstract: *The study assessed the role of school management team in implementation of universal basic education in Umuhia North Local Government Area, Abia State. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The sample size of the study was three hundred and five (305) respondents and their responses were duly used in this study. The questionnaire was well-structured and validated before administered to the respondents. The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 25, whereby mean and standard deviation were used to evaluate the research questions, while independent t-test was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that the principals are not involved in policy making which makes implementation of the programme not to be realistic, the school based management board members are not involved in the policy making and implementation of the programme, that the government do not provide the adequate facilities and personnel needed for the implementation of the programme and that teachers who are at the implementation level are not retrained and given adequate remuneration to enhance the implementation of the programme. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the role of principal in the implementation of universal basic education and the role of school board in the implementation of universal basic education in Umuhia North Local Government Area, Abia State. The study recommended among other things that the principals should be involved in policy making so that the implementation will go well with them, that the government should see education, precisely Universal Basic Education, as socially desirable. In this respect, it has to evolve viable strategies which include getting in place groups that will provide reasonable and accurate data on the Universal Basic Education clientele. Moreover, there should be a need to monitor the different groups involved in the Universal Basic Education for effective implementation of the programme.*

Key words: School management team, universal basic education, implementation

Introduction

One of the major desires of every nation is to drastically reduce illiteracy especially in this modern societies. This is because education is one of the vital indices used in the measurement and categorization of nations as developed or developing. Nigeria, for example, is categorized as a developing nation, and she must enhance the quality of literacy among its citizens by ensuring that every member of the society has access to Western education. Education is an important key for the development of any society. In

fact, education is an instrument a society can use to solve her challenges. Educators are beginning to show an increased awareness of the importance of the way students learn. Many of the standard methods of conveying knowledge have been shown to be relatively ineffective on the students' ability to master and to retain important concepts (Sharma, 2012). Learning through some methods of teaching is passive rather than active. The conventional methods (lecture) do not tend to foster critical thinking,

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creative thinking and collaborative problem- solving (Blair, 2007).

Education is agreed to be the bedrock of any country's development. It is considered as the cornerstone for meaningful and sustainable growth development and achievement in art, science, and technology. Education is affirmed worldwide as catalyst for achieving socio-economic, scientific, and technological development (Abiogu, 2014). For example, the Federal Government of Nigeria (2013) declared in her National Policy on Education that education is an instrument per excellence for achieving national development. After the Jomtien, declaration and framework of action on "Education for All" (EFA) citizens of every member of the world by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2000), many countries are striving towards achieving this aim of assuring that education is being provided to all citizens, in recognition of national progress. Most of the nations concerned in achieving this aim strive through their national governments and international agencies and design a UBE plan along with commitment to provide the necessary resources which are needed to implement the education plan and the presence of transparency and accountability in its implementation, so as to achieve the expected development of the people.

Education is generally regarded as one of the tools to aid improvement in the quality of human life and in the progress of the society in general. It has also been seen as a good way of reducing the existing gap between the members of the society who are rich and poor. Education is meant to better the life, needs, and aspiration of the people and thereby make it the powerful instrument of social, economic, and cultural transformation necessary for achieving the national goals, aims, and objectives. For these reasons, the education system of every nation should be developed with the help of an achievable, workable, and realistic policy to meet up with the

expected goals by every government and institution of each country.

Different educational policies have been conceived and implemented in Nigeria. The motives for their enactment differ, but it is believed that each new one is an improvement on the former one (Uko-Aviomoh, Okoh, & Omatseye, 2007). The UBE was designed to be an improvement of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) by tendering to the deficiencies of the latter program (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). One of such deficiencies was the drop out problem, which sees children in primary and secondary schools for varying reasons, leave school abruptly and fail to finish their education. Policy makers have drawn up a number of reasons why they felt the UPE program was unable to address the problem of school dropouts, and they sought to incorporate solution strategies in the UBE program that would take care of the problem (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000).

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. Their 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. Therefore, the role of school management team (principals, school based management board teachers and government)

in the implementation of the universal basic education cannot be overemphasized. Their job as a team is to see to the effective implementation of the policies and programs in the universal basic education. But the effectiveness of the policies and program of the UBE has not been seen in the educational system in this country. There has been an increase in the illiteracy level, school dropout, truancy of the individual persons. Thus the need to assess the role of the school management team so as to enhance their performance and their efficiency in their job as school managers. The teacher for instance, as a school manager has the duty to bring every policies and programs closer to the pupils and responsible to see to the implementation of the programs meant for the schools.

Education policy implementation as a field of research and practice for decades has amounted to a sort of national search for two types of policies: "implementable" policies; those that in practice resemble policy designs and "successful" policies; those that produce demonstrable improvements in students' school performance. This focus on what gets implemented and what works make sense especially in education. After all, education has become a high-stake and big-budget policy arena. Education commands a lion's share of state and local budgets to levels that beg hard questions about the feasibility and value added by education policies. Given its promise to serve as a significant lever of change in an institution intended to serve all children and youth, education policy affects multiple dimensions of social welfare. And given these high stakes, education policy implementation warrants careful scrutiny.

Nigeria is an example of one country which has strongly committed to the possibility of improving its UBE since its existence in the 1990's. After the country's achievement of democracy in its history, the national government has been increasingly pressured to allow the people to have access to high-quality and adequate public services, including universal basic education. This was a priority because of the need to produce educated and highly knowledgeable



citizens who can prove to be highly influential and significant in the overall growth of the national economy. The federal, state, local government, and other private actors are working closely with each other to be assured that the UBE is keeping up to its aims, goals, and objectives. However, the present way the system is operating makes Nigerians doubt its potential effectiveness. The main goal for implementing the UBE program is to make basic education available for free within the space of nine years of schooling for children of school age in Nigeria. The policy might to be a reform measure to rectify the regional disparities in basic education across the country, eradicate illiteracy and poverty, as well as stimulate and accelerate national development, political consciousness, and national integration. The UBE program is the Nigeria strategy for achieving EFA and the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Nigeria's educational system has witnessed a catalogue of changes in educational policies and programs. Some of the changes have appeared to a number of people desirable while others have not been able to meet the desired target. Many of the changes in educational policies in Nigeria have been a product of inadequate planning. There is therefore, a high level of uncertainty which is bedeviling the implementation of this program in Nigeria schools. This situation call for much concern by the researchers as the young ones are the future leaders of this country.

This study was guided by the following research questions and hypotheses.

- What are the roles of school principal in the implementation of universal basic education in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State?
- What are the role of the school management board in the implementation of universal basic education in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State?

* What are the role of the government in the implementation of the universal basic in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State?

* There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the role of principal in the implementation of universal basic education in Umuahia North Local Government Area.

* There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the role of school management board in the implementation of universal basic education in Umuahia North Local Government Area.

Method

The design for this study is a descriptive survey research design. This research design is considered appropriate for this study because it describes a situation as it is and identifies present conditions of the existing situation. Hence, the research design will help the researcher to have in-depth and representative information on the role of school management team in implementing universal basic education in Umuahia North L.G.A, Abia State.

The population of the study comprised of 1020 made up of 20 principals and 1000 teachers in 20 secondary schools in Umuahia North Local Government Area, Abia State. (Source: Abia State Universal Basic Education Board, 2013). The researchers used stratified random sampling technique to get a sample size of 305 respondents which will yield a 5% margin of error and a confidence of 95%. The sample that was used for this study comprises of 10 secondary schools, from the selected schools. 295 teachers and 10 principals. The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire titled 'Management Team in Implementing Universal Basic Education Questionnaire (MTIUBEQ) which solicited information on the roles of principals, teachers, school board and the government in implementing the universal basic education in Umuahia North Local Government Area. The rating scale for the



instrument will be strongly agreed (4), agreed (3), disagreed (2) and strongly disagreed (1). The validation of the instrument for data collection for this study was ascertained by subjecting it to three experts from the department of Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation (Science Education). The research purposes, research questions and the research hypotheses were submitted with an initial draft of the questionnaire to check its validity to be used to carry out this research work. Direct delivery and retrieval method was applied in the administration of the questionnaire on the respondents. The research questions were answered using mean scores and standard deviation while independent t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The mean ratings of the respondents were categorized using the real limits of numbers of the responses made. The cut-off means score of 2.5, as a decision rule. Any item with a mean score of 2.5 and above will be regarded as agreed while any mean below 2.5 will be regarded as not agreed.

Table 1: Mean responses on the roles of school principal in the implementation of Universal basic education

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Principals should participate in the supervision and inspection in the academic activities	305	2.5934	0.89514
No specified duty of the principal in secondary school	305	1.9279	0.74431
The school principal request for qualified teachers for the schools	305	2.5016	0.84263
Principals request for adequate instructional materials for teaching and learning purpose	305	2.8918	0.67236
Principals see to the provision of effective school library and laboratories	305	2.9738	0.81876

School principals has no role in policies formulations	305	1.9803	0.82295
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Grand Total **2.478133** **0.4044**

The descriptive analysis on table 1 shows that the average rating for the statement on variables 1, 3, 4 and 5 are 2.5, 2.5, 2.8 and 2.9 respectively, showing that teachers agreed on the variables stated. While variables 2 and 6 had 1.9 meaning that the respondents did not agree on those variables with the criterion mean value of 2.50. This means that principals have no specific duties assigned to them and that they do not play any role in policy formulation. Conclusively, the grand total mean of 2.478133, which is approximately 2.5 indicates that the respondents agreed that the principals play significant roles in the implementation of Universal basic education in Umuahia North Local Government Area, Abia State.

Table 2: Mean responses on the roles of school based management board in the implementation of Universal basic education

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
School based management board form the fulcrum of school policies implementation	305	2.8295	0.85673
School based management board supervises the activities of the school principals	305	2.9508	0.68887
School based management board maintain a healthy school-community relationship	305	2.5148	0.73936
School based management board keep the academic records of the students	305	2.7475	0.64267
School based management board audit the school account on timely bases	305	2.918	0.80898



School based management board check the performance of the teachers in implementation processes	305	2.7672	0.82013
Grand Total		2.787967	0.759457

Educational programmes at all levels should be improved by adequate funding by the government	305	3.0754	0.70072
The government should provide adequate teaching facilities in the school	305	2.6482	0.84867
Teachers should be paid their salaries when due so as to avoid unnecessary strike actions	305	3.0656	0.8325
Educational programmes should be established in the schools to improve the students' academic performance	305	2.9934	0.78218
Grand Total		2.9457	0.75803

From table 2, the mean values of 2.8295, 2.9508, 2.5148, 2.7475, 2.9180 and 2.7672 indicate that for the respondents agreed to the statements that “School based management board form the fulcrum of school policies implementation”, “School based management board supervises the activities of the school principals”, “School based management board maintain a healthy school-community relationship”, “School based management board keep the academic records of the students”, “School based management board audit the school account on timely bases” and “School based management board check the performance of the teachers in implementation processes” since the mean value respectively is greater than 2.5. The grand total row of table 4.3 above shows a mean value of 2.787967 and standard deviation value of 0.759457. This implies that the meaning rating of all the question asked with respect to research question two recording a mean score of 2.787967, which is above the criterion mean value of 2.5. Thus, the study concludes respondents indicates that the school-based management board plays significant roles in the implementation of universal basic education in Umuahia North Local Government Area, Abia State.

Table 3 indicates that the mean of all the statement displayed above is greater than the criterion mean value respectively. Meaning that the respondents agreed to the statement that government should provide competent personnel for the sensitization on the use of school facilities, government should recruit well trained teachers for the teaching job, Educational programmes at all levels should be improved by adequate funding by the government, The government should provide adequate teaching facilities in the school, Teachers should be paid their salaries when due so as to avoid unnecessary strike actions and Educational programmes should be established in the schools to improve the students' academic performance respectively. The grand total mean of 2.9457 indicates that on the average, the respondents agreed that the government has significant role to play in the implementation of the universal basic education in Umuahia North Local Government Area, Abia State.

Table 3: Mean responses on the roles of the Government in the implementation of Universal basic education

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Government should provide competent personnel for the sensitization on the use of school facilities	305	3.0000	0.71174
Government should recruit well trained teachers for the teaching job	305	2.8918	0.67236



Table 4. Significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the role of principal in the implementation of universal basic education

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Equal variances assumed	1.61	0.21	2.653	304	0.011	1.80882
Equal variances not assumed			2.455	302.484	0.021	1.80882

Table 4 above shows the Levene's test for equality of variance, which suggests that equal variance should be assumed since the F statistics value is 1.61 and F statistics probability (sig) 0.21 which is greater than 0.5. Therefore, accept the assumption of equal variance and carry out the t-test examination on the row of "equal variance assumed". The t-test value is 2.653 with a probability (sig) 0.011 and

a mean difference of 1.80882 indicating that there is a significant difference, since the probability value is less than 0.05. Thus, there is a significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the role of principal in the implementation of universal basic education. Therefore, this study rejects the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the role of principal in the implementation of universal basic education in Umuahia North Local Government Area, Abia State. Thereby accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the role of principal in the implementation of universal basic education in Umuahia North Local Government Area, Abia State. The implication is that the female teachers had greater rate than male teachers, this may be due to the fact that most schools in Abia State have more female teachers who pay attention to details than male teachers.

Table 5. Significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the role of school management board in the implementation of universal basic education

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Equal variances assumed	0.366	0.548	0.314	304	0.755	0.19771
Equal variances not assumed			0.302	302.484	0.765	0.19771

Table 5 shows that the F statistic value is 0.366 with a probability of 0.548 which suggests that equal variance is assumed in the test. The value of the t-statistics of the equal variance assumed row is 0.314 its probability value is 0.755 which is greater than 0.05. This concludes that there

is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the role of school board in the implementation of universal basic education. Thus, the study accepts the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female



teachers on the role of school board in the implementation of universal basic education in Umuahia North Local Government Area, Abia State. This implies that the mean ratings of male and female teachers concerning the role of school board in the implementation of universal basic in Umuahia North Local Government Area, Abia State is not statistically significant different. Meaning that their views are most likely the same.

Discussion

The findings showed that the principals have the role of supervising education activities and should be included in the formulation of education policies for easy implementation of the UBE program. This is in consonance with Bempah, (2012) in his study of policy implementation placed emphasis that for a policy to be well implemented, those at the implementation level should be involved in policy formulation because in understanding the success or failure of public policy, they elaborate on factors that affect it. This concept helps to draw the attention of policy makers and implementers to study the processes that influence and establish the outcome of public policy.

The findings also revealed that the school based management board should form the fulcrum of school policies implementation by supervising the activities of the school principals, maintain a healthy school-community relationship, keep the academic records of the students, audit the school account on timely bases and check the performance of the teachers in implementation of UBE programme. This agrees with Gazieli (2002) who retreated that the management team members and educators have an opportunity to work together with the principal in considering all possible consequences of a proposed action.

From the result of the study also revealed that the respondents agreed to the statement that government should provide competent personnel for the sensitization on the use of school facilities, recruit well trained teachers for the teaching job, provide adequate funding and

personnel for the improvement of this programme at all levels. The government should provide adequate teaching facilities in the school, Teachers should be paid their salaries when due so as to avoid unnecessary strike actions and educational programmes should be established in the schools to improve the students' academic performance respectively gearing towards education for all. This is in tandem with the Jomtien declaration and framework of action on "Education for All" (EFA) citizens of every member of the world as by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2000) which states that many countries are striving towards achieving this aim of assuring that education is being provided to all citizens, in recognition of national progress by the government. This was a priority because of the need to produce educated and highly knowledgeable citizens who can prove to be highly influential and significant in the overall growth of the national economy.

Conclusion

This study assessed the role of principals, school-based management board and government in the implementation of universal basic education in Umuahia. Umuahia North of Abia State. The importance of education cannot be overemphasized. It is generally regarded as one of the tools to aid improvement in the quality of human life and in the progress of the society. Education has proven to be a good way of reducing the existing gap between the members of the society who are rich and poor. When it is deeply acquired it betters the life, needs, and aspiration of the people and thereby make it the powerful instrument of social, economic, and cultural transformation necessary for achieving the national goals, aims, and objectives. For these reasons, education system of every nation should be developed with the help of an achievable, workable, and realistic policy to meet up with the expected goals by every government/institution of each country. The results indicated that the principals, school based management board and government at all levels have significant roles to



play in the implementation of universal basic education in Umuahia North Local Government Area, Abia State.

Recommendations

Having come to the end of this study, the following recommendations have been made to enhance the implementation of universal basic education.

1. The principals should be fully involved in the policy making for proper implementation of the universal basic education as they are closer authorities to the school than the government.
2. The school board should ensure that adequate supervision and monitoring role regarding the implementation of universal basic education in Umuahia North, Abia State.
3. There should also be constant re-training of teachers who are involved in the teaching of pupils/students in the Universal Basic Education programme.
4. Government should see education, precisely Universal Basic Education, as socially desirable. In this respect, it has to evolve viable strategies which include getting in place groups that will provide reasonable and accurate data on the Universal Basic Education clientele.
5. Government should demonstrate its willingness to act appropriately in funding education by making a cut “in parties, incessant travels, unnecessary summits, and talk shops.
6. Finally, there should be a need to monitor the different groups involved in the Universal Basic Education for effective implementation of the programme.

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