



HEAD-TEACHERS' CAPABILITIES AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE) PROGRAMMES IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

Okey, Stella Maris, Abana, Clement Unimke and Egbeji, Emmanuel Edung

Department of Educational Management

Faculty of Education

University of Cross River State, Nigeria (Former CRUTECH)

Email: stellamarisegim@gmail.com

Abstract

Education is the fountain of development. In Cross River State the case is not different but the depleting nature of our school management system is worrisome. It is as a result of this state of affairs that this study x-rays the assessment of the capabilities of head-teachers for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programmes in Cross River State. The study adopted one objective and one hypothesis. Relevant literature were consulted while the survey research design methodological approach was adopted. Using Yaro Yamen's statistical method, a total of 200 sample size was gotten for the study while purposive sampling technique was adopted to select 9 local government areas out of 18 that made up Cross River State. A structured questionnaire titled "People Opinion Questionnaire" was used to gather information for the study. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the data. Findings from the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between Capabilities of head-teachers and Effective implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programmes. It is recommended that workshops should be organized at the local and zonal levels of the educational zones to enable the head-teachers acquire the necessary capabilities for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education programme (U.B.E.).

Keywords: Capabilities, Head-teacher, Implementation, Universal Basic Education

1. Introduction

Generally speaking, education is the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction to a person or group of people either formally or informally. Basic education is the foundation for sustainable life-long learning. It provides reading, writing and innumeracy skills. Education is seen as the cornerstone of development because it forms the basis for literacy, skill acquisition, technological advancement and ability to harness the national

resources of the environment and requires proper implementation for its success.

The word "Universal" according to Kurkpatwiche in Ugwu (2005), means "affecting or for use by the whole world or all people without exception". In the Nigerian context, basic education includes primary, junior secondary and nomadic education as well as adult literacy. The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) is Federal Government's Agency saddled with the responsibility for coordinating all aspects of

UBE programme implementation. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme was introduced in 1999 by the Federal Government of Nigeria as a reform programme aimed at providing greater access to, and ensuring quality of basic education throughout Nigeria. The UBE Programme objectives include:

The Early Child Care, Development and Education (ECCDE): This stage of education also referred to as the pre-primary education is the education given to younger learners before the age of entering primary education (6 years). UBE, came as a replacement of the Universal Primary Education and intended to enhance the success of the first nine years of schooling. The UBE involves 6 years of Primary School and 3 years of Junior Secondary School. Junior Secondary is a phase of education in secondary schools for students between the ages of 7, 8 and 9 years, which helps to ensure the bridge between primary and secondary school.

Statistics have shown that a number of factors like inadequate funding, lack of qualified human resources, inadequate facilities and infrastructure has militated against the effective administration of Universal Basic Education (Obanaya, 2000). According to Ukeje (1992) the work of the school head has become more complex and needs more skills. Based on the foregoing, the degeneration of infrastructural facilities, lack of qualified human resources, management of financial resources and quality teaching in public schools is an issue of great concern to stakeholders of basic education and the general public. This is shown on the level to which parents withdrawn or take their children to private primary and secondary schools instead of allowing them to receive free education as provided by both federal and state government in Nigeria. This shows the weak capacity of our education managers to actually merge demand and supply of facilities with enrolment and needs of the school. This is why the researchers developed interest in embarking on this study. This ugly

scenario has also warranted the question, to what extent do head-teachers' capabilities influence effective implementation of the universal basic education (UBE) programmes in Cross River State, Nigeria?

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Pareto Model of Efficiency Dynamics (1906)

This paper adopted Pareto model of efficiency dynamics (Vilfredo Pareto, 1906). This model was developed by Vilfredo Pareto in the year 1906. He was an Italian economist who made great contributions to efficiency theory. The theory has these assumptions:

- (i) An industry is not relatively efficient in producing its output from a given inputs if it can be shown that another firm can produce more output without utilizing more of any inputs.
- (ii) Technicality in production of output.

Given this theory, students should remain in the school for successful completion at the specified time without dropping out, and there should be no repetition which would lead to an added year for the course of study. The theory identified two subjects of firms, one efficient and the other inefficient. This characterization of any industry into two groups shows that competitive pressures may work over time through market dynamics so as to increase the market share of the relatively efficient firms. Also, new innovations if adopted by the efficient firms would increase their efficiency by reducing unit cost of production.

When schools adopt effective teaching methods, high level of discipline, good and effective instructional medium, students' performance improves thereby reducing the rate of students' dropout. The theory also stresses on technicality in producing outputs. This is the knowledge and abilities needed to accomplish specific tasks. Teachers need to possess a good knowledge of the teaching profession, well grounded in their subject areas, and know how to help students achieve excellence in their academics,

particularly the slow learners who are at higher risk of dropping out. Available resources must be organized in such a way that the maximum feasible output is produced. In the school system, educational resources and other learning facilities must be made adequately available so as to boost students' performance which is a good predictor of remaining in school for successful completion.

The implication of the theory to the study is that a school is only said to be more efficient if it produces successful graduates at a given level within the specified period of time without producing less of the number of students enrolled in the school than produce less students and add more student-years.

3. Literature review

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was formally launched by President Olusegun Obasanjo on 30th September 1999 with the aim of achieving the following objectives:

- i) Developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- ii) The provision of free, compulsory, universal basic education for every Nigeria child of school age group
- iii) Reducing drastically the incidence of drop out from the formal education system
- iv) Catering for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complimentary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
- v) Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, manipulative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values

needed for laying the foundation for life long learning.

The above objectives are laudable and would transform the nation into a high literate one if carried out as planned. The FRN (2003) in her National Policy on Education, stated the implementation guide lines to include the following:

- i) Programme/initiatives for early childhood care and socialization.
- ii) Education programme for the actualization of functional literacy, numeracy and life skills especially for adult, special programmes for nomadic population.
- iii) Out-of-school, non-formal programmes for up-dating the knowledge and skills of persons who left school before acquiring the basics needed for life-long learning.
- iv) Non-formal skills and apprenticeship training for adolescents and youths who have not had the benefit of formal education
- v) The formal school system from beginning of primary education to the end of junior secondary school

From the above goals, objectives and scope of UBE, it would benefit many Nigerians and bring about national development as well.

The launching of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) by the then President, Chief Olusegun Matthew Obasanjo on 30th September, 1999 at Sokoto invariably is expected to increase the population of the primary/secondary school enrollment. This increase in population means an increase in manpower in the teaching, infrastructural facilities, text and exercise books, increased number of buildings to house the libraries, laboratories, classrooms, examination

halls among others. Consequently, such increase in both human and material resources raise questions of the capabilities of the head teachers in effective implementation of Universal Basic Education in the area of staff personnel management, school plant, finance and business management, curriculum development, programme of instruction, and school community relationship.

Furthermore, the capabilities of the head teacher, as the school administrator will determine the programmes success or failures. The capabilities of the head teacher is necessary for proper inculcation of such values as honesty, regards and concern for order, just, fair play and discipline. It is also necessary for proper accountability in the area of school records and financial management. It is necessary for the maintenance of good social climate between the school and the community and between the staff and the head teacher. It is also necessary for creation of enabling on environment in the school. Incapability of head-teachers will mar the laudable goals/objectives of Universal Basic Education stated above and reduce the literacy level in the nation.

The importance of Universal Basic Education towards the eradication of illiteracy and equalization of educational opportunities has been stressed in the National Policy on Education. This implies that Basic Education from primary – junior secondary school requires viable implementation. The head-teachers are the major forces in determining the quantity and even the quality of education in the school. This is why they are referred to as the hub or pivot, which all education system revolves.

The success or failure of the implementation of the Universal Basic Education hinges on the capabilities of head-teachers at all levels of the implementation of the scheme. A study of Vaillant (2015) has demonstrated the significant role head teachers play in ensuring that the education policy agenda is implemented as a

priority. The study therefore is an addition to earlier studies in this area and it is designed to investigate the head teacher leadership role or capabilities in educational policy implementation with specific reference to government aided public schools in Cross River State. The study is premised the assumption that the availability of effective leadership is critical to the implementation of the educational policies in Cross River State because any serious academic institution must have a head teacher with equanimous qualities and frugality in managing teaching, resources as well as engaging the community from where the school draws its learners. Oliver and Pawlas (2001) observed the head teacher as a leader who is supposed to provide a congenial environment that engages other teachers in shared work central to curriculum and instruction and also ensure that management and policy decisions are implemented collaboratively through team work.

Similarly, Hope (2002) noted that head teachers are not only supposed to be at the forefront to the vehicle that implements changes and actualizes the realities in the education policy implementation process but they are also key drivers who should have the ability to motivate teachers and staff to accept and contextualize such policies so as to improve the quality of education in Cross River State. Studies by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2011) emphatically observed that school leaders play a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivation and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment. Thus, capabilities of the head teacher or his effective leadership skills is essential in improving the efficiency and equity of schooling because of which policy makers have the opportunity to enhance the quality of school leadership and make it sustainable. Furthermore, Mpaata, Lubogoyi and Okiria (2017) concluded that school effectiveness and the ultimate delivery of education cannot be realized if the leadership

function is not performing well. The study noted the urgent need to allocate enough resources to ensure that qualified teachers are recruited and prepared so that they can keep staff attendance registers, maintain personal files for each pupil, maintain an updated enrolment list and prepare pupil's progress or report cards as per regulations. In this way, the school policy on teaching and learning as well as attendance would be realized.

According to Hope (2002), head teachers implement more of local government education policies at present more than ever before. These policies are related to a number of directives including zero tolerance, school safety, multicultural education, bilingual education, grouping, scheduling, driers code, and technology. Educationists such as Faniran and Fejob (2016) argued that it is unlikely for a policy to be implemented if the head teachers oppose it since it's success requires them to be advocate for and act on behalf of the policy. It is important to note that head teachers are vital in every aspect of school life at all levels of education. Consequently, their decision making and influence reverberate throughout the school and in the community. Head teachers can be; (i) initiators by getting projects started (ii) innovators by developing new ideas (iii) motivators by encouraging reaching goals and objectives (iv) calculators by planning for programs and activities and (v) communicator by disseminating information. Given such qualities, head teachers are essential in the effective implementation of educational policies in Cross River State, just like elsewhere.

Reform Support Network (2015) presented that, limited school leadership capacity poses a real challenge to many countries in meeting educational goals since head teachers are the centerpiece of high quality policy implementation. Moreover, Fullan (2001) observed that it is the way head teachers respond to policy demands that help them to shape and

adapt new policies in relation to their schools and the community environment. This not only promotes systemic policy development but also provides an opportunity for the head teacher to come up with a priority list on how to implement them. Therefore, Vaillant (2015) concluded that training and retraining of head teachers is very important since they are the people who apply educational policies in schools and if they are poorly trained and supported, no policy, be it national or state or local, can be effective.

The study by Day and Sammon (2013) revealed a number of leadership practices that determines the effectiveness of head teachers including:

- (i) Developing harmony on school goals that are focused on students learning
- (ii) Developing teacher's knowledge and skills to effectively teach
- (iii) Creating workplace conditions and relationships that support teaching and learning such as community engagements
- (iv) Managing the instructional programme to support the realization of school goals including resourcing, staffing, monitoring as well as the use of assessment data for decisions about improvement in teaching and learning.

According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)(2009) whereas head teachers have competent staff to whom they can delegate some of their day-to-day responsibilities, they still have a duty of leading staff on many occasions such as meeting parents, noting their opinions and involving them in the school. motivating teachers and other staff involved in education and ensuring that they work together and above all else interpreting policy and explaining it to all.

Ozigi in Ugwu (2005) noted that the school work revolves around the administrator (head-teacher), the school reputation depends on him, he can make or mar the school, “therefore the success of any policy introduced in schools depends on him. The head-teacher’s responsibility according to him falls into two main categories – professional and administrative. The duty of the head teacher in the implementation of U.B.E can be classified into the following categories. Curriculum development, finance management, school plant management, staff personnel management, programme of instruction and school community relation.

Staff personnel management is a major task in the implementation of education policy (U.B.E) (Eclippo in Ugwu, 2005) noted that staff personnel management involves among other things; decision policy formulation, recruitment and training required to make the staff obtain maximum satisfaction and cooperation for the achievement of the education objectives and goals. The success of any education policy depends on the quality and strength of its staff. No matter how capable the head teacher may be one cannot achieve any success without the full support and cooperation of well qualified, dedicated and adequate staff.

Asiegbu (2014) defined school plant as the school building, all materials, furniture and equipment attached and unattached in the building, all structures and features on the school site, including paths, roads, parking lots, playground, open grounds, trees, flowers and other objects used for implementing or supporting the educational programmes. It’s also seen as the space interpretation of the curriculum which is the physical expression in the construction and arrangement of the school plant. There is need for effective management and control of the material resources. The head teachers capabilities in finance management in schools is directed towards generating and managing available resources enhancing

teaching and learning for the achievement of educational goals Ozigi in Ugwu(2005), outlined the roles of head teachers in the financial management in schools to include; making adequate financial provision in the school budget, keeping of records of imprest account carefully, seeing that allocation made in the budget are spent according to the directives of the employer and in accordance with the financial regulations and procedures, and the issuance receipts on all monies collected. All these finance management functions should be given adequate attention by the head-teachers in the realization of the goals/ objectives of Universal Basic Education (U.B.E). According to Stoups, Rafferty and Johnson in Ugwu (2005), the instructional responsibilities of the head-teachers include;

- 1) Developing new curriculum and designing educational programmes
- 2) Provision of instruction
- 3) Budgeting for the instructional programme and equipment
- 4) Encouraging continuous curriculum planning and development
- 5) Promoting articulation among various school levels
- 6) Promoting special instructions for special children
- 7) Providing for educational research

School/community relationship is very important for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) since school exist in the community and communities supply pupils to the schools, where the relationship between the school and community is not cordial, it is bound to affect the set objectives of the Universal Basic Education. Thus, the study focus on the assessment of the capabilities of head-teacher’s

for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education (U.B.E) programmes.

4. Statement of problem

Education remains one of the most powerful tools for both the development of man and transformation of the society at large. Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development. In Nigeria's interest for the development of basic education, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria was launched on 30th September, 1999 to wipe out illiteracy, poverty and ignorance. Its objectives as stated in the UBE Commission annual report in 2005 is to increase and improve national and political development, reduce the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system and the ensuring of acquisition of life-long skills with moral and civic values needed for the beginning of a life-long learning. But these set goals are difficult to achieve due to the following: lack of adequate funds; misappropriation of available funds; corruption; nepotism; poor planning; inadequate inspection; poor management; lack of trust, commitment and integrity which is crown by the ineffective capabilities of the head-teachers in the management of the school system to achieving UBE set goals.

It is as a result of this short-comings that this paper is built upon not only to identify the effective capabilities but to recommend possible way forward to achieving the goals and objectives of Universal Basic Education in Cross River State and beyond.

5. Purpose of the study

The overall objective of this study is to examine Head-Teachers' Capabilities and Effective Implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programmes in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seek to assess the relevant capabilities of head-teachers and the

effective implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programmes in the study area.

6. Hypothesis

One hypothesis was tested to help guide the study into contributing to the existing body of knowledge. There is no significant relationship between the capabilities of head-teachers and effective implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programmes in Cross River State.

7. Research method

The survey research design was used for the study. Survey design refers to the process of planning, creating, and implementing a survey in order to collect data from a targeted group of individuals. Survey research refers to a particular type of research design where the primary method of data collection is by survey. In this study design, surveys are used as a tool by researchers to gain a greater understanding about individual or group perspectives relative to a particular concept or topic of interest. A survey typically consists of a set of structured questions where each question is designed to obtain a specific piece of information. Survey research can be undertaken for a variety of reasons, but a common theme with surveys is that they are an easily accessible way for respondents to share or demonstrate their knowledge or perspectives about a particular topic. This kind of approach in turn can allow for researchers to gain a better understanding about different populations or groups of people, help identify any problems or concerns respondents have, and/or lead to the identification or development of solutions based on identified issues (Mills, 2021).

The areas of study cut across all the eighteen local government areas of Cross River State. The target population of this study comprised of all teachers in public primary schools in Cross River State. According to State Universal Basic Education (SUBEB, 2022), the total population of primary school teachers in Cross River State which is made up of eighteen (18) Local

Government Area is eleven thousand, two hundred and eight one (11,281) which is used as the population of the study.

The sampling technique adopted for the study is the simple random sampling technique. Simple random sampling technique refers to the sampling procedure whereby all the cases in the defined population have an equal probability or chance of being drawn and sampling each case from the pool is independent of the sampling of another case (Denga and Ali 1998). To ensure randomization, the balloting method was employed to select nine (9) local government areas, three (3) from each Educational zone out of the eighteen Local Government Areas that make up Cross River State.

The sample size for this study is determined through the Yaro Yamen's (1967) statistical method. This is a simplified formula for calculating sample size at 95% confidence level and $p=5$. Using this method, a total of 200 sample size was gotten for the study.

People Opinion Questionnaire was used to generate data for the study. The structured questionnaire was used for the study because it enables the researcher to obtain firsthand information from the respondents as well as gives the respondents necessary time to respond to the items in the questionnaire. While the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis was used to analyzed the generated data.

8. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Test of hypothesis using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis (N=200)

Variables	Σx	Σx^2	Σxy	R-cal
Capabilities of Head-Teacher	2617	6732		
Effective implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE)	9967		0.461	

Programmes	
986	1974

Level of significant=0.05, DF=198, critical r-value= 0.126

The table above shows that the calculated r-value of 0.461 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.126 at 0.05 level of significant and 198 degrees of freedom. Within this, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This clearly implies that there is a significant relationship between Capabilities of head-teachers and Effective implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programmes.

8.1 Discussion

From the analysis, head-teachers are drivers who have the ability to motivate teachers and staff to accept and contextualize universal education policies so as to improve the quality of education in Cross River State. This, they do by praising workers under them, constantly ask their opinions in virtually everything as it affects the school system, encourage their ideas always, provide little things like snacks, lunch and above all the skills of friendliness should not be joked with. OECD (2011) supported that school leaders play a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivation and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment. Thus, capabilities of Head Teacher or his/her effective leadership skills is essential in improving the efficiency and equity of schooling because of which policy makers have the opportunity to enhance the quality of school leadership and make it sustainable.

9. Conclusion

This study was designed to examine Head-Teachers' Capabilities and Effective Implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programmes in Cross River State, Nigeria. Extent literatures were consulted with scholarly postulations and survey design adopted. With the instrumentality of questionnaire data were drawn from the field and

using Pearson's Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis, the result shows that the adoption of adequate capability is an ingredient to effective implementation of Universal Basic Education Programme in Cross River State and beyond. Therefore, for schools to succeed in curbing absenteeism, indiscipline and ensure that teaching and learning takes place, the head teachers plays a critical role because there is no teaching and learning that can take place where such policies are not effectively enforced.

10. Recommendations

As a way forward for a better implementation of Universal Basic Education Programme, the Ministry of Education has enormous responsibility of ensuring that they retrain or provide in-service training to head teachers with the aim of not only motivating them but helping them to redefine their personality and enable them to have the necessary competencies to work with thoroughness and flexibility so that they are able to engage communities in which their schools are located and also closely monitor not only classroom teaching but the resources that government avails to the schools to enhance academic performance. Only when the above policy requirements are given attention and implemented will schools be able to teach efficiently the required curriculum beyond the present and massively venture into science and technology that require extra discipline in managing equipment, tools and laboratories. Education by the government requires that head teachers understand their role beyond classroom teaching alone to include the management of scarce school resources and engagement of the community to communicate regularly results to school activities/ practices to stakeholders and make sure that community supports the school through provision of a wide range of resources. Above all, praising your workers, asking their opinion in all you intend to do, encouraging their ideas, provision of little things like snacks, lunch and being friendly with your workers in school should not be taken lightly by the head-teachers.

References

- Asiegbu, E. C. (2014). *School Plant Management* in Ukpong, N. N. (Ed.) Educational Management: An Approach to Basic Rudiments In Educational Management. Nature Printers, Cross River State.
- Day, C. & Sammon, P. (2013). *Successful leadership: A review of the international literature*. CFBT Education Trust.
- Faniran, V. L. & Fejob, J. (2016). Impact of in-service training and staff development on workers job performance and optimal productivity in public secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria. *Journal of Educational and Practice*, 7(33), 183-189.
- Federal Government of Nigeria (2003). *National policy on education*. Lagos: NERDC press.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change*. 3rd edition. Teachers college, Columbia University, New York, NY.
- Hope, W. C. (2002). Implementing educational policy: Some considerations for principals. *The Clearing House*, 76(1), 40-44.
- Kofi, A. (2009). Kofi Annan's remarks at the IMF annual conference, 'Africa Must be Part of the Global Solution'. Available in <https://www.kofiannanfoundation.org/speeches/kofi-annans-remarks-at-the-imf-annual-conference-africa-must-be-part-of-the-global-solution/>
- Mills, J. G. (2021). Survey research, a simple introduction. Available in <https://www.supersurvey.com/Research>
- Mpaata, K. A., Lubogoyi, B. & Okiria, J. C. (2017). The supervisory role of head teachers and the delivery of primary education in the rural district of Uganda. *International Journal of Science and Research*, 6(4), 458-462.
- Obanya, P. (2000). Sustainability, stability and continuity. The U.B.E response. A paper

- presented at conference/workshop on Universal Basic Education U.N.N.
- Oliver, P. F. & Pawlas, G. E. (2001). *Supervision for today's schools*. 6th edition, Hoboken, NY: Wiley.
- Reform Support Network (2015). Principals: The centerpiece of state policy implementation U.S Department of Education.
- State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) (2022). Cross River State Public Primary schools data for 2021/2022.
- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2011). Improving school leaders. Hip policy and practice: Pointers for policy development.
- Ugwu, R. O. C. (2005). Head-teacher competencies for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education (U.B.E) programmes in Nsukka Education zone of Enugu state, University of Nigeria, Research publications.
- Ukeje, B. O. (1992). *Education administration*. Enugu: Fourth dimension publishing Co. Ltd.
- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (2009). Secondary education in the 21st century: The new roles of secondary school head teachers. Place de Frontenoy, 75352 Paris 07SP.
- Vaillant, D. (2015). School leadership, trends in policies and practices, and improvement in the quality of education. *Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 2015*.
- Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An introductory analysis*. 2nd edition, New York: Harper and Row.