

**ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIVERSAL BASIC
EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKWA IBOM
STATE**

By

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the level of implementation of the Universal Basic Education Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State. Two research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study was all the 264 principals and 6,205 Secondary School Teachers. Simple stratified sampling technique was used in selecting 480 respondents. Questionnaire containing 20 item was the instrument for data collection. Mean ratings was used in answering the research questions. The findings of the study reveals that the problems that hindered the effective implementation of the UBE programme regarding the adequacy of teachers include: Lack of qualified trained teachers for effective implementation of UBE Programme for subjects like home economics, computer and introductory technology are not offered in some schools due to inadequate manpower among others. Also the findings of the study regarding the adequacy of facilities/instructional materials for effective implementation of UBE revealed that most schools lack introductory technology laboratory, some of the supplied science equipment/instructional materials have not been installed, the few facilities installed have broken down, most of the tools/facilities supplied are operated with electricity and most of the schools are not electrified among others. The recommendations include: The government should recruit adequate number of teaching staff for secondary schools, provide well equipped introductory technology laboratories for all the state junior secondary schools, should ensure adequate provision and proper disbursement of funds to junior secondary schools for administrative functions among others.

KEYWORDS: Universal basic Education, Curriculum, Curriculum Implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Education in all countries of the world has been considered very important for personal and societal development. It is therefore in view of this indispensable role of education in the development of man and modern society that various declaration on education have been made at the global level. Two of such declarations include the world conference on education for all which was held in Jomtien, Thailand from 5th to 9th March 1990 and the April 2000 Declaration of the Dakar Education for all forum. Following the above declarations and in keeping the requirements of the section 18 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), the government shall eradicate illiteracy and to this end government shall endeavor as much as they can to provide, free compulsory primary education, free secondary education and free adult literacy program. Consequently, the then president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, on 30th September, 1999 launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme. The introduction of the programme was welcomed by many Nigerians who considered the scheme as a good opportunity for improving the literacy level of many Nigerians as well as solving problems of educational system in Nigeria.

Universal Basic Education (UBE) is education meant for children between the ages of 6 to 15 years which a child will acquire basic literacy, numeracy, manipulative and communicative skills in addition to moral and civic values for living. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) defined the Universal Basic Education in Section 15(1) of the Universal Basic Education Act as “early childhood care education and nine year of formal education: This law describes the UBE Programme to include six years of primary education (Primary 1-6) and three years of junior secondary education (JSS1-3), hence the Universal Basic Education Programme has the broad aim of laying a solid foundation for life-long learning through inculcating of appropriate learning to learn self-awareness, citizenship and the skills for every Nigerian child of school age. According to Ukpong (2012) Universal Basic Education Programme is packaged to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance and poverty. It is important to understand the universal declaration for human right assert that “everyone has a right to education” This declaration engaged efforts from all countries of the world to universalize basic education which Nwagbara (2012) describes as that level, type and form of learning needed to build firm roots for literacy and numeracy, to inculcate basic life skills and more importantly, consolidate the skills of how to learn. As stated by the National Policy on Education (2013), the Universal Basic Education Programme is universal, free and compulsory education where every Nigerian child of school age is provided with opportunities to go to school. The educational programmes at this level is set up to teach or instruct learners on acquiring knowledge, skills, ideas, and principles in order to advance progress in the society. Specifically, the objectives of Universal Basic Education are as follows:

- i. Developing in the entire citizens a strong consciousness for education and strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- ii. Providing free and compulsory universal basic education for every Nigerian child.
- iii. Reducing drastically the evidence of early leaving from the formal school system, thus catering for drop-out from school catering for the learning needs of young persons who for one reasons or another have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision of basic education.
- iv. Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy numeracy, manipulative, communication and life skills as well as the ethical moral and civil values for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

A curriculum is a structured framework that outlines the educational content, learning objectives and teaching strategies to be implemented within a specific course or programme. It serves as a guide for educators and learners, ensuring consistency, relevance and progression in the

acquisition of knowledge, skills and values. According to Rhode (2018) curriculum is a standard base off sequence of planned experiences where students practice and achieve proficiency in content and applied learning skills. According to Ifeobu (2017), curriculum refers to a series of planned and unplanned learning activities which a child is exposed to in the course of his development aimed at helping the child to develop his potentials fully and to effectively function in the community. In the writings of Gharifeker and Wan-Athirah (2015), curriculum is the central guide for all educators as to what is essential for teaching and learning so that every student has access to rigorous academic experience. Therefore, curriculum implementation refers to the process of putting the planned curriculum into action through teaching and learning activities in schools, it involves teachers delivering lessons, students engaging in learning and the use of instructional materials to achieve the educational goals outlined in the curriculum. Curriculum implementation which involves translating planned objectives into action is primarily the responsibility of teachers (Igi, 2021). Teachers play a central role in delivering lessons, utilizing in structural materials and employing strategies such as stimulation, experiments and case studies to create interactive and engaging learning experiences. According to Davies (2021), effective curriculum implementation is a dynamic process influenced by the teachers as well as instrutural materials especially at the basic education level which is the foundation upon which all other levels of education rest on.

The vision of the Universal Base Education Programme is that at the end of nine years of continuous education, through the system every child should acquires appropriate level of literacy, numeracy, communication, manipulative and life shows and be employable. Also, the beneficiary should be useful to himself/herself and the society at large by possession relevant ethical, moral and core skills. Like every other enterprise, the success of the programme depends significantly on adequate provision of human and material resources. Wikipedia (2012) define human resources as the set of individuals who make up the workforce of an organization. The human resources in the context of this research are the teachers. The teacher is a vital personality in the education process. He is the fulcrum on which the education wheels revolve. Teachers are the life wire of the education system because they plan, organize, direct, coordinate, implement and control goals and objectives (Yusuf, 2022). They are also responsible for the translation and implementation of educational policies and curriculum and the all-round development of the child. The role played by teachers in any educational system is enormous. For the UBE scheme to achieve its objectives, there have to be professionally competent, motivated, skillful and experienced teachers who would impact the desired knowledge to the students. The achievement of the UBE as spelt out in charter of service will then be a function of not only the teachers but also the quality of the teachers and the number of teachers available to realize the goals. The quality of teachers is a critical factor in the implementation of the universal basic education. Nwobi (2013) observed that since the education enterprise is highly labour intensive, the first and foremost critical quality input is undoubtedly the teacher. In the same vein Ujah (2018) averred that it is on the teachers personal qualities and characters, his educational qualifications and professional competence that the success of all education endeavours must ultimately depend. It is obvious that the implementation of the basic education curriculum depends largely on the availability of teachers in sufficient numbers and quality to perform the task (Yusuf, 2022). However, it is important to note that no matter how skillful, experienced and competent a teacher is, for effective teaching to take place, more must be adequate and relevant instructional materials to help the teacher in delivering his or her lesson to the learners.

Instructional materials according to Asiyai (2012) are resources that support teaching and learning, therefore making the process relevant and purposeful. Lack of or inadequate provision of

more facilities means that educational objectives will not be met or will be met at a lower level than intended. Resources such as, chalkboard, textbooks, graphics, photos, television, radio among others are all part of what Muiyiwa and Quadri (2012) refer to as instructional materials that help children learn. In a research, Okoye (2013) argues that in order to provide quality education in Nigeria, the country's educational system requires adequate instructional materials and infrastructure including classroom blocks and furniture among others. Ohuche and Akeju (2017) in their research saw a number of unfinished buildings and broken furniture, destroyed classroom, unkept grounds and overgrown grass. According to Ikoya and Onoyase (2018) this is consistent with the fact that many Nigerian schools still lack the resources necessary to effectively administer the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme despite massive yearly budgeting and expenditures.

Adeyemi and Adu (2020) stated that school infrastructure is one of the most important factors in a student's academic growth. Classrooms, school building, playground, library and other similar items fall under this category. They argue that the value of school facilities cannot be overemphasized since they provide the resources that make education possible. In support of this argument, Odukunle and Okuwa (2012) remarked that the Nigerian Federal Government awarded contracts to build over 200 school buildings around the country in 2002 as a first step toward providing infrastructure in schools. After that, classroom and library furnishing were delivered. Twenty years of contracting have passed with no tangible results from the UBE initiative. Similarly, Anoke and Tari (2011) state that especially in rural regions, schools lack the infrastructure necessary to carry out the UBE programme effectively,

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme has laudable and realistic objectives which if adequately planned and implemented will no doubt improve the literacy level of Nigerian citizens and enable them live a meaningful and fulfilled lives to contribute positively to national development. However, it is important to note that a similar programme, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) was attributed in 1976 but the programme was largely unsuccessful. Consequently, scholars like Chidime (2011) have attributed the failure of this educational programme in Nigeria to several factors. Among these are teacher factors like shortage of teachers, inadequate training and retraining of teachers and poor motivation of teachers. He also identified lack of competent administration, lack of basic infrastructure like instructional materials, inadequate funding, lack of effective supervision, monitoring and evaluation among others. It is against this backdrop that the researcher intends to assess the level of implementation of the Universal Basic Education Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State. The problem of this study, put in question form; to what extent have the Universal Basic Education (UBE), curriculum been implemented in Akwa Ibom State?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study is to assess the level of implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State specifically, the study sought.

- i. To examine the extent of adequacy of teachers for effective implementation of UBE programme in Junior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State.

- ii. To determine the extent of adequacy of available facilities and instructional materials for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study

- i. To what extent is the adequacy of teachers for effective implementation of UBE programme in Junior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State?
- ii. To what extent is the adequacy of the available facilities and instructional materials for effective implementation of UBE programme in Junior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State?

METHODOLOGY

The research design used for the study was a descriptive survey based on interrogation or questioning of respondents using such techniques as questionnaire, interviews, standardized test for intelligence, aptitude, achievement or performance (Nkemakolam, 2012). The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State. Akwa Ibom State has ten education zones namely: Uyo, Ikot Ekpene, Ikono, Etinan, Ikot Abasi, Oron, Itu, Abak, Ukanafun and Eket. The population of the study consisted of all the 264 principals and 6,205 secondary school teachers in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State (Akwa Ibom State Secondary Education Board, 2025). A simple stratified random sampling technique was adopted for selecting both the principals and the teachers. The sample comprised of twelve principals and thirty six teachers from each of the zones. This gives a total of four hundred and eighty respondent. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire titled "Assessment of the level of implementation of UBE programme questionnaire" (ALIUPQ). The instrument was a 20 item likert type instrument scored on a 2-point scale of adequate (A), and inadequate (1A). The instrument had two sections namely; Section 'A' concerned with personal data of the respondents Section 'B' contains 20 items in two clusters on adequacy of teachers and adequacy of facilities/instructional materials for implementation of UBE programme respectively. In order to ensure the material consistency of the instrument, a trial task was carried out on five principals and thirty teachers in five secondary schools in Etinan Education Zone who were not selected for the actual study. Internal consistency reliability for each of the cluster was computed using iron Bach alpha. Coefficient of 0.82 was obtained hence was considered appropriate because it ensured the extant of homogeneity of the items in each cluster. The researchers had two trained research assistant who administered the instrument directly and retrieved same from the respondents. Data collected was analysed using mean score and standard deviation for answering the research questions. A score of 2.50 and above was taken to mean that the respondent is in agreement with the option while a mean of 2.49 and below showed disagreement to the instrument.

RESULT

Research Questions One

To what extent is the adequacy of teachers for effective implementation of UBE programme in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?

Table One: Mean responses of principals and teachers on the adequacy of teachers for effective implementation of UBE programme in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

| Adequacy of Teachers | Principal | | | Teachers | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|----------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| | \bar{X} | SD | Rank | \bar{X} | SD | Remark |
| 1. There are not enough quality Teachers for the implementation of UBE programme | 3.28 | 0.58 | A | 3.12 | 0.16 | A |
| 2. Some regular teachers who teach introductory technology and business studies in junior Secondary Schools are not qualified to teach them | 3.23 | 0.52 | A | 3.11 | 0.63 | A |
| 3. Some subjects like home Economics, computer and Introductory technology are not offered in some schools due inadequate manpower | 2.44 | 0.96 | A | 3.22 | 0.95 | A |
| 4. Some part time staff who are irregular are hired to teach technical courses | 3.27 | 0.64 | A | 3.22 | 0.87 | A |
| 5. Some teachers teach only The theoretical aspect of the Courses ignoring the practical | 2.98 | 0.90 | A | 2.91 | 0.95 | A |
| 6. Some unit and introductory Technology and home economics Are not taught due to inadequate Human resources | 3.20 | 0.70 | A | 3.02 | 0.77 | A |
| 7. Some qualified teachers opted out due to poor condition of service | 2.52 | 0.96 | A | 2.54 | 0.96 | A |
| Grace Mean | 3.00 | 0.76 | A | 2.90 | 0.82 | A |

From table one above, it can be observed that items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 are rated 3.28, 3.23, 3.27, 2.98, 3.20 and 2.52 with standard deviation of 0.58, 0.52, 0.64, 0.90, 0.70 and 0.96 by the principals. The teachers rated items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 as 3.12, 3.11, 3.22, 2.91, 3.02 and 2.54 with standard deviation of 0.16, 0.63, 0.87, 0.95, 0.77 and 0.96. The results from table one above indicated that both the principals and the teachers are of the opinion that there is inadequate of teachers for the implementation of UBE curriculum in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question Two

To what extent is the adequacy of the available facilities and instructional materials for effective implementation of UBE programme in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?

Table Two: Mean responses of principals and teachers on the adequacy of the available facilities and instructional materials for effective implementation of UBE programme in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

| Adequacy of facilities/instructional materials | Principal | | | Teachers | | |
|--|-----------|------|--------|----------|------|--------|
| | X | SD | Remark | X | SD | Remark |
| 8. introductory technology laboratory workshop is not installed in my school. | 3.29 | 0.61 | A | 3.25 | 0.90 | A |
| 9. The quality of instructional materials for practical clusters in home economics are very poor | 3.23 | 0.62 | A | 3.24 | 0.70 | A |
| 10. Some of the sampling instructional materials have not been installed in the school | 3.29 | 0.92 | A | 2.90 | 0.92 | A |
| 11. There are cares of theft of supplied Instructional materials | 3.21 | 0.73 | A | 3.20 | 0.73 | A |
| 12. Most of the instructional materials Have broken down | 2.74 | 1.04 | A | 2.69 | 1.05 | A |
| 13. The school library is properly equipped With current books to cater for the needs of students in various subjects | 1.38 | 0.58 | 1A | 1.36 | 0.54 | 1A |
| 14. Most of the instructional materials are Are operated with electricity and most of the of the schools are not electrified | 3.28 | 0.67 | A | 3.25 | 0.75 | A |
| 15. There are inadequate workshop tools/ Instructional materials in the school | 3.58 | 0.78 | A | 2.80 | 0.69 | A |
| 16. There is inadequate funding of the Workshops | 3.96 | 0.68 | A | 2.90 | 0.81 | A |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|----------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| 17. There is lack of maintenance culture to keep the equipment's functional | 2.40 | 0.46 | 1A | 2.35 | 0.42 | 1A |
| 18. The classroom have all facilities that enhance teaching and learning | 1.73 | 0.53 | 1A | 2.20 | 0.50 | 1A |
| 19. There are inadequate physical facilities for teaching practical classes like wood work and metal work | 3.58 | 0.78 | A | 3.25 | 0.69 | A |
| 20. There are inadequate physical education Facilities for practical classes. | 3.07 | 0.47 | A | 2.78 | 0.47 | A |
| Grand Mean | 3.18 | 0.72 | A | 3.15 | 0.76 | A |

From table two above, it can be observed that items 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19 and 20 are rated 3.29, 3.23, 3.95, 3.21, 2.74, 3.28, 3.58, 3.96, 3.58 and 3.07 with standard deviation of 0.61, 0.52, 0.92, 0.73, 1.04, 0.67, 0.78, 0.68, 0.78 and 0.47 by the principals. The teachers rated items 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19 and 20 as 3.25, 3.24, 2.90, 3.20, 2.69, 3.25, 2.80, 2.90, 3.25 and 2.78 with standard deviation of 0.90, 0.70, 0.92, 0.73, 1.05, 0.75, 0.69, 0.81, 0.69 and 0.47 with standard deviation of 0.58, 0.46 and 0.53 by the principals while items 13, 17 and 18 are rated 1.36, 2.35 and 2.20 with standard deviation of 0.54, 0.42 and 0.05 by the teachers. It is therefore the opinion of the principals and teachers that the adequacy of facilities and instructional materials for effective implementation of UBE curriculum has not been met.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

A close observation of the analysis reveals that out of 9 the seven items in cluster one, the respondents agreed with six items. The items agreed upon by the respondents include: there are not enough quality teachers for the implementation of UBE programme, some regular teachers who teach introductory technology and businesses studied in junior secondary schools are not qualified to teach them, some part time staff who are irregular are wired to teach technical courses, ignoring some units of introductory technology and home economics due to insufficient teachers and qualified teachers opted out due to poor condition of service. The analysis further reveal that the respondents did not accept only one item on the adequacy of teachers for the implementation of UBE programme. The rejected item was that some subjects like home economic, computer and introductory technology are not offered in some schools due to inadequate manpower. These findings are consistent with that of Omeje (2015) and Okoro (2013) who formed out that the expected pre-vocational orientation in technology has not been provided because of lack of technical manpower to take care of the different aspects of the programme.

Research question two sought to find out the adequacy of the available facilities and instructional materials for effective implementation of the UBE programme. From the result obtained, it is evident that all the principals and teachers were of the opinion that facilities and instructional materials are not adequately available. The analysis reveal that out of the thirteen items both the principals and teachers accepted ten items in cluster two as inadequate facilities for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in junior secondary schools. They include introducing technology laboratory workshop is not installed in schools. The quality of facilities and instructional materials for practical in home economics are very

poor, some supplied equipment have not been installed in schools, there are cases of theft of supplied materials, most of the supplied instructional materials installed have broken down, most of the instructional materials are operated with electricity and most of the schools are not electrified. There are inadequate funding for teaching practical classes in introductory technology and finally, there are inadequate physical education facilities for practical classes.

From the finding both the principals and the teachers did not accept three out of thirteen items they include: the school library is properly equipped with current books to cater for the needs of students in various subjects, there is lack of maintenance culture to keep the equipment functional and finally that the classroom have all facilities that enhance teaching and learning. These imply that adequate of facilities and instructional materials for effective implementation of UBE programme has not been met. In line with the observation of Ezeocha (2013) the government from Federal to Local Government does not provide sufficient funds for the implementation of educational programmes. In studies carried out by Chidume (2011) he reported that there were inadequate provision of facilities and equipment in the secondary schools as well as inadequate funding for the effective implementation of UBE programmes in the secondary schools in Enugu State.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study actually confirmed that there is inadequate number and teachers and that has led to ineffective implementation of UBE programme in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The result of the study also reveals that the facilities and instructional materials are not adequately available for effective implementation of UBE programme in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. If these constraints are not adequately addressed, they will continue to exist in schools. This may lead to poor secondary school products. The low quality secondary school products will form poor foundation at the tertiary level. This may eventually lead to such vices as examination malpractices and cultism which may lead to the production of poor quality graduates. If the problem of inadequate teachers, facilities and instructional materials are not properly addressed, it will amount to ineffective implementation of the universal basic education curriculum in junior secondary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- i. Government should recruit adequate number of qualified teaching staff for the secondary schools, especially in teaching subjects like sciences, mathematics, introductory technology, computer and technical education.
- ii. Government should provide well equipped introductory technology laboratories for all the state junior secondary schools in Enugu State.
- iii. Adequate infrastructural facilities such as enough offices and classrooms accommodation as well as necessary equipment and materials for effective teaching should be provided by the government.
- iv. The state secondary education board should ensure adequate provision and proper disbursement of funds to secondary schools for proper administration functions.
- v. There must be adequate security to protect the school facilities, especially the introductory technology laboratories in the junior secondary school.
- vi. The government should equip the school libraries with the current and relevant books to update the knowledge of the students.

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