
Strategies for Effective Administration of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme in Anambra State

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Abstract

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme is one of the programmes of the Federal Government to ensure participatory democracy in Nigeria. It was launched on 30th September, 1999 by former President Olusegun Obasanjo in Sokoto State. Many people have written on this programme. This study examined the strategies for the effective administration of the programme. The study adopted a descriptive research survey. Three research questions guided the study. Six hundred and eighty-one respondents in Anambra State were studied out of 1,346 respondents that formed the population of the study giving a 50.59% sample size. Several strategies for effective administration of UBE were recommended. If they are adopted, the goals of the UBE programme will hopefully be achieved.

Introduction

The most current crucial strategy for sustainable education development in Nigeria is the UBE scheme, which was launched in 1999 by Olusegun Obasanjo (Osuji, 2004). More importantly, in May 2004, the National Assembly passed the UBE bill into law. According to the National Policy on Education (2004:13), basic education shall be of 9 years duration comprising 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary education. It shall be free and compulsory. It shall include adult and non-formal education programmes at primary and junior secondary levels for the adult and out of school youth. From the above provision, it is understandable that the UBE Act represents the most significant reform and addresses

comprehensively the lapses of the Universal Primary (UPE) with reference to access, equity, inclusiveness, affordability and quality.

In the Nigeria context, basic education includes primary education, junior secondary education, nomadic education and adult literacy. Accordingly, section 15(1) of the compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act, 2004 (UBE) ACT, 2004) stated thus:

Universal Basic Education means early childhood care and education, the nine years of formal schooling, adult literacy and non-formal education, skills acquisition programmes and the education of special groups such as nomads and migrants, girl-child and women, almajiri, street children and disabled group. P.17

The implies that the UBE scheme seeks to universalize access to and equality of education to all children for nine years irrespective of the situation in which the target learner may find him or herself.

The new legal status of the scheme has a far-reaching implication. Its policy objectives aim at providing universal free and compulsory education at the primary and first three years of secondary school, and to provide functional literacy for adult illiterates.

Section 2 of the Act provides that:

Every government in Nigeria shall provide free, compulsory and universal basic education for every child of primary and junior secondary age. Every parent shall ensure that his child or ward attends and completes his primary school education; and junior secondary school education by endeavouring to send the child to primary and junior secondary schools. p. 10

Further, section 3(1) states that the services provided in public primary and junior secondary schools shall be free of charge. Thus, the problem of poverty being an impediment to schooling has been eliminated.

The impact of UBE scheme on the Nigerian education manifests in access to equality in education in education. The UBE ACT, (2004) has been considered a landmark achievement with particular regard to access and equality. The UBE vision statement is to ensure that every child that passes through the system acquires appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communicative, manipulative and life skills and be employable, useful to himself and the society at large by possessing relevant ethical, moral and civic values (Universal Basic Education Commission, UBEC 2004). This vision statement has been expanded in the objectives of the programme which according to UBEC (2005:4) are as follows:

1. ensuring unfettered access to nine years of formal basic education;
2. The provision of free, universal basic education for every Nigeria child of school-going age;
3. Reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out syndrome from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency;

4. ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills, as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

In order to actualize the above objectives, the scheme aims at working in concert with all stakeholders, thus mobilizing the nation's creative energies to ensure that education for all by 2015 becomes the responsibility of all (UBEC 1004:v). The realization of the above mission statement is the function of effective educational administrative.

Statement of Problem

A study carried out by Salau (2005) to find out the problems that would hinder the effective implementation of the UBE scheme revealed that issues involving statistical deficiencies, teaching manpower requirement, provision of physical facilities, administrative bottlenecks, financing, educational wastage and possible apathy to UBE are factors that were anticipated to adversely affect the UBE programme. The focus of this study is therefore to ascertain the strategies for effective administration of the UBE programme.

Concept of Educational Administration

Ezeocha (1989) has viewed educational administration as the process whereby the school head, as the chief executive of his school or college, coordinates the efforts and activities of the school system. This definition, however, does not address comprehensively the meaning of educational administration. In this regard, we can view educational administration as the process of bringing together both human and material resources within the education sector to achieve pre-determined educational goals and objectives. Thus, the ultimate aim of educational administration is the realization of education purposes.

According to Mgbodile (1997), the operational zones of educational administration are management of instructional programme, staff personnel administrative, student personnel administration, financial and physical resources management and the school-community relationship management, especially in relation to the government concept of community-based education management. A good look at the above functional areas suggests that educational administration is more than what goes on in the classroom. Of course, an administrator is expected to discern and influence educational goals and policies, be in constant touch with the Ministry of Education, Board, community and the entire school system. He should also stimulate and direct the development of educational programmes, enlist the support and co-operation of individuals and agencies within and outside the mainstream of the school system.

The above discourse implies that effective administration is required for the realization of the goals of the Universal Basic Education in Nigeria. The purpose of this study is thus to find out the strategies that can be used to achieve this effective administration. The following questions are therefore posed.

Research Question

1. What are the strategies for effective funding of UBE programme?
2. What are the strategies for effective staff personnel administration in the management the UBE programme?
3. What are the strategies for effective school-community relationship in the management of the UBE programme?

Method

The design of the study was descriptive survey

The population of the study comprised 1356 junior secondary school principals, head masters and community leaders in Anambra State.

Date obtained from the State Ministries of Education and Information and the State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB) and reveal that there are 260 Junior Secondary School Principals, 979 Headmasters and 107 community leaders in Anambra State.

The sample for this study is 681 respondents. They were selected through simple random sampling. Fifty percent of the principals, head teachers and community leaders were selected. Hence 130 principals, 489 head teachers and 53 community leaders were selected for the study.

The instrument used for data collection was a researcher constructed questionnaire. Respondents were required to rate their agreement with the items on a 4-point rating scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The instrument was duly validated. For the reliability of the instrument, a Cronbach alpha of 0.84 was given which was accepted for the study.

The researcher, with the help of Local Education Secretaries, did the administration and collection of the instrument to the respondents in their respective schools and communities. Out of the 681 copies distributed 679 (99.70%) were retrieved and used for data analysis. Then mean and standard deviation were the statistical tools used for the data analysis. A mean of 2.50 was the cut-off point for accepting an item as a strategy for effective administration of UBE.

Data Analysis and Presentation of Result

The result of the data analysis in line with the research questions are shown below:

Research question 1: What are the strategies for effective funding of the UBE programme?

Table 1: Strategies for effective funding of the UBE programme

Item no	Items	Principals		Head masters		Community leaders	
		\bar{x}	sd	\bar{x}	Sd	\bar{x}	Sd
1.	Reducing capital cost through direct labour will help in funding the UBE	3.00	1.13	2.71	0.94	3.08	0.77
2.	There should be in-house fund raising by parents and the school.	3.18	1.09	3.04	0.62	3.56	0.81
3.	Local governments should finance primary and junior secondary schools in their locality.	1.19	0.61	2.38	0.89	3.05	0.74
4.	Registered companies should pay part of their profits into an education fund for financing basic education	1.19	0.61	2.38	0.89	3.56	0.87
5.	Parents should help maintain school facilities through donations.	3.04	0.93	3.44	0.82	2.76	0.73
	Grand mean	2.63		2.88		3.20	

The results show that item 1,2,4 and 5 have grand mean of 2.63, 2.88 and 3.20 which is above the decision rule of 2.50 for all the categories of respondents. The ratings indicate that the respondent consider as follows:

- a. The use of direct labour in executing UBE capital projects;
- b. In-house fund raising by parents and communities, and
- c. Registered companies should remit part of their profits as a way of funding the UBE programme.
- d. Parents should help maintain school facilities through donations. However, the ratings of items 3 by all categories of respondents indicate that the respondents consider local government funding of UBE as ineffective strategies for funding the UBE scheme.

Research question 2: What are the strategies for effective personnel administration in the management of the UBE programme?

Table 2: Strategies for effective Staff Personnel administration

Item no	Items	Principals		Head Masters		Community Leaders	
		\bar{X}	sd	\bar{X}	Sd	\bar{X}	Sd
6	Teacher's salaries should be paid promptly and regularly.	3.76	0.52	3.2	0.93	3.86	0.72
7	Federal government should take over the payment of salaries of teacher under the UBE schemes.	3.02	1.02	3.38	0.87	3.56	0.82
8.	Teachers should be promoted based on merit	3.48	0.78	3.21	0.92	3.54	0.74
9.	Teacher's condition of service should be improved.	2.60	1.02	2.60	0.76	3.32	0.76
10	Teachers should attend conference and workshops.	3.31	1.06	3.00	1.01	3.32	0.79
Grand mean		3.23		3.07		3.46	

The result show that item 6,7,8,9 and 10 have the grand mean of 3.23, 3.07 and 3.46 which is above the decision rule of 2.50 for all the categories of respondent.

The Results Above Reveal as Follows:-

- a. There should be prompt and regular payment of teachers' salaries;
- b. Federal government should for teachers' promotion;
- c. Merit should be the basis for teachers' promotion;
- d. Teachers' should attend conferences and workshops.
- e. Teacher's should attend conferences and workshops.

Research question 3: What are the strategies for effective school community relationship in the management of the UBE programme?

Table 3: Strategies for effective School –Community relationship

Item no	Items	Principals		Head Masters		Community Leaders	
		\bar{X}	Sd	\bar{X}	Sd	\bar{X}	Sd
11.	District committee members should be selected on the basis of contributions and influence of the individuals	3.05	0.95	3.23	0.47	3.33	0.87
						3.42	0.91
12.	There should be regular PTA meetings to discuss the affairs of the school and areas of mutual assistance	3.43	0.84	3.27	0.89	3.45	0.88
						3.56	0.78
13.	There should be annual awards and recognitions for best parents that make outstanding donations to the school.	3.09	0.96	3.08	0.79	3.67	0.70
14	The PTA should be involved in the maintenance of the school plant.	3.34	0.75	3.15	0.87		
		3.27	0.86	3.67	0.84		
15.	School heads should allow the community to use the schools for social activities on weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) and during holidays.						
Grand mean		2.64		3.15		3.49	

The result show that item 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 have grand mean of 2.64, 3.15 and 3.49 which is above the decision rule of 2.50 for all the categories.

The ratings on the table above indicate that effective school-community relationship can be maintained by:

- a. The selection of members of the district committees should reflect the individual’s contribution to the school,
- b. PTA meetings should be organized from time to time to discuss issues affecting both the school and the community;
- c. School heads should recognize well-deserved parents through awards; and
- d. School heads should permit the members of the community to carry out social activities in the school outside school hours.

Discussion of Findings

Findings obtained from the study revealed the effective strategies for funding the UBE scheme. Whether in developing or developed nations, past or recent times, the expansion and funding of education have attracted much interest from both practitioners and non-practitioners. The increased concern about rising costs of education in Nigeria and other countries of the world has led to the search for ways or strategies of reducing costs and expenditure. Thus, the findings of this work in terms of alternative avenues for financing the education industry in Nigeria are a step in the right directions.

Conclusion

Since the UBE programme is an expression of the strong desire of government to reinforce participatory democracy in the country, all stakeholders should be fully mobilized and involved at all level. It is only when this is done that education for all shall be the responsibility.

Suggestions

The goals of the UBE scheme cannot be achieved if teacher are not adequately taken care of. The poor attitude of the government towards teacher's welfare has resulted in many industrial disputes which affect the educational system in many industrial disputes which affect the educational system in the country very badly. This means that there should be effective staff administration and the strategies for achieving this has been outlined in this work.

Schools exist in communities or towns and thus require harmonious co-existence with the neighbours. It is required of a good administrator to move his school to the community and invite the community into the school through mutual understanding and assistance. Fostering school-community relations is a function of the school administrator and is considered very important in the achievement of the UBE goals. The school should be community- friendly and vice versa.

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