

Level of Policy Implementation Process of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria: A Case Study of Cross River State UBE Programme

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Abstract - This study examined the level of policy implementation process of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria with particular reference to Cross River State. Four research questions and four hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A survey research design was adopted to determine the mean responses of the identified variables. The population of the study comprised of all basic schools and their head teachers respectively. A sample of 300 schools and head teachers was used to generate the data. The instrument for data collection was a 20 item questionnaire which was carefully developed and validated by experts in test and measurement. The questionnaire items were arranged in clusters representing each of the variables. A Modified Likert Four-point rating scale was adopted. Thus; Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyse the mean response of the research questions, while t-test was used for the analysis of the research hypotheses. The results of the finding revealed a mean of means of 2.33 and standard deviation (SD) of 1.32 for the provision of adequately qualified teachers, mean of 1.93 and standard deviation (SD) of 1.39 for provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities, mean of 2.48 and standard deviation (SD) of 1.09 for smooth transition from Primary School to Junior Secondary School. The obtained mean of means were all measured at the criterion of 2.50. These results indicated that all the mean responses do not agree to the implementation process of basic education policy. In the t-test analysis, all the variables under study were significant at 0.05 level of significance with 299 degree of freedom. A conclusion was drawn that the mean responses do not agree with the basic education policy in Cross River State, Nigeria. It was recommended that basic education policy as stated by Federal Government of Nigeria should be comprehensively implemented, especially with the engagement of qualified teachers and provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities.

Keywords: Policy, Implementation, Universal Basic Education, Qualified Teachers, Teaching and Learning Facility.

1. Introduction

Education is the process through which individuals are made participating members of their society. It is the system through which man becomes moral agent capable of living in society and contributing towards the growth and development of the society. It is the process through which the young acquires the ability to be useful to himself and others. It is also a process through which man realises his potentialities and uses it for self-fulfillment in the service of himself and others, [5]. The ability of a nation to grow and develop depends on the quality and emphasis in its educational system and not on the amount of natural resources such as minerals, arable land, forestry, and sea products available in the country. Nigeria as a nation has all these in abundance – minerals of all types, arable land, and large population and yet she is among the poorest nations in the world. A nation where the vast majority of people is under the slavery of want and suffering. Why? There is only one answer. A majority of its past and present leaders do not believe that quality foundational education makes the difference between abundance and want.

The major goals of education in Nigeria as stipulated in the National Policy on Education, [4], include;

- a) Development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen;
- b) Total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world;
- c) Provision of equal access to qualitative education opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education within and outside the formal school system;
- d) Inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity;
- e) Development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the

individual to live in and contribute positively to the society;

The specific goals on the other hand as stipulated include to;

- a) Ensure and sustain unfettered access and equity to education for the total development of the individual.
- b) Ensure the quality of education at all levels.
- c) Promote functional education for skill acquisition, job creation and poverty reduction, amongst others.

It became very obvious by educationist, education stakeholders and the general public that both the goals and objectives of Nigeria education are very far from its realization and attainment. This is connected to the facts that school leavers both at secondary and primary school levels cannot fend for themselves, do not have the skills expected of them after graduation, cannot contribute to the growth and development of their immediate community, worst still, is the fact that some cannot read, write and do simple calculation. [5], attributed these phenomenon to inadequate funding, lack of teaching and learning facilities, dearth of qualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms, poor monitoring, supervision and evaluation of education/schools, corruption among other variables. Based on these, therefore, the Federal Government of Nigeria expressed some concerns on this dilemma in educational sector and re-launch the universal, free and compulsory education system in the last quarter of 1999. According to government policy, schooling will not only be free but also compulsory for the first nine years of education. This means that, the free and compulsory system will not be limited to the six-year primary education, but would include the three years of our Junior Secondary School. The question now is; to what level do the policy of universal, free and compulsory education implemented? It is worthwhile at this point to briefly highlight the background of UBE which is launched to address the issue of universal free, and compulsory education in Nigeria.

2. Background of UBE

The UBE programme of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was formally launched by the then President, Olusegun Obasanjo on 30th September, 1999 aimed at achieving the following specific objectives;

- Developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- The provision of the Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school going age.
- Reducing drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal school system (through improved relevance, quality and efficiency).

- Catering for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their school through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
- Ensuring the acquisition of the 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. [3], (UBE Implementation Guideline).

Basic Education, according to the Jomtien declaration and Framework of Action on Education for all is not defined in terms of years of schooling neither is it limited to formal schooling. It sees Education in its broadest sense as a close articulation of the formal, the non-formal approaches to and mechanisms for awakening an all-round development of the human potential, [3]. The broad aims are to lay the foundation for life-long learning through the inculcation of appropriate learning, self-awareness, citizenship, and life skills.

It is worthwhile at this point to highlight the concept "Policy". A policy in general terms means a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organisation or individual [9]. Policy is a deliberate system of guidelines to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. It is also described as a statement of intent and is implemented as a procedure (Wikipedia). Educational Policy consists of the principles and policy decision that influence the field of education, as well as the collection of laws and rules that govern the operation of education system (Wikipedia). The National Policy on Education in Nigeria is the national guideline on the effective management and implementation of education at all tiers of the system. The National Policy on Education therefore, is a statement of intentions, expectations, goals, prescriptions, standards and requirements for quality education in Nigeria.

The Universal Basic Education Policy of 2014 Act is an official statement of government intentions on different sectors of government. It is the activities involved in getting and using power in public life and being able to influence decision that affects a country or a society, [2]. This implies that policies takes long processes to be formulated, decided upon, adopted, implemented, violated, evaluated, revised, and rescinded. For instance, the National Policy on Education which provide the principles, guideline, programmes, persons, contents, methods, supervision and evaluation of in-put/ out-put process to achieve educational goals in Nigeria did not spring up overnight. It came into being as a result of many meetings, conferences, workshops that brainstormed to put together what is known today as a National Policy on Education. It is in this regard that,[6],defined educational policies as course of action recommended and adopted by the

leaders as expedient or essential to the issues and problems of education which takes the form of ordinance, code, edict, decree or law dependent on the type of government in place.[8] stated that educational policy is the statement of intentions of government and the envisaged means of achieving those aspects of its national objectives that have to rely on the use of education as a tool.

The vision of the UBE is that at the end of nine (9) years of continuous education, every child should have acquired appropriate and relevant skills and values and be employable in order to contribute his/her quota to national development. The UBE Act of 2004 covers;

- a) Early Childhood Care Development and Education (ECCDE)
- b) Six years of Primary Education
- c) Three years of Junior Secondary Education, [10].

The guideline for the implementation of UBE outlined the targets of the policy as follows:

- a) Ensuring that all school age children are in school.
- b) 100% transition to Junior Secondary School at the end of six years primary school.
- c) Completer of Basic Education to possess literacy, numeracy and basic life skills, as well as ethical moral and civic values.
- d) All teachers in Basic Education schools to possess the Nigerian Certificate on Education (NCE).
- e) Review of Basic Education Curriculum to conform to the reform agenda.
- f) Achievement of 100% awareness of HIV/AIDS in schools.
- g) Establishment of an effective institutional framework for monitoring learning and teaching.
- h) Active involvement in and participation and eventual ownership of schools by local communities. (www.ubec.gov.ng).

The conscious intentions of the Federal Government of Nigeria to launch the Universal Basic Education in 1999 was or is to ensure that every Nigerian child of school age attend and received the basic education to help young Nigerian to develop a strong consciousness as a citizen and to contribute their quota to the development of the society. It is geared toward ensuring that citizens acquire the 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. The basic education policy also provided that education will be free, compulsory and universal within the nine (9) years of studies. Government stated as a policy that adequate teaching and learning facilities will be provided in basic schools,

engagement of competent teachers, regular monitoring, supervision and evaluation, adequate funding of the programme amongst other intentions.

The Universal Basic Education programme is worth executing, especially going by its objectives and scope. The objectives of the programme is still very far from its attainment as a result of dearth of qualified teachers to adequately handle educational needs arising from the expansion of the scheme. In affirmation of the foregoing, [1], pointed out that the problem of lack of teachers in primary schools affect 85% of the states in Nigeria (Vanguard Newspaper, Thursday, May 25th 2006). There is also a challenge of inadequate teaching and learning facilities and infrastructure. [7], affirmed that a number of primary schools in Nigeria are characterised by limited resources, overcrowded classrooms and dilapidated buildings. The researchers observed that in most primary schools, some pupils still learn under trees as a result of inadequate classrooms and building. Another observation by the researchers is that the UBE programme is designed to be free, compulsory and universal, but in practice, it is not free and compulsory in the study area. It is against this background that the researchers designed this study to find out the levels Basic Education Policy implementation in Cross River State, Nigeria.

3. Purpose of the Study

The rationale for this study is to ascertain the level of Basic Education Policy implementation in Cross River State, Nigeria, specifically;

- a) Adequacy of qualified teachers.
- b) Adequacy of teaching and learning facilities such as classrooms, instructional materials, etc.
- c) Free and compulsory nature of the programme.
- d) Smooth transition from Primary to Junior Secondary School.

4. Research Questions

- 1) What is the aggregate of adequate provision of qualified teachers in Basic Schools in Cross River State?
- 2) What is the mean response in the provision on adequate teaching and learning facilities in Basic Schools in Cross River State?
- 3) What is the average response on the implementation of free and compulsory basic education in Cross River State?
- 4) What is means response on the transition of pupils from Primary Schools to Junior Secondary Schools in Cross River State?

5. Research Hypotheses

- 1) There is no significant response on the adequate provision of qualified teachers in basic schools in Cross River State.
- 2) There is no significant mean response on the provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities in basic schools in Cross River State.
- 3) There is no significant average response on the implementation of free and compulsory basic education in Cross River State.
- 4) There is no significant mean response on the smooth transition of pupils from Primary School to Junior Secondary School in Cross River State.

6. Methodology

A survey research design is adopted in this study because it is intended to examine the mean responses of multiple factors on the dependent variable. The population of the study comprised of all the Basic Education schools and their heads respectively in Cross River State, Nigeria. A random sampling technique was used to select one hundred (100) Head Teachers / Principals each from the three education zones in the State. A sample of three hundred (300) respondents was used to generate the data. The instrument used for data collection was carefully developed and titled: “Basic Education Policy and Level of Implementation Questionnaire (BEPLIQ)”. Twenty (20) items were developed in cluster representing each variable and arranged on the Modified Four-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The questionnaire items were face-validated by experts in educational administration and planning and educational test and measurement from University of Calabar and University of Cross River State respectively. The observations and inputs from the experts formed the basis for the modification of the questionnaire items. The instrument was administered to Head Teachers of Primary Schools and Principals of Secondary Schools in the selected sampled basic education schools. The Mean (\bar{x}) and Standard Deviation (SD) statistics were used to analyse the research questions while t-test statistics was used to analyse the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

7. Results

Four research questions and four research hypotheses were formulated to guide this study. The results on the four research questions are as presented below:

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation analysis of the aggregate of adequate of qualified teachers in basic schools in Cross River state

S/N	Items	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	All teachers in my school have teaching qualification	300	2.82	0.65	Accepted
2	All class levels have qualified teachers	300	2.61	0.61	Accepted
3	There are adequate number of qualified teachers	300	2.01	0.48	Rejected
4	Some teachers in my school do not have teaching qualification	300	2.07	0.55	Rejected
5	Pupils are over-crowded in classroom as a result of few number of teachers	300	2.10	0.52	Rejected
Average Mean (\bar{x}) & SD			2.33	0.56	Rejected

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation analysis of the mean response in the provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities in basic schools in Cross River state

S/N	Items	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
6	There are variety of instructional facilities in my school	300	2.08	0.57	Rejected
7	Desks are sufficient for pupils use	300	1.53	0.51	Rejected
8	Children bring their seats from home because the school do not have	300	2.12	0.52	Rejected
9	My school classroom are well furnished with required teaching and learning facilities	300	2.26	0.53	Rejected
10	There is no electricity to put the few facilities into use	300	1.62	0.66	Rejected
Average Mean (\bar{x}) & SD			1.93	0.56	Rejected

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation analysis of the average response on the implementation of free and compulsory basic education in Cross River state

S/N	Items	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision	
11	Children in my school do not pay any fees or levy	300	2.68	0.75	Accepted	
12	Children within the school location are forcefully brought to school building	300	3.27	0.55	Accepted	
13	Children pay little amount of money for the development of the school	300	2.22	0.50	Rejected	
14	I have not had any experience of children withdrawal from school	300	2.06	0.68	Rejected	
15	Parents within the school local are charged to compulsorily send their children to school	300	2.16	0.43	Rejected	
Average Mean (\bar{x}) & SD			300	2.48	0.58	Rejected

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation analysis of the response on the transition of pupils from primary schools to junior secondary schools in Cross River state

S/N	Items	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision	
16	Primary six pupils sit for qualifying examination before they are admitted into JSS 1	300	2.15	0.59	Rejected	
17	Pupils are always requested to show evidence of primary six completion before their enrolment into JSS 1	300	2.04	0.59	Rejected	
18	Pupils are automatically migrated from Primary six class after completion to Junior Secondary School	300	1.95	0.50	Rejected	
19	There is a synergy in place between a particular Primary School and Junior Secondary School for easy transition	300	2.03	0.45	Rejected	
20	The smooth transition system of Primary six pupils to JSS 1 is not working in my school	300	2.09	0.55	Rejected	
Average Mean (\bar{x}) & SD			300	2.06	0.54	Rejected

The result on table 1 above showed a calculated average mean (\bar{x}) of 2.33 and standard deviation (SD) of 0.56 in relation to the provision of adequately qualified teachers in basic education in Cross River State. The results revealed a rejected average mean (\bar{x}) response with the mean rating of 2.50. This simply means that teachers in basic schools in the study area are not adequately qualified. This generalisation was reached based on questionnaire items numbering 1 to 5.

On cluster 2, Table 2, questionnaire items 6-10 on the provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities in basic schools. The average mean response of 1.93 and standard deviation of 0.56 were obtained. The calculated average mean (\bar{x}) response rejected that there is provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities at a decision level of 2.50. In relation to the implementation of free and compulsory basic education in the area as can be envisaged in Table 3, the calculated average mean (\bar{x}) indicated 2.48 and standard deviation of 0.58, with a decision level of 2.50, implying that basic education is not free and compulsory in the study area. On smooth transition from Primary School to Junior Secondary, the calculated average mean (\bar{x}) of 2.06 and standard deviation of 0.54 were obtained with 2.50 decision level. The calculated mean (\bar{x}) indicted a rejection on the smooth transition of pupils from Primary Schools to Junior Secondary Schools and is as presented in Table 4.

The results obtained above were further subjected to t-test analysis based on the stated null hypotheses.

Table 5: Student t-test analysis of all the variables under study

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t_{ent}	t_{tab}	Decision
Provision of adequate qualified teachers	300	2.33	0.56	72.136	1.645	Significant
Adequate provision of teaching and learning facilities	300	1.93	0.56	59.752	1.645	Significant
Free and compulsory basic education	300	2.48	0.58	74.074	1.645	Significant
Smooth transition from Primary to Junior Secondary School	300	2.06	0.54	66.076	1.645	Significant

0.0.5 level of significance at 299 DF

The results on Table 5 are a student t-test analysis on the variables under investigation. The result revealed a significant mean response in the provision of adequately qualified teachers in basic education in Cross River State with a mean average of 2.33, Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.56 and $n = 300$. The result revealed t-calculated value of 72.136, t-tabulated value of 1.645 and significant at 0.05, with 299(DF) degree of freedom, since t-calculated value of 72.136 was greater than t-tabulated value of 1.645.

On the provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities, the student t-test was subject to the mean value of 1.93 and SD value of 0.56, using $n = 300$. The result also showed a significant response with a t-calculated value of

59.752, t-tabulated value of 1.645 and significant at 0.05, with 299(DF) degree of freedom, since t-calculated value of 59.752 was greater than t-tabulated value of 1.645.

In like manner, on free and compulsory Basic Education, the student t-test was subject to the mean value of 2.48 and SD value of 0.58, using $n = 300$. The result also showed a significant response with a t-calculated value of 74.074, t-tabulated value of 1.645 and significant at 0.05, with 299(DF) degree of freedom, since t-calculated value of 74.074 was greater than t-tabulated value of 1.645.

Lastly, for smooth transition from Primary to Junior Secondary school, the student t-test was subject to the mean value of 2.06 and SD value of 0.54, using $n = 300$. The result also showed a significant response with a t-calculated value of 66.076, t-tabulated value of 1.645 and significant at 0.05, with 299(DF) degree of freedom, since t-calculated value of 66.076 was greater than t-tabulated value of 1.645.

8. Discussion

The study revealed an average mean of means of 2.33 and a standard deviation of 0.56 in relation to the provision of adequately qualified teachers in basic education in Cross River State. The obtained mean of means (2.33) is less than criterion of 2.50 indicating that there is no provision of adequately qualified teachers to teach at basic education in Cross River State. The findings further revealed that there is no adequate provision of teaching and learning facilities in basic education with the obtained average mean of means of 1.93 and standard deviation of 0.56 at the criterion of 2.50. The obtained mean (\bar{x}) is less than the criterion of 2.50 indicating a rejection. Question 3 which sought to find out how free and compulsory basic education is operated, it revealed an average mean (\bar{x}) response of 2.48 and standard deviation of 0.58 at the criterion of 2.50.

This indicated that basic education is not free and compulsory in Cross River State as stated in the National Policy on Education; and as a policy of Federal Republic of Nigeria. Section 2, No.3 P.14 (2008) of the National Policy on Education clearly stated that education at basic level shall be free and compulsory. The finding showed that the policy is not implemented in relation to smooth transition from Primary School to Junior Secondary School, the result revealed an average mean of means of 2.06 and a standard deviation of 0.54 at a criterion of 2.50. The criterion level is greater than the obtained average mean response, implying that there is no smooth transition of pupils after Primary six class to Junior Secondary School as stated in the implementation guidelines of Universal Basic Education Programme document, [3].

In a further analysis of the results using student t-test analysis on the variables under investigation, as can be envisaged on Table 5, the result revealed a significant mean response in the provision of adequately qualified teachers in basic education in Cross River State with a mean average of 2.33, Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.56 and $n = 300$. The result revealed t-calculated value of 72.136, t-tabulated value of 1.645 and significant at 0.05, with 299(DF) degree of freedom, since t-calculated value of 72.136 was greater than t-tabulated value of 1.645.

On the provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities, the student t-test was subject to the mean value of 1.93 and SD value of 0.56, using $n = 300$. The result also showed a significant response with a t-calculated value of 59.752, t-tabulated value of 1.645 and significant at 0.05, with 299(DF) degree of freedom, since t-calculated value of 59.752 was greater than t-tabulated value of 1.645.

Similarly, on free and compulsory Basic Education, the student t-test was subject to the mean value of 2.48 and SD value of 0.58, using $n = 300$. The result also showed a significant response with a t-calculated value of 74.074, t-tabulated value of 1.645 and significant at 0.05, with 299(DF) degree of freedom, since t-calculated value of 74.074 was greater than t-tabulated value of 1.645.

Finally, for smooth transition from Primary to Junior Secondary school, the student t-test was subject to the mean value of 2.06 and SD value of 0.54, using $n = 300$. The result also showed a significant response with a t-calculated value of 66.076, t-tabulated value of 1.645 and significant at 0.05, with 299(DF) degree of freedom, since t-calculated value of 66.076 was greater than t-tabulated value of 1.645.

From the above findings, all the null hypotheses were rejected, indicating a significance mean response of all the studied variables. The findings do not agree with the Federal Government of Nigeria Policy as stated in the National Policy on Education document Section 1, No.6(C), Pg 11, that there shall be provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education within and outside the formal school system, [4]. The study findings is in agreement with, [7], who affirmed that basic education in Nigeria is facing the challenges of dearth of adequately qualified teachers, poor teaching and learning facilities, overcrowded classrooms, amongst others.

9. Conclusion

Basic Education in Nigeria is launched basically to provide foundational education to all Nigerian citizens irrespective of their status and background. The system of the

education at basic level is intended to be free, universal and compulsory to all Nigerians of school going age. The specific objective of basic education is to help develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and strong commitment to its vigorous promotion, provision of the universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school going age, reducing drastically the incidence of dropout from formal school system, among others. This programme is supported with a policy blue-print such as the implementation guidelines of UBE and the National Policy on Education. This study was therefore designed to find out the level of policy implementation process of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria with particular reference to Cross River State. The study revealed a significant negative response to the policy statement in the provision of adequately qualified teachers at basic education level, adequate provision of teaching and learning facilities, providing of free and compulsory education at basic level and smooth transition from Primary School to Secondary School. Summarily, the findings indicated that basic education policy is not comprehensively implemented.

10. Recommendations

- 1) Basic Education Policy as stated by Federal Government of Nigeria should be comprehensively implemented at all levels of government.
- 2) Monitoring and evaluation team should be put in place to enforce compliance of Basic Education Policy.
- 3) Adequately qualified teachers should be employed and posted to Basic Education level.
- 4) Adequate teaching and learning facilities should be provided and maintained at Basic Education.

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