

***Fidelity and Efficacy of Implementing Universal Basic Education in Kwara State,
Nigeria***

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Abstract

This study examined the fidelity of implementation and efficacy of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Kwara State. It investigated the gap between policy formulation and implementation in the programme. The belief by various stakeholders in education that the huge investments made in the UBE programme had not been correspondingly compensated for by improved efficiency in basic education classes in Nigeria precipitated this study. A descriptive survey research design was used. The population for the study comprised all the 997 public primary schools and 225 junior secondary schools in nine Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) in Kwara State. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select samples, which consisted of 76 primary schools and 33 junior secondary schools. The respondents consisted of 76 primary school headteachers, 228 primary school teachers, 33 principals and 165 junior secondary school teachers. Two instruments were used for data collection. Three hypotheses guided the study and all the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The study found among others that: teachers' quality of delivery in the UBE programme was dependent on the quality of post qualification trainings they receive; the efficacy of the programme was a function of the adequacy of facilities in UBE schools. The study recommended that serious attention must be given to the re-training of teachers, provision of facilities and information resource centres for the goals of UBE to be realised.

Keywords: Fidelity, Efficacy, Illiteracy, School facility

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Introduction

Education constitutes the major instrument for sustainable human development as well as the fulcrum around which every other activity revolves. This accounts for the reason why development experts assert that no society can rise above its educational level. Nations which have recorded tremendous achievements in the world heavily relied on the instrumentality of education. It is on this basis and the pluralistic nature of human society that slogans like equalization of educational opportunities, education for all, open educational access, universal basic education, amongst others, become popular world-wide.

Nigerian government like other countries of the world, more than ever before, is eager to wipe out illiteracy among her citizens. The United Nations, which defines illiteracy as the inability to read and write a simple message in any language, has conducted a number of surveys on world illiteracy. In the first survey in 1957, it was revealed that 44 % of the world's population were illiterate. Further survey in 1978 and 1998 showed the rate to have dropped to 32.5 % and 27% respectively (United Nation, 2010). At the end of 20th century only a quarter of the world's children were in school, the highest being in the less developed nations of Africa, Asia and South America (United Nation, 2010). These accounted for the reason why the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) insisted that all development review should include illiteracy reduction.

Combating illiteracy takes two forms namely: adult education, that is, extension of educational opportunities to those adults beyond the age of general public education, and the establishment of public schools with compulsory attendance for children. The United States for example, has adopted various means to reduce her illiteracy level to 1%, this include but not limited to universal public education. Soldiers have been used effectively in Turkey and Mexico as instructors for the general populace. In Ghana, complimentary education and in particular School For Life (SFL) model has been used to complement government's effort in Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education(FCUBE). The Ghanian government has shown this commitment through policy directive and interventions like the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, the Education Strategy Plan (ESP) for 2003-2005 and the Growth Poverty Reduction Strategy (UNICEF, 2007).

In Nigeria, the government's commitment towards achieving the educational goals is reflected in several international covenants on basic education to which she has adhered. For example, the Nigerian government attended the Jomtien (1990) Declaration and Framework for Action on Basic Education for All, the New Delhi (1992) declarations on the E-9 countries, (that is, the nine countries with the largest concentration of illiterates, of which Nigeria is a member), the Quagadougou (1992) Pan-African Declaration on the Education of Girls and Women, the Amman Affirmation (1996) calling for the forceful pursuit of the Jomtien recommendations, the OAU Decade of Education in Africa (1997-2006), the Dakar Declaration and the 2002 Millennium Development Goals summit, which had as one of its goals universal education for all. In keeping with the above covenants, Nigerian government introduced the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in September, 1999, 23 years after the introduction of the Universal Primary Education (UPE).

Although the UBE programme was launched in September, 1999, there was no serious activity until 2004. This Onyene (2005) observed was due to lack of enabling law to execute some aspects of the programme. In order to give the programme a legal backing therefore, the UBE Act of 2004 was enacted. The Act apart from stipulating that every child must complete at least nine years of continuous basic education, also states that parents would be punished for not sending their wards to school. Under Section 2 (2) of the Act, every parent is expected to ensure that his child or ward attends and completes his/her primary school education by endeavoring to send such child to primary and junior secondary schools.

According to the Act published in official gazette No 66, Volume 91 on 4th August, 2004, it states:

Any parent who contravenes Section 2 (2) commits an offence and is liable on first conviction to be reprimanded, on second conviction to a fine of N2000 or imprisonment for a term of one month or to both and on subsequent conviction to a fine of N5000 or imprisonment for a term of two months or both (Universal Basic Education Commission , 2004).

Section 3 of the Act further emphasizes that services in primary and junior secondary schools are free of charge. In this regard, Section 3(2) states that:

A person who receives or obtains any fee contrary to the provision of Section 3, subsection (1) of this Act commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding N10,000.00 or imprisonment for a term of three months or to both.

By this provision, it shows that no principal, headmaster, teacher or Parents Teachers Association official is allowed to charge pupils or students for any services rendered in the public schools.

Statement of the Problem

In the UBE implementation guidelines, the Federal Government promised to create enough awareness on the need for education in Nigeria through public enlightenment and social mobilization, train, motivate and develop professional teachers; provide appropriate quantity, size and quality of infrastructure and facilities to meet the minimum standards for promoting meaningful teaching and learning; review curriculum in order to meet the 21st century generation; improve funding through the establishment of Universal Basic Education Fund among others. The government went further to outline the sequential implementation to commence the first set of basic education class in 2000/2001 and graduate them in 2008/2009, that is, over a period of nine years.

However, the government seems to be committed to the basic education programme, but experts (Olori, 2005 and UNICEF, 2007) argue that the UBE programme may collapse due to inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, politicisation of the programme, ethnicisation of the supervisory committee and the current academic qualification discrepancies for the teachers participating in the scheme to mention but

few. This situation, however, shows an apparent paradox between government intention and the seeming unameliorated and pitiable conditions of our primary and junior secondary schools, the focus of UBE. If the government seems to be committed to the programme by enacting policy and workable implementation guidelines, one begins to wonder where the problem of unsuccessful result lies. Could it be that there is no fidelity of implementation in the programme? To what extent does fidelity of implementation impact on the efficacy of the UBE programme? Has Nigeria been able to achieve and sustain universal access to quality basic education? All these are the thrust of this study.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between training and re-training received by basic education teachers and their ability to deliver the goals of the UBE.
2. There is no significant relationship between adequacy of facilities in the UBE schools and the efficacy of UBE programme.
3. There is no significant relationship between headteacher management skills and performance efficacy.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses attention on public primary and junior secondary schools which are the components of UBE in Kwara State, Nigeria. The choice of Kwara State was borne out of the fact that it is one of the educationally disadvantaged States with a literacy level of less than 40% (Federal Ministry of Education, 2011).

Methodology

The design adopted for this study was the survey research design which was suitable for the study because it helped in collecting data and describing in systematic manner of the situation that existed.

Population of the Study

The study population consisted the three Senatorial districts in Kwara state namely, the North, the South and the Central Senatorial districts. The North Senatorial district had five Local Government Educational Authorities (LGEAs). These were Baruten, Kaiama, Moro, Patigi and Edu LGEAs. In the South Senatorial district, there were seven LGEAs namely: Ifelodun, Irepodun, OKe-Ero, Oyun, Offa, Isin and Ekiti LGEAs. Lastly, there were only four LGEAs in Kwara Central Senatorial district comprising Asa, Ilorin South, Ilorin East and Ilorin West LGEAs (Kwara State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2013). From the North, South and Central Senatorial districts, three, four and two LGEAs respectively were randomly selected for the study. All these LGEAs had 997 primary and 225 junior secondary schools.

Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select samples for the study, while purposive sampling technique was used to choose the subject. Location, year of establishment and type of settlements (that is, rural and urban) were the major strata used for the stratification. The entire population was stratified into three on the basis of zones, that is, Kwara North, Kwara South and Kwara Central. The primary and junior secondary schools in each zone (stratum) were arranged alphabetically and assigned identifiable numbers beginning with 01. The year of establishment as well as the ownership status of the schools were also considered before the final selections were made. Schools established after 2007 were not included in the list. This was

because they were considered too young for the realization of the UBE goals at the time of this study. Private schools were not included because they were fee paying schools. Using a table of random numbers, 32,27 and 17 primary schools were chosen from the North, South and Central zones respectively. This gave a total of 76 primary schools in all. At the JSS level, 7, 18 and 8 schools were chosen in each of the Kwara North, South and Central respectively. In all, a total of 33 JSS were chosen.

Research Instruments

Two instruments were used for data collection. They were the Headteachers’ Management Skills and Efficacy of UBE Questionnaire (HMSEUQ) and Teachers’ Self-report Checklists (TSC).

Results

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between training and re-training received by basic education teachers and their ability to deliver the goals of the UBE.

To test this hypothesis, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistical tool was used and the result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Teachers’ Training and Ability to Deliver the Goals of UBE Programme

Variable	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	r-cal	r-crit
Teacher’s training	382	35.8	3.937	380	.236	.095
Quality of delivery		12.55	2.163			

Level of significance =0.05

Table 1 shows a calculated r-value of .236 and critical value of .095 at 0.05 level of significance at 380 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated value of r is greater than the critical value (that is $.236 > .095$), the hypothesis which says that there is no significant relationship between teachers’ post-qualification training and ability to deliver the goals of UBE is therefore rejected. This means that teachers’ ability to deliver the goals of UBE is dependent on the level and quality of post-qualification training such teachers received.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between adequacy of facilities in the UBE schools and the efficacy of UBE programme.

To test this hypothesis the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistical tool was used and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Adequacy of Facilities and Efficacy of UBE Programme

Variable	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	r-cal	r-crit
Adequacy of facilities	102	12.58	2.163	100	.182	.164
Efficacy of UBE		25.17	4.717			

Level of significance =0.05

Table 2 shows a calculated correlation coefficient value of .182, and a critical value of .164 at 100 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value of r is greater than the critical value (i.e. $.182 > .164$), then hypothesis two that says there is no significance relationship between availability of facilities and efficacy of UBE is hereby rejected. This means that availability of facilities and UBE programme efficacy are significantly related.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between head teacher management skills and performance efficacy.

This hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical tool and the result of the analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Head Teacher Management Skills and Performance Efficacy

Variable	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	r-cal	r-crit
Head Teachers' Management Skills	102	27.46	3.425	100	-.099	.164
Performance Efficacy		25.17	4.717			

Level of significance = 0.05

Table 3 shows the correlation coefficient for the two variables, that is, head teachers' management skills and performance efficacy. The calculated value of r is $-.099$ while the critical value is $.164$ at 0.05 level of significance and 100 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated value of r is less than the critical value (that is $-.099 < .164$), hypothesis three is therefore accepted. This means that head teacher management skills and the efficacy of UBE programme are not significantly related.

Discussion

Post-Teacher Training and Ability to Deliver the Goals of UBE

The results of the analysis of hypothesis one show that there was a significant relationship between teachers' post qualification training and their abilities to deliver the goals of UBE. This implies that the UBE teachers' abilities to participate in the implementation of the programme and deliver its goals is a function of the post-qualification trainings they acquire. These trainings may be in the form of conferences, seminars, workshops, refresher courses and so on. This position and the vital role teachers play in the overall development of the students had earlier been recognised by the Federal Government. This explains the reason why the government maintains in the UBE Implementation Blue Print that teachers would always be an integral part of the process of the conceptualization, planning and execution of UBE programme (Federal Ministry of Education, 2000). This is also in agreement with the provision of the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) Section 8 Sub-section 75 that in-service training shall be developed as an integral part of continuing teacher education.

This finding agrees with that of Jamil, Atta, Alli, Baloch and Ayaz (2011) which found a positive correlation between on-the-job training and teachers job performance. Nakpodia (2001) maintains that if teachers are exposed to post-qualification trainings in the form of induction or orientation programme, instructional supervision, workshops, and so on, there is likelihood that such teachers would be abreast of the dictates of the new trend. Nakpodia's finding could be said to be true

because knowledge is dynamic. There are new innovations and inventions every day and for teachers to fully embrace these, they must be re-trained continually.

Unfortunately, answer to research question one showed that the number of post-qualification training given to basic education teachers was not enough for them to deliver the goals of UBE programme. Although, basic education teachers have been exposed to different types of post qualification trainings in the areas of : the use of continuous assessment, effective use of instructional materials in the teaching of various subjects, among others, it was found that, the percentage of teachers that attended such training was very low and insignificant. For example, in 2010 only 27.6% of the total number of teachers in the 16 LGEAs in Kwara State attended training, in some LGEAs (like Kaiama and Oke-Ero), no teacher was sponsored for training in 2010. This situation was not only ugly but also inimical to the achievement of the UBE goals. This is because as new innovations are introduced in the curriculum (in the forms of subjects and topics) there is the need for teachers to be updated. Where this is not done, there is every tendency that the teachers would find it difficult if not impossible to interpret the changes. Such teachers are described as dangerous teachers by Fafunwa's diary (as cited in Jekayinfa, 2006). The interview conducted with a junior school Principal revealed that it was difficult for some teachers to understand the structure of the new curriculum. Some of these teachers were conservative and stuck to their old ideas, ideologies and methods. For instance, some teachers argued the reasons for changing the names of some subjects like Introductory Technology to Basic Technology, Integrated Science to Basic Science and even the introduction of new ones. This conservative idea made it difficult for such teachers to fully grasp the objectives of UBE programme. This problem may be one of the reasons for the low quality of teachers in the state as identified by Ijaiya (2004).

Zuzovsky (2003) asserts that post qualification training enables the teachers to update their knowledge of contents and teaching skills in order to meet the requirements of the new curricular. It also helps them in their professional growth as well as assisting them to network with their counterparts within and outside the country (Nakpodia, 2004).

Wokocha (2007) and Nwadiani (1995) had also argued that previous policies in education had failed partly because teachers do not possess adequate knowledge about them. Nwadiani (2007) further expatiates his position that the problem of reform implementation in Nigeria is always lack of understanding of the policy, especially, by the major actors. This may be true, as majority of UBE teachers do not understand what the UBE scheme is all about. Notably, many of the teachers confuse the scheme with the system of education, as they erroneously believe that the system of education in Nigeria has changed from 6-3-3-4 to 9-3-4 when the programme was first introduced in 1999. This erroneous belief is not surprising as Odili, Ebisine and Ajuar (2010) found that teacher's knowledge of the policy and their perception of the adequacy and achievability of its contents may be influenced by their level of academic qualifications, teaching experience, number of workshops attended and the type of employer. By implication, it means that the basic education teachers who are employees of the government are expected to attend workshop under the sponsorship of the State Government. However, this was not the case in Kwara State as teachers were not regularly sponsored for seminars and workshops, the few that were sent on training were sometimes selected based on politics. It is therefore clear that the 2015 set as target for the full realization of UBE goals is a mere statement of illusion and not realistic.

Adequacy of Facilities and Efficacy of UBE Programme

The results of the analysis of hypothesis two show that adequacy of facilities and the efficacy of UBE programme are significantly related. This means that for the goals of UBE programme to be fully achieved, schools must be fully equipped in the areas of classrooms, toilet facilities, sick bay, chalkboards, seats, portable water, fans, electricity. The importance of all these facilities had been highlighted by Edwards (1992), Cash (1993), Ehiamentor (2001), Ahunanya and Ubabudu (2006) and Adegbesan (2007).

Adegbesan (2007) observes that meaningful training and necessary skills cannot be acquired in schools without adequate facilities. This is not different from the findings of Ifeyinwa (2007) who also found that school facilities and students' capacity to learn are positively related. This had earlier been realised by the federal government, hence, the inclusion of the need to provide those facilities in schools in the UBE implementation guidelines. The guidelines expatiate that those facilities must be in appropriate quantity, size, and quality to meet the minimum standards for promoting meaningful teaching and learning. This therefore, shows that if students must acquire 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 teaching/learning environment must be conducive.

Empirical evidence indicates that none of the facilities (that is, classrooms, seats, chalkboards, portable water, toilets, electricity, fans and sick bay) in the UBE schools in Kwara State was adequate. Although, the level of the inadequacies varied among the LGEAs, none of the LGEAs had adequate facilities. It was observed that these inadequacies hampered the performance of students in external examinations like the Junior Secondary School Certificate Examinations. This finding is in harmony with Oku and Chikwendu (2010) who observe the dismal state of school facilities as a sign of rapid deterioration of educational system in Nigeria. In a situation where classes are held under shades or where more than 95 students occupied a classroom meant for 40 students, where heat forces the students and teachers to either pull off their shirts or look for a local hand fan, one begins to doubt whether meaningful teaching/learning can really take place.

One of the mid-term strategies for effective implementation of the UBE programme as contained in the implementation blue print is that by the end of 2008, 50% of the UBE schools should have conducive teaching and learning environment. This strategy is appropriate as experts (Bello, Issa and Jimoh, 2009; and Abdulllahi and Onasanya, 2010) observe that for education in schools to be effective, the environment needs to be conducive for learning, giving the pupils sufficient space and time to interact in the teaching and learning process. They further advised that in order to create and maintain stimulating and conducive environment in the school, there should be effective classroom organization, interactive and whole school display, and of course, a climate of innovation. In reality, conducive learning environments do not just happen, they are result of effective classroom management that establish and maintain work systems for pupils to engage in their learning. This is in agreement with the earlier position of Sanford, Emmar and Clements (2003) who believe that a conducive learning environment is one that is task-oriented and predictable, where pupils know what is expected of them and how to succeed. The Florida Department of Education (2010) gave some indicators of conducive learning environment, these include:

- classrooms that are inviting to students, clear of clutter, and consistently used as a resource to promote learning;
- where classroom furniture and physical arrangements are conducive to learning and modified as appropriate to learners exit activity;
- where classrooms display/contain literacy-rich, instructional-based visual aids and resources like interactive word walls, content posters, process posters, classroom libraries, student-produced work, and project displays, etc.

All these presuppose that an effective school needs to create an atmosphere that is conducive for learning. The school campus should be safe and secure from external interference. Unfortunately, the pitiable condition of UBE schools in Kwara State shows that the teaching/learning environment in those schools was far from being conducive. If the target year for 50% attainment of conducive teaching/learning environment was set at 2008, and as at 2013 this objective was far from being realized, it shows that there was no fidelity of implementation in the UBE programme in Kwara State. This may hinder long term goal achievement.

Head Teacher Management Skills and Performance Efficacy

The results of the analysis of hypothesis three show that the head teachers' management skills has nothing to do with the outcome of UBE programme. This implies that professional training in educational management is not significantly related to the achievement of UBE goals. The reason for this position may be because the study did not find any significant difference between schools managed by professional educational administrators and those that were not. It may also be due to the insignificant number of such trained administrators in UBE schools in Kwara State. Generally, this study found that only about 17.6% of the head teachers in the sampled schools had professional qualifications in Educational Management. This number is too low to have any significant impact. Implicitly therefore, majority of those teachers in leadership position were groomed for teaching profession and not for managerial work. This incompetency was obvious in the inability of these so-called head teachers to harness the human, material and financial resources at their disposal for the attainment of the school goals. This finding is not surprising as Ijaiya (2004) had earlier lamented the poor quality of both head teachers and classroom teachers in Kwara State schools. It is important to note that for a school head to perform well as a school manager, he/she needs leadership, managerial and teaching skills especially in this era of globalization. Abdullahi and Onasanya (2010) faulted the selection process into headship position in Kwara State secondary schools. They observed that the highest qualified teacher in the school is mostly made the principal, irrespective of whether the person has leadership or managerial training. It is important to note that the head teacher acts as the leading professional in a school and an officer of the local authority. He/she provides appropriate vision, leadership and direction to ensure high standards of education for all the children and young people in his/her care so that they can become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. To achieve this, the head teacher works with and is accountable to others to ensure that the school is organized and managed to meet its aims and targets, and is a creative, disciplined learning environment.

It is obvious that the federal government recognizes the important position the head teacher occupies in the educational system, hence, the need for their retraining was included in the UBE implementation blue-print. It was targeted that by the year 2008, 60% of the head teachers and their assistants should have undergone training in school management. As at 2013, this goal has not been realized as the number of the head teachers that had gone for training at one time or the other was less than 30%. The training programmes that have been organized for these few head teachers were not even related to school management, a very shocking and disturbing discovery. Most of them stepped into offices unprepared for their new roles and have little or no opportunity for further management training. Sad to say, some of these head teachers could not fully understand the objectives, contents and other intricacies of the UBE policy. They could not differentiate among the various funds available for UBE programme (like counterpart fund, matching grant, UBE intervention fund and consolidated revenue fund) neither were they able to access them. Worse still, they found it difficult to interpret the curriculum and the sequential implementation of different curriculum at different levels.

The facts that the head teachers are not being trained and re-trained in the act of school management, and that they are not participating fully in the overall decision making process as stipulated in the implementation guidelines showed that the implementation of UBE programme in Kwara State is without fidelity. Hence, it is not realistic that the 2015 set as target for 100% literacy level in Nigeria will be achieved.

Conclusion

The need for Nigeria to provide all-round education for her citizens and improve her level of literacy was expected to be achieved with the introduction of Universal Basic Education. This was her own way of complying with the second goal in the Millennium Development Goals which aspires to achieve basic primary education for all by 2015. The government, through the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), has shown her commitment to the policy in different areas like regular disbursement of funds, review of curricular at both primary and junior secondary schools, enactment of laws to give the policy a legal backing, among others. It is sad to conclude that the implementation of the various components of the UBE policy was without fidelity. There were lots of lacuna between government intentions (that is, UBE policy) and implementation. This means that the achievement of the goals of the policy within the targeted time frame is not realistic.

Lots of gaps were also found between the formulation of UBE policy and its implementation. The most conspicuous areas were the provision of facilities in schools, retraining of teachers, public enlightenment, monitoring and poor attention given to the non-formal aspect of basic education. All these areas were not given adequate attention. This is contrary to the emphasis in the policy document.

It is obvious that the formal education sector alone cannot give the intended result of achieving 100% literacy level in Nigeria because majority of illiterates in Nigeria have passed the school-going age. It is high time the government implemented all components of basic education with high level of fidelity. The inclusive education, education for the special groups like the *Almagiris* should be given serious attention, the recent stride by the government in building schools for this group is in the right direction. This is very important, especially, if one considers the fact that the neglected group of today can be dangerous to the peaceful existence of the country

tomorrow. For example, the 'Boko Haram' oppressive attack against public peace in Nigeria could be traced to the criminal neglect of the school-age children in the past in Northern Nigeria.

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