

TEACHER QUALITY AND QUANTITY: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to find out teacher quality and quantity and its implication for the implementation of the Universal Basic Education in Edo-State, Nigeria. The design of the study was descriptive survey and a sample of 110 principals was randomly selected using stratified proportionate sampling technique. Three research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. Mean, standard deviation and rank order statistics were used to analyze the research questions and z-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Findings revealed that teacher quality and quantity facilitates the implementation of the UBE programme in Nigeria, by ensuring a better delivery of instruction, use of varied teaching methodologies, pedagogical task of childbearing, better classroom management, reduction in teachers' workload and adequate teacher-student ratio. Findings also revealed that the implication of the implementation of the UBE scheme in Nigeria includes: training and retraining of teachers, improved academic performance, reduction in student dropout and eradication of the widespread of examination malpractice. The study recommended that the federal government should focus on the supply of quantity and quality teachers for secondary school education who will be able to teach and equip our children with the opportunities they need to optimize their potentials and contribute to the growth and development of the society and humanity.

Keywords: Teacher quality, Teacher quantity, and Universal Basic Education

INTRODUCTION

Education is basic to nation-building, that is why nations all over the world strive to make it available not only to the few that can afford it but to all citizens. Nigeria has sought national development by using education to attain desired national objectives. Hence, Sanni and Ogonor (2000) submitted that the Federal Government of Nigeria evolved the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976 and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme in May, 1999. The non-realization of the objectives of the Universal Primary Education Scheme with the world wide emphasis on basic education necessitated the evolution of the proposed Universal Basic Education Scheme. The compulsory free universal basic education is a new education culture in Nigeria which is in line with contemporary development in the world. It is a laudable initiative geared towards globalizing "education for all" beginning at the foundation levels.

The universal basic education (UBE) scheme, through its egalitarian philosophy seeks to liberate educational opportunities for all children of school-going age by making education compulsory, free and universal irrespective of ethnic group, gender, religion, as well as political, economic and social position. The UBE programme is similar to the UPE programme and needs to derive its lesson from the failure of UPE programme. Madugu (2000) stated that the UPE programme failed as a result of inadequate supply of trained teachers, improper compilation of data and unreliable statistical data thereby resulting into

wrong projection, financial shortage, poor publicity, and lack of involvement of those concerned. Teachers hold the key to meaningful education which is vital to nation building. Consequently any nation desirous of transformation into a great country must be committed to making teachers available to meet the requirement of the school system. The role played by teachers in any educational system is enormous. They are responsible for the translation and implementation of educational policies and curriculum and all-round achievement of the child's development. According to Ukeje (1991)

If the child is the center of the educational system, the teacher is the pivot of the educational process. This is because in any educative process, there always stand the teacher, in front or at the back, at the center or at the side, what he knows and does not know, cannot do or fail to do can be an irreparable loss to the child(p.6).

Teachers serve as catalysts for the intellectual, socio-economic, scientific, technological, cultural, growth and development of any society. There is a high demand of quality and quantity teachers in the nation's school system. This demand can only be met if the Government is willing to live up to the challenges and ready to move the country along the right path of development in the 21st century. It is generally known that many schools do not have the required number of quality and qualified teachers. In other words, the "teacher factor" has always been a major issue in determining whether the universal basic education is successful or not. In the light of the above, teachers translate policies into practice and programmes into action. The implementation of the UBE programme therefore lies with teachers' quality and quantity. Therefore, their qualifications and quantities should be examined in order to check their abilities to implement the UBE programme successfully.

Teacher Quality

Education requires teachers of high quality. Research has shown that a highly skilled and professional teaching force does, and will continue, to make a difference. Teachers' knowledge, an intended outcome of pre-service training, is strongly and consistently related to student performance (World Bank, 1995). As a result, teachers are the main medium through which students learn, especially during the foundation years. Making school an important functional locus of efforts for improving quality requires that teachers use their professional attitudes, energy, and motivation in combination with teaching skills in creating quality learning. Teacher quality is the most important school – related factor influencing student's achievement (Rice, 2003). To be highly qualified, according to No Child is Left Behind Act (NCLBA), teachers must meet three general requirements: have a bachelor's degree, be licensed or certified by the state, and demonstrate subject matter competence in each academic subject they teach. The definition differs depending on the level of students being taught and whether a teacher is new or already teaching.

In the past, to teach in primary schools require being certified with Teacher Certificate Grade 11, but this was phased out in 1998 when the National Certificate of Education (NCE) became the required minimum qualification for all primary and junior secondary school teachers (Education Encyclopedia, 2012). Also to teach in senior secondary schools in Nigeria, a person must have a Bachelors Degree in Education (B.Ed) or a Bachelor's degree in a subject field combined with a Post-Graduate Diploma in education (PGDE). In summary a teacher is termed qualified when he/she is trained and certified by any recognized College of Education or University (Ogunlade, 2013).

Kpee (2006) stated that a teacher is an old component of the school system, his roles in any society or educational programme especially in the pedagogical task of child upbringing has always been recognized. Omo-Ojugo (2009) opined that, in order to have quality teachers in

the school system both the Federal and State Governments should embark on Quality Teacher Programmes as a matter of urgency. Active participation in high quality teacher professional development is a key element in improving students' outcomes which is one of the major goals of the UBE programme. As part of Quality Teacher Programme, continuous professional development of teachers should be put in place. Such a programme will afford teachers in our school system to participate in refresher courses during the holidays. This will enable teachers to be equipped to respond to changes in teaching methods. Teachers need to update and improve their knowledge and skills. The development of professional standards and certification of teachers are means of improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools, and enhancing the professional standing of teachers. It is a good thing that the Federal Government has put in place the Teacher's Registration Council which has the power to sanction all unqualified teachers. It is only hoped that with adequate funding and commitment, the Council will professionalize teaching in Nigeria and ensure that required standards in terms of skills and intellectual capacity are maintained.

Nwafor (2006) posited that the UBE programme will endure the test of time if special attention would be given to the training and retraining of teachers. The essence of this exercise is to properly equip the teachers with the new ideas and methods in the profession. This will improve not only teachers themselves, but also their students and the programme in general. For this reason, long-term training for new teachers who would replace ageing and retiring ones, and short-term training of those already in the service cannot be ignored. Quality teachers produce good students, which is the primary purpose of the UBE scheme.

Teacher Quantity

Researchers have shown that teachers' shortages have been a common feature in many countries including Nigeria (Adeyemi, 2011). The problem is even made worse by the increasing growth rate of students enrolment propelled by the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme which made education from basic one to nine compulsory and free. Supply of teachers' refers to the number of qualified teachers that are available to teach in schools. This can also be referred to as the stock of teachers.

The idea of teacher-student ratio is to provide one-on-one attention to students in the course of teaching-learning process. Thus, the more the number of students to a teacher, the lesser the attention the students get from the teacher, and the lesser the teacher is able to spot learning difficulties of students and provide solutions accordingly. On the question of what is or should be the ideal teacher-student ratio, there is no agreement or uniformity world over. However, UNESCO in Adeyemi (2011) encourages ratio 1:40 in secondary schools while the FRN (2004) advises ratio 1:35 for secondary schools. Other countries such as Indonesia, Luxemburg, USA and UK have teacher-student ratios that are lower than 1:35 or 1:40 as prescribed by FRN (2004) and UNESCO (in Adeyemi, 2011) respectively. Omo-Ojugo (2009) observed that there is a shortfall in the supply of teachers with a preponderance of under- and un-qualified teachers at the primary and secondary school level. This results in low levels of students' performance in the final primary, JSS and SSC examinations.

Implication for the Implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria

Nwogu (2006) stated that the quality of any educational programme depends on the quality of teachers. In education generally, there is a high degree of agreement that "no educational system can rise above the level of its teachers". As a result of this ignorance many laudable educational policies and programmes have failed because the teacher factor was considered irrelevant. The actualization of the UBE will be a mirage and a full exercise in futility if the

teacher factor (both quality and quantity) is not considered. Nwafor (2006) opined that for the UBE to achieve the objective of waste reduction, students' achievement must be improved through qualitative instruction by the teachers. Unfortunately, in spite of all the past huge government inputs and curriculum innovative efforts, the menace of poor academic performance still remains apparently insurmountable. This means that the challenge of qualitative education must be tackled head-on as we plunge into implementing the UBE scheme and this can be achieved through the quality and quantity of teachers in our school system.

Omo-Ojugo (2005) has also noted the general concern in developing countries, like Nigeria, is that students at all levels lack the basic reading skills in order to properly function in a world where information is rapidly increasing and knowledge becoming much more complex. For instance, while much attention is given to the teaching of reading in literate countries such as the United States of America, Canada and Britain, etc, little, or no importance is attached to the teaching of Reading in Nigeria. It is no wonder then that Nigerian students do not generally perform well in most public examinations. Almost every year, Chief Examiners Reports for the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and the National Examinations Council (NECO) highlight the abysmal poor performance of students at the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations. Added to this poor performance at these public examinations, is the widespread vice of examination malpractice – which is indicative of poor and inadequate preparation for examination. When students have not read widely and thoroughly and have not been well-prepared for examination, the tendency would be to turn to short-cuts and sharp practices in order to pass examinations. If the consequence of the above scenario is to be reversed, in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century, Nigeria must therefore, begin by giving greater attention to our pre-school, primary, secondary and vocational schools. These areas constitute the building blocks of any society's educational foundation. Once the desired foundation has been laid by a well-trained quality teacher, the Nigerian child will certainly aspire to other levels equipped with a capacity to meet and deal with 'life challenges.

Idehen and Izevbigie (2000) posited that the implementation stage of any educational programme contends with practical obstacles which make it impossible for the actualization of intended goals and objectives. They further stated that problems such as shortage of teachers, lack of qualified teachers, absence of textbooks, absence of necessary equipment, insufficient funds, poor organizational abilities, effective management and supervision may adversely affect the successful implementation of the UBE programme. Attainment of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) goals requires a high quality teaching workforce. Omo-Ojugo (2009) stated that teachers with the right kinds of established qualifications will provide high-quality instruction to students, which will improve academic performance, eradicate the widespread of examination malpractice, and a reduction in student dropout. These are the primary purpose of the UBE scheme and the basis upon which teachers should be evaluated. Thus, the demand and supply of teachers are the foundation of highly effective schools in our educational system

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The free and compulsory basic education policy of the state government and its consequential rise in students' enrolment have perhaps brought about the need for more qualified teachers to be supplied to secondary schools in Nigeria. The addition of new subjects into the curricula of secondary schools has also contributed in reinforcing the need to supply more qualified teachers to secondary schools. It is a welcome development that many states in Nigeria are putting up structures for the implementation of UBE, like in the building of the UBE model

school. The researcher through careful observation noticed with dismay the vacuum that this has created. There has been an increase in students' enrolment without a corresponding increase in the quality and quantity of teachers. With the introduction of UBE modern schools, majority of the states in Nigeria have not made any serious attempt for teacher recruitment, in some states where it is in process, it is been delayed. With the scenario, one could not help but wonder the fate of actualizing the UBE scheme in Nigeria. It is in this light therefore, this paper seeks to examine teacher quality and quantity and its implication for the implementation of universal basic education in Nigeria.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of the study was to examine teacher quality and quantity and its implications for the implementation of universal basic education in Nigeria. Specifically it seeks to:

1. Ascertain the ways teacher quality facilitates the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria.
2. Determine the ways teacher quantity enhances the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria.
3. Examine the implications of teacher quality and quantity for the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided this study;

1. What ways do teacher quality facilitates the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria?
2. What ways do teacher quantity enhances the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria?
3. What are the implications of teacher quality and quantity for the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference between the mean perceptions of male and female principals on the implications of teacher quality and quantity for the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey design. The population of the study included 276 principals of public senior secondary schools in Edo State. Out of the 276 principals, a sample of 110 representing 40% served as the study participants. The sample size was drawn using stratified proportionate sampling technique based on the three educational zones in Edo-State, Nigeria. A self designed instrument tagged Teacher Quality and Quantity and its Implication for the Implementation of the Universal Basic Education Questionnaire (TQQIUUBEQ) was used for data collection. The instrument which contained 15 items patterned using a modified four point likert scale was administered by the researchers personally. Mean and rank order statistics was used to answer the three questions while Z-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULT

The results of data analysis were presented below;

Research Question I: What ways do teacher quality facilitates the implementation of the Universal Basic Education in Nigeria?

Table 1. Weighted mean, standard deviation and rank order scores of male and female principals used in computing results on the ways teacher quality facilitates the implementation of Universal Basic Education

S/N	Statement	N	Male		Female		General		Rank
		110	x ₁	SD ₁	x ₂	SD ₂	x	SD	
1	Increases teachers' mastery in the subject matter		3.30	0.74	3.18	0.93	3.24	0.84	2 nd
2	Better delivery of instruction		3.16	1.07	3.33	0.69	3.25	0.88	1 st
3	The use of varied teaching methodologies to improve teaching/learning process		3.05	0.94	3.14	0.91	3.10	0.93	3 rd
4	Increases the pedagogical task of child upbringing		3.13	0.97	2.96	1.12	3.05	1.05	4 th
5	Reduces time wastage in the classroom.		2.03	0.10	1.92	1.02	1.98	0.56	5 th

Table 1 shows the ways teacher quality facilitates the implementation of the Universal Basic Education in Edo-State. They include the following in order of ranking: Better delivery of instructions, increases teachers' mastery in the subject matter, increases the pedagogical task of child upbringing and reduces time wastage in the classroom.

Research Question 2: What ways do teacher quantity enhances the implementation of the Universal Basic Education in Nigeria?

Table 2. Weighted mean, standard deviation and rank order scores of Urban and Rural principals used in computing results on the ways teacher quantity enhances the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Edo-state.

S/N	Statement	N	Male		Female		General		Rank
		110	x ₁	SD ₁	x ₂	SD ₂	x	SD	
6	Reduces teachers' workload		3.30	0.72	3.29	0.86	3.30	0.79	2 nd
7	Provides one-on-one attention to students in the teaching/learning processes.		3.32	0.84	2.97	0.97	3.15	0.91	4 th
8	Reduces students performance		2.00	1.01	1.92	0.88	1.96	0.95	5 th
9	Increases teacher-student relationship.		3.26	0.73	3.18	0.90	3.22	1.63	3 rd
10	Better classroom management		3.43	0.73	3.32	0.87	3.40	0.80	1 st

Table 2 shows the ways teacher quantity enhances the implementation of the Universal Basic Education in Edo-State. They include the following in order of ranking: better classroom management, reduces teachers' workload, increases teachers-students relationship, provide one-on-one attention to students in the teaching/learning processes, and reduces student's performance.

Research Question 3: What are the implications for the implementation of UBE in Nigeria?

Table 3. Weighted mean standard deviation and rank order scores of male and female principals used in computing results on the implications for the implementation of UBE in Edo-State

S/N	Statement	N	Male		Female		General		Rank
		110	x_1	SD ₁	x_2	SD ₂	x	SD	
11	Improved academic performance		3.10	1.04	3.29	0.82	3.20	0.93	1 st
12	Eradicates the wide spread of examination malpractice		3.08	1.14	3.14	1.00	3.11	1.07	4 th
13	Reduction in student drop out		3.03	0.93	3.20	0.87	3.12	0.90	3 rd
14	Training and retraining of teachers		3.11	0.91	3.16	0.90	3.14	0.91	2 nd
15	Decrease in enrollment rate		1.75	0.99	1.73	0.86	1.74	0.93	5 th

Table 3 shows the implications for the implementation of the Universal Basic Education in Edo-State and they include the following in order of ranking: improved academic performance, training and retraining of teachers, reduction in students drop out, eradicates the wide spread of examination malpractice and decrease in enrollment rate.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between the mean perceptions of male and female principals on the implications for the implementation of UBE in Nigeria.

Table 4. Mean standard deviation and z-test of difference between the perception of male and female principals on the implications for the implementation of UBE in Nigeria

S/N	Categories of principals	n	\bar{x}	SD	Df	z-cal	z-crit	Significant level	Remark
1	Male	61	2.81	1.01	108	0.45	1.96	0.05	Not Significant
2	Female	49	2.90	0.89					
	Total	110							

Table 4: shows the z-test of difference between the mean perceptions of male and female principals on the implications for the implications of Universal Basic Education in Edo-State. The calculated z was 0.45 while the z-crit stood at 1.96 using the significant level of 0.05. Since the z-cal was less than z-crit, the null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference between the mean perceptions of male and female principals on the implications for the implementation of universal basic education in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings from the results as presented in table 1 revealed that better delivery of instruction ranked 1st while increases teacher mastery in the subject matter ranked 2nd. Others in their ranking include the use of varied teaching methodologies to improve teaching/learning process (3rd), increase the pedagogical task of child upbringing (4th) and reduce time wastage in the classroom (5th). The study further revealed that male principals exhibited higher mean

scores in terms of teacher mastery in the subject matter, the pedagogical task of child upbringing and reduces time wastage in the classroom. However, female principals exhibited higher mean scores in terms of better delivery of the subject matter and the use of varied teaching methodologies to improve teaching/learning processes. Results as presented from table 2 showed the ways teacher quantity enhances the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria. This includes; better classroom management (1st), reduces teachers' workload (2nd), increases teacher-student relationship (3rd), provides one-on-one attention to students in teaching/learning process (4th) and reduces students' performance (5th). A further analysis of the result revealed that urban principals exhibited higher mean scores than the rural principals in terms of a better classroom management, reduction in teachers' workload, increases teacher-student relationship, and provides one-on-one attention to students.

Results from table 3 revealed that improved academic performance ranked 1st, training and re-training of teachers ranked 2nd. Others in their ranking include reduction in student dropout (3rd), eradicates the wide spread of examination malpractice (4th) and decrease in enrollment rate (5th). The study further revealed that male principals had higher scores in the decrease in enrollment rate, while female principals exhibited higher mean scores in training and re-training of teachers, improved academic performance, students dropout and eradicates the wide spread of examination malpractice. Result from table 4 shows that there is no significant difference between the mean perceptions of male and female principals on the implications for the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Edo-State. The reason for the no significant difference could be that both of them do not have divergent but the same views, hence the reason for the no significant difference.

The findings of the study conforms to the work of Kpee (2006) who reiterated that a teacher is an old component of the school system, his roles in any society or educational programme especially in the pedagogical task of child upbringing has always been recognized. Also, the findings agree with Omo-Ojugo (2009) who stated that teachers with the right kinds of established qualifications will provide high-quality instruction to students, which will improve academic performance, eradicate the widespread of examination malpractice, and a reduction in student dropout. This is the primary purpose of the UBE scheme and the basis upon which teachers should be evaluated. Finally, these findings are also in line with Nwafor (2006) and Omo-Ojugo (2009) who posited that the UBE programme will endure the test of time if special attention would be given to the training and retraining of teachers. The essence of this exercise is to properly equip the teachers with the new ideas and methods in the profession. In order to have quality teachers in the school system both the Federal and State Governments should embark on Quality Teacher Programmes as a matter of urgency. Active participation in high quality teacher professional development is a key element in improving students' outcomes, which is one of the major goals of Universal Basic Education.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes as follows;

1. That teacher quality and quantity facilitates the implementation of the UBE programme in Nigeria, by ensuring a better delivery of instruction, use of varied teaching methodologies, pedagogical task of childbearing, better classroom management, reduction in teachers' workload and adequate teacher-student ratio.
2. That the implication for the implementation of the UBE scheme in Nigeria includes: training and retraining of teachers, improved academic performance, reduction in student dropout and eradication of the widespread of examination malpractice.

3. That there is no significant difference between the mean perceptions of male and female principals on the implications for the implementation of the UBE programme in Nigeria.

IMPLICATION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study have shown that teacher quality and quantity has helped in quality education, which is one of the major aims of the Universal Basic Education programme. Therefore, it has a huge implication on implementation. This is because where there is lack of quality and quantity teachers, education will suffer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Attention should be focused on the supply of quantity and quality teachers for secondary school education who will be able to teach and equip our children with the opportunities they need to optimize their potentials and contribute to the growth and development of the society and humanity.`
2. The federal government should make provisions for training and retraining of teachers, in order to equip them with new ideas and methods in the profession.
3. Teachers should be provided with adequate instructional materials for effective teaching/learning process.

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