

PROBLEMS OF STAFF MANAGEMENT AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE) PROGRAMME IN SOUTHERN EDUCATION ZONES OF TARABA STATE

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the problems of staff management that militated against the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme in the Southern Education Zone of Taraba State. Two research questions guided the study while two hypotheses were formulated and tested. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. In a population of 4,432 teachers, a sample sized of 444 respondents was drawn through the Hat and Draw random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire titled "UBE implementation: implication for staff management questionnaire" was used to collect data for the study. In the statistical method of analyses, mean and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions while the test of hypotheses was by the use of chi-square at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that: qualified teachers were not available to teach core subjects in the UBE programme; availability of teachers affects pupils' enrolment into UBE Schools. Based on the findings, it was recommended that enough qualified core subject teachers should be employed by Governments for the successful implementation of the UBE programme.

Keywords: UBE programme, Implementation, Teacher, Quality

Introduction

Core subjects in any educational institution are the bedrock for the achievement of the objectives of such an institution. Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2008:6), reported that the main features of the new 9-year basic education curriculum include "English Studies, Mathematics, Basic Science and Technology, Social Studies, Civil Education, Cultural and Creative Arts, Health and Physical Education, Language, Religious Studies (CRS/IRS), Computer Studies and French". These are the core basic subjects in the new dispensation.

There is no doubt that these subjects in no small measures demand well qualified and enough teachers to teach the pupils/students meant for the scheme. In that vein, proper and efficient staff management is not only important but is an ineffective tool for

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teachers' quality performance. However, the teacher factor in the implementation of education programmes is a problem. This is not only in the education zones of Taraba State, rather, it is a global issue. A recent survey by the Australian Education Union (AEU) cited by Roberts (2007:23) shows that, "more than half of new teachers plan to leave the profession within five years, because of heavy workload, class size, poor pay and badly behaved students". Adelaide in Roberts (2007:21) also states that "teachers in schools work at the 'chalk face' as such; the expectation is that they will enact and implement the mission and focus of schools". In a related citation Hopkins opines in Roberts (2007:22) that, "teachers are also expected to enable their students to become powerful and competent learners and citizens." Labe, and Ndomi (2009:193) in the same vein, posit that "teachers are a great influence on what and how students learn". Guided by these assertions, it is logical to infer that an educational institution's ability or inability to achieve its set objectives or goals is largely dependent on the appropriateness or otherwise of its staff management.

In Taraba State, the UBE bill was passed and signed in 2005 and launched the same year. This event, culminated in the establishment of Taraba State Universal Basic Education Board (TSUBEB). The development later gave birth to sixteen (16) Local Education Authorities (LEAS) with sixteen pioneer Education Secretaries to ensure the take-off and success of the programme in the state. A likely question to ask is was the appointment of these Education Secretaries and their supporting staff based on relevant qualifications and experience such that the effective and successful implementation of the UBE programme can be facilitated and achieved? The same question can also be asked about the teaching staff of the Primary and Junior secondary schools, that is, the recruitment, development and retention of teachers who are the grass-root implementers of the UBE programme.

In the Southern Education zone of Taraba State, the researchers observed that teachers are leaving the teaching profession for other jobs they consider lucrative. Teachers die while some retire because of the years they have served. Despite all these, there is embargo on employment of primary school teachers in Southern Education zone of Taraba State. The case is not different even with the Senior Secondary schools in the zone. As a result of this, there seems to be shortage of qualified teachers to implement the UBE programme as expected. Nonetheless, what appears to have taken the place of employment/recruitment of teachers in the zone is a phenomenon called "replacement of staff". Replacement of staff regrettably is not a competitive and transparent process of recruitment. Consequently, the whole process of staff selection is reduced to favour only very few privileged unqualified persons. This in effect is contrary to staff management which should connote a process that follows all the official procedures involved in the recruitment of staff, their development and retention in the service. Moreover, there can be no way for one to talk of core subjects teachers' quality performance without first, addressing the issue of effective and efficient staff management, which is the process that brings such staff into the employment. Tjhus, enhance quality and availability of staff. No wonder Akpakwu (2008) strongly believes that, personnel management is essential for the success and quality service delivery both at individual and group levels of educational establishments.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of quality, adequacy and availability of teachers cannot be over emphasized in the effective implementation of any educational programme. The National Policy of Education (2004) also affirms to part of this claim, that, "in order that

these functions may be discharged effectively, a cadre of qualified staff is required in adequate numbers and quality at the different operational levels by the local, state and federal authorities”.

Unfortunately, the status of public primary school teachers in this respect leaves much to be desired. Teachers' qualifications are low and insufficient numbers of teachers to teach the core subjects are bound. Trapped in this kind of situation, the performance of teachers at the primary school level is worrisome. This is also because the primary schools are stocked with unqualified teachers who are alleged to be primary or secondary school dropouts that local education officers employ just to empower them financially (Maiwada, 2011:2). It is believed that such teachers may not deliver in the context of achieving the UBE objectives. This is because; parents no longer seem to have confidence in bringing their children or wards for enrolment in the public primary schools. Hence, children are not enrolled in the schools or they are not attending school even if enrolled. Those enrolled usually stay back when holidays are over for three to four weeks sometimes before resuming for normal school activities. The rural schools are worst hit compared to those in the urban areas. As a result, children no longer learn as they are supposed to. These no doubt may affect the implementation of the UBE programme. It is on this basis that this study investigated the problems of staff management in the implementation of UBE programme in the Southern Education Zone of Taraba State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the implementation of UBE programme in Southern Education Zones of Taraba State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine if qualified teachers are available to teach core subjects in UBE schools.
2. Find out if availability of teachers affects pupils' enrolment in UBE schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent are qualified teachers available to teach core subjects in UBE schools?
2. How does availability of teachers affect pupils' enrolment into UBE schools?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance

1. Availability of qualified teachers does not significantly affect the teaching of core subjects in UBE schools.
2. Availability of teachers does not significantly affect pupils' enrolment in UBE schools.

Methodology

This study adopted the survey design because it sought to find out and describe an already existing phenomenon and determines the status of same. The area of study is Southern education zones of Taraba State. The study covers Wukari and Takum Education Zones, consisting four LGAs (Wukari, Ibi, Takum and Ussa). This covered part of the Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State. The population for this study was 4,428 teachers from 432 public primary schools and four Education Secretaries from

four (4) Local Education Authorities, giving a total population of 4,432. While a Sample size of 444 respondents was drawn for the study through simple random sampling. The Hat and Draw sampling technique was employed.

Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. A twelve (12) item structured questionnaire titled “UBE Implementation: Implication for Staff Management questionnaire” was designed. It was made up of two sections, “A” and “B”. Section “A” sought to obtain data on educational qualification and work experience of the respondents. Section “B” was concerned with eliciting information on the variables of the study consisting of four clusters. Cluster “A” contained items (3-7) on availability of qualified teachers and the teaching of core subjects of the UBE, while cluster “B” had items (8-12) which dealt with availability of teachers and enrolment into UBE schools. The scale used in the questionnaire was the four point rating scale of: Strongly agreed (S A) – 4 points, Agreed (A) – 3 points, Disagreed (D) – 2 points, Strongly disagreed (SD) – 1 point. Two experts in research methods and Educational management from the Department of Educational Foundations, Benue State University Makurdi, carried out the face validity of the instrument. The instrument was also pilot tested to ascertain its reliability. The Cronbach Alpha obtained as a reliability coefficient was 0.85. This indicated that the instrument was reliable for the purpose of the study (Pallant, 2001).

Four Hundred and Forty-Four (444) questionnaires were self-administered. The respondents were given a time frame of two days to respond to the questionnaire, after which the researcher collected them back. This was to ensure that areas with difficult terrain were equally covered. The completed questionnaires were retrieved through the Education Secretaries to avoid losses. However, only Four Hundred and Thirty-Eight (438) were retrieved. In the analysis, mean score and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions. A mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted for a positive response (meaning agreement), while mean scores of below 2.50 indicated a negative response (meaning disagreement). A chi square statistical test was used to test the two null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table one and two below shows the answer to the two research questions respectively.

Research Question One: To what extent are qualified teachers adequately available to teach core subjects in UBE Schools?

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviations from respondents on availability of qualified core subject teachers

N/S	Item	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	\bar{X}	STD	Decision
1	Enough qualified teachers	68	115	216	39	2.48	0.63	Rejected
2	Difficulty in teaching	154	196	62	26	3.09	.71	Accepted
3	Lack of specialization on core subjects	116	207	58	57	2.87	.65	Accepted
4	Teach all subjects	78	150	183	27	2.64	.73	Accepted
5	Inability to teach core subjects	107	224	78	29	2.93	.68	Accepted
Cluster mean						2.80	0.68	Accepted

A mean of 2.48 with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.63 is below the acceptable level of 2.50 as shown in item 1 (Table 1). Responses on items 3 and 4 also

showed mean opinions of 2.87 with a standard deviation of 0.65 and 2.64 with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.73 respectively. This is indicative of the fact UBE teachers do not teach in their areas of specialization. On the whole a cluster mean of 2.80 with corresponding cluster standard deviation (STD) of 0.68 showed that qualified teachers are not adequately available to teach all UBE core subjects.

Research Question Two: How does availability of teachers affect enrolment in UBE schools?

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviations from respondents on availability of teachers and pupils enrolment into UBE schools

N/S	Item	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	\bar{X}	STD	Decision
1	Sufficient teachers to cope with number of pupils	70	115	181	72	2.42	0.73	Rejected
2	Teacher pupil ratio okay	65	179	136	58	2.57	0.67	Accepted
3	Pupil teacher ratio okay	75	217	103	43	2.74	0.65	Accepted
4	Pupils/teacher ratio per class okay	60	125	212	41	2.47	0.68	Rejected
5	Pupil teacher ratio exceeds stipulated standard	187	141	78	32	3.10	0.70	Accepted
Cluster mean						2.66	0.69	Accepted

Item 1 with a mean of 2.42 with its corresponding standard deviation of 0.73 is below the acceptable level of 2.50. Responses on items 4 also showed mean opinions of 2.47 with a standard deviation of 0.68 which is also not accepted (Table 2). These points to the fact that, classes in UBE schools were large or over crowded. On a whole a cluster mean of 2.66 with a corresponding cluster standard deviation of 0.69 is indicative of teachers available in schools were not adequate to effectively teach the pupils enrolled in UBE schools.

Testing of Hypotheses

The two null hypotheses for this study was tested at 0.05 level of significance and 12 degrees of freedom. In these regard the decision rules were to compare the calculated value of chi-square with the critical value. The decision was to reject the null hypotheses for all calculated values of chi-square greater than the critical values and accept if otherwise.

Hypothesis One: Availability of qualified teachers does not significantly affect teaching of core subjects in the UBE schools.

Table 3: Chi-square Test of effect of availability of qualified teachers on job performance

Resp	SA	A	D	SD	df	X ² cal	X ² crit	Decision
Item 1	68(104.6)	115(178.4)	216(119.4)	39(35.6)				
Item 2	154(104.6)	196(178.4)	62 (119.4)	26(35.6)	12	332.27	21.03	Rejected
Item 3	116(104.6)	207(178.4)	58 (119.4)	57(35.6)				
Item 4	78(104.6)	150(178.4)	183(119.4)	27(35.6)				
Item 5	107(104.6)	224(178.4)	78 (119.4)	29(35.6)				

Table three showed that the inferential statistics of chi-square was used to test the hypothesis. The result showed that the calculated chi-square value of 332.27 is greater than the critical values of 21.03 checked at a 0.05 level of significance and at 12 degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis was rejected. This then implies that the availability of qualified teachers significantly affect the teaching of core UBE subjects.

Hypothesis Two: Availability of teachers does not significantly affect enrolment into UBE schools

Table 4: Chi-square Test of effect of availability of teachers and pupils' enrolment

Resp	SA	A	D	SD	df	X ² cal	X ² crit	Decision
Item 1	70(91.4)	115(155.4)	181 (142)	72(49.2)				
Item 2	65 (91.4)	179(155.4)	136 (142)	58(49.2)	12	277.47	21.03	Rejected
Item 3	75 (91.4)	217(155.4)	103 (142)	43(49.2)				
Item 4	60 (91.4)	125(155.4)	212 (142)	41(49.2)				
Item 5	187 (91.4)	141(155.4)	78 (142)	32(49.2)				

This hypothesis was tested at 0.05 significant level with 12 degrees of freedom to find out if teachers available are adequate to effectively teach the pupils enrolled into UBE schools. The data amassed was subjected to the chi-square test. The result of the analysis showed that the calculated value of 277.47 is greater than the table value of 21.03. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This simply means that, availability of teachers significantly affects pupils' enrolment in the UBE schools.

Discussion of Findings

The results obtained from the questionnaire through test of hypothesis one revealed that qualified teachers are not adequately available to teach all the UBE core subjects and that availability of qualified teachers does have significant effect on teaching of the UBE core subjects. This finding is at variance with the statement of the National Policy on Education (2004) of improving the quality of education at the primary level, through appointing academically and professionally qualified persons as teachers and head teachers. The finding also showed that, these teachers are inadequate hence low pupils and student performance. This is in consonance with Ijaiya's (2009) study; as his study revealed students' performance in English as dismal.

The result of the test of hypothesis two on availability of teachers and enrolment of pupils showed significant effect on pupils' enrolment in the UBE schools. As a result, the hypothesis of no significant effect on enrolment of pupils was rejected. This is because the calculated chi-square value of 277.47 is greater than the critical or its table value of 21.03. The result from this table also indicated that, pupils/teacher ratio per class in most schools exceeds the stipulated standard. The finding is in disagreement with the stipulated standard of 35:1 (thirty five pupils for a teacher in a class) in the primary schools NPE (FRN, 2004).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this work, it was concluded that core subject teachers are not enough in UBE schools. Besides, teachers available in UBE schools are not adequate to effectively teach the pupils enrolled. This implies that the variables considered are affecting the implementation of UBE programme significantly.

Recommendations

1. Qualified teachers should be recruited to teach the core subject areas.
2. The number of teachers recruited should be in the same ratio with the population of pupils enrolled in the UBE schools.
3. Regular recruitment and selection procedures should involve staff that can perform their job as required of them instead of replacement which has come to be the practice in the zones.

4. Teacher Competency Test (TCT) should be conducted regularly for serving teachers, as this will make teachers desirous of acquiring new knowledge necessary for the effective performance of their job.
5. The institution meant to certify teachers Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) should employ more stringent measures in selection and certifying teachers.
6. The TRCN should register only holders of a teaching certificate who have passed professional set test.

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