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Universal Basic Education (Ube) Implementation Strategies and Early Childhood Care and Education Teachers' Efficiency for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

This work was designed to find out some of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) implementation strategies and their relationship with pre-primary school teachers' efficiency in instructional delivery. Specifically, the study examined the relationship between UBE workshop/training programmes, mentorship of teachers by experts and teachers' efficiency in instructional delivery. Two research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A descriptive design was adopted for the study. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaire and observation technique. The study area was Cross River State. Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (PPMC). The result revealed that there exist a significant relationship between workshop/training programmes attended by pre-primary school teachers, mentorship of pre-primary school teachers and their efficiency in instructional delivery. Based on the findings, it was recommended that teachers' workshop/training programmes and their mentorship by experts should be taken serious by the UBE and other education stakeholders in Cross River State.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Universal Basic Education, Early Childhood Education and Teachers Efficiency.

Introduction

Education is a powerful tool for enhancing sustainable, social, economic, political and cultural development of a people and the society. Sustainable development according to Wikipedia (2017), is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs. It is the practice of maintaining the process of productivity indefinitely by replacing resources used with resources of equal or greater values. Children are the common basis for all dimensions of sustainable development, John in Wikipedia (2017). According to a cammon parlance, "Children are the leaders of tomorrow." It is therefore necessary that beyond sheer survival, children should have a right to thrive, develop to their full potential and live in a sustainable world. The Child Right Act was a deliberate policy to enhance the development of the full potentials of children to enable them to live in a sustainable world. The interest and rights of children are well recognized in 2030 agenda of sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognized the children as agents of change. There are seventeen (17) SDGs and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is included in goal four (4). Goal four (4) states that: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." It is specifically mention in target 4:2 that, "By 2030 ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education." The Nigerian government through the ongoing Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme is making frantic efforts to meet up with the Universal Development Charter for the 21st century in the agenda of 2030 (SDGs). Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was launched on the 30th September, 1999 in Sokoto, the Headquarters of Sokoto State of Nigeria.

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The programme that was launched by President Olusegun Obasanjo was yet another milestone in the history of free education in Nigeria. According to Amanze (2008), the compulsory free Universal Education was formally enacted by an Act on the 26th May, 2004 by the Nigeria National Assembly. This Act gave the programme its legal frame work for a full blown implementation. The overwhelming significance attached to the programme demonstrates Nigeria's commitment to many different international declarations and agreement on the compelling need to reduce illiteracy through quality Basic Education. These include: The World Declaration of 1991 and the follow-up conference in Beijing in 2001 etc. The Act establishing the UBE programme recognized the constitutional rights of the states and Local Government to manage Basic Education and defined the role of the Federal Government to only intervene, assist and or act in partnership with the States and Local Government (UBE, 2004). The Act also imposed a duty on the parents or guardians of the beneficiaries of the programme to ensure that the children not only attend but also complete the compulsory period of schooling. Penalties ranging from fines and jail term against erring parents are also enshrined in the enabling Act. The Act equally states that the services to be provided in public pre-primary, primary and Junior Secondary Schools free of charge include books, instructional materials, classroom furniture and free lunch. The law consequently, made it a criminal offence for any person to receive fees from parents. Basic Education, according to the National Policy on Education (2013), is the education given to children aged 0-15 years. It encompasses the Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) 0-6 and nine (9) years of formal schooling. Basic Education to be provided by government shall be free, compulsory, universal and qualitative. It includes 1 year of kindergarten, 6 years of primary and 3 years of Junior Secondary Education. It is designed to be universal, free and compulsory for all children of schooling age (NPE, 2013). Underpinning the importance of Early Childhood Education which pre-primary school education is an integral part, the World Declaration on the Survival/Protection and Development of Children in 1990 undertook a joint commitment to make an urgent universal appeal to give every child a better future. In addition, the World Conference on Education For All (EFA) and the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasized urgent priority to ensure access to an improve the quality of education for all children (Nakpodia, 2011). The National Policy on Education, from which the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) derives its establishment, clearly states the objectives of Nigerian education and indicates that the philosophy of the nation's education is based on integrating the individual into a sound and effective citizen and the provision of equal opportunities for all citizens at the pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels inside and outside the formal school system. The curriculum for the various levels therefore aims at fulfilling the objectives of the policy. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act with its specific objectives as outlined in the implementation guidelines of Federal Ministry of Education (2000) and National Policy on Education (2013) are as follows:

1. Developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.

2. Provision of free Universal Basic Education for every child that reaches or attains school age.
3. Reducing drastically the incidence of dropouts from the formal school system.
4. Catering for the learning needs of dropouts and out-of-school-children/adolescents through appropriate complementary approach to the provision and promotion of Basic Education.
5. Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate level of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communication and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for the learning. To achieve the above objectives, the Federal Government of Nigeria put up the following strategies:
 1. Steps should be taken to address apathy on the country's education especially in the Northern part of the country. Since the main theme of UBE is education for all, there is need to sensitize the general public towards realization of these objectives.
 2. Monitoring is essential for effective control, therefore there is need to provide mobility for inspectors and supervisors of schools such as vehicles, bicycles, boats and animals.
 3. Recruitment of more trained teachers should be done to cater for the enrolled students.
 4. The conditions of service for teachers should be improved.
 5. All dilapidated structures should be renovated and new ones erected to contain the teaming number of pupils to be enrolled.

Policies meant to assist in objective decision making are usually operational in nature and can be objectively tested; the Cross River State Government has replicated the Universal Education Act. It is against this background that the researcher was motivated to investigate the extent to which UBE policies in terms of its implementation strategies like workshops/training programmes and mentorship programme has influenced pre-school teachers' performance in instructional delivery. Universal Basic Education training, workshops and seminars as it is popularly called in Cross River State is a teacher development programme aimed at training teachers to develop physically, mentally, socially and emotionally (Arop, Eju and Ekpeni, 2013). Olamiyan and Ojo (2008) assert that training both physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally are very essential in facilitating not only the level of productivity but also the development of personnel in any organization. Abudun (2000), defines teacher training as a systematic development of the knowledge, skills and attitude required by a teacher to perform adequately on a teaching task or job. Teachers' training and re-training programmes are avenues for teachers to acquire more and new knowledge and develop further the skills and techniques to function effectively and improve performance in the classroom. Arop, Eju and Ekpeni (2013) emphasizing on the importance of teacher training programme as they explained that: Workshops, conferences, seminars and in-service training for teachers is required to update them and help them acquire the various skills needed for professional growth UBE makes it compulsory for teachers to be involved in in-service training, workshops of different kinds in related areas and

conferences to update teachers' knowledge and expand their scope of experience as this experience in turn will benefit the pupils/students. The basic concern of teachers' training workshops and seminars is to bring changes in the attitude of teachers. Teachers' training contributes towards not only to shape and modify teachers' attitude but also to develop certain teaching skills which are necessary to improve performance in the teaching profession. Mentors and supervisors play fundamental role in professional development. They play formative role in professional development of trainees in the manner in which ethical standards are conveyed (Bird, 2001). In most cases, the responsibilities of mentors and supervisors overlap, that is why most persons use the words of mentorship and supervision interchangeably. Though, one person can do both supervision and mentorship. These words mean two different things. The school supervisors are interested in seeing things done accordingly for the purpose of achieving optimum goals or some specific educational objective. The mentor is rather interested in the professional development of the mentee which in this case is the teacher. Common among them, is the goal achievement aim. According to Bird (2001), a mentor is one who shares experience and expertise and takes interest in the professional development of the mentee. They are those who are willing and able to share their experience and expertise, they reflect on their successes and failure and can explain what they have learned. Koki (2000), define mentorship in education as a complex and multi-dimensional process of guiding, teaching, influencing and supporting a beginning or new teacher. He further states that mentor teach, lead, guide and advices another teacher more junior in experience in a work situation that is characterized by mutual trust and belief. Teachers' efficiency is the ability of a teacher to accomplish the goals of his/her tasks with minimal time, money and energy. Esu (2004), describes teacher efficiency as all-embracing as it deals with his/her basic knowledge, communication skills, teaching skills and administrative skills. Teachers' efficiency refers to the right way of conveying units of knowledge, application and skills to students. The right way include: the knowledge of content

process, method and means of conveying content (Hamilton-Ekeke, 2013).

Research questions

The following research questions were posed:

1. What relationship exists between pre-primary school teachers' workshop/training attendance and their efficiency in instructional delivery?
2. To what extent does pre-primary school teachers, mentorship by experts relate with their efficiency in instructional delivery?

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. Pre-primary school teachers' workshop/training attendance has no significant relationship with their efficiency in instructional delivery.
2. The mentorship of pre-primary school teacher by experts has no significant relationship with their efficiency in instructional delivery.

Research Method

Descriptive survey design was used for this study. This study was carried out in Cross River State of Nigeria. Cross River State has 1,031 public pre-primary/primary schools. The total number of pre-primary school teachers as at June, 2017 was 2,271 from the 1,031 pre-primary schools. The multi-stage procedure was adopted in selecting the sample. 1093 teachers were selected for the study. The main instruments for data collection were a researcher made questionnaire and observation technique. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient Analysis (r) was used to answer the research questions. The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses since it aimed at establishing a relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The research questions were answered using the correlation co-efficient values and the associated natures of relationship as summarized by Joshua (2005) as follows:

+ 1.00	-	Perfect Positive Relationship
+ 0.40	-	+0.99 High (Strong) Positive Relationship
+ 0.10	-	+ 0.39 Low (Weak) Positive Relationship
- 0.09	-	+ 0.09 Very Weak or no Relationship
- 0.10	-	0.39 Low (Weak) Negative Relationship
- 0.40	-	0.99 High (Strong) Negative Relationship
- 1.00	-	Perfect Negative Relationship

The grading scale used in the study were high, low and very weak accordingly and where applicable. In like manner, all the null hypotheses formulated for the study were tested at 0.05 alpha levels.

Research question one

What relationship exists between pre-primary school teachers' workshop/training attendance and their efficiency in instructional delivery? Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research question. The result of the analysis is presented in table I.

Table I: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) Analysis of Pre-Primary School Teachers' Workshops/ Training Attendance and their Efficiency in Instructional Delivery

Variables	Σ	Σ^2	N	ΣXY	r-cal
Workshops/Training Attendance (X)	29389	870249	1093	987897	0.47
Efficiency in Instructional Delivery (Y)	35239	1228207			

The result in table I reveals the calculated r-value of 0.73 which indicate the nature of relationship between the two variables. Considering the criteria shown above for interpretation of r, the value of r of, 73 falls between .4-99 which is considered as high (strong) positive relationship. Therefore, there is high positive relationship between pre-primary school teachers' workshop/training attendance and their efficiency in instructional delivery.

Research question two

To what extent does pre-primary school teachers, mentorship by experts relate with their efficiency in instructional delivery? Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research question. The result of the analysis is presented in table II.

Table II: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) Analysis of Mentorship of Pre-Primary School Teachers by Experts and their Efficiency in Instructional Delivery

Variables	Σ	Σ^2	N	ΣXY	r-cal	Df	r-crit	Decision
Workshops/Training Attendance (X)	31629	965247	1093	1069111	0.73	1091	0.062	Reject Hop<0.5
Efficiency in Instructional Delivery (Y)	35239	1228207						

The result in table II reveals the calculated r-value of 0.47 which indicate the nature of relationship between the two variables. Considering the criteria shown above for interpretation of r, the value of r of .47 falls between 4-.99 which is considered as high (strong) positive relationship. Therefore, there is high positive relationship between mentorship of pre-primary school by experts and their efficiency in instructional delivery.

Hypotheses one

Pre-primary school teachers' workshop/training attendance has no significant relationship with their efficiency in instructional delivery. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis was used for testing this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in table III

Table III: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) Analysis of Pre-Primary School Teachers' Workshops/ Training Attendance and their Efficiency in Instructional Delivery

Variables	Σ	Σ^2	N	ΣXY	r-cal	Df	r-crit	Decision
Workshops/Training Attendance (X)	31629	965247	1093	1069111	0.73	1091	0.062	Reject Hop<0.5
Efficiency in Instructional Delivery (Y)	35239	1228207						

The result in table III revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.73 is greater than the critical r-value of .062 at .05 level of significance with 1091 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that says pre-primary school teachers' workshop/training attendance has no significant relationship with their efficiency in instructional delivery was rejected. This implies that pre-primary school teachers' workshop/training attendance has a significant relationship with their efficiency in instructional delivery.

Hypothesis two

The mentorship of pre-primary school teacher by experts has no significant relationship with their efficiency in instructional delivery. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis was used for testing this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in table IV

Table IV: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) Analysis of Mentorship Pre-Primary School Teachers by Experts Relate with their Efficiency in Instructional Delivery

Variables	Σ	Σ^2	N	ΣXY	r-cal	Df	r-crit	Decision
Workshops/Training Attendance (X)	29389	870249	1093	987897	0.47	1091	0.062	Reject H ₀ p<0.5
Efficiency in Instructional Delivery (Y)	35239	1228207						

The result in table IV revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.47 is greater that the critical r-value of .062 at 0.5 level of significance with 1091 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that says the mentorship or pre-primary school teachers' experts have no significant relationship with their efficiency in instructional delivery was rejected. This implies that the mentorship of pre-primary school teachers' by experts has significant relationship with their efficiency in instructional delivery.

Attendance and Pre-Primary School Teachers' Efficiency in Instructional Delivery

In analyzing hypothesis one, a significant relationship between pre-primary school teachers' workshop/training attendance and pre-primary school teachers' efficiency in instructional delivery was revealed. The calculated r-value of 0.73 was greater than the critical r-value of .062 at .05 level of significance with 1091 degrees of freedom. This result implies that UBE workshops/training programmes for teachers are very important for their professional development. The findings of the above study is in congruence with Arop, Eju and Ekpeni (2013) who assert

Discussion of Findings

Pre-Primary School Teachers' Workshop/Training

that the aim of UBE teacher workshop/training programme is to develop the teacher physically, mentally, socially and emotionally, so that they can effectively carry out their teaching task.

Mentorship of Pre-primary School Teachers by Experts and their Efficiency in Instructional Delivery

The result of testing hypothesis two presented in table 4 shows that there exist a significant relationship between mentorship of pre-primary school teachers by experts and their efficiency in instructional delivery. The calculated r-value of 0.47 was greater than the critical r-value of .062 at .05 level of significant with 1091 degrees of freedom. The implication of this result is that the UBE mentorship programme for pre-primary school teacher by experts from tertiary institutions has a significant relationship with teachers' efficiency in instructional delivery. The result of this study is in line with Koki (2000), who describe mentorship in education as a complex and multi-dimensional process of guiding teaching, influencing and supporting a beginning or new teachers towards professionalism in the professional development of the mentee. He added that efficient teachers are product of good mentorship by experts. The finding of the study support Esu (2004), who described teacher efficiency as all embracing as it deals with his/her basic knowledge, communication skill, teaching skills and classroom administrative skills. He emphasized on reflective teaching and learning exercise where mentorship plays an important role. Ebam (2014), commending the prevailing level of teachers' efficiency in Cross River State attributed it to the skills and knowledge acquired during cluster mentorship programmes organized by the CRSUBEB in conjunction with UBEC.

Summary of the Study

This study was carried out to find out the relationship between Universal Basic Education (UBE) implementation strategies and efficiency of pre-primary school teachers in instructional delivery in Cross River State of Nigeria. The UBE variables were (i) workshop/training programme for teachers, and (ii) Mentorship of teachers by experts. The aim of this study was to find out if there exist any relationship between the UBE implementation policies and the efficiency of teachers in institutional delivery.

Two research question and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study utilized a descriptive survey research design. The instruments used for data collection were: UBE policy Implementation Strategies and Pre-Primary School Teachers Efficiency in Instructional Delivery, (UPISPTE) questionnaire and classroom observation technique. The study area was Cross River State of Nigeria which consisted of three major educational zones with 1,031 public pre-primary schools. The population of the studies consisted of all the pre-primary school teachers from the 1,031 public pre-school totaling 2271 teachers. The sample was drawn with a multi-stage procedure. A total of 424 schools and 1,093 pre-school teachers were sampled. The two research question and hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficiency (PPMC). All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The data analysis yielded the following findings:

1. Pre-primary school teachers' workshop/training attendance has a significant relationship with their efficiency in instructional delivery.
2. Mentorship of pre-primary school teachers by experts has a significant relationship with their efficiency in instructional delivery.

Conclusion and Recommendations

On the basis of the research findings, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. There exist a significant relationship between pre-primary school teachers' workshop/training attendance and their efficiency in instructional delivery.
 - Mentorship of pre-primary school teachers by experts relates significantly with their efficiency in instructional delivery. The following recommendations were made:
 - Teachers' workshop/training programme should be taken serious by the UBE officials and the pre-school teachers as these programmes are the best ways of guaranteeing teachers' efficiency. The workshop and training programme should not be politicized in any way.
 - Considering the fact that teachers mentorship by experts is a catalyst for pre-school system performance, the UBE Official and the head teachers should ensure that selection of teachers who participate on the programme is without bias. They should adopt a random selection approach that would give equal opportunities for participation of teachers in the programme.

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