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IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IMO STATE

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ABSTRACT
The study was carried out to "x-ray the implementation of Universal Basic Education Curriculum for sustainable development at Junior Secondary School in Imo State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey was adopted as the research design. The population of the study was three thousand, five hundred and eighty nine (3,589) junior secondary school teachers in Orlu education zone 2 of Imo State Nigeria. Fifty percent (50%) of the population were purposively selected using simple random sampling technique by replacement, which came up to one thousand, seven hundred and ninety five (1,795) respondents. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Data were collected using the researchers developed questionnaire titled Basic Education and Human Development Questionnaire (BEHDQ), two null hypotheses that were tested, yielded no significant relationship between the planning/implementation, level of funding of UBE programme and sustainable human development in the State. It was therefore concluded that the planning/implementation and level of funding of the UBE programme in the state does not facilitate sustainable human development in the state. Hence, it was recommended that the planning/implementation, and funding of UBE be given great attention by the government to facilitate sustainable human

development. Need for periodic evaluation and strategies for the correction of the lapses were emphasized.

Introduction

Education has remained a social process in capacity building and maintenance of society for decades. It is a weapon for acquiring skills, relevant knowledge and habits for surviving in the changing world. In Nigeria, different programmes are evolving for the development of the human capital. One of these programmes is the Universal Primary Education (UPE) which has metamorphosed into the Universal Basic Education (UBE). The Universal Basic Education aims at providing compulsory basic education for the citizenry. It is expected to provide basic education that is terminal (Adewole 2003 and Obayan 2010). The UBE programme brought about nomadic education, education for migrant fishermen, school drop out of school children, and adult education. Adeniran (2001) highlighted the goals and objectives of UBE as follows: The objectives of the new curriculum are consistent with the goals of basic education. The goals of Basic Education from the curricular perspective are to:

- Provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship, wealth generation and educational advancement;
- Inculcate values and raise morally upright individuals capable of independent thinking, and who appreciate the dignity of labour.
- Provide opportunities for the child to develop manipulative skills that will enable the child to function effectively in the society and to realize his or her full potentials.

Archibong and Ejue (2009) observed that the organization of learning/training opportunities should be able to develop the intellectuals to understand and appreciate their internal and external environment under well managed capacity–building actions and individuals as well transformed to be resourceful. They can easily appreciate the achievement correlates and opportunities inherent in their environment. The 21st century is characterized by comparative advantage in wealth creation and socio-human development sustainability. This involves improving the quality and sustainability of socio-human

development in consonance with position and healthy endeavours.

Bassey and Achibong (2006) observed that, to be able to participate functionally in socio-human development, basic learning cum training advantage is very necessary. Basic learning opportunities are essentially the pre-degree or pre-higher institutions learning programmes. Agbunno(2007) in his own contribution argued that for Nigeria to produce world class scientists, technologists, artists among others in the 21st century, every Nigerian child must go to school and be stimulated academically, categorized and classified by experts in search for talents. The researcher is of the opinion that sustainable human capital development could be achieved through the Universal Basic Education (UBE). At the formal level, Universal Basic Education (UBE) provides every child with a nine-year compulsory education spanning from primary one to class three (3) in the junior secondary school level.

At the non-formal level, it provides a wide range of opportunities for adults and other educationally disadvantaged group to acquire basic education relevant to their needs. The long and short term objectives of UBE is to equip every individual with appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes, habits and values as well as enable the individuals to develop fullest potential, derive maximum social, economic and cultural benefits as a citizen and fulfill his civil obligations as well as keep alive in him the spirit of inquiry, a desire for problem solving and a life-long interest in living (Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development 1993).

The need for functional Universal Basic Education in sustainable human development has been acknowledged world over. This is based on the realization that no country can attend any meaningful progress and development without a sound educational system for its citizens. Nkang (2008) supporting this observation, noted that developed Nations such as United States of America (USA), Britain, France, Russia and emerging Tiger States of Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, long realized the indispensability of basic functional education as a catalyst for sustainable human development.

In Nigeria, education has been recognized as an instrument par-excellence for effective national development. No nation can fully

develop, if majority of her citizens are illiterates. According to Abiem (2001) about 48.5% of Nigerians live below poverty line. Education has the potentials and it is the "magic key" needed to change this situation. The World Bank's fundamental strategies for poverty reduction is based on the principles of invest in people and create a climate for jobs, growth and prosperity.

World Bank (2003) observed that developing countries such as Nigeria have the vast majority of the world's young people, those that really need basic education. If their talent and energy can be developed, channeled and harnessed using basic education as a spring board, poverty level would drastically be reduced. Inadequate human development is one of the fundamental reasons for poverty.

Well, functioning equitable basic education is needed as a catalyst for sustainable human development; modern societies can become or remain materially wealthy only if they are managed by a large group of educated individuals with the right mix of sophisticated technical and organizational expertise. This expertise and many of the behavioral attributes that go with it are mostly readily acquired and transmitted through modern educational institutions of which basic education lays the foundation. Human development is important for intellectual capacity in analyzing national development challenges, formulating policy choices made, monitoring and evaluating performances, drawing lessons to improve performance including revising policy choices.

Ndu and Emegorun (1996) noted that there is a direct relationship between the nature of education an individual receives and the nature of his career development and also the extent of his contribution to the socio-economic development of his country. Several factors militate against the full implementation of UBE in Nigeria. Close examination of past and present educational policies and practices in Nigeria indicate a frequent lack of a continuing focus on goals and objectives and systematic implementation of the content of educational programmes. Asuqua (2001) observes that the implementation of education programmes in Nigeria have been sporadic, ineffectual and inadequate rather than continuing, systematic, integrative and sequential.

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In consonance with the above observation, Usen (2008) observes that it is sad to note that the National council on Education (NCE) which is the highest policy making organ on education was presented with the implementation of the scheme. It could be seen that no proper planning was made before the UBE programme was launched.

The UBE scheme was launched by UPE in 1976, it was expected that having assessed the degree of failure of the UPE programme, one would expect a more realistic and result oriented planning, monitoring and evaluating strategies for the UBE. But this was not the case in planning, for implementation, preparing and commencing of the UBE project (Usen 2008). He further observed that the UBE programme was launched before the educators were invited to review and advice on the details of the ministry's draft implementation blue print. This was a one day summit which could not have given the participants enough time to give in-depth review of the blue print in order to make more meaningful contribution to a programme as important as the UBE.

It was months after the UBE was launched that the Federal Ministry of Education attempted to tinker into shape and implementation, the Blue print which was presented to the National Council on Education for further advice and subsequent action.

Another constraint in the planning and implementation of UBE programme is that the programme took off with the signing of the UBE Act in April, 2004, but the appropriation of the UBE fund to the commission and subsequent disbursement to the states was in July 2005 (UBEC, 2006;4). The new 9-year Basic Education curriculum which was approved by the National Council on Education was launched long after the UBE had started. There are many other setbacks to the UBE programme as stated by the Thursday February 16, 2006Editionof the Daily Sun. The condition of affairs as examined above may not facilitate effective implementation of the UBE programme for sustainable human development in Imo State Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The study was carried out to examine the implementation of UBE Curriculum at junior secondary school for sustainable development in Imo State. Specifically, the study which was delimited to Orlu education zone 2 of

Imo State, sought to examine the relationship between the:

1. Planning of the UBE programme and sustainable human development.
2. Level of funding of the UBE programme and sustainable human development.

Research Questions

1. What is the main rating of planning of UBE programme?
2. What is the main rating of funding UBE in Owerri education zone 2?
3. What is the main rating of achievement of UBE for sustainable development?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

H0$_1$: There is no significant relationship between the planning/implementation of the UBE programme and sustainable human development.

H0$_2$: There is no significant relationship between the level of funding of the UBE programme and sustainable human development.

Methodology

The research work adopted descriptive survey design, which was carried out in Orlu education zone two. Teachers of junior public secondary schools in Orlu Education Zone 2 of Imo State constituted the population of the study. There are 78 public junior secondary schools with 3, 589 teachers – 50 percent of the teachers were selected using simple random sampling technique by replacement, which are one thousand, seven hundred and ninety-five teachers (1,795). A four-point modified Likert-type researchers structured questionnaire, titled Universal Basic Education and sustainable human development questionnaire (UBESHQ) was used to collect data for the study.

The questionnaire was made up of three sections: planning of UBE programme; funding of UBE programme and sustainable human development. Each section had five items. The reliability of the instrument was established through test re-test method of two weeks interval and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Statistics was used to establish a reliability coefficient of 0.7. The researchers adopted direct delivery method for data collection. Mean and Standard deviation was used to answer

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research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses.

Data Analysis and Result

The data collected were analysed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Statistics. This is considered appropriate because the study seeks to establish the relationship between the variables.

Table 1: Means and standard deviation of Research variables

	Mean	**Standard deviation**	**N**
Planning of UBE Programme	13.13	2.22	1795
Funding of UBE programme	12.45	2.01	1795
Sustainable Human Development	9.08	1.99	1795

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between the state of planning of the UBE programme and sustainable Human Development. In order to test this hypothesis, the analysis ® was used.

Table 2: Pearson's Production Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between planning of the UBE and sustainable Human Development

		Planning of UBE Programme	**Sustainable Human Development**
Planning of UBE Programme	Person corr. Sig (2 tailed)N	1.0	023
		1795	12
Sustainable	Pearson Coor	.23	1795
Human Development	sign (2-tailed)	.12 1795	1.0 1795

Critical-r-value = 0.098; calculated-r-value =0.023 the calculated r-value of 0.023 was less than the critical r-value of 0.098 at 0.05 alpha level and 1795

degree of freedom. The null hypotheses were therefore accepted. This means that planning of the UBE programme does not relate significantly with sustainable human development. It therefore emphasis that UBE programme is not adequately planned to facilitate sustainable human development.

Hypothesis 2:
There is no significant relationship between the level of funding of the UBE programme and sustainable human development. In order to test the hypothesis, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis ® was employed.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between funding of the UBE Programme and sustainable human development

		Funding of the UBE Programme	**Sustainable Human Development**
Funding of the	Pearson	1.06	062
UBE Programme	Correlation sig.	1795	0.4
	(2 tailed) N		1795
Sustainable	Pearson	.062	1.0
Human	Correlation sig,	.40	1795
Development	(2-tailed)N	1795	

Critical r-value = 0.98; calculated = 0.062

The calculated r-value of 0.062 was less than the critical r-value of 1.06 and was less than critical r-value of .098 at 0.05 alpha levels and 1793 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore retained. This means that the funding of the UBE programme does not relate significantly with sustainable human development. By implication the UBE Programme in Imo State is not properly funded to facilitate human development.

Discussion of findings
Hypothesis one, which tested significant relationship between planning UBE programme and sustainable human development, showed no significant

relationship. The calculated r-value was less than the critical r-value, leading to the retention of the null hypothesis. This shows the true situation of the UBE Programme in Imo State Nigeria. The Universal Basic Education curriculum (UBEC) which would have been launched and presented to the public long before the launching of the UBE programme was launched and presented to the public long after the UBE had been launched.

Effective implementation of the UBE Programme which is necessary for sustainable human development needs proper planning (Alagoa, 1999). Accurate number of the actual number of children of school age, class rooms, teachers, books, teaching aids and other requirements for the implementation of the programme must not be taken for granted. This is the only way the Universal Basic Education can contribute meaningfully to sustainable human development.

Data analysis on hypothesis two reveals that there is no significant relationship between funding of the UBE Programme and sustainable human development. The calculated r-value was less than the critical r-value, hence, the null hypothesis was retained. This implies inadequate funding of UBE Programme in Imo State, Nigeria.

Although some money has been released by both the federal, state and local Governments for UBE Programme implementation, such funds are grossly inadequate (Kosemani 2000).Funds are not released early enough to mobilize contractors. The programme lacks fund for research, evaluation and monitoring which are the basic functions of the programme. There is backlog of unpaid teachers' salaries, allowances and other fringe benefits, lack of funds to settle retirement and other benefits of retired staff.

UBE programme needs to be properly funded and this cannot be done by the government alone. Concerted efforts should be made by all stakeholders, including donor agencies to fund the programme adequately to enhance effective implementation of the UBE programme for sustainable human development in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The paper investigated planning and financing Universal Basic Education for sustainable human development in Imo State, Nigeria. From the findings, the paper concludes that there are lapses in the planning and financing of the UBE

Programme which need to be addressed if the UBE Programme will achieve the laudable objectives for which it was established and to facilitate sustainable human development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that the Best Brains in education system and major stakeholders in education be involved in the planning of the programme right from the onset to be able to give the planning all the necessary input for sustainable human development. Adequate fund should be made available for the programme. The fund provided for the programme should be monitored closely to avoid misappropriation. There should be periodic evaluation of the programme and mechanism put in place for the correction of the lapses.

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