

Assessing the Implementation of Universal Basic Education Curriculum in Rural Basic Schools in Gwadabawa Education Zone, Sokoto State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper assessed the implementation of universal basic education curriculum in rural Upper Basic Schools in Gwadabawa Education Zone, Sokoto State, Nigeria. The study aimed, among others to examine the level of implementation of UBE curriculum and find out the availability of teachers for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in the study area. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consist of 46 principals and 370 teachers across 46 schools in the study area. A multi stage sampling technique was used to select a sample of 19 principals and 132 Teachers. The instrument for data collection was "Assessment of Universal Basic Education Curriculum Implementation Questionnaire and has content and face validity as well as reliability index of 0.78. Descriptive statistics of frequency, mean and standard deviation were used to answer all the research questions. Findings of the study revealed, among others, there was low level of curriculum implementation and teachers are not adequately available for implementation of UBE curriculum in the study area. The study recommended among others that the Universal Basic Education Commission and State Universal Basic Education Board should ensure that curriculum for all subjects are adequately provided to teachers in the area and teachers' capacity be enhanced through regular training for effective implementation and government in collaboration with School Based Management Committees should ensure that teachers are employed and send to various schools in rural upper basic schools to address teachers' shortage.

Keywords: Curriculum implementation, Universal Basic Education, Rural Basic Schools.

Introduction

Education remains an important tool for both human and national development for ages. In every society its impact on major framework for capacity building is recognized as the vital element of socialization and for having a greater society. Abdullahi (2022) see education as a process through which learners derive the appropriate behaviour, attitudes, values, knowledge and skills. It provides opportunity for one to acquire knowledge, skills and traits for both human and national development (Ige, 2013). Various governments and international actors have over the years introduced reforms and initiatives aimed improving the quality of education systems.

Basic education, as one of those initiatives, is fundamental to human and societal development. It is the foundation upon which other levels of education are built and a necessary prerequisite for human and national development (Tahir in Anaduaka & Okafor, 2013). According to Ojo and Azeez (2024) the specific goals of Universal Basic Education are to equip the citizens with information, abilities and mindsets they need to lead fulfilling lives, improve society and fulfil their civic duties. Universal basic education comprises of nine (9) year duration, 3 years of lower basic and 3 years of middle basic education (formerly called primary education) and 3 years of upper basic education (formerly called junior secondary education). It also includes adult and non-formal education programmes at primary and junior secondary education levels to take care of those who dropped out of school (FRN, 2014). Before the introduction of the Universal Basic Education in Nigeria, there was the Universal Primary Education (UPE) which was one of the basic education programme introduced in the country, this programme failed despite the amount of money, effort and resources spent on it due to several factors some of which are attributed to lack of trained teachers, infrastructural facilities for the effective implementation of the curriculum among others.

Implementation determines the success or failure of any plan, proposal, and intention. Curriculum implementation, therefore, is the dissemination of information on a wide basis, after pilot-test, on a newly designed curriculum or on a change or revised curriculum. It ascertains the feasibility, adequacy or relevance of curriculum plans towards the accomplishment of intended learning outcomes. Salami and Ojediran (2017) defined Curriculum implementation as a process by which a curriculum is transferred from the paper into active exercise. The teacher is identified as agent in the curriculum implementation process. They set up learning opportunities aimed at enabling learners acquire the

desired knowledge, skills, attitudes and values through adoption of appropriate teaching methods and materials to guide students' learning. The curriculum planned and developed is implemented through the medium of instruction. This is why curriculum implementation is seen as the daily activities of school management and classroom teacher in the pursuit of the achievement of the objectives of the school curriculum.

It was also said that no educational system can grow above the quality of its teachers. Teacher's quality is an important variable in students' achievement. Researches have shown that, the outcome of student's performance depend largely on the quality of teachers. Tanner and Tanner (2019) noted that, the success of any curriculum depend largely on teachers handling it. Andreyka (2016) reported that the prime requisite for successful implementation of educational programmes is qualified teachers who are occupationally competent and skilled in the use of teaching methods. In most of the rural schools, basic education teachers who were found overloaded with the task of teaching too many subject including those they were not competent to handle which hampers the implementation process.

Universal basic education was launched in 1999 by the then President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, to address the problem of quality and drastically reduced the number of out of school children in the country among other objectives. Problems that marred the implementation of of similar programme in the past seemed to be apparent the current programme. These range from poor teacher quality in most basic schools in the country, inadequate and dilapidated infrastructural facilities inadequate instructional materials, poor funding to lack of proper monitoring and supervision. The apparent divide between urban and rural areas in terms of provision of facilities, human and material resources as well as other essential services germane to effective implementation of curriculum may hinder the achievement of the objectives of UBE programme in Nigeria. To this end, Madondo (2020) identified teacher-centred approach to classroom instruction, lack of teaching resources, lack of professional development and qualified teachers as factors hindering implementation of curriculum in rural schools.

Several researchers have investigated the implementation of basic education curriculum and reported different results. Ajayi and Sikiru (2021) evaluated the UBE programme in Lagos and reported among other findings that teachers are adequate in number and fund for the smooth running of the programme is grossly inadequate. Ahmad (2014) reported that there was inadequate school facilities, poor supply of teachers and instructional resources for implementation of UBE curriculum. Ebiyefa

(2015); Ogunode, Olatunde and Akin-ibidiran (2021) and Abutu (2015) in separate studies reported that lack of textbooks, library facilities inadequate instructional materials and lack of adequate funds, inadequate supervision, insecurity, poor capacity development were among the major setbacks responsible for low implementation of UBE curriculum. Ojumor's (2018) study revealed that the implementation of Basic Education curriculum was very poor in the study area due to lack of availability of manpower and instructional materials for the implementation of the curriculum. Similarly, results from another research by Bashir (2015) it revealed that there was inadequate qualified Islamic studies teachers, inadequate instructional materials for teaching Islamic Studies curriculum among other findings. This study was conceived to assess the implementation of the Universal Basic Education curriculum in Rural Basic schools in Gwadabawa Educational Zone, Sokoto state.

Research questions

The following research question were answered in the study:

1. What is the level of implementation of the Universal Basic Education curriculum in rural basic schools in Gwadabawa Education zone, Sokoto State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent are teachers available for the implementation of the Universal Basic Education curriculum in rural Basic schools in Gwadabawa Education zone, Sokoto State, Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges facing teachers in the implementation of Universal Basic Education curriculum in rural basic Schools in Gwadabawa Education zone, Sokoto State, Nigeria?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted of all principals and teachers of rural upper basic schools in Gwadabawa Education zone. There is a total of 46 principals and 370 teachers in Six Local Governments under Gwadabawa Education Zone. (Ministry of Basic and secondary Education, Sokoto. 2024). The population is as shown in the table 1 below:

Table 1: Population of the study

S/N	Local Governments	No. of Schools	No. of Principals	No. of Teachers
1	Binji	04	04	32
2	Gada	13	13	104
3	Gudu	06	06	48
4	Gwadabawa	07	07	56
5	Illela	07	07	58
6	Tangaza	09	09	72
Total	06	46	46	370

A multi stage sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. Convenient sampling was used in the selection of four (4) local governments areas, these are: Binji, Gwadabawa, Illela and Tangaza local Governments with a total number of 27 schools, 218 teachers and 27 principals. Based Research Advisors' (2006) recommendation a sample of 151 participants comprising of 19 principals and 132 teachers was proportionately selected. The sample was presented in table 2:

Table 2: Sample of the Study

S/N	L/Govt	Population			Sample		
		Schools	Principals	Teachers	Schools	Principals	Teachers
1	Binji	04	04	32	03	03	19
2	Gwadabawa	07	07	56	05	05	34
3	Illela	07	07	58	05	05	35
4	Tangaza	09	09	72	06	06	44
Total	04	27	27	218	19	19	132

The self-constructed instrument titled "Assessment of Universal Basic Education curriculum implementation Questionnaire" (AUBECIQ) was used to collect data from the participants. The questionnaire was a 30-item instrument structured on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. The face and content validity of the instrument was determined by experts in Curriculum and Instruction and Primary Education studies. The reliability of the instrument has a reliability index of 0.78.

Data was collected through direct administration to participants in the selected schools and the researchers waited to retrieve the completed copies of the instrument. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of simple frequency, mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and a criterion mean of 2.50 on a four (4) point Likert scale was used as a yardstick for making decision.

Results

Research Question One: What is the level of the implementation of Universal Basic Education curriculum in the rural upper basic schools in Gwadabawa Education zone of Sokoto state?

To answer this question, data collected was analyzed and the result was presented in the table 3 below:

Table 3: Result showing the Level of Implementation of UBE Curriculum in Rural Upper Basic schools in Gwadabawa Education Zone, Sokoto state

S/N	Level of Implementation of UBE Curriculum	SA	A	D	SD	X
1	Curriculum for all subjects were available to teachers in rural basic schools	7	6	39	99	1.48
2	Teachers in rural basic schools are always encouraged to use curriculum when planning their lesson	12	8	39	92	1.60
3	Curriculum guides teachers in lesson planning	109	29	9	4	3.61
4	Teachers in rural basic schools find it difficult to use curriculum in planning their lesson	9	16	27	99	1.57
5	Some teachers in rural basic schools complained about the content of the UBE curriculum	72	39	21	19	3.09

6	Some content in the UBE curriculum have cultural biases to rural basic schools	62	59	19	11	3.14
7	Teachers in rural basic schools use to implements all the content of the UBE curriculum without any difficulty	14	21	39	77	1.81
8	Teachers in rural basic schools can differentiate between the content of the old UBE curriculum and the new 9 year Basic Education Curriculum	8	26	39	78	1.76
9	Teachers in rural basic schools sometimes make some changes in the UBE curriculum to suit students' learning abilities.	69	47	18	17	3.11
10	Corruption practices affects the effective implementation of UBE curriculum in rural basic schools	69	38	25	19	3.04
Cluster Mean						2.42

Sources: *Research Survey, 2024*

Table 3 presents a summary of results of analysis for data collected on the level of implementation of UBE curriculum in rural Basic Education schools in Gwadabawa Education zone of Sokoto state, Nigeria. The results revealed item 1,2,4,7 and 8 have mean score of less than the 2.50 criterion mean while item 3,5,6,9 and 10 have mean values greater than the criterion mean. However, the result revealed a cluster mean of 2.42 for all the items assessing level of implementation of UBE curriculum in rural upper basic schools in Gwadabawa Education zone of Sokoto state. Therefore the Cluster mean of 2.42 is statistically less than the 2.50 Criterion Mean (i.e. $2.42 < 2.50$). Hence the level of implementation of the UBE curriculum in the rural upper basic schools in Gwadabawa Education zone of Sokoto state is low.

Research Question Two: To what extent are teachers available for the implementation of the Universal Basic Education curriculum in rural Basic schools in Gwadabawa Education zone, Sokoto State, Nigeria?

To answer this question, data collected was analyzed and the result was presented in table 4 below:

Table 4: Result showing availability of Teachers for the Implementation of UBE Curriculum in Rural Upper Basic schools

S/N	Availability of Teachers	SA	A	D	SD	X
1	There is need for the recruitment of more teachers to handle all subjects in rural basic schools	11	27	3	2	3.74
2	All teachers in rural basic schools are holders of NCE which is the minimum requirement for teachers in rural basic schools	9	19	39	84	1.69
3	There is provision for in-service training of teachers in rural basic schools	6	7	21	117	1.35
4	Lack of qualified teachers can not affect the implementation of UBE curriculum at Rural basic schools	5	4	39	103	1.41
5	Teachers serving in rural basic schools actively implements the content of UBE curriculum	19	26	49	57	2.04
6	Qualified teachers for all subjects are available in the rural basic schools	3	5	26	117	2.09
7	Teachers in rural basic schools teach any subject assigned to them	89	38	16	8	3.37
8	Teachers in rural basic schools attends seminars and workshops for the implementation of curriculum	3	1	31	116	1.27
9	In rural basic schools all teachers have in depth knowledge and mastery of their subject area.	15	20	39	77	1.82
10	The quality of teachers in rural basic schools is satisfactory	9	12	29	101	1.53
Cluster Mean						2.03

Sources: *Research Survey, 2024*

Table 4 presents a summary of result of analysis of data collected on the availability of teachers for the implementation of UBE curriculum in rural upper basic schools in Gwadabawa Education zone Sokoto state, Nigeria. The result revealed a cluster mean of 2.03 for all the items assessing the availability of teachers for the implementation of UBE curriculum. This indicated that teachers are not adequately

available for the effective implementation of the UBE curriculum in the rural upper basic schools in the study area.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges facing teachers in the implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) curriculum in the rural upper basic schools in Gwadabawa Education zone Sokoto State, Nigeria?

To answer this question, data collected was analyzed and the result was presented in table 5 below:

Table 5: Result showing Challenges facing teachers in the Implementation of UBE Curriculum in Rural Upper Basic Schools

S/N	Challenges facing Teachers	SA	A	D	SD	X
1	Lack of adequate fund affect teachers effective implementation of UBE curriculum in rural basic schools	116	19	11	5	3.63
2	Lack of proper supervision hinders the effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rural basic Schools	63	56	19	13	3.12
3	Heavy work load affects teachers capabilities in teaching at rural basic schools	119	27	3	2	3.74
4	Lack of support from parent and other stakeholders affect teachers in the implementation of UBE curriculum in rural basic schools	73	21	36	21	4.19
5	Lack of re-training of teachers for capacity building affect the effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rural basic Schools	111	29	6	5	2.62
6	Lack of motivation affects teachers of rural basic schools in the implementation of UBE curriculum	97	36	12	6	3.85
7	Over population of students in the classrooms affect teachers in the implementation of UBE curriculum in Rural Basic Schools	95	31	19	6	3.48

8	Non-involvement of teachers in curriculum planning affect their performance in the implementation of UBE curriculum in rural basic schools	116	29	2	4	3.15
9	The content of the UBE curriculum itself is too difficult to understand by teachers in rural basic schools	46	39	25	41	2.60
10	Insecurity of schools affects teachers implementation of UBE curriculum in rural basic schools	102	28	12	9	3.48
Cluster Mean						3.39

Table 5 presents a summary of result of analysis of data collected on the challenges facing teachers in the implementation of UBE curriculum in rural upper basic schools in Gwadabawa Education zone Sokoto State, Nigeria. The result revealed that all the items have mean values greater than the criterion mean (2.5) and cluster mean of 3.39 which is statistically greater than the 2.50 Criterion Mean (i.e. $3.39 > 2.50$). This revealed that there were numerous challenges facing teachers in the implementation of the UBE curriculum in rural upper basic schools in Gwadabawa Education zone Sokoto State, Nigeria.

The following findings were made from the study:

1. There was low level of implementation of UBE curriculum in rural upper basic schools in the study area.
2. Teachers were not adequately available for the effective implementation of UBE curriculum in rural upper basic schools in Gwadabawa Education zone, Sokoto State, Nigeria.
3. Lack of funds, poor supervision, and heavy workload, lack of capacity building/training for teachers, overcrowded classrooms, insecurity are among the challenges teachers are facing in the implementation of UBE curriculum in the study area.

Discussion of findings

The first finding revealed that the level of implementation of UBE curriculum in the study area was very low. It shows that curriculum for some subjects were not provided in some schools and teachers

in those schools finds it very difficult to even apply the curriculum in preparation of their lessons which marred the implementation process. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Ojumor (2018) and Abutu (2015) which revealed that the level of implementation of BEC in Delta Central Senatorial District is poor/low attributable to inadequate funds and instructional facilities among others.

The second finding revealed that teachers are not adequately available for the effective implementation of UBE curriculum in the study area. The above finding conforms with some of the findings of Abutu (2015), Audi (2022) and Ojumor (2018) that there are no training incentive for teachers in UBE schools, there are inadequate teachers in some schools, and there are no teachers for special need students in UBE schools to a high extent. It also corroborates Bashir's (2015) study which revealed that there were inadequate qualified teachers, and the instructional materials for teaching the subject of Islamic studies in Senior Secondary Schools in Jigawa State, Nigeria. Similarly, Ahmed (2016) revealed that there were inadequate teachers in UBE schools for sustainable development in public junior secondary schools in Nasarawa State. However, this result contradicts Kantoma (2015) who reported that qualified teachers of social studies are usually employed to teach in schools and social studies teachers who are opportune to attend training or capacity building/workshops performed better in class teaching in their schools. However the finding contradicts Ajayi and Sikiru (2021) whose study reported adequate number of teacher in UBE schools.

The third finding of this study revealed that, teachers are facing a lot of challenges in the implementation of the UBE curriculum. These range from lack of funds, poor supervision, and heavy workload, lack of capacity building/training for teachers, overcrowded classrooms to insecurity. This findings is in line with the findings of Ogunode, Olatunde and Akin-Ibidiran (2021); Madondo (2020) and Nompumelelo (2016) which revealed that inadequate supervision, poor capacity development insecurity, inadequate human resources (teachers) in schools as some of the biggest challenges faced by schools teachers. These findings are also in disagreement with the findings of Kantoma (2015) which revealed that the learning environment is adequate and conducive for teachers in JSS in Kaduna State for the effective implementation of social studies curriculum.

Conclusion

Based on the major findings of the study, it was concluded that the low level of UBE curriculum implementation in the study area was due to non-provision of UBE curriculum and lack of proper guide to teachers on implementation of the UBE curriculum, and teachers are not adequately available in the rural upper basic schools and the fewer ones available are facing a number of challenges in the implementation of curriculum ranging from poor supervision, lack of fund, insecurity, lack of professional training/capacity building to heavy workload among others.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations have been put forward:

1. UBEC and SUBEB should ensure that curriculum for all subjects are provided to teachers in rural basic schools and teachers be given regular training to enhance their capacities;
2. Government in collaboration with Schools Based Management Committees (SBMC) should also ensure that qualified teachers are employed and posted to various schools in rural areas so as to address teacher's shortage; and
3. Sokoto State Universal Basic Education Board should find a way of addressing the challenges teachers are facing in the implementation of the UBE curriculum in the study area.

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