Original Research Article

Assessment of the Implementation of Universal Basic Education Programme in Rivers State

Asuk Unyejit William (PhD)[1*]

[1]Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni Campus, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

Abstract: This study investigated the implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Rivers State. Descriptive survey research design was employed for the study. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study comprise 8182 teachers in Rivers State UBE. The stratified simple random sampling technique was used to draw 400 male and female teachers for the study, using Taro Yamane formula to determine the sample size. Data was collected using a self-structured questionnaire titled "Assessment of the Implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme (AIUBEP) and validated by experts in measurement and evaluation. The corrections and contributions made by experts were built into the final draft of the questionnaire. 0.75 was obtained as a measure of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha Statistical technique. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while independent t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 5% probability level. The results showed that availability of infrastructural facilities, number of qualified teachers and free and compulsory education significantly influence the effective implementation of the UBE programme in Rivers State. Based on the above submissions, adequate infrastructural facilities, employment of teachers with requisite educational qualification and provision of fund to enhance free and compulsory education amongst other influence the effective implementation of the UBE programme in Rivers State.
Keywords: Universal Basic Education (UBE), Taro Yamane formula, internal consistency.

INTRODUCTION

Assessment in the field of education is seen as an important component of teaching and learning process. Here, assessment means a process of collecting information to specify and verify problems as well as making decisions about the students. To Asuquo, *et al.,* (2005) assessment is regarded as a multifaceted process that in involves the several procedures used in collecting information. In the same vain, the author anchored that the explicitness of the measuring process, the objectivity of the procedure and the purpose of what the products are put into use actually determined whether or not an activity is an assessment. In like manner, Asuru (2011) and Afemikhe, *et al.,* (2016) maintained that assessment constitutes the central focus in teaching and learning in the educational industry. It includes the totality of the processes of collating information for decision making about the learners, teachers, instructional process, curricular, schools, educational policies and the study at large.

Again, Asuk (2017) defined assessment as the gathering of relevant information to help individuals, groups or teachers to make valid and reliable decisions. Furthermore, the author maintained that assessment is one of the critical components in educational process that helps to improve students' academic performances vis-à-vis the quality of education. To Asuk (2022) assessment is a mechanism whereby the evaluation of students cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of behaviours are carried out systematically for decision making during a given period of schooling. In the same

*Corresponding Author: Asuk Unyejit William (PhD)
Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni Campus, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

spirit, the author opined that assessment in education is to help to examine the gaps in students' learning and to provide the appropriate remedial measures to reduce the gaps and improve the learning of the students.

Educationally, assessment is embedded in the teaching and learning process. It is the interpretation and the use of information gained to enhance its intended purpose likewise, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) is a reformed programme in Nigeria basic education delivery from primary one to junior secondary school three (i.e JS III). The aim is to reinforce the implementation of the National Policy on Education (NPE) in order to provide greater access and ensure quality in education throughout the Federation as it is free and compulsory (Adomeh, *et al.,* 2015). Universal Basic Education (UBE) is a well-defined scheme and process of fulfilling the aim of education for all (EFA) as endorsed at the world conference on education held Jomtien in 1990 (Universal Basic Education Commission – UBEC (2004). According to the world conference on education, basic education is made free and available to all and sundry. Thus, emphasizing free access, equity, efficiency, literature, numeracy and long-life skills for all (2004).

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme is an educational programme aimed at eradicating illiteracy, ignorance and poverty. It is in compliance with the Declaration of the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA). The world summit for children stated that children should have access to basic education and emphasis on raising the levels of female literacy.

The Goals of Universal Basic Education
Yusuf and Ajere (2016) stated the goals of UBE as follows:
   i.   Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
   ii. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, with special emphasis on girls and minorities have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
   iii. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls full and equal access to basic quality education.
   iv. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
   v.   Achieving a 50 percent improvement in adult literacy by 2015, especially for women and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
   vi. Finally, improving all aspects of the quality education, and ensuring excellence for all, so

that recognised and reasonable learning outcomes are achieved, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Objectives of Universal Basic Education
The objectives of the UBE programme as stipulated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria FRN (2000) are as follows:
   i.   Development of the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotions.
   ii. The provision of free universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school age.
   iii. Reducing drastically the incidents of school drop out from the formal school system (through improved relevance, equality and efficient education).
   iv. Catering for the entire needs of young persons who for any reason had an interrupt in their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision of basic education.
   v.   Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate level of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, morale and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for a lifelong learning.

These are demonstrations of the nation's bold attempt to address the needs of Nigerians and the desire to move the nation forward educationally.

The Availability of Infrastructural Facilities for the Effective Implementation of UBE Programme
Oyekale (2019) conducted a study on the assessment of conduciveness of learning environment at Nigeria's primary schools. The design of the study was survey design. The population comprised all the primary schools in Nigeria. Through simple random technique 744 primary schools were selected as the sample size. Data were analyzed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression. The results obtained showed that availability of infrastructural facilities enhance effective implementation of UBE programme in Rivers State.

Again, Ogedi and Obionus (2017) investigated the poor learning environment as a threat to teaching and learning activities at basic education level in Imo state, Nigeria. The study aimed at finding how unconducive learning environment could hinder effective teaching and learning activities at basic education level in Okigwe Local Government Area of Imo state. The population of the study was 150 teachers and by simple random sampling technique 32 were selected as the sample size. The results obtained showed that unconducive learning environment hinders effective teaching and learning activities.

Availability of Qualited Teachers for Effective Implementation of UBE Programme

Oladimeji and Ogunyebi (2019) investigated the assessment of the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in south-west Nigeria. The study assessed the extent to which UBE programme has been implemented in south-west Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study consisted of students, teachers of both primary and the junior secondary schools. The sample size of the study was one thousand (1,000) head teachers, principals, teachers, education personnel and students. The results showed that adequate availability of qualified teachers in the UBE programme enhance the effective implementation of the UBE programme.

Nakpodia (2011) investigated teachers influence on the implementation of UBE programme in the junior secondary schools in the south senatorial district of Delta state. The research design used was ex-post facto with a population of 2,040 and sample size of 50 teachers. The results obtained showed that adequate availability of teachers improve the effective implementation of UBE programme.

Free and Compulsory Education for the Effective Implementation of UBE Programme

The free and compulsory education implies that pupils/students of school age should be allowed to attain schools with little or no cost from their parents. It implies that government should take total responsibility of school aged students. In line with the foregoing, Abiodum-Oyebaje and Akintayo (2016) investigated the implementation of free Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Oyo state senatorial district. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population covers all the primary schools in Oyo state south senatorial district with a population of 22,012 teachers. This senatorial district was selected because it consists of urban area. The population of the study was 500 teachers in the study area. The result obtained showed that free and compulsory education enhances the effective implementation for education for (EFA) as stipulated in the objective of UBE programme.

Again, Akpabio and Sammy (2020) investigated the extent the free and compulsory UBE programme was implement in Akwa Ibom state. The study adopted a correlational research design. Data collected was analysed statistically with the help of Pearsons' Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 5% probability level. The results showed that there is a positive significant relationship between the compulsory educations in the UBE programme.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Two major theories will be examined here namely: (i) Empowerment Evaluation theory and (ii) System Theory.

i. **Empowerment Evaluation Theory (EET)** – The proponent of this theory was David Fetherman (Fetterman, 2012) who uses a technique to foster self-determination. Self-determination theory describes an individual's ability to chart with his or her course in life and to identify and express needs. The theory sees evaluation as a vehicle of self-determination. Therefore, empowerment evaluation theory seeks to increase the probability of success of the programme and the use of appropriate techniques to achieve the desire objectives. The basic aim of the theory is put together all the variables that could enhance the implementation of the UBE programme in Rivers State.

ii. **System Theory (ST)** – Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (1968) was one of the proponents of system theory in education. The theory is used to explain the different interrelated parts such that the interaction of any part affects the whole system. The theory emphasize that the interdependency of the various units make up a system. This shows that the adequate qualified teachers, free and compulsory education, availability of infrastructural materials among others make the implementation of the UBE programme possible to realise.

On the whole, the study hinged on two theories. These theories are related to the study because UBE programme involves different elements, stages among others to ease its implementation.

Statement of the Problem

The cardinal objective of the National Policy on Education is focused on the implementation of the UBE programme. The UBE programme is meant to provide basic, equal and free education for all. But since the inception of the programme series of complaints were levied at the door post of UBE programme which include and not limited to: poor infrastructural facilities, inadequate staffing and funding, lack of adequate free and compulsory education among others.

Therefore, the extent to which infrastructural facilities available enhance effective implementation, the extent to which the availability of qualified teachers enhance effective implementation and finally the extent to which the free and compulsory education enhance effective implementation of the UBE programme in Rivers State. Consequently, the foregoing constitute the problem of the study.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to assess the implementation of the UBE programme in Rivers State using the UBE guidelines (1999) as the benchmark. Specifically, the study intends to find out:
1. The extent infrastructural facilities available enhance effective implementation of the UBE

programme based on teachers' gender mean rating scale.

2. The extent the availabilities of qualified teachers enhance effective implementation of the UBE programme based on teachers' gender mean rating scale.

3. The extent the free and compulsory education enhance effective implementation of the UBE programme based on teachers' gender mean rating scale.

Research Questions
The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. To what extents are he infrastructural facilities available enhance the effective implementation of the UBE programmed based on teachers' gender mean rating scale?

2. To what extent are he availabilities of qualified male and female teachers enhance the effective implementation of the UBE programme base on teachers' gender rating scale?

3. To what extent do the mean ratings of free and compulsory education enhance the effective implementation of the UBE programme in Rivers State?

Hypotheses
The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the availability of infrastructural materials for the effective implementation of the UBE programme in Rivers State.

2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating on the availability of qualified teachers for the effective implementation of the UBE programme based on gender.

3. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers for free and compulsory education for effective implementation of the UBE programme in Rivers State.

METHOD
The study was guided by a plan of action as presented below:

The survey research design was adopted for this study. This is because it is non-experimental study and the variables involved in the study have been occurred earlier in the population and so they were only measured and not manipulated in the study. Nworgu (2016) describe survey design as a systematic manner that gives the characteristics, features and facts about a given population.

The population of the study comprises all the teachers in the junior secondary schools in the 23 local government area of Rivers State. In selecting the

sample and sampling technique, the appropriate stratified simple random sampling technique was used to draw 180 male teachers and 220 female teachers respectively using Taro Yamane Statistical Method. The sample sizes of 400 teachers of the UBE programme in Rivers State were selected from the 23 local government areas of Rivers State. On the instrument for data collection, self-constructed questionnaire titled "Assessment of the Implementation of UBE programme (AIUBEP) in Rivers State.

In the validation of the instrument experts in assessment of instruments and measurement and evaluation vetted the relevance of the items in achieving the objective were considered valid for the study. Again, the content coverage of the instrument was validated by experts in instrument design and measurement and evaluation. To determine the validity of the instrument, the instrument titled AIUBEP was given to experts to vet the items in terms of phrasing, content coverage, relevance of the items in achieving the set objectives and they considered them valid.

To establish the reliability of the instrument, twenty (20) copies of the instruments AIUBEP were administered to junior secondary school teachers outside the scope of the study for two (2) consecutive times. The correlation of the two administrations using the Rulon Statistical technique gives a reliability coefficient of 0.82, indicating that the instrument is reliable.

In the method of data collection, the AIUBEP rating scales were administered to the respondents (teachers) of the UBE programme in Rivers State. The administered instruments were collected back immediately to generate data from the study. Again, in the method of data analysis, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while independent t-test aided by the statistical package for social sciences version 22 was used to test the null hypotheses at 5% probability level.

RESULTS
The results of the study are presented as follows and guided by the research questions answered and hypotheses tested at 5% probability level.

Research Question One
To what extent are the infrastructural facilities available enhance effective implementation of the UBE programmes in Rivers State?

Hypothesis One
There is no significance difference in the mean rating of teachers on the availability of facilities for the effective implementation of the UBE programs in Rivers State.

Results of teachers' responses on the infrastructural facilities available for effective implementation of the UBE programmes in Rivers State based on gender.

Table 1: Showing the mean, SD and t-test Analysis

Group	N	Mean	Std	Df	r	t-value	p-test	decision
Male teacher	180	2.90	0.80	398	1.96	3.54	0.08	Accepted
Female Teachers	220	2.96	0.82					

Table 1 showed that the mean of male and female teachers' responses are 2.90 and 2.96 with their respective standard deviations of 0.80 and 0.82. The result showed that infrastructural facilities available enhance the implementation of UBE programme in Rivers State. Subjecting the results to t-test analysis the results showed that t- calculate value 3.54, p=0.08>0.05 is greater than the chosen r-level at 398 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the availability of physical structures for the effective implementation of UBE programme in Rivers State. This study is in agreement with that of Ejere (2011) who found that for effective implementation of the UBE programmes, schools must be provided with adequate

infrastructures and physical facilities like classrooms, libraries, computers, toilets etc so as to meet the demand of the students and enhance teaching and learning process.

Research Question Two

To what extent are the availabilities of qualified male and female tachers enhance the effective implementation of the UBSE programmes in Rivers State?

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the mean rating on the availability of qualified male and female teachers for the effective implementation of the UBE programmes in Rivers State.

Table 2: Showing the mean, SD and t-test analysis on the availability of qualified male and female teachers for the effective implementation of the UBE programmes in Rivers State

Group	N	Mean	Std	Df	t-crit	t-value	p-test	decision
Male teacher	180	3.00	0.96	398	1.96	3.19	0.08	Accepted
Female Teachers	220	2.90	0.94					

The results in table 2 showed that the mean ratings of male and female teachers are 3.00 and 2.94 respectively. When subjecting the results to t-test statistical analysis, the results obtained showed that t-calculate value 3.19, p Value = 0.08>0.05 at 398 is greater than the chosen r-level at 398 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the educational qualifications of teachers for the effective implementation of UBE programmes in Rivers State.

This study is in line with the findings of Ude (2006) who supported that qualified male and female teachers will influence teaching and learning. Again, the author maintained that qualified male and female teachers enhance effective implementation of UBE

programmes in Rivers State. Again, this study collaborated with the finding of FRN (2004) who maintained that quality teachers enhance quality education and vis-à-vis the implementation of UBE programme in Nigeria.

Research Question Three

To what extent do the mean ratings of male and female free and compulsory education enhance the effective implementation of the UBE programmes in Rivers State?

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers for free and compulsory education for the effective implementation of the UBE programmes in Rivers State.

Table 3: Showing the results of mean, SD, and t-test analysis on male and female teachers' responses of free and compulsory education for the effective implementation of the UBE programmes in Rivers State.

Group	N	Mean	Std	Df	t-crit	t-value	p-test	decision
Male teacher	180	2.63	0.50	398	1.96	1.95	0.08	Accepted
Female Teachers	220	2.60	0.40					

In table 3, the mean responses of male teachers were 2.62 with standard deviation 0.50 while the mean responses of female teachers were 2.60 with a standard deviation of 0.40 respectively. Hence, no absolute difference in the mean rating of male and female

teachers responses on free and compulsory education in Rivers State. Subjecting the results to t-test analysis, the results obtained showed that the t-calculated value t-1.98, pValue 0.08>0.05 at 398 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted than the

chosen r-level. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on free and compulsory education to enhance effective implementation of the UBE programmes in Rivers State.

This study is in support of the finding of Ogbonaya (2012) who maintained that poor funding did not enhance free and compulsory education in the UBE programmes. Hence, head teachers levy the students in order to meet up the schools need.

Again, the study supported the finding of Ofonime (2020) who found that no differences in the mean responses of teachers towards the availability of funds for effective implementation of UBE programmes. Consequently, this hampered the notion of free and compulsory education in Rivers State.

CONCLUSION
The study established that the availability of infrastructural facilities, number of qualified teachers and free and compulsory education significantly influence the effective implementation of the UBE programme in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:
i. Adequate infrastructural facilities to enhance the successful implementation of UBE programmes in Rivers State.
ii. Regular seminars, workshops and conferences should be organized for teachers in the UBE to update their knowledge for efficient and effective instructional delivery.
iii. The employment of teachers into the UBE programmes should be based on teaching qualifications.
iv. Fund should be provided to enhance the free and compulsory education at the UBE levels.

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