



Assessment of the Extent of Implementation of the Universal Basic Education Curriculum in Rivers State.

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Abstract: *The study assesses the Universal Basic Education Curriculum and its extent of implementation in Rivers State. The study used a descriptive research design. The study population consisted of all elementary school teaching staff, while the target population is 7439 elementary school teaching staff in Rivers State and the sample size for this study was 366 teaching staff. The questionnaire was adopted as a data collection tool with a reliability coefficient of 0.82, using the test-retest method. The research questions were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation statistics, while the hypotheses were tested using a z-test at the 0.05 significant level. Based on the data collected and analyzed, the study reached the following conclusions: The study provided evidence to a large extent, that UBE curriculum has created awareness of education in Rivers State, the UBE curriculum is free and available to Rivers students. The UBE curriculum has reduced the dropout rate In Rivers State, the UBE curriculum has adequate infrastructure that has been used for the effective implementation of the UBE curriculum in Rivers State and qualified teachers have been employed to use the curriculum of UBE for the effective implementation of the UBE curriculum at Rivers State.*

Keywords: *Assessment, Basic Education, Curriculum, Implementation*

1. INTRODUCTION

Universal Basic Education is a Federal Government Initiative to address current deficiencies in the Basic Education subsector of the educational system. The specific objectives of the Universal Basic Education Program, as described in the Implementation Instructions issued by the Federal Ministry of Education (2000), are the following:

- 1) Develop a strong awareness in the entire population and a strong commitment to its strong promotion.
- 2) Provide free Universal Basic Education to all Nigerian children of school age.
- 3) Significantly reduce dropouts from the formal education system by promoting relevance, equity and efficiency.
- 4) Satisfy the learning needs of young people who, for one reason or



another, have had to suspend their studies through appropriate modalities of complementarity to impart and promote basic education. 5) Ensure the acquisition of the required levels of literacy, education and basic moral, ethical and civic values to build a solid foundation for lifelong learning. One of the main aspirations of any country is to greatly reduce illiteracy, especially in today's contemporary cultures. This is because education is one of the basic indicators used to measure and classify countries as developed or developing. Although the word 'curriculum' does not have a single meaning, it can be seen as a process encompassing the whole experiences through which the school teaches young and immature members of society (Qnwuka, 2010). Likewise, the demands of society are met through the approaches developed by society, with awareness of social, cultural and technical changes over time. Thus, the curriculum is the life and program of the school. The school decides and promotes the kind of life it wants the students to live. Once again, school life is a continuation of life in the community it serves. In fact, a school is a miniature community. The result is that each style of education must require a proportionate curriculum in order to thrive. In light of the above, the comprehensive Basic Education Curriculum emerges as a bridge to the existing gap in the country's previous educational system. Therefore, the type of formal education in Nigeria adopted from the British was inadequate and unsatisfactory for the development demands of the Nation after several decades of independence. Consequently, Favunwa (2012), Nduka (2013) and Opayan (2012) believed that the education system was regional, elitist and insensitive to the demands and aspirations of today's Nigerian society. They claimed that the so-called 6-5-4 education system only emphasized the "3Rs," which stand for reading, writing, and arithmetic. However, in an attempt to correct the inherent shortcomings of this educational system, the Federal Government of Nigeria has committed itself to defining a form of education that will meet the development demands of a rising Nigerian society. This resulted in the birth of the 6-3-4 education system that was inaugurated in 1982 (Omolowa, 2004).

However, despite the expected advantages of this new system, such as heralding an educational revolution in the country, towards the technical advancement of the nation, the system suffered as a result of poor and careless implementation (Uwaifo and Uddin 2009). Therefore, the Federal Government of Nigeria recently adopted the 9-3-4 education system which focuses on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This new educational program through its approach is designed to eliminate or at least reduce the rate of social vices such as bad practice in exams, academic terror, unemployment, youth disorder, poor quality of education, extortion of certificates and other associated social vices. Furthermore, the curriculum dictates that the method of assessment in a UBE course will be predominantly school-based assessment or continuous assessment (CA). This should decide the child's progression from one level to the next, so that failure to meet specific criteria means the child will have to repeat the level. This new curriculum was introduced in 2007 with only Primary 1 to Junior School (JSS1). The previous elementary school curriculum was phased out in July 2013, while the middle school curriculum was phased out in July 2010 (UBEC 2011). Therefore, under this framework, school-based continuous assessment constitutes 60% of overall student assessment, while external examination conducted by the state Ministry of Education and administered by an accredited national examination body represents the remaining 40% (Ignatius & Frederick, 2016). Furthermore, under the Universal Basic Education curriculum, there is no First School Leaving Certificate. The Common Entrance Examination for Admission to JSS 1 was withdrawn as of 2006. Therefore, the certificate



should only be awarded upon completion of JSS 3. This is called the Basic Education Certificate (BEC).

Obstacles to effective implementation of the UBE curriculum

It cannot be denied that the need for comprehensive basic education in today's Nigerian society is a must. However, there are some basic problems/challenges to guard against if the new plan is to succeed. The following are the perceived challenges:

1. **Implementation Difficulty:** This has been a recurring challenge to implement projects in the nation. For example, universal primary education fails due to inadequate implementation.
2. **Funding:** This curriculum is expected to be free and compulsory. However, the huge financial burden on the government often makes parents and communities cooperate with the government to finance basic education in the country, but since most parents/communities are poor, children still do not want to study .
3. **At present, the supply and maintenance of infrastructure facilities, including buildings, equipment and educational materials, is insufficient.**
4. **Shortage of qualified teachers:** Currently, there is a shortage of qualified teachers to attend to basic education in the country. In addition, teachers are underpaid and there is a massive exodus of qualified teachers from the teaching profession due to inadequate incentives and the low prestige of the profession.
5. **Lack of dedication on the part of government and community leaders:** The UBE Law (2004) stipulates that education in the first nine years should be free and compulsory. However, no parent or guardian has ever been penalized for removing their child or ward from a basic education establishment.

In the area of curriculum, UBE seeks a bottom-up approach with teachers as end users, playing an active role in the curriculum revision and textbook production processes. Students benefit from an environmentally sustainable textbook while the educational process is dynamic and child-centred (Mpka, 2003). In short, the curriculum tries to generate students who are not limited in their behavior only to knowledge, but also to action.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Today in Rivers State, many school-age children still roam the streets during school hours; the school dropout rate is increasing; lack of concern for the learning needs of students; There is not an adequate level of literacy and numeracy to build the racial, moral, and civic values necessary to lay a solid foundation for lifelong learning. These problems can be attributed to many factors, such as low student and teacher performance due to old and dilapidated buildings with leaky roofs, inadequate infrastructure facilities, lack of teaching materials, lack of competent teachers, equipped libraries, supply of poor power for information and communication technology (ICT)) and many more, high dropout rate, lack of provision of textbooks and other resources, curriculum development, supervision and classroom management, among others. Since the initiative's inception, researchers have considered the Rivers State UBE scenario for effective implementation for better plan sustainability. Therefore, the researcher is concerned about the large gap between the implementation of the project and its objectives. Therefore, the rationale for this study is to assess the extent to which the UBE curriculum has been implemented in Rivers State.



1.3 Research questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

- 1) To what extent has the UBE curriculum created awareness of education in Rivers State?
- 2) To what extent is the UBE Curriculum free and available to students in Rivers State?
- 3) To what extent has the UBE curriculum reduced the dropout rate in Rivers State?
- 4) To what extent has the appropriate infrastructure been used to effectively implement the UBE curriculum in Rivers State?
- 5) To what extent have qualified teachers been employed to effectively implement the UBE curriculum in Rivers State?

1.4 Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were tested for the study

- 1: There are no statistically significant differences in the average rating of male and female elementary school teachers on their students' conscious awareness of education in Rivers State.
- 2): There are no statistically significant differences in the average ranking of male and female elementary school teachers on the extent to which Universal Basic Education Curriculum is free and available to students in Rivers State.
- 3) There are no statistically significant differences in the average qualification of male and female elementary school teachers to the extent that the UBE curriculum reduced the dropout rate in Rivers State.
- 4) There are no statistically significant differences in the average rating of male and female elementary school teachers on the extent to which adequate infrastructure is used for the effective implementation of the UBE curriculum in Rivers State.
- 5) There are no statistically significant differences in the average rating of male and female elementary school teachers on the extent to which qualified teachers are recruited for the effective implementation of the UBE curriculum in Rivers State.

2. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was used for this study. The study population is made up of all teaching staff of the primary school, while the target population is 7,439 elementary school teachers in Rivers State (Rivers State Universal Basic Education, 2022). The sample size of this study was 366 teachers. Among them (178 male and 188 female teachers), they were selected from the target population with the help of “Fluid Survey Online Sample Size Calculator” (FSOSSC). Therefore, when selecting respondents for this study, two LGAs were selected from each state senatorial district. While the stratified sampling technique is adopted.

2.1 Instrumentation

A self-developed tool (questionnaire) entitled "Questionnaire for the Extent of Implementation of the Universal Basic Education Curriculum" (QEUBEC), using a four (4) point scale of very high extent (VHE), high extent (HE), low extent (LE) and very low extent (VLE). The tool was delivered to three experts for facial verification. After critically analyzing the elements of the tool, their feedback and corrections helped developed the final tools. To establish the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was used. With this, a test was conducted with 20 respondents outside the sample area of the study who, after a period of two weeks, were given new copies of the same test to the same group of students. The results were then analyzed and



Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to test the reliability coefficient of the result. It Provided a reliability index of 0.82

2.2 Method of data analysis

In this study, the mean, standard deviation and Z-test were adopted to analyze the collected data. The mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions, while the Z-test was used to test the hypotheses. Therefore, the decision rule is based on a mean score of 1.49 and below is considered very low extreme, a mean score of 1.50 to 2.49 is considered low extreme, a mean score of 2.50 to 3.49 is considered a high score, while any average score of 3.50 or higher is considered very high. The decision of the tested hypothesis was made by comparing the calculated Z value with the Z value from the table.

3. RESULTS

Research Question one: *To what extent has the UBE curriculum created awareness of education in Rivers State?*

Table 1: Mean Responses of the male and female students on the extent the UBE curriculum has created conscious awareness about education in Rivers State

S/N	Item Statement	Male (n = 178)			Female (n = 188)		
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	RMK	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	RMK
1	What is your excitement rate about going to school?	2.62	1.19	HE	2.70	1.20	HE
2	What is your level of obedience to your teachers?	2.52	1.24	HE	2.57	1.29	HE
3	How is your regular attendance to school?	3.19	1.07	HE	3.20	1.12	HE
4	How would you rate your last examination results	3.29	0.63	HE	3.29	0.64	HE
	Grand Mean/SD	2.91	1.03	HE	2.94	1.06	HE

Source: *Researcher's Field Result, 2022*

Table 1 reveals that the grand means for both male and female respondents on the extent the UBE curriculum has created conscious awareness about education in Rivers State is higher than the decision mean of 2.5 (that is 2.91, 2.92 > 2.50), an indication that both respondents share the same opinion that to an high extent the UBE curriculum has created conscious awareness about education in Rivers State.

Research Question two: *To what extent is the Universal Basic Education curriculum free and available to pupils in Rivers State?*

Table 2: Mean Responses of the male and female respondents on the extent the UBE curriculum is free and available to pupils in Rivers State.

S/N	Item Statement	Male (n = 178)			Female (n = 188)		
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	RMK	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	RMK



5	Do you pay any school fee in your school?	2.48	1.23	LE	2.53	1.28	HE
6	Does your school provide you with free uniforms?	3.20	1.02	HE	3.22	1.07	HE
7	Is there free lunch is your school?	3.21	0.66	HE	3.18	0.67	HE
8	Did you pay for your text books?	2.92	0.89	HE	3.01	0.89	HE
	Grand Mean/SD	2.95	0.95	HE	2.99	0.98	HE

Source: *Researcher's Field Result, 2022*

It was revealed from the results in the above table that the grand means for both male and female respondents on the extent the UBE curriculum is free and available to pupils in Rivers State is higher than the decision mean of 2.5 (that is 2.95, 2.99 > 2.50), an indication that both respondents share the same opinion that to an high extent the UBE curriculum is free and available to pupils in Rivers State.

Research Question three: *To what extent has the Universal Basic Education curriculum reduced the rate of dropouts from schools in Rivers State?*

Table 3: Mean Responses of the male and female respondents on the extent the UBE curriculum has reduced the rate of dropouts from schools in Rivers State.

S/N	Item Statement	Male (n = 178)			Female (n = 188)		
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	RMK	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	RMK
9	Is there a school counselor in your school?	2.46	1.26	LE	2.51	1.32	HE
10	Do you go on academic excursions?	3.17	1.07	HE	3.18	1.12	HE
11	Do your teachers inspect your notes?	3.29	0.62	HE	3.29	0.63	HE
12	Is excellent performance awarded at the end of the session?	2.93	0.90	HE	3.02	0.90	HE
	Grand Mean/SD	2.96	0.96	HE	3.00	0.99	HE

Source: *Researcher's Field Result, 2022*

It was revealed from the results in the above table that the grand means for both respondents on the extent the UBE curriculum has reduced the rate of dropouts from schools in Rivers State and this is higher than the decision mean of 2.5 (that is 2.96, 3.00 > 2.50), an indication that both groups share the same opinion that to an high extent the UBE curriculum has reduced the rate of dropouts from schools in Rivers State.

Research Question four : *To what extent has adequate infrastructure been utilized for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State?*



Table 4: Mean Responses of the male and female respondents on the extent to which adequate infrastructure have been utilized for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State

S/N	Item Statement	Male (n = 178)			Female (n = 188)		
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	RMK	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	RMK
13	Is there a school library?	2.73	1.32	HE	2.59	1.28	HE
14	Are your classroom equipped with good chairs?	3.20	1.05	HE	3.22	1.10	HE
15	Are the doors and windows intact?	3.25	0.61	HE	3.25	0.62	HE
16	Is there a playground in your school?	2.89	0.93	HE	2.98	0.93	HE
	Grand Mean/SD	3.02	0.98	HE	3.01	0.98	HE

Source: *Researcher's Field Result, 2022*

It was revealed from the results in the above table that the grand means for both male and female respondents on the extent to which adequate infrastructure are been utilized for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State and these are higher than the decision mean of 2.5 (that is 3.02, 3.01 > 2.50), an indication that both groups share the same opinion that to an high on the extent to which adequate infrastructure have been utilized for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State.

Research Question five: *To what extent has employment of qualified teachers been utilized for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State?.*

Table 5: Mean Responses of the male and female respondents on the extent to which employment of qualified teachers are utilized for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State

S/N	Item Statement	Male (n = 178)			Female (n = 188)		
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	RMK	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	RMK
17	Do your teachers use instructional materials to teach?	2.73	1.32	HE	2.59	1.28	HE
18	Are there teachers for the subjects you offer?	3.20	1.05	HE	3.22	1.10	HE
19	Does your teacher's teaching style excite you?	3.25	0.61	HE	3.25	0.62	HE
20	Does your teacher give you assignments after each class?	2.89	0.93	HE	2.98	0.93	HE
	Grand Mean/SD	3.02	0.98	HE	3.01	0.98	HE

Source: *Researcher's Field Result, 2022*

Table 5 reveals that the grand means for both male and female respondents on the extent to which employment of qualified teachers are utilized for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State and these are higher than the decision mean of 2.5 (that is 3.02, 3.01 > 2.50), an indication that both groups share the same opinion that to an high extent to which employment of qualified teachers are utilized for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State.



Test of Hypotheses

- 1: **There is no statistically significant difference in the mean rating of male and female primary school teachers on the conscious awareness of their students to education in Rivers State.**

Table 6: z–test Analysis of Differences between male and female primary school teachers responses on the conscious awareness of their students to education in Rivers State.

Variable	N	\bar{x}	SD	Z-cal	Z-crit	α	Remarks
Male	178	2.91	1.03				Accepted
				-0.28	1.96	0.05	H ₀
Female	188	2.94	1.06				

Source: *Researcher’s Field Result, 2022*

The analysis shows a Z – calculated value of -0.28 which is less than the Z- critical value of 1.96 and since the computed value is less than the table value, it is not significant which confirms the stated null hypothesis. Sequel to the above facts , the null hypothesis which says there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female primary school teachers on the conscious awareness of their students to education in Rivers State while the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

- 2: **There is no statistically significant difference in the mean rating of male and female primary school teachers on the extent to which the Universal Basic Education curriculum is free and available to pupils in Rivers State**

Table 7: z–test Analysis of Differences between male and female primary school teachers on the extent to which the Universal Basic Education curriculum is free and available to pupils in Rivers State.

Variable	N	\bar{x}	SD	Z-cal	Z-crit	α	Remarks
Male	178	2.95	0.95				Accepted
				-0.38	1.96	0.05	H ₀
Female	188	2.99	0.99				

Source: *Researcher’s Field Result, 2022*

The analysis shows a Z – calculated value of -0.38 which is less than the Z- critical value of 1.96 and since the computed value is less than the table value, it is not significant which confirms the stated null hypothesis. Sequel to the above facts , the null hypothesis which says There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female primary school teachers on the extent to which the Universal Basic Education curriculum is free and available to pupils in Rivers State while the alternative hypothesis is rejected

3. **There is no statistically significant difference in the mean rating of male and female primary school teachers on the extent to which the Universal Basic**



Education curriculum has reduced the rate of dropouts from schools in Rivers State.

Table 8: z–test Analysis of Differences between male and female primary school teachers on the extent to which the Universal Basic Education curriculum has reduced the rate of dropouts from schools in Rivers State.

Variable	N	\bar{x}	SD	Z-cal	Z-crit	α	Remarks
Male	178	2.96	0.96				Accepted
				-0.38	1.96	0.05	H ₀
Female	188	3.00	0.99				

Source: *Researcher’s Field Result, 2022*

The analysis shows a Z – calculated value of -0.38 which is less than the Z- critical value of 1.96 and since the computed value is less than the table value, it is not significant which confirms the stated null hypothesis. Sequel to the above facts , the null hypothesis which says there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female primary school teachers on the extent to which the Universal Basic Education curriculum has reduced the rate of dropouts from schools in Rivers State is accepted while the alternative hypothesis is rejected

4. There is no statistically significant difference in the mean rating of male and female primary school teachers on the extent to which adequate infrastructures have been utilized for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State

Table 9: z–test Analysis of Differences between male and female primary school teachers on the extent to which adequate infrastructures have been utilized for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State

Variable	N	\bar{x}	SD	Z-cal	Z-crit	α	Remarks
Male	178	3.02	0.98				Accepted
				0.10	1.96	0.05	H ₀
Female	188	3.01	0.98				

Source: *Researcher’s Field Result, 2022*

The analysis shows a Z – calculated value of 0.10 which is less than the Z- critical value of 1.96 and since the computed value is less than the table value, it is not significant which confirms the stated null hypothesis. Sequel to the above facts , the null hypothesis which says there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female primary school teachers on the extent to which adequate infrastructures have been utilized for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State is accepted while the alternative hypothesis is rejected

5. There is no statistically significant difference in the mean rating of male and female primary school teachers on the extent to which employment of qualified teachers has been utilized for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State.



Table 10: z–test Analysis of Differences between male and female primary school teachers on the extent to which employment of qualified teachers has been utilized for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State.

Variable	N	\bar{x}	SD	Z-cal	Z-crit	α	Remarks
Male	178	3.02	0.98				Accepted
				0.10	1.96	0.05	Ho
Female	188	3.01	0.98				

Source: *Researcher’s Field Result, 2022*

The analysis shows a Z – calculated value of 0.10 which is less than the Z- critical value of 1.96 and since the computed value is less than the table value, it is not significant which confirms the stated null hypothesis. Sequel to the above facts , the null hypothesis which says There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female primary school teachers on the extent to which employment of qualified teachers has been utilized for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State is accepted while the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of this study to a great extent has proven that the UBE curriculum has created awareness of education in Rivers State. This is consistent with the fifth specific objective of the Universal Basic Education program, as described in the implementation guidelines of the Federal Ministry of Education (2000), which establishes that UBE study plans must guarantee the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, education, ethics and ethics. and the civic values necessary to lay a solid foundation for lifelong learning. In addition, the results of the analysis confirmed that the UBE curriculum is largely free and available to Rivers State students. This statement is presented in the General Implementation Guidelines of the Federal Ministry of Education which state: "One of the main wishes of every nation is to substantially reduce illiteracy, especially in these modern societies." Additionally, the results of this study largely demonstrated that the UBE curriculum reduced the dropout rate in Rivers State. Furthermore, the adequacy of the infrastructure that was used for the effective implementation of the UBE curriculum in Rivers State was also greatly emphasized in line with Johnson's (2011) statement . According to Johnson, (2011) that educational curricula must be designed and structured to meet the needs of students, as well as those who need continuous learning, self-employment and peaceful coexistence. It has also been revealed that the recruitment of highly qualified teachers is used for the effective implementation of the UBE curriculum in Rivers State.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions are drawn from the responses of the respondents. It is clear from the respondents that Education for any individual is inevitable. It is true that there are some unresolved conflicting gaps in the curriculum that can make students uncomfortable, however



there is a wide range of intervention activities that can be used to address them. Conflict of inadequacy in the different levels of the curriculum. Therefore, the curriculum must be implemented. It must be able to meet the needs of students. Based on the results, the study concluded that the implementation of Universal Basic Education Curriculum in Rivers State has largely created conscious educational awareness , is free and available to students, has reduced the dropout rate, its use of infrastructure is adequate and the employment of qualified teachers has contributed to the effective implementation of the UBE curriculum in Rivers State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion above, the researcher therefore recommends that:

1. Curriculum planners should incorporate other things that will create educational awareness into the curriculum at all levels to boast educational status of the state.
2. The Curriculum should be made free and available to pupils in Rivers State.
3. Since Curriculum plays a vital role in education by reducing the rate of dropouts from schools among Rivers State students, government should encourage teachers to make use of Curriculum in teaching.
4. Since the curriculum is adequate, then government should encourage teachers to utilize the adequacy of the curriculum for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State.
5. There should be employment of qualified teachers to utilize the curriculum for effective implementation of UBE curriculum in Rivers State.

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