

Strategies for Improving Staff Personnel for Effective Implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

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Abstract

This study investigated the strategies for improving staff personnel for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in junior secondary schools in Rivers State. Descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population comprised 8,687 junior secondary school teachers. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 720 teachers out of which 120 were from urban schools while 600 were from rural schools. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire captioned Strategies for Improving Staff Personnel Questionnaire (SISPQ). The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity by experts in the department of Educational Management, University of Port Harcourt. Data collected were analyzed using mean for research questions and z-test for the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. Findings revealed among others that in-service training programs in the areas of sandwich, workshops, and conferences were strategies for improving staff personnel for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education in junior secondary schools in Rivers State. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural teachers on the in-service training programs provided in junior secondary schools in Rivers State. Recommendations were made based on the findings that government should develop more interest in the area of distance learning and refresher courses for teachers and teachers should from time to time update their knowledge, on the pedagogical skills so as to improve their effectiveness and efficiency in service delivering.

Keywords: Strategies, Improving, Staff Personnel and Effective implementation.

1.0 Introduction

Education all over the world has been described to be an important instrument for personal and social development. Many countries in the world who recognized this fact and invested heavily in education witnessed rapid growth in the economy. Nigeria as a developing country identified this and included it in her National Policy on Education. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) Education is described as an instrument “per excellence” for affecting national development FRN (2004) defined Basic Education as the type of education which lasts for nine years, it has six years of secondary education and also includes adult and non-formal education programs at primary and junior secondary school levels.

The Jomtien conference on “Education For All (EFA) as reported by Nduka (2000) stated that Basic Education is the education that is designed to meet the basic learning needs such as acquisition of skills on literacy and numeracy and basic learning content such as knowledge, values and attitudes required to survive and develop their full capacities and potentials. The early effort to combat the dreaded scourge of illiteracy was initiated in 1990 when the world leaders from the sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Caribbean countries met and formulated a framework to achieve the goals of Education for All (EFA). The aim was to meet a minimum bench mark in national education system in countries of the world.

In Nigeria, to achieve these global commitments the former president Olusegun Obasanjo launched the Universal Basic education (UBE) programme in 1999. It’s major objectives as reported by Alumedede (2006, p.110) and according to the UBE act of 2004 are as follows:

- To develop in the citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- To provide free universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school age.
- To reduce drastically the incidence of dropout from school system through improved relevance quality and efficiency.
- To cater for the learning needs of young people who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complimentary approaches to the promotion of basic education.
- To ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy numeracy, communication skills as well as ethical, moral and civic values needed for tagging a solid foundation for life long learning”.

The implementation of this education system can only be successful if the human resources (teaching staff) are well motivated and qualified. On the basis of this Aghanta (2000) advised that the number and quality

of teachers must be planned to ensure adequacy of teachers both quantitatively and qualitatively. To improve the quality of staff personnel in junior secondary schools is the responsibility of the state government. This involves sending teachers on conferences, workshops, seminars, sandwich programs, refresher courses etc. It is imperative to state that staff personnel development is the sum total of activities designed to improve the quality and production capacity of teachers in the school system. Obi (2003) observed that a well motivated, committed and flexible work force can be achieved by a coherent approach to developing strategies in the areas of teachers' development and quality of working life. In the National Policy on Education (FRN 1998), Government outlined that training shall be developed as an integral part of continuing teacher development and shall also take care of all inadequacies. Teachers to a great extent determine ultimately what happens to the educational policies. Mgbadile (2000) perceived teachers as the most important resource for achieving educational objectives and they are at the forefront of putting educational policies into action. Hence the teacher needs to be equipped with the necessary skills for sustainable development. Alumade (2006) identified motivation finance and manpower as three important factors that determine the general level of development of any society.

Since the inception of Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in Rivers State there has been complains by teachers on the present level of welfare services and quality of manpower; prominent among them are poor remuneration, lack of allowances, non-implementation of promotion arrears, recruitment of non-professionals into the field and so on. The FRN (2004) has stated that the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession shall be the Nigerian certificate in Education (NCE). In essence all those to be admitted or licensed as teachers must possess requisite teaching certificate. The researcher is concerned with the manner and way the current recruitment exercise of teachers was conducted, whereby non-professionals were required and subsequently deployed to teach in primary and secondary schools.

If basic education is a necessary tool to achieve national development, it then means that the proper devices shall be put into place. This gave the impetus for the present study aimed at investigating the strategies for improving staff development for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education in junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

1.1 Statement of Problem

Over the years teachers have been accused of various lapses and offences leading to a decline in the value of education. They are accused of being inefficient and failing to provide the necessary knowledge and skills needed by students to excel in their studies. Teachers, on their part complain of poor remuneration, inadequate training programs to keep them abreast of the current knowledge in the education industry, unconducive learning environment among others. The problem of the study was to identify the strategies for improving staff personnel for effective implementation of the universal basic education for junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What are the in-service training programs provided for teachers in effective implementation of (UBE) program in junior secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. What are the welfare services provided for teachers in effective implementation of (UBE) program in junior secondary schools in Rivers State?

1.3 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha levels.

- H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural teachers on the in-service training programs provided in junior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural teachers on the welfare services provided in junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

2.0 Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This design was found to be appropriate because it focused on the perception of respondents on the existing situation. The population of the study comprised of 8,687 junior secondary school teachers which is made up of 2,105 urban teachers and 6,582 rural teachers. The sample for the study comprised of 120 junior secondary schools out of the 236 schools, with urban having 20 and rural having 100 respectively. In the same vain 120 urban teachers and 600 rural teachers were sampled using stratified random sampling techniques, all together the total sample was 720 used for the study.

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire designed by researcher and captioned Strategies for Improving Staff Personnel Questionnaire (SISPQ). The section A of the questionnaire elicited information on the personal data of respondents while section B covered the questionnaire items. The questionnaire was face validated by experts from the department of Educational Management – University of Port Harcourt. The reliability of the items was established using test retest method to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.82 which was deemed adequate.

720 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researcher and two research

assistants. Out of this number 18 copies were wrongly filled and consequently rejected, leaving a total of 702 that were used for the analysis. The analysis of data was done using mean to answer the research questions. The items were based on a 4 point likert type scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The criterion mean was 2.5, where any score above 2.5 is agreed and score below 2.5 is disagreed. The z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

3.0 Results and Discussion

Research Questions 1: What are the in-service Training Programs provided for Teachers for Effective Implementation of UBE in Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean ratings of teachers on the provision of in-service training programs.

S/NO.	ITEMS	URBAN N = 112		RURAL N = 590		MEAN SET \bar{X}_1 \bar{X}_2	RANK	DECISION
		\bar{X}_1	SD	\bar{X}_2	SD			
1.	Sandwich program	3.00	1.73	3.07	1.75	3.04	1 st	Agreed
2.	Workshops	2.6	1.61	2.82	1.68	2.71	3 rd	Agreed
3.	Distance learning program	2.46	1.57	2.47	1.58	2.48	4 th	Disagreed
4.	Conferences/ Seminars	2.97	1.72	2.58	1.61	2.78	2 nd	Agreed
5.	Refresher courses	2.37	1.54	2.48	1.57	2.43	5 th	Disagreed
Aggregate \bar{X}		2.68		2.67				

Table 1, shows that the mean scores of items 1, 2 and 4 have scores above the criterion mean of 2.5 and thus indicating that the respondents agreed that sandwich program, workshops and conferences/seminars were the in-service training programs provided in junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions 2: What are the Welfare Services needed for Effective Implementation of UBE programme in Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean ratings of Teachers on the Welfare Services

S/NO.	ITEMS	URBAN N = 112		RURAL N = 590		MEAN SET \bar{X}_1 \bar{X}_2	RANK	DECISION
		\bar{X}_1	SD	\bar{X}_2	SD			
6.	Prompt payment of staff salaries	2.82	1.68	2.86	1.69	2.84	3 rd	Agreed
7.	Full implementation of teachers salary structure	2.96	1.72	2.83	1.68	2.89	1 st	Agreed
8.	Prompt promotion of teachers	2.66	1.63	2.84	1.68	2.75	5 th	Agreed
9.	Implementation of housing and car loans to teachers	2.96	1.74	2.79	1.67	2.88	2 nd	Agreed
10.	Provision of staff quarters and free health services	2.79	1.67	2.75	1.66	2.77	4 th	Agreed
Aggregate \bar{X}		2.84		2.81				

Table 2 analysis reveals that all the items from 6 – 10 have scores above the criterion mean of 2.5 showing that the respondents agree that prompt payment of staff salaries, full implementation of teachers salary structure, prompt promotion of teachers, implementation of housing and car loans and provision of staff quarters and free health services were the welfare needs of teachers in junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

3.1 Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural teachers on the in-service training programs provided in junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 3: z-test analysis of the responses of urban and rural teachers on the in-service training in Junior Secondary School in Rivers State.

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	z-Cal	z-critical	Decision
Urban teachers	112	2.68	1.64	700	0.59	1.96	Accepted
Rural teachers	590	2.67	1.63				

From the result of the analysis in table 3, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean rating of urban and rural teachers in the provision of in-service training programs is accepted. This is because the z-calculated value of 0.59 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 at 700 degree of freedom and 0.05 alpha level.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural teachers on the welfare services provided in junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4: z-test analysis of the responses of urban and rural teachers on the welfare services needed in Junior Secondary School in Rivers State.

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	z-Cal	z-critical	Decision
Urban teachers	112	2.84	1.68	700	1.73	1.96	Accepted
Rural teachers	590	2.81	1.67				

The analysis in table 4 reveals that the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean rating of urban and rural teachers in the provision of welfare services is accepted. This is because the z-calculated value of 1.73 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 at 700 degree of freedom and 0.05 alpha level.

4.0 Findings

From the analysis of data the following findings emerged.

1. In-service training in the areas of sandwich program, workshops, and conferences/seminars are strategies for improving staff personnel for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education in junior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. Welfare services in the form of prompt payment of salaries, full implementation of teachers salary structure, prompt promotion of teachers, implementation of housing and car loans and provision of staff quarters and free medical services are strategies for staff personnel improvement and effective implementation of Universal Basic Education in junior secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. The finding revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural teachers on the in-service trainings provided in junior secondary schools in Rivers State.
4. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural teachers on the welfare services needed in junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

4.1 Discussion of findings

The analysis of data on research question one and hypothesis one with regard to in-service training showed that sandwich program, workshops and conferences were necessary programmes required for improving the quality of teachers for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education in Rivers State. These strategies, the respondents confirmed would lead to increasing the output or quality of students. This is in line with the findings of Alumade (2006) who found that manpower development is one of the important factors that determine the general level of development of any society.

The analysis of data on research question two and hypotheses two revealed that prompt payment of staff salaries, full implementation of teachers salary structure, prompt promotion of teachers, implementation of housing and car loans, and provision of staff quarters and free health services. This finding is in agreement with the study by Aghanta (2000) who held that for teachers to be retained there should be improvement on regular payment of salaries and allowances, regular promotion etc.

4.2 Conclusion

On the strength of the findings, these conclusions were drawn that staff personnel development and welfare such as implementation of teachers salary structure, provision of health services regular promotion of teachers should be provided to raise the morale of teachers and to enhance their efficiency in the discharge of their duties.

4.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings:

1. The government should develop more interest in the area of distance learning and refresher courses for teachers. More importantly teachers should from time to time update their knowledge on the

- pedagogical skills of imparting knowledge to students.
2. Government should endeavour to provide adequate welfare services to spur teachers to perform their duties with more zeal and commitment.
3. Teachers should exhibit high moral standards as students look up to them as role models in the society.

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