

Strategies for Enhancing the Functionality of Business Studies in the Universal Basic Education Programme in South South Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the strategies for enhancing the functionality of Business studies in the Universal Basic Education Programme recently introduced in Nigeria in 1999 and implemented in September 2007. Most secondary school seem not to have requisite facilities and teachers on ground for the successful implementation of the programme. Most surprising, the subject has been made elective in the junior secondary school curriculum. Many states have not access the intervention funds lodged in by Federal government using the principle of counterpart funding. Research question and hypotheses guided the study. A 35 item questionnaire was designed and administered to 418 principals and 1254 teachers in 418 out of 1669 Junior Secondary Schools in South South Nigeria. The data were analysed using means and standard deviations, The study revealed that students should have interest in Business students, facilities and adequate teachers are highly needed for the programme, the subject should be made core in the curriculum and state governments should access the funds• of the federal government in order for enhancing the functionality of the programme.

Keywords: Methods, Functionality, Business Studies, UBE, Nigeria

Introduction

History of education in Nigeria has it that the late introduction of Business education subjects into the Nigeria secondary schools was the architect of the colonial masters of that era. Before independence, there was no serious attempt by the colonial masters to educate the citizens in specialized areas of knowledge, thus, people went to school to major in Arts because the curriculum studies offered in secondary schools then include only subjects, such as English, Religious Studies, History, Latin, Geography, philosophy and Science, mathematics and vocational subjects were not offered because colonial office in London feared the Nigeria might become more economically and technologically advanced if given the opportunity (Esene, 2012).

However, the advent of the Nigeria Policy on Education which recommended 6-3-3-4 the present educational system brought a sigh of relief to business education scholars and practitioner in the sense that the junior secondary school programme is both prevocational, pre-technical and academic. The 6-3-3-4 system of education introduced in 1982 gave birth to introduction of Business Studies in Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) curriculum. Business Studies is integrated in nature which means that the subject is taught as a single subject which has five major components of Bookkeeping, Commerce, Office Practice, Shorthand and Typewriting. Business Studies is expository and discovery in nature which enable students to discover those skills and potentials that help individuals in future for life long education. The curriculum is broad and rich in skills acquisition subjects and students are expected to cover all the various subjects to enable them possess the prevocational skills therein. It helps in training the students on those skills that are relevant to develop skills, aptitudes, potentials and competences to be useful citizens and contribute economically to the society. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2009) states the objectives of Business Studies as

- ❖ to enable students to acquire the basic knowledge of business studies,
- ❖ to develop the basic skills in office occupation,
- ❖ to prepare the students for further training in Business studies,
- ❖ to provide orientation and basic skills to start a life of work for those who may not undergo further training,
- ❖ to provide basic skills for personal use in future, and
- ❖ to relate the knowledge and skills to the national economy.

Business studies is synonymous with Business education at higher institution Business Education is education for and about business or training in business skills and competencies required for use in business offices. Esene (2012) described Business studies at JSS level were the subjected is taught as a single subject but these subjects can stand alone at senior secondary school level - Bookkeeping, Commerce, Typewriting and Shorthand.

To translate these laudable objectives of Business Studies into concrete reality, federal government has also introduced another programme, Universal Basic Education. It is a programme which is aimed at addressing problems of access, quality and equity in primary and junior secondary schools. It is a 9-years educational programme of six years duration for the primary segment and three years of junior secondary. These two levels

of basic education are universal, free and compulsory for all Nigerian children aged 6-15. The Universal Basic Education programme stimulates learning from the early years of 3-5+ which is called Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE) Universal Basic Education (2008).

The inadequate attention paid to the basic education sub-sector over the years had resulted in the near total collapse of the education system which led to limited access to, poor retention in, and poor quality of basic education. The rate of illiteracy was unacceptably high, the condition of the school infrastructure was appalling teachers were poorly trained and poorly motivated and school drop-out rate had not abated, while funding of basic education continued to decline. Consequently, Nigeria was nowhere close to achieving full access to primary education. reports and studies have consistently pointed to this fact. As a result of the failure of other initiatives to register any sustainable impact on access to primary education, due principally, to lack of sustained political will and poor implementation plans, the Federal Government re-launched the Universal Basic Education programme in September, 1999, as a radical intervention strategy for ensuring access to quality basic education. It should also be noted that the need to broaden educational opportunities, especially in developing countries has been highlighted since the Jomtien conference on Education for all in 1990. The international commitment to that effect stems from an understanding that education holds the key to individual and national development. This is to be realized through improvement of the attitudes, beliefs and practices that are inimical to human and national progress and the enthronement of democratic values among citizens. Thus, the National Policy on Education (FRN,2009) states that “the Government recognizes education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development’. Apart from these plausible reasons for equitable access to education, another fundamental reason for such equity is the fact the education is a right in itself as enshrined in the Child Right Act, 2003. (UBEC Manual, 2008).

It should be noted also that Universal Basic Education programme is not altogether a brand new initiative, but rather a reform measure, which is aimed at addressing problems of access and quality in primary and junior secondary schools. Thus, the Universal Basic Education is a nine-year educational intervention programme, whose overall objective is to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance and poverty with the aim of stimulating and accelerating national development, political consciousness and national integration, Specifically, the programme was introduced in order to remove distortions an inconsistencies in basic education delivery and to reinforce the implementation of the National Policy on Education and ensure that the child rights are well catered for.

Government resorted to the Universal Basic Education because of its (FG) concern that states and local governments, which have the constitutional responsibility for basic education delivery, were unable to effectively deliver, and ensure unhindered access to quality basic education for all children and youths aged 6-15 years. Relying on a constitutional provision, which empowered it to set and maintain standards in education, the Federal Government enacted the Compulsory, Free, Universal basic education Act in April 2004. Part (1) of the Universal Basic Education Act states that: “Without prejudice to the provisions of item 30 of part II of the Second Schedule and item 2(9) of he Fourth Schedule to the 1999 Constitution dealing with primary school education, the Federal Government’s intervention under this Act shall only be an assistance to the States and Local Governments in Nigeria for the purposes of uniform and qualitative basic education throughout Nigeria”. The act also formally established the (Universal Basic Education Commission) as the agency through which the Federal Government intervention in basic education would be effected and also provided for State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEB).

Consistent with the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2009) and the relevant provisions of extant laws, the Universal Basic Education programme is expected to achieve the following:

- (a) an uninterrupted access to 9-year formal education by providing free, compulsory basic education for every child of school age (6-15 years.).
- (b) drastic reduction in incidence of school dropout and enthronement of relevance, quality and efficiency in the sub-system.
- (c) Acquisition of literacy, numeracy, life skills and appropriate values for lifelong education and useful living.
- (d) Removal of distortions and inconstancies in the delivery of basic education by reinforcing lthe implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system of education as provided for in the National policy on education; and
- (e) Enhancement of community participation in decision-making process in schools with a view to engendering community interest in, and eventual ownership of basic education institutions.

The implementation of Business Studies programme at the junior secondary school level seems to have been haphazard and treated with levity (Esene, 2012). Like any other new educational programme, successful implementation of the Business Studies curriculum at the junior secondary school depends on the availability of necessary equipment and materials as well as competent teachers (Iyeke & Okoro, 2004) and (Amaewhule & Okwuanaso 2004). The importance of qualified teachers in an educational programme cannot be overemphasized.

Osu (1988) and Anadi (1992) noted that the strength of an educational system must largely depend on the qualities of its teachers.

Statement of the Problem

Business Studies has become an integral part of Junior Secondary School (JSS) curriculum in the provision of prevocational skills needed in the world of work. Despite its immense importance, since the introduction of the subject, in Nigeria secondary school in 1982, it has been faces with some setbacks inhibiting its effective teaching and learning. Makeri (2006) found out that teachers identified lack of instructional facilities, inadequate teachers, inadequate administrative support and students. Lukewarn attitude as of a reason of unattractiveness of Business studies. The inadequacy of instructional facilities and teachers seems to have resulted to poor method of instructions. Most secondary schools do not offer Business Studies rather they prefer Arts and Science subjects. The subjects seems to have been neglected; unfortunately, the subject has also been made elective in Junior Secondary School at the Universal Basic Education programme (2008) Most states have not access the intervention funds lodged by the Federal Government since the last quarter of 2005. Federal Government continues to lodged in funds quarterly since 2005.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess the strategies for enhancing the functionality of Business Studies in the Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research question was raised by guide

What are strategies for enhancing the functionality of Business Studies in Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated for the study.

1. There is no significant difference between principals and teachers perception on the strategies for enhancing the functionality of Business Studies in the Universal Basic Education programme.

Methodology

The research design for this study was a descriptive survey, which investigated the strategies for enhancing the functionality of Business Studies in the Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria. The population comprises Business Studies teachers in 1669 Public, Junior Secondary Schools in South South Nigeria. 1254 teachers and 418 principals were selected through random sampling technique in junior secondary representing 25% of the entire schools in the area in each state, sampling in each state 25% of the teacher were selected which was involved in the study. The south south states in Nigeria and their number of teacher and number of school are Edo, 368 (95 schools! 285 teachers); Delta, 394(98 schools, 294 teachers); Bayelsa, 151(27 schools! 111 teachers); Rivers, 242 (60 schools, 180 teachers); Akwa-Ibom, 273 (68 schools! 204 teachers) and Cross Rivers, 237(60 schools! 180 teachers). A questionnaire titled Strategies for Enhancing the Functionality of Business Studies in the Universal Basic Education Questionnaire (SFEFBSUBEQ) containing 35 items was the instrument used for the study. The test-retest method was used to establish its reliability which has a coefficient of 0.83. The questionnaire was structured on 4-point type Liked Scale of strongly agree (4points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2points) and strongly disagree (1 point). In analyzing the research question, item, the mean scores which fall below 2.50 was rejected responses while the mean score which was above 2.50 was accepted responses. The z-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Table 1: Mean rating of principals and teachers on the strategies for enhancing the functionality of Universal Basic Education programme.

| S/N | Strategies for enhancing the functionality of Universal Basic Education | X | SD | Rmk |
|-----|---|------|------|----------|
| 1 | Business studies students having interest in the subject can enhance the functionality of the subject in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.88 | 0.73 | Accepted |
| 2 | Given assignments Business Studies students regularly can enhance the functionality of the subject in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.86 | 0.81 | Accepted |
| 3 | Marking of assignment of student regularly can enhance the functionality of Business studies in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.91 | 0.81 | Accepted |
| 4 | Involving the students in practical work can enhance the functionality of Business studies in the Universal Basic Education | 2.76 | 0.75 | Accepted |
| 5 | Students having the relevant textbooks in Business Studies can enhance the functionality of the subject in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.78 | 0.76 | Accepted |
| 6 | Increasing the teaching hours of Business Studies can enhance the functionality of the subject in the Universal Basic Education programme | 3.11 | 0.76 | Accepted |
| 7 | Allowing the students to know the areas of difficulty that need students constant practice can enhance the functionality of the Universal Basic Education programme | 3.10 | 0.80 | Accepted |
| 8 | Provision of teaching module for Business Studies can enhance the functionality of the subject in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.76 | 0.78 | Accepted |
| 9 | Provision of adequate instructional facilities can enhance the functionality of Business Studies in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.62 | 0.77 | Accepted |
| 10 | Provision of adequate shorthand studies can enhance the functionality of Business Studies in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.94 | 0.82 | Accepted |
| 11 | Provision of sufficient typing pool with typewriters can enhance the functionality of business studies in the Universal Basic Education programme. | 3.02 | 0.79 | Accepted |
| 12 | Provision of sufficient classrooms for Business Studies can enhance the functionality of the University Basic Education programme | 2.82 | 0.77 | Accepted |
| 13 | Provision of conducive classes for Business Studies can enhance the functionality of the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.90 | 0.74 | Accepted |
| 14 | Employing sufficient teachers can enhance the functionality of Business Studies programme | 2.86 | 0.79 | Accepted |
| 15 | Employment qualified teachers can enhance the functionality of Business Studies programme. | 2.87 | 0.70 | Accepted |
| 16 | Sponsoring teachers to attend workshop and seminars regularly can enhance the functionality of Business Studies in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.87 | 0.70 | Accepted |
| 17 | Allowing Business Studies teacher to undergo inservice training can enhance the functionality of the subject in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.91 | 0.75 | Accepted |
| 18 | Adopting small group of instruction for teaching Business Studies can make the subject functional in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.82 | 0.71 | Accepted |
| 19 | Individualized method of instruction for Business Studies can enhance the | 2.80 | 0.77 | Accepted |
| 20 | Adopting demonstration method of instruction for Business Studies can enhance the functionality of the subject in the Universal Basic | 2.82 | 0.78 | Accepted |

| | | | | |
|----|---|------|------|----------|
| 21 | Education programme Adopting problem solving method of instruction for teaching Business Studies can enhance functionality of the subject in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.88 | 0.89 | Accepted |
| 22 | Adopting lecture method for Business Studies can enhance the functionality of the subject in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.43 | 0.74 | Rejected |
| 23 | Adopting discussion method for teaching Business Studies can enhance the functionality of the subject in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.92 | 0.81 | Accepted |
| 24 | Adopting field trip for Business Studies students can enhance the functionality of the subject in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.43 | 0.72 | Rejected |
| 25 | Adopting project method for instruction in Business Studies can enhance the functionality of the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.31 | 0.78 | Rejected |
| 26 | Adopting discussion method of instruction can enhance the functionality of the subject in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.56 | 0.68 | Accepted |
| 27 | Constant review of the Business Studies curriculum can enhance the functionality of the subject in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.55 | 0.78 | Accepted |
| 28 | Clinical supervision of Business Studies can make the subject more functional in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.68 | 0.72 | Accepted |
| 29 | Allocating of sufficient funds to Business Studies can enhance the functionality of the subject in the Universal Basic Education programme | 2.72 | 0.76 | Accepted |
| 30 | State governments accessing the intervention funds can enhance the functionality of business studies in Universal Basic Education programme | 2.86 | 0.78 | Accepted |

The table presented and analysed above, revealed the strategies for enhancing the functionality of Business Studies in the Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria.

Testing of Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between principals and teacher perception on the strategies for enhancing the functionality of Business Studies in the Universal Basic Education programme.

Table 2: Z-test mean rating of principals and teacher principal on strategies for enhancing functionality of business studies in the Universal Basic Education Programme.

| Variable categories | X | SD | N | Df | Z-Cal | Z-crit | Level Significance | Dec. | Rmk |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|-------|--------|--------------------|------|----------|
| Principals | 2.87 | 0.78 | 418 | | | | | | |
| Business studies teachers | 2.93 | 0.76 | 1254 | 1670 | 1.12 | 1.96 | 0.05 | Ns | Accepted |

*P<0.05

Computed z-value (1.12) is less than table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significant. The hypothesis which states that there is no significance difference between principals and teachers on strategies for enhancing the functionality of Business studies in the Universal Basic Education programme was therefore retained.

Discussion of Findings

Business Studies came into existence in Nigerian secondary school in 1982 when the 6-3-3-4 system of education was introduced. The aim was to enable the students discover and expose them to those skills to function in life. The students should have interest in Business Studies, provision of teaching module can enhance the functionality of the subject in the recent Universal Basic Education programme introduced in 1999 and implemented in September 2007. The provision of adequate instructional facilities, Shorthand Studios, Typing Pools stocked with sufficient Typewriters and classrooms are necessary for the program which was earlier emphasized by Okoro and Iyeke (2004) as strategies for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in Business Studies. The study also revealed the relevance of qualified teachers, adequate teachers and sponsoring teachers to attend workshops and seminars to update their skills which was consistent with earlier studies of Amaewhule and Okwuanaso (2004). Anadi (1997) and Osu (1988) emphasized that the strength of an educational system depend largely on the quality of its teachers. Adopting small group method of instruction,

individualized method of instruction, demonstration method, problem solving method and discussion method can make Business studies functional in the Universal Basic Education programme. Lecture methods, field trips and project methods are not required for the programme. Constant review of the curriculum, clinical supervision and monitoring are strategies for enhancing the Functionality of the subject in the Universal Basic Education programme.

Conclusion

Business studies is an integral part of vocational Education which has to do with exposing and discovery the skills that students will required in the world of work for effective functioning.

Recommendations

The following suggestions are made in the study.

1. Business Studies should be made a core subject in the UBE programme.
2. Adequate instructional facilities should be made available in the right quality and quantity by the state and federal governments.
3. Adequate teachers should be provided by the state and federal government.
4. Business studies teachers who are capable of teaching typewriting, Shorthand and Accounting should be employed by the state government and federal government.
5. All states government should assess the finds by paying their counter part finds to carry out projects of the UBE programme.
6. Students should have interest in learning Business Studies by doing their assignment regularly.
7. Business studies teaching module should be prepared and provided by the state and federal governments.

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