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Impact of the Implementation of the 9- Years Universal Basic Education Programme in Public Primary and Junior Secondary Schools in Imo State

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Abstract

The study focuses on the impact of the implementation of the Universal Basic Education 9-3-4 system of education. Its general objective is to identify and access the impact of the implementation of the Universal Basic Education 9-3-4 programme while the scope covers the public primary and junior secondary schools in Imo State. It adopted the descriptive survey design with a sample size of 300 respondents that were drawn from teachers in public primary and junior secondary schools. Data collected was analyzed using mean score. Findings suggest that the impact of merging primary school and Junior Secondary School (JSS) is significant and positive while disarticulating JSS and Senior Secondary School (SSS) is not significant and therefore negative. It is therefore recommended that JSS Programmes of activities such as improving the relationship between the administrators and properly equipping the JSS school for a smooth transmission from JSS to SSS.

Introduction

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) is a policy reform measure of the federal Government of Nigeria aimed at rectifying distortions in the Basic Education (<http://www.ubec.govng/prog>). Basic Education means the type of Education in quality and content that is given in the first level of education (Denga, 2000). Although the UBE programme could be said to have been on course since its launch in the year 1999, it suffered legislative backing until the UBE Act, 2004 was passed by the national assembly and finally signed into law by the then president Chief Olusegun Obasanjo on May 26, 2004. The UBE Act, 2004 provides for compulsory, free universal basic education for all children of primary and junior secondary school age in the Federal republic of Nigeria.

Due to the imperative nature of the UBE Act, the junior secondary school has to be separated from the senior secondary. There is also provision for the removal of selection/ elimination policies at the end of primary six (6) (Oluhodun, 2005). The impact of this on quality control of human resources (pupils, teachers, students), management of materials resources (funds, equipment, school plant), quality of instruction delivered, quality of pupils and JSS students before continuing SSS (have they acquired right attitudes and skills, do they meet their individual aspirations and expectations of their society?) is not well known. There is clear need to bridge the gap in knowledge of the impact of the disarticulation of JSS from SSS and merging of JSS and primary School. The focus of the study is therefore to assess the impact of disarticulating JSS from SSS.

Statement of Problem

Due to the imperative nature of the UBE, Act, 2004, (FGN, 2005:30) the junior Secondary School has to be disarticulated from the senior secondary school, and the primary has to be merged with the junior secondary school. By implication, the Act stipulates the absorption of the National Primary Education Commission which implies merging of administrative boards of primary schools and junior secondary schools. Subsequently, it led to demerging junior secondary schools and Senior Secondary hence duplicating administrators and administrative duties. Concerns have been expressed on likely impacts on the quality of instruction, delivery system, management of human and material resources and the quality of pupils/students as products of the school system. The study therefore, assesses perceptions of the impact (negative or positive) of the merging of primary school and Junior Secondary and the demerging of JSS and SSS.

Conceptual Framework

Disarticulating JSS from SSS and its Impacts

Due to the imperative nature of the UBE Act, (2004) the junior secondary school had to be separated from the senior secondary school. This resulted to the simultaneous existence of two secondary schools – junior and senior in a school compound. This could have impacts on human resource development. Human resources include pupils, teachers, students and principals. As stipulated in the UBA Act, (2004), the responsibility of basic education is to lay the foundation for and provide where possible the necessary knowledge, values, attitude and skills to meet the social, economic, intellectual, ethical and physical needs. The impact could be a shift from the above objectives by head teachers and principals to tussle for power and conflicts in the management of material and human resources.

There is likely to be urgent need for more funding, qualified teachers, instructional and infrastructural resources. It however, could lead or result to lack of acquisition of vocational and technical skills.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of study is to identify and assess the impact of the implementation of the 9 year UBE programme. Specific objectives include:

- (1) To establish the impact of merging primary school programme with the junior secondary school programme.
- (2) To determine the extent to which the implementation of the 9-year Universal Basic Programme impact on teaching, learning and administration.

Significance

- Findings of the study will clarify contentious issues earlier raised as well as contribute to knowledge and literature on the subject.
- It will expose teachers to the extent to which their efforts will help to achieve the EFA goals of 2015. School administrators will be able to either adjust their strategies or put in extra efforts to ensure that they are not found wanting in their studies as providers and facilitators of knowledge.

- The study will be of immense benefit to the government, programme planners, school administrators, teachers and the general public in their bid to actualize educational policies.
- The study will also be of immense importance to the general public since it will expose them to the need of availing themselves the opportunity for free and compulsory education for their wards, at least to the basic education level.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- (1) What is the impact (in terms of quality of primary school graduates, zeal of teachers etc) merging primary school programme with that JSS.
- (2) What are the impacts (funding, provision of instructional/ infrastructural facilities, academic performance etc) material of disarticulating the JSS from SSS?

Scope of Study

This study was restricted to public primary and junior secondary schools in Imo State, which is one of the 36 states in Nigeria. The study accessed the impact of 9-3-4 system on education as it relates to administration of the schools and duties of the teachers in the 9 – year basic education level, as well as investigate the impact of disarticulating JSS from SSS.

Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive survey design. The adoption of survey research design helps to make comparisons and evaluation of existing condition as well as collect possible factual information on the study.

The population of this comprised of teachers of schools from the government owned schools in the three zones in Imo State. The teachers are those who know how far the planned curriculum has been implemented and how to achieve the set goals of learning in 9-3-4 system of education.

The sample for the study was drawn from the three Educational zones in Imo State. A list comprising all the local government Areas and the zones of the sample frame. Purposive sampling technique was used to select participants and LGAs in the zones. The stratified random sampling technique was used to

select the public primary and junior and junior secondary schools in Imo State. A list of schools from the L.G.As of the states served as the sample frame from which the participants' schools and respondents were randomly selected. A total number of 300 participants were selected for the study.

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Prefacing the questionnaire was a letter of introduction from the research team requesting for permission to distribute the questionnaires to respondents, and also a letter addressing the voluntary nature of participation and measures to ensure confidentiality. The instrument was administered using a face to- face method. This is to ensure clarification of questions, words and phrases. It also aided the collection of adequate number of questionnaires distributed. The instrument titled 9-year Basic Education Questionnaire (9-YBEQ) is made up of sections A-C. Section A elicited information on the biographical data of respondents, section A was based on the impact of merging on primary school with JSS while section B gave information on the perception of the respondents on the impact of the disarticulation of JSS from SSS on human resources, provision and management of material resources, quality of instruction delivered and quality of the products of primary six (6) pupils and JSS students. While section B elicited information concerning the extent to which primary schools are merged with junior secondary school. The instrument was made up of 13 items. 9- YBEQ is a 4 – item reformed likert type rating scale hence its overall mean score is 2.5. For decision on the result any mean less than 2.5 is taken as not significant (NS) while the rest are significant (s).

The instrument was vetted by school heads and experts in the department of Measurement and Evaluation in State Universities for face and content validation. Following the recommendation, the final draft of the instrument was produced. This is to make provision for maximum efficiency of the instrument as well as eliminate complex, redundant and overloaded questions from the instruments.

To determine the reliability of the instrument, a test-retest approach was used. 20 primary / junior secondary school teachers, from the population were used for the pilot study. The instrument was administered to the respondents and after two weeks interval, the instrument was re-administered to the same respondents. Crombach alpha method was used to compute the

reliability coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained , hence the instrument is considered as being stable over time.

Data Analyses and Findings

Research Question 1: *What is the impact of merging primary schools with JSS?*

Table 1 shows that all the items under consideration have mean scores that range from 2.67 to 3.22 which means that they are all significant the cluster mean of the items in the table I is 2.97 which is also significant. The results therefore show that there is a significant impact on the schools involved in 9-year basic education.

Research Question 2: *What are the impacts of disarticulating the JSS from SSS.*

Table II shows that out of the 7 Items that indicate the impact of separating JSS from SSS, 4 items have no significant impact, while the other 3 have significant mean. The Cluster mean of 2.35 also shows not significant impact. The findings therefore indicate that demerging JSS and SS has a negative impact on the schools concerned.

Discussion of the Findings

Table 1 indicated that there is a significant impact in the merging of primary schools with Junior Secondary. Items 1, 4 and 5, which were on improvement of enrolment, quality of pupils admitted, teachers' zeal and responsibility have significant mean scores. The table also showed that the negative statement items 2 and 3 have equally significant mean scores, which indicate a positive result. The result is in line with the UBE Act, 2004 that stipulated the absorption of National Primary Education Commission into the junior secondary education. This implies that the programme has made a positive impact on primary and junior secondary school students and pupils as well as their teachers. Again, it follows that with the effective implementation of merging primary and JSS Schools, it will lead to the smooth transmission into senior secondary school.

From table II, items 7, 8, 10 and 11 were not significant while items 9,12 and 13 were significant. Item 7 has a very low mean score of 1.54 indicating that

there are unhealthy competitions among the Junior and Senior Secondary Schools Principals. Items 10 and 11, which dealt on instructional and infrastructural facilities also, indicated a low mean score of 2.24 and 2.2 respectively. This result is in line with Onyeachu (2008) who observed that essential facilities are not provided in schools. The result however is against the aim of UBE programme, which stipulates adequate provision of facilities for the realization of its objectives. In terms of academic achievement separating JSS and SSS has significant impact which however is not in line with the objective of UBE. This also confirms the position of National Teachers Instituted (2006) that very little attention is given to higher mental task like ability to apply the knowledge gain in real world rather the emphasis is on taking examinations and passing.

Moreover Ifelunni (2007) opines that UBE full of hope on bringing sanity to the system by turning out graduates that are self-reliant and not only suitable for white – collar jobs which is normally as the result of better academic performance. In the UBE Act, there is a special consideration for those that may drop out of school and will need non- formal approaches in the contemporary approaches in the JSS. Since the programme has a non-significant impact at this stage when these JSS graduates are expected to go out and seek for self-employment, they will not be fully prepared to face the society.

Conclusion

Due to the imperative nature of UBE Act, 2004, the junior secondary school has to be separated from the senior secondary and the primary merged with the junior secondary. Establishing the impact on quality of primary school graduates, zeal of teachers, funding, provision of instructional / infrastructural facilities, academic performance became important. The study therefore established that there is positive impact of merging primary with junior secondary schools. On the impact of separating JSS from SSS there is power conflict among JSS and SSS principals, need for proper funding and provision of instructional and infrastructural facilities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- There should be a reorientation for the principals in junior and senior secondary schools for a better working condition.
- Junior secondary schools should be better equipped to be in line with the objectives of UBE.
- Teachers should be made to understand that learning should be more of goal oriented than just performance oriented.

Figure 1: Definition and Description of Variables and their Operationalization

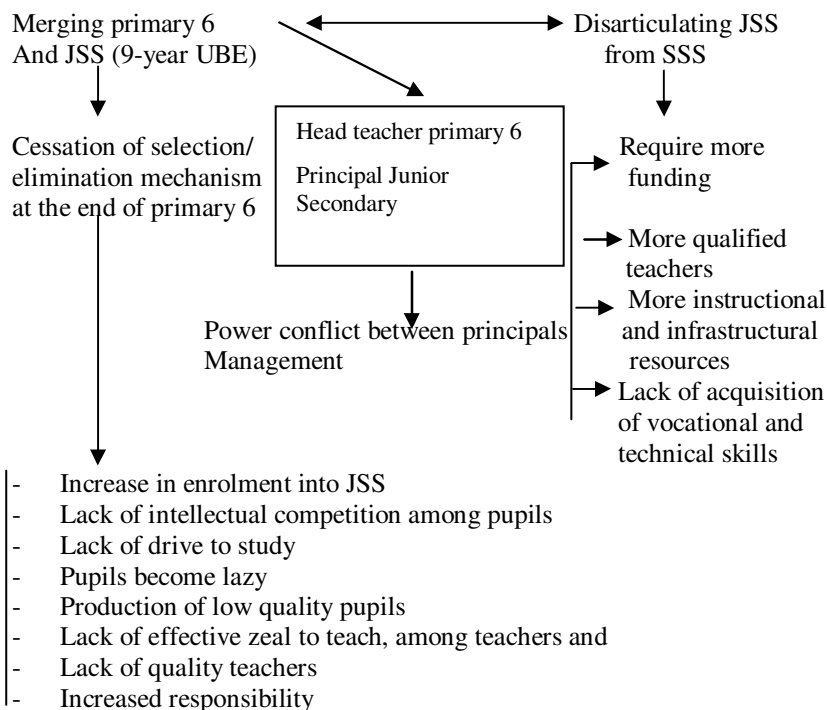


Table 1: Impact of Merging Primary Schools with JSS

S/ N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Total Score	Mean Score / Item	Decision
1	Improved Enrolment into JSS	137	92	69	2	300	964	3.2	S
*2	Lack of intellectual competition among pupils	45	46	162	47	300	811	2.7	S
*3	Primary School pupil are now lazy to study	25	45	139	91	300	896	2.99	S
4	The quality of pupils admitted to JSS now improved	115	90	89	6	300	914	3.04	S
5	Primary School Teachers have zeal to Teach	130	121	35	14	300	967	3.22	S
6	Teacher in Primary School are now more responsible	80	92	92	22	300	802	2.67	S
	Cluster mean							2.97	S

Note: The Items with asterisk (*) are negative items while the rest are positive

Table II: Impact of Separating JSS from SSS

S/No	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Total Score	Mean Score	Decision
*7	Power conflict among JSS and SSS principals	185	69	44	2	300	463	1.54	NS
8	JSS are now better funded	3	138	113	46	300	698	2.32	NS
9	JSS Teachers are now more dedicated	23	160	89	28	300	778	2.59	S
10	Teaching Instructional facilities are now available on JSS	2	138	91	69	300	673	2.24	NS
11	Availability of better infrastructural facilities	22	46	207	25	300	665	2.20	NS
12	JSS Students have the zeal to Study	20	230	46	4	300	866	2.89	S
13	Improved academic performance	5	201	90	4	300	807	2.69	S
	Cluster Mean							2.35	NS

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