

QUALITY ASSURANCE PRACTICES AND UBE PROGRAMMES IMPLEMENTATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CRS, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR ENHANCED EDUCATIONAL PEACE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Adalikwu, Rose Amokeye*

Peace and Conflict Unit, Centre for General Studies, University of Cross River State, Nigeria

Corresponding Author Adalikwu, Rose Amokeye Peace and Conflict Unit, Centre for General Studies, University of Cross River State, Nigeria Article History Received: 29/10/2024 Accepted: 12/11/2024 Published: 17/11/2024	Abstract: This study examined the relationship between quality assurance practices and the implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programs in secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria, with implications for educational peace and conflict management. A survey research design was employed, involving 319 teachers selected through stratified and simple random sampling techniques. A validated instrument, Quality Assurance Variables and Implementation of UBE Programme Questionnaire (AVIUBEPQ), was used to collect data. The instrument's validity and reliability were ensured through expert scrutiny and a pilot test, which yielded a reliability estimate range of 0.80 to 0.97 using Cronbach's alpha method. The study's findings revealed that qualified teaching facilities and staff development significantly predict the successful implementation of UBE programs. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the government prioritise merit-based hiring, invest in teacher training, and address systemic challenges such as funding, transparency, and political interference to enhance the quality of education. Keywords: Quality Assurance Practices, UBE Programmes Implementation, Peace and Conflict Management.
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Introduction

Nigeria has implemented various initiatives to enhance education quality, with the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program being a key effort. Launched in 1999, following the World Conference on Education in Jomtien, Thailand, the UBE program provides nine years of free and compulsory education, covering primary and junior secondary levels. According to Umosen (2018), the program aims to address inconsistencies in basic education delivery, increase access, and ensure quality education nationwide. The program's objectives include:

- Fostering a strong commitment to education among citizens
- Providing free and compulsory basic education for all Nigerian children
- Reducing dropout rates through improved relevance and efficiency
- Catering to out-of-school children and adolescents through alternative approaches
- Equipping students with literacy, life skills, and moral values for lifelong learning

These objectives align with the National Policy on Education and aim to promote education for all. Let me know if you need further clarification or assistance! More so, Ukam (2019) posits that the

UBE programme is expected to be a continuation of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme, which was abandoned due to several challenges. However, it is observed by the researcher that the current Universal Basic Education programme seems not to be achieving its stated objectives in terms of implementation in the Calabar Education zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Uko (2014) quality assurance in basic schools involves those indices and measures that define or ensure quality in the school system. They include: Curriculum Standards, Teacher Qualifications, Infrastructure and Facilities, Student-Teacher Ratio, Assessment Methods, Parental Involvement, professional development for Teachers, school governance and Leadership, teaching and learning resources, supervision etc. However, this study will focus on five essential quality assurance variables. These are qualified teachers, availability of teaching facilities, staff development, school supervision and staff motivation. Qualified teachers are essential for ensuring quality education in basic education schools. A qualified teacher typically holds the necessary academic credentials, such as a degree in education or a specific subject area, and possesses teaching certifications required by educational authorities. For instance, the minimum entry qualification for teachers in Nigeria is the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). In addition, the availability of teaching facilities

refers to the physical resources and infrastructure necessary for effective teaching and learning. This includes classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and access to technology such as computers and internet connectivity. Adequate teaching facilities create an environment conducive to learning, allowing students to engage with materials and resources that enhance their educational experience.

Furthermore, staff development refers to ongoing training and professional growth opportunities for teachers. This includes workshops, seminars, mentorship programs, and further education aimed at enhancing teachers' skills and knowledge. Continuous professional development is crucial because it helps teachers stay updated on the latest pedagogical strategies, curriculum changes, and educational technologies (Ofre, 2012). In addition, School refers to a systematic process aimed at evaluating, assessing, and guiding teachers and staff to enhance their everyday work. Effective supervision includes regular classroom observations, feedback sessions with teachers, and support in implementing best practices in pedagogy. More so, staff motivation refers to the factors that encourage educators to perform at their best within their roles. Factors influencing staff motivation can include recognition for achievements, opportunities for career advancement, supportive leadership, adequate compensation, and a positive school culture.

From the foregoing, it appears there is a link between quality assurance variables and the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme. Therefore, this study focuses on quality assurance practices and UBE programmes implementation in secondary schools in CRS, Nigeria: Implications for enhanced educational peace and conflict management.

Theoretical Framework

Total Quality Management Theory

The theory you're referring to sounds like Total Quality Management (TQM). TQM is a management approach that emphasizes continuous improvement, customer satisfaction, and employee involvement to achieve long-term success. Its core principles include:

- Customer Focus: Meeting or exceeding customer expectations
- Employee Involvement: Engaging all employees in quality improvement efforts
- Process Approach: Understanding, managing, and improving processes
- Integrated System: Aligning quality objectives across teams
- Strategic and Systematic Approach: Aligning quality management with organizational goals
- Fact-Based Decision Making: Using data and objective analysis for decision-making
- Continual Improvement: Striving for ongoing improvements in processes, products, and services

TQM aims to enhance organizational performance, reduce costs, and improve customer satisfaction, ultimately leading to increased market share and job security. The theory suggested to organisations a strategy for addressing ineffective quality management problems with successful management techniques such as quality assurance practices. According to the theory, management is in charge of operations, while systems are in charge

of 80 per cent of business issues. The theory stresses that no quality control system will work without a top management commitment; it is the management that invests in systems, establishes a cooperative culture, chooses suppliers and maintains long-term relationships. Total quality management theory holds that;

- i. Organisations at all levels must accept and practice their commitment continuously.
- ii. There is a need for cooperation, teamwork work and developing trust throughout the organization.
- iii. Quality and reliability must not be compromised.
- iv. Organization should support self-improvement and education at every level.
- v. Organization must provide adequate training and equipment and encourage pride in employees in their work and product.
- vi. Organization must aim at continuous improvement in products and processes.

The relevance of Deming's total quality management theory to this study is the premise of the theory that quality improvement will lead to better results and outcomes, and suggested quality assurance practices as a technique for improving quality. It therefore implies that the practice of quality assurance at basic education level will help to improve quality in the system, which will in turn lead to smooth implementation of Universal Basic Education Programme.

Statement of the problem

In Nigeria, the Universal Basic Education was introduced by the Federal government to remove distortions and inconsistencies in basic education delivery and to reinforce the implementation of the National Policy on Education. These are in addition to providing greater access to and ensuring the quality of basic education throughout the country. However, it is observed by the researcher that the Universal Basic Education Programme, which is hinged on the achievement of the objectives, has not been effectively implemented in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, it is observed by the researcher that there has been an inadequate widespread awareness and advocacy for the importance of education among community members. This has manifested in insufficient participation in educational programmes and initiatives aimed at promoting education as a vital component of personal and societal development. More so, it is observed that despite policies aimed at ensuring that every child receives free and compulsory basic education, many families face hidden costs associated with schooling, such as uniforms, textbooks, and transportation, that may significantly affect the implementation of the programme's objectives. Furthermore, it is observed that the goal to significantly lower drop-out rates has not been realised in Calabar Education zone, as many students continue to leave the formal schooling system before completing their basic education. This can be seen in the increasing number of "Sconobo children" roaming the Calabar metropolis. Additionally, efforts such as vocational training or adult literacy initiatives to address the needs of dropouts and out-of-school children have been limited in Calabar education Zone. In addition, while some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attempt to fill this gap through informal education programs, these efforts are often sporadic and lack coordination with governmental strategies. In addition, it is observed that some individuals who have completed the Universal Basic Education programme frequently face difficulties with their

reading and writing abilities. Therefore, the problem of this study lies in the question: to what extent do quality assurance practices predict UBE programmes implementation in secondary schools in CRS, Nigeria: Implications for enhanced educational peace and conflict management?

Research questions

The study will be based on the following research questions:

- What is the prediction of qualified teachers and implementation of UBE programme?
- How does the availability of teaching facilities relate to implementation of UBE programme?
- To what extent does staff development relate to the implementation of UBE programme?

Statement of hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- There is no significant prediction of qualified teachers on implementation of UBE programme.
- There is no significant prediction of availability of teaching facilities and implementation of UBE programme.
- Staff development has no significant relationship with the implementation of UBE programme.

Several studies have investigated the relationship between quality assurance indices and management effectiveness in Nigerian educational institutions. Key Findings: Availability of Qualified Teachers: Studies by Ubana (2017), Mazi (2018), and Okobe (2022) found a significant relationship between the availability of qualified teachers and management effectiveness or institutional effectiveness.

- School Facilities: Research by Ikenna (2016) and Obase (2018) revealed that the availability of school facilities has a significant relationship with the implementation of educational programs and teachers' job effectiveness.
- Principals' Staff Training: A study by Arikpo (2015) found that principals' staff training effectiveness has a significant relationship with the implementation of school programs.
- Quality Assurance Indices: Ofem (2019) discovered that the availability of staff training programs has a significant influence on teachers' job performance.

Quality Assurance Indicators:

- Quality of supervision
- Quality of leadership behavior
- School climate
- Availability of qualified teachers
- Staff training programs
- School facilities

Impact on Educational Institutions:

- Improved management effectiveness
- Enhanced institutional effectiveness
- Better implementation of educational programs
- Increased teachers' job effectiveness and performance
- Improved student outcomes

These findings suggest that quality assurance indices play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of educational institutions in

Nigeria. By focusing on these indicators, institutions can improve their overall performance and achieve their goals.

Research Methods

The research design adopted in this study is a survey research design. It is a research design that enables the researcher to collect opinions or views through a data collection instrument from a sample of a given population for study, and generalise the results to the entire population at the end of the study. The population of the study will comprise all teachers under the Universal Basic Education scheme in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. According to Cross River State Universal Basic Education Board (2024), there are a total of two thousand and twenty (2,020) teachers under the scheme in the study area. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used in the study to select respondents. In each Local Government Area, the teachers were stratified into two main groups, namely lower basic and upper basic. Therefore, a simple random sampling technique will be applied to select the respondents from each stratum. This was carried out through paper balloting. The sample of the study comprised three hundred and nineteen (319) respondents. Fifteen percent were used to select the respondents proportionally from each of the Local Government Area. An instrument titled "Quality Assurance Variables and Implementation of UBE Programme Questionnaire (AVIUBEPQ) was used to collect data in the study. The instrument was divided into three parts, A, B and C. Part A will focus on respondents' information, part B contain forty (40) items in a modified four-point Likert-type scale to measure the sub-independent variables (qualified teachers, quality teaching facilities and staff development). While section C contains ten (10) items in a modified four-point Likert-type scale to measure the dependent variable (implementation of Universal Basic Education Programme). To validate the instrument, draft copies were given to the study supervisors and two other experts in measurement and evaluation in the Faculty of Education, University of Cross River State. The instrument was carefully scrutinised. Some items were modified, while a few were replaced with new ones. At the end, the instrument was certified statistically valid for use in the study. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was carried out using thirty (30) UBE teachers who were not part of the main study. The questionnaires were administered to them. The data generated was analysed with Cronbach's alpha method. Reliability estimate ranged 0.80 and 0.97. The result of the reliability shows that the instrument is statistically reliable for use in the study. Hypothesis-by-hypothesis method of data were restated in null form. Independent and dependent variables, as well as the test statistical tool, were appropriately employed in the study.

Results and Discussions

Hypothesis one

There is no significant prediction of qualified teachers on the implementation of UBE programme. The major independent variable in this hypothesis is qualified teachers. The dependent variable is implementation of UBE programme. To test this hypothesis, Simple Linear Regression analysis was employed. The choice of simple linear regression is because the independent and dependent variables are measured continuously and the researcher sought to predict these two variables. The analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Regression analysis of implementation of UBE programme on qualified teachers					
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
.237 ^a	.056	.055	14.08502		
Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Regression	7474.999	1	7474.999	37.679	.000
Residual	125182.653	631	198.388		
Total	132657.652	632			
Group	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Unstandardized Coefficients Beta	t-value	p-value
(Constant)	14.893	2.950		5.048	.000
Qualified teachers	1.013	.165	.237	6.138	.000

*p<.01

The results in Table 6 show that the R-value is .237, the R-squared value is .056 and adjusted R-squared value is .055. This means that about 5.5% of the total variance in the implementation of UBE programme is accounted for by the variation in qualified teachers. The p-value (.000) associated with the computed F-value (37.679) is less than .05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. With both the regression constant (14.893) and coefficient (1.013) making a significant contribution in the prediction model ($t = 5.048$ & 6.138 respectively, $p = .000 > .05$). The prediction model (equation) may therefore be written as: $y = 14.893 + 1.013x$, where y is the implementation of UBE programme, X is the qualified teachers.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant prediction of the availability of teaching facilities on the implementation of UBE programme. The major independent variable in this hypothesis is the availability teaching facilities and the dependent variable is implementation of UBE programme. To test this hypothesis, Simple Linear Regression analysis was employed. The choice of simple linear regression is because the independent and dependent variables are measured continuously and the researcher sought to predict these two variables. The analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Regression analysis of implementation of UBE programme on availability teaching facilities					
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
.275	.075	.074	13.94207		
Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Regression	10003.097	1	10003.097	51.461	.000
Residual	122654.555	631	194.381		
Total	132657.652	632			
Group	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Unstandardized Coefficients Beta	t-value	p-value
(Constant)	14.210	2.633		5.398	.000
Availability of teaching facilities	1.076	.150	.275	7.174	.000

*p<.05

The results in Table 2 show that the R-value is .275 with an R-square of .075 and adjusted R-squared value is .074. This means that about 7.5% of the total variance in implementation of UBE programme is accounted for by the variation in the availability of teaching facilities. The p-value (.000) associated with the computed F-value (51.461) is less than .05. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected. With both the regression constant (14.210) and coefficient (1.076) making a significant contribution in the prediction model ($t = 5.398$ & 7.174 respectively, $p = .000 > .05$). The prediction model (equation) may therefore be written as: $y = 14.210 + 1.076x$ where y is the implementation of UBE programme, X is the availability of teaching facilities.

Hypothesis three

Staff development has no significant prediction with the implementation of UBE programme. The major independent variable in this hypothesis is staff development and the dependent variable is the implementation of UBE programme. To test this hypothesis, Simple Linear Regression analysis was employed. The choice of simple linear regression is because the independent and dependent variables are measured continuously and the researcher sought to predict these two variables. The analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Regression analysis of implementation of UBE programme on staff development					
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
.159 ^a	.025	.024	14.31568		
Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Regression	3341.359	1	3341.359	16.304	.000
Residual	129316.294	631	204.939		
Total	132657.652	632			
Unstandardized Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients			
Group	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	p-value
(Constant)	21.577	2.806		7.690	.000
Staff development	.634	.157	.159	4.038	.000

*p<.05

The results in Table 3 Regression Analysis Results: - R-value: 0.159 - R-squared value: 0.025 (2.5% of variance in UBE program implementation explained by staff development)- Adjusted R-squared value: 0.024- Regression equation: $y = 21.577 + 0.634x$ (where y = implementation of UBE program, x = staff development). Conclusion: Staff development significantly predicts the implementation of UBE programs, accounting for 2.5% of the variance. The regression model is statistically significant, and both the constant and coefficient make significant contributions to the prediction.

Summary of results

The findings of this study can be summarised as

- There is a significant prediction of qualified teachers on the implementation of UBE programme.
- There is a significant prediction of the availability of teaching facilities and the implementation of UBE programme.
- Staff development has a significant impact on the implementation of UBE programme.

Conclusion

The study centres on quality assurance practices and UBE programmes implementation in secondary schools in CRS, Nigeria: Implications for enhanced educational peace and conflict management. Effective quality assurance (QA) in secondary schools involves systematic processes to ensure that educational standards, curriculum implementation, teaching practices, and school infrastructure meet required levels for improved student outcomes. Its role is to foster a positive learning environment, enhance teacher performance, guide resource allocation, and drive continuous improvement through monitoring, evaluation, and stakeholder collaboration, ultimately leading to better academic achievement. In conclusion, effective quality assurance (QA) in secondary schools involves a proactive, systemic approach to maintaining high educational standards and achieving national goals through continuous improvement of curriculum, teaching, learning environments, and teacher development. Its role is to ensure that schools meet established benchmarks by implementing standards, monitoring performance, fostering a quality-oriented culture, and promoting accountability from stakeholders, ultimately benefiting students by providing a higher quality education and producing well-rounded individuals ready for future roles.

Recommendation

The following were recommendations drawn from the study

1. Government should prioritise merit-based hiring over quotas, invest in teacher training to ensure high-quality candidates, and address systemic challenges like funding, transparency, and political interference.
2. Policies should also focus on improving working conditions, including competitive salaries and professional development, and using data-driven approaches to identify teacher shortages and effectively deploy staff, particularly in rural and hard-to-staff areas.
3. To recommend government staff development, focus on creating Individual Development Plans (IDPs) aligned with agency goals, foster a culture of continuous learning through mentorship and cross-training, utilize technology and diverse training methods, and provide incentives and regular, constructive feedback to motivate employees.

Significance of the study

The study will be beneficial to the government, Universal Basic Education Commission, policy makers, Head teachers, teachers, parents and future researchers in the following ways. The government, through its various agencies, will find this study and its findings worthy, as the study will inform them on the challenges faced by basic education in implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme in schools with a view to finding lasting solutions to the challenges.

The Universal Basic Education Commission will benefit from the study, because through the study, the commission will determine how to improve its efforts toward actualising the objectives of the programme in schools. Policy makers will also benefit from the study because it will provide a platform in which sound and effective policies will be made to actualise the dream of the scheme.

The study will enable school heads to understand their roles in the implementation of the programme in their various schools and also understand that without effective school administration, implementation of UBE programme will be difficult. Through this study, teachers will understand their roles in the implementation of the programme and improve their job performance toward the actualisation of the objectives of UBE in their schools.

Parents will understand through this study the importance of the UBE scheme and allow their children to acquire a basic education.

Implications for enhanced educational peace and conflict management

Enhanced educational peace and conflict management implies that education should not only impart knowledge but also equip individuals with the attitudes, skills, and values for peaceful coexistence, conflict resolution, and social transformation. This involves integrating peace education into the curriculum, promoting cooperative learning, teaching non-violent communication and negotiation, fostering empathy and respect for diversity, and providing a safe, stable environment within schools to build a more harmonious society.

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