

ETHNICITY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF UBE PROGRAMME IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA: ISSUES AND WAY FORWARD

BY

Ibinabo Stephen Koroye,
Department of Educational Foundations, Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education,
Sagbama, Bayelsa State.
ibinabostephen@yahoo.com, 08103415709

&

Dr Ogbolosingha, Samuel Joseph,
Department of Educational Foundation, Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education,
Sagbama, Bayelsa State.
singaman405@gmail.com, 07035797224

Abstract

This paper investigated how to address the issue of ethnicity for the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria. Three research questions were answered and three hypotheses tested in the study. Survey design was employed in the study while the population of the study was all the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) chairmen in public senior secondary schools in South-South and the school principals out of which 240 (120 parents and 120 principals) were sampled using Multistage sampling technique. Instrument adopted for data collection was a 15-item questionnaire titled "Ethnicity and the Implementation of the Universal Basic Education Questionnaire" (EIUBEQ). The questionnaire was face and content validated by two Educational Management experts at University of Port Harcourt while the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.87 using Cronbach alpha statistics. Out of the 240 copies of questionnaire administered, 229 copies (118 parents and 111 principals) representing 95.4% were retrieved. Research questions raised were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using z-test statistics. The result of the study showed that the issue of minority and politicized ethnicity were ethnic factors hindering the implementation of the UBE programme. It was also discovered that ethnicity affected the location of UBE schools among other effects. The study further showed the need for more awareness on the objectives of the programme for its successful implementation. It was recommended that government at all levels should make more financial commitment to the implementation of the UBE scheme to avoid the effects of ethnicity.

Keywords: *Ethnicity, Education, Programme, Students, Policy*

Introduction

Education is recognized all over the world as a tool for sustainable development not just for the society but also for raising responsible citizens who will contribute to the growth and development of the society. More importantly, basic education at the primary and lower secondary level are considered essential for the formation of the right skills, knowledge and attitude that will make citizens active members of the society. It was on this premise that the education sector particularly at the basic level has undergone several reforms in the process of making it responsive to societal demands.

There are several education policies that have been rolled out in Nigeria for individual and societal growth and development and Imam (2012) summarized this by stating that educational policy in Nigeria has passed through two significant stages which are the colonial and post-independence eras. The colonial era saw several educational policy efforts geared towards meeting the needs of the colonialists as well as the missionaries while the post-independence efforts were geared towards localizing the educational system to meet the needs of Nigerians by taking into consideration their ethnicity, religion, tribe and other factors that will make these educational policies relevant to identified needs.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme was one of such educational policies that were designed to address the need for functional basic education which will meet the peculiarity of the Nigerian State by taking into consideration several demographic and social factors and this scheme was launched on 30th

September 1999 at Sokoto by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (Ategwu, 2015). This was a follow up to the first effort in 1976 still by Olusegun Obasanjo tagged the Universal Primary Education (UPE) which failed as a result of several unforeseen factors such as over enrollment, shortage of resources among others. Since this period, a lot of changes and reforms have taken place both at the national and subnational levels to meet the basic education need of Nigerian. However, a lot of interventions are still required for the successful implementation of the programme as a result of several factors including the diversity in ethnicity. Osarenren-Osaghae and Irabor (2018) quipped that educational policies had always been wonderfully stated but imperfectly implemented in Nigeria and this singular reason has crumbled plans and made education in Nigeria a laughing stock and this is the case with the UBE scheme. It is widely acknowledged that education is the key to economic prosperity and a vital instrument for combating diseases, poverty and supporting development of the citizenry (Amaewhule, 2015) but how this can be achieved in the midst of ethnic diversity particularly as it relates to the UBE scheme which is a necessity for all remains a huge challenge.

Statement of the Problem

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme which metamorphosed from the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme has passed through several reforms in order to achieve the target of education for all at the basic level. However, despite all of these reforms and investment of resources, the implementation of the UBE scheme remains far from being successfully implemented. Although several successes have been recorded included increased school enrollment, a lot of pupils still remain out of the system. In a surprising twist, billions of naira earmarked for the programme has remained unaccessed by governors due to their inability to pay their counterpart funding. No doubt, ethnic interference both at the individual, institutional and societal level have constituted a clog in the wheel of progress of the UBE scheme and how this can be addressed remains an issue of concern to educational stakeholders.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate how to address the issue of ethnicity for the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria. In specific terms, the objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the ethnic factors hindering the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria.
2. Determine the effects of ethnicity in the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria
3. Examine the strategies for managing the issue of ethnicity for the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

1. What are the ethnic factors hindering the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria?
2. What are the effects of ethnicity in the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria?
3. What are the strategies for managing the issue of ethnicity for the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean opinion score of parents and principals on the ethnic factors hindering the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean opinion score of parents and principals on the effects of ethnicity in the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria
3. There is no significant difference between the mean opinion score of parents and principals on the strategies for managing the issue of ethnicity for the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria

Literature Review

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic State with over 250 ethnic groups distributed across the six geopolitical zones in the country. Ethnicity in this context refers to original heritage or culture that a person belongs to. It is the root or ancestry of a person which helps to differentiate him or her from someone from other heritage. Marcionis as cited in Daminabo (2019) mentioned that ethnicity is a shared cultural heritage such as common ancestors, languages or religion that confers a distinctive social identity. Ethnicity helps to differentiate an individual from one origin from another whether or not they live within the same locality.

There is no doubt that difference in ancestry and origin has its effect not only on the education sector but also on the other sectors of the national economy. Implementation in this context refers to carrying out, accomplishing, fulfilling, producing or completing a given task (Daura & Audu, 2015). In the process of implementing the UBE scheme which is a compulsory educational programme that is free for the first nine years of a child. The UBE scheme is expected to be beneficial to all members of the society irrespective of their ethnic orientation. However, the manner in which people respond to the scheme differ across different ethnic groups and this has led to several agitations and drawbacks as well.

For example, Akinrotimi and Olowe (2016) identified that several children in the North have remained out of the UBE scheme despite the implementation efforts and this has resulted to lopsided implementation of the programme. The difference in ethnicity has made some groups to also benefit more while others benefit less from the scheme while some also agitate for the success of the programme and some less. In some communities particularly in the South-South, some community schools exist where resources for the implementation of the scheme are provided by the communities while the case is different in other places and this also affects the implementation rate of the scheme.

Guda and Mando (2020) identified that policies arise from the needs of the society and from the aims and objectives of organizations and there is no doubt that the UBE scheme was borne out of the needs of the people. However, the variations in public disposition to the scheme has made it difficult for the scheme to succeed in some areas. In the same manner, due to ethnic diversity, some political office holders have situated schools in areas within their ethnic locality even when they are not needed while localities that need such schools have been denied due to difference in ethnicity and this has also affected the extent of implementation and made the policy not so successful.

The Federal Government of Nigeria (2013:2) stated that “education is compulsory and a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender, social status, religion and any peculiar individual challenges” but in reality, ethnic factors have made it difficult for this goal to be achieved. Societal beliefs, political orientation, communal perspectives among others have rode on the wings of ethnicity to influence who gets what from the scheme and this has made the programme successful in some areas and worse off in others. Alluding to this fact, Daminabo (2019:124) stated that ethnicity in Nigeria made it imperative for the debate of restructuring the educational system offered by various levels of government as even the curriculum offered in schools are affected by ethnic factors and all of these form of pool of barriers that have limited the success of the scheme.

Uriah and Obi (2019) noted that today, ethnic groups seek advantage by appealing to their various groups, ethnic identities or shared groups characteristics to lobby for a place in the implementation of the UBE scheme within their locality while minority ethnic groups are disenfranchised. Several factors have also contributed to why ethnicity has continued to hinder the successful implementation of the UBE scheme and this includes inadequate funding, ineffective communication, shortage of human and material resources, lack of political will among others. Therefore, for the scheme to succeed in meeting its objectives, Adedayo (2015) noted that the political class must imbibe the practice of continuity. This is in addition to making critical resources available for all for the successful implementation of the UBE programme.

Empirical Review

Daura and Audu (2015) investigated the challenges of the implementation of the universal basic education programme in Yobe State, Nigeria and the prospects for 2015 and beyond. The null hypothesis was tested using Spearman Rank Order (RHO) and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Six local government areas in Yobe were used to randomly choose a sample of 243 respondents. The primary theoretical framework employed was the System theory. The program performed extremely poorly in the area of student-teacher ratio, where a minimum ratio of 1:40 is considered abuse, according to the data analysis. Every school we visited had a minimum of one teacher for every fifty students in both the primary and junior secondary divisions (1:50 and above). Once more, it was noted that the teachers' qualifications ranged from a certificate A-three years of post-secondary education, a certificate A-four years of post-middle school, and a diploma in basic education; the least number of holders of senior school certificates and second degrees were.

On the other hand, Ategwu (2021) conducted another study on the implementation of universal basic education programme in Cross River State, Nigeria focusing on philosophical implication on teachers, nomads and migrant fishermen. A fourteen (14) item questionnaire and a structured oral interview schedule were used as the data collection tools. Four (4) employees of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) Calabar participated in a structured oral interview schedule, while 1,438 respondents—all teachers—were given the questionnaire. Based on the average of the arithmetic mean (X) score, a threshold of 2.50 and higher was established as the acceptance criterion. Following a thorough examination of the items, the study's main conclusions are: Some teachers teach subjects outside of their area of competence since qualified teachers are still insufficient to handle key subjects. The government's arrangement for the benefit of migrant and nomadic fishermen and their offspring is still insufficient.

Similarly, Shittu (2021) conducted another study on the impact of universal basic education (ube) programme on the learning of basic science in junior secondary schools in Bosso Local Government Area Niger State. The study's population consisted of 5,944 JSS3 pupils from every junior secondary school in the Bosso Local Government area of Niger State. The study was guided by three research questions. One hundred and twenty Basic science students made up the study's sample. Thirty students from each of the four randomly chosen schools received questionnaires, which were then distributed to the students. The data gathered from the questionnaires was analyzed using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) to impute the data for frequency tables and means standard deviations in descriptive statistics. The results show that while certain secondary schools are located in Bosso Local Government Area, Niger State, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Program has not had an impact on student enrollment in that area. In Niger State, there are more than fifty students in each class, and neither aspiring nor experienced educators get the assistance they require to develop the necessary skills to guarantee that kids are learning. The results show that the lack of trained teachers and subpar facilities in the majority of the schools in Bosso Local Government Area, Niger State, prevents the region from achieving the aim of Universal Basic Education. These caused students' performance in secondary education to suffer.

Wey-Amaewhule (2018) also conducted a study on accessibility of basic education to children from low income families in Rivers State. There were 94,010 JSS III pupils and their parents from all 266 junior secondary schools in Rivers State who made up the study's population. There were 3,760 JSS III pupils and their parents who were chosen at random from 27 junior secondary schools in nine local government areas of Rivers State as sample. A 15-item modified Likert Scale questionnaire with a Cronbach Alpha reliability rating of 0.72 was the study tool utilized to collect the data. The z-test was employed to evaluate the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance, and the mean and rank order statistics were used to analyze the study issues. It was discovered that the removal of fees from schools had a favorable impact on the admission of kids from low-income families as well as the availability of instructional resources.

On his part, Kingsley (2021) conducted a study on perceived teacher's culture and teaching of environmental education at the universal basic education (UBE) level in Cross River State, Nigeria. The investigation was guided by a single hypothesis. Three of the state's school zones provided a sample of 450 teachers. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed to determine the instructor sample size. The primary tool used to collect data was a questionnaire called the Perceived Influence of Teachers' Culture on Teaching of Environmental Education questionnaire (PITCTEEQ), which was created and given by the researcher. For the study, an ex-post facto design was used. Using the Cronbach Alpha method, the instrument's dependability estimate was determined, yielding a reliability index of 0.81. The statistical method used to test the null hypothesis under investigation was ANOVA. A questionnaire consisting of ten items was approved. Everyone was examined at the significance level of .05. The analysis's conclusion showed that: There was no statistically significant difference in the environmental education lessons taught by male and female teachers concerning TCC, KSM, TCM, TCWS, and TEC. The study area's EE instruction was significantly impacted by the culture of the teachers. These studies have shown that ethnicity has its influence on the implementation of the UBE scheme across different localities.

Methodology

The study adopted survey design as it focused on investigating an existing phenomenon. The population of the study was all the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) chairmen in public senior secondary schools in South-South and the school principals. The sample size was 240 (120 parents and 120 principals) who were drawn using Multistage sampling technique. First two states (Rivers and Bayesla) were randomly selected

from the six States in the South-South while the schools were dawn purposively from the State capital (Port Harcourt and Yenagoa LGAs) consisting of 80 parents and principals from Yenagoa (40 each) and 160 parents and teachers from Port Harcourt (80 each). The instrument used for data gathering was a 15-item questionnaire tagged “Ethnicity and the Implementation of the Universal Basic Education Questionnaire” (EIUBEQ). The instrument had two sections with the Section A used for the collection of demographic data while the Section B contained the questionnaire items which were responded to on a four point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA=4), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2) and Strongly Disagree (SD=1). The weights were summed up and divided by 4 to arrive at the criterion mean score of 2.50 which was used for decision making. The questionnaire was face and content validated by two Educational Management experts at University of Port Harcourt. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated using Cronbach alpha statistics with a coefficient of 0.87. Out of the 240 copies of questionnaire administered, 229 copies (118 parents and 111 principals) representing 95.4% were retrieved. The research questions raised were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using z-test statistics.

Results

Answer to Research Questions

Research Question One: What are the ethnic factors hindering the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Ethnic Factors Hindering the Implementation of the UBE Programme in South-South, Nigeria

S/No	Items	Parents n=118		Principals n=111		Mean Set	
		Mean \bar{X}_1	SD	Mean \bar{X}_2	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
1	Language difference interfere with the implementation of the UBE scheme	2.33	1.05	2.47	1.02	2.40	Disagreed
2	Ethnic conflicts hinder the smooth implementation of the UBE programme	2.70	0.90	2.81	0.87	2.76	Agreed
3	Politicized ethnicity obstructs the success of the UBE scheme	2.85	0.85	2.84	0.85	2.85	Agreed
4	Minority nomenclature due to population strength is a barrier	2.93	0.81	2.90	0.82	2.92	Agreed
5	Difference in historical orientation interferes with the scheme	2.41	1.02	2.45	1.02	2.43	Disagreed
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation		2.64	0.93	2.69	0.92	2.67	Agreed

Table 1 indicated that mean scores of 2.33, 2.70, 2.85, 2.93 and 2.41 as well as 2.47, 2.81, 2.84, 2.90 and 2.45 were derived for items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 from the responses of the parents and the principals. Following the decision making rule, items 1 and 5 with mean scores of 2.33 and 2.41 as well as 2.47 and 2.45 from the parents and principals were below the criterion mean score of 2.50 used for decision making and as such were disagreed while the other items above the criterion mean scores were agreed. The highest mean set score was 2.92 from item 4 implying that the idea of minority as a result of population strength was the major ethnic inhibitor to the implementation of the UBE programme. Grand mean scores of 2.64 and 2.69 from the parents and principals supported the average mean set score of 2.67 to indicate that the respondents agreed with the items as the ethnic factors hindering the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria.

Research Question Two: What are the effects of ethnicity in the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Effects of Ethnicity in the Implementation of the UBE Programme in South-South, Nigeria

S/No	Items	Parents n=118		Principals n=111		Mean Set	
		Mean \bar{X}_1	SD	Mean \bar{X}_2	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
6	The location of schools is affected by ethnic orientation	2.94	0.80	2.92	0.81	2.93	Agreed
7	Enrolment of pupils into the scheme is determined by their ethnicity	2.28	1.07	2.38	1.05	2.33	Disagreed
8	Access to basic resources for the scheme has ethnic undertone	2.74	0.88	2.78	0.89	2.76	Agreed
9	Ethnicity play out in the recruitment of teachers in UBE schools	2.76	0.87	2.85	0.85	2.81	Agreed
10	Ethnic disparity affects the academic performance of students in the UBE scheme	2.30	1.06	2.42	1.03	2.36	Disagreed
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation		2.60	0.94	2.67	0.93	2.64	Agreed

Table 2 indicated that for items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, the parents responded with mean values of 2.94, 2.28, 2.74, 2.76 and 2.30 while the principals answered the same set of questions with mean responses of 2.92, 2.38, 2.78, 2.85 and 2.42. The items below the criterion mean score of 2.50 were disagreed while those above the criterion mean score were agreed. The highest mean set score of 2.93 from item 6 indicated that the location of schools was mainly affected by ethnicity in the UBE scheme while the respondents' least agreed with item 7 with mean score of 2.33 that ethnicity affected student enrollment in the UBE programme. The grand mean scores of 2.60, 2.67 from the parents and principals as well as the mean set score of 2.64 all pointed to the fact that the respondents averagely agreed with the items listed as the effects of ethnicity in the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria.

Research Question Three: What are the strategies for managing the issue of ethnicity for the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Strategies for Managing the Issue of Ethnicity for the Implementation of the UBE Programme in South-South, Nigeria

S/No	Items	Parents n=118		Principals n=111		Mean Set	
		Mean \bar{X}_1	SD	Mean \bar{X}_2	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
11	Active participation of all ethnic groups in the implementation of the UBE scheme	2.86	0.84	2.88	0.83	2.87	Agreed
12	Educational activities should be free from ethnic bias	2.70	0.89	2.74	0.90	2.72	Agreed
13	Educational needs should supersede ethnic interest	2.90	0.82	2.93	0.81	2.92	Agreed
14	There is need for more awareness on the objectives of the scheme	2.98	0.78	2.97	0.78	2.98	Agreed

15	Power sharing should be promoted in the management of the scheme	2.92	0.81	2.87	0.84	2.90	Agreed
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation		2.87	0.83	2.88	0.83	2.88	Agreed

Table 3 showed that items 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 had mean scores of 2.86, 2.70, 2.90, 2.98 and 2.92 from the responses of the parents and 2.88, 2.74, 2.93, 2.97 and 2.87 from the responses of the principals. All of these items were above the criterion mean and as such were agreed. Item 14 had the highest mean set score of 2.98 indicating that there is need for further sensitization on the objectives of the programme. The grand mean scores of 2.87 and 2.88 from the parents and principals align with the mean set score average of 2.88 to show that the respondents agreed with the questionnaire items as the strategies for managing the issue of ethnicity for the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean opinion score of parents and principals on the ethnic factors hindering the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 4: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Difference between the Mean Ratings of Parents and Principals on the Ethnic Factors Hindering the Implementation of the UBE Programme in South-South, Nigeria

Variable	n	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Parents	118	2.64	0.93	227	0.41	1.96	0.05	Accepted
Principals	111	2.69	0.92					

Table 4 pointed out that while the value of z-cal. was 0.41, the value of z-crit. was 1.96. Therefore, since the value of z-cal. of 0.41 is less than the value of z-crit. of 1.96, the null hypothesis was accepted implying that there was no significant difference between the mean opinion score of parents and principals on the ethnic factors hindering the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean opinion score of parents and principals on the effects of ethnicity in the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria

Table 5: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Difference between the Mean Ratings of Parents and Principals on the Effects of Ethnicity in the Implementation of the UBE Programme in South-South, Nigeria

Variable	n	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Parents	118	2.60	0.94	227	0.57	1.96	0.05	Accepted
Principals	111	2.67	0.93					

Table 5 showed that while the value of z-cal. was 0.57, the value of z-crit. was 1.96. Therefore, since the value of z-cal. of 0.57 is less than the value of z-crit. of 1.96, the null hypothesis was accepted implying that there was no significant difference between the mean opinion score of parents and principals on the effects of ethnicity in the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference between the mean opinion score of parents and principals on the strategies for managing the issue of ethnicity for the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria

Table 6: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Difference between the Mean Ratings of Parents and Principals on the Strategies for Managing the Issue of Ethnicity for the Implementation of the UBE Programme in South-South, Nigeria

Variable	n	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Parents	118	2.87	0.83	227	0.09	1.96	0.05	Not Rejected
Principals	111	2.88	0.83					

Table 6 indicated that while the value of z-cal. was 0.09, the value of z-crit. was 1.96. Therefore, since the value of z-cal. of 0.09 is less than the value of z-crit. of 1.96, the null hypothesis was accepted implying that there was no significant difference between the mean opinion score of parents and principals on the strategies for managing the issue of ethnicity for the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The data collected and analyzed from the respondents indicated that they agreed that there were ethnic factors hindering the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria and there was no difference in the opinion of the parents and principals concerning these issues. Supporting this finding, Kingsley (2021) pointed out that the culture of teachers affects the implementation of educational programmes in schools. The respondents established that when some groups are considered minority as a result of their population strength, it becomes a major ethnic barrier that hinders the successful implementation of the UBE scheme implying that this may hinder fairness in implementation based on this ethnic orientation. It was also discovered that politicized ethnicity where political affiliations of ethnic groups determine who gets what from the scheme is also a barrier. This means that ethnic groups without a political voice may not get as much benefits as they should from the scheme. For example, Ategwu (2021) pointed out that it was discovered that some teachers teach subjects in which they are not specialized and this is sometimes due to politicized ethnicity. The respondents also identified that communities with ethnic conflict which may include cases of communities at variance may also hinder the successful implementation of the programme. However, the parents and principals disagreed that difference in language could constitute an ethnic barrier that limits the programme. This may be because most schools engage the use of English language for communication and as such the issue of language may not make so much difference in the implementation of the scheme. They also disagreed that the history of ethnic groups can constitute an ethnic barrier to the UBE programme implementation.

The study further established that there was no difference in the opinion of the parents and principals on the effects of ethnicity in the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria as they both agreed or disagreed with some of the issues raised. The parents and the principals agreed that ethnicity has a great effect in determining the location of schools. This means that schools may be located in places with less advantage and efficiency as a result of ethnic influence. They also agreed that ethnicity may also affect how resources are deployed into schools in the scheme as well as the recruitment of teachers in the UBE programme. This shows that the allocation of resources for the programme may not be entirely based on fair principles. Related study by Daura and Audu (2015) indicated that the UBE programme performed extremely poorly in the area of student-teacher ratio and the implication of this is that some ethnic groups may not be adequately represented as staff in the schools as a result of low staffing. However, the respondents disagreed that ethnicity can affect the enrollment of pupils. This may be based on the existing law guiding the UBE programme which makes it free and compulsory for all and this suggests the need for stiffer legislations for the programme to be well implemented. On the contrary, Shittu (2021) discovered that there were problems with enrollment in some schools as a result of lack of trained teachers and subpar facilities in the majority of the schools in Bosso Local Government Area, Niger State which prevents the region from achieving the aim of Universal Basic Education. This means that if other conditions are not right, enrollment too may be affected. The respondents also disagreed that ethnicity can affect the performance of students implying that the programme provides a level platform for all beneficiaries which is commendable.

Furthermore, responses from the respondents showed that they do not differ in their opinion in terms of the strategies for managing the issue of ethnicity for the implementation of the UBE programme in South-South, Nigeria. The parents and principals indicated that there was need for more awareness and sensitization on the objectives of the programme and this is likely to reduce the sense of entitlement from some ethnic groups. They also indicated that educational needs must outweigh ethnicity meaning that attention should be given

to educational priorities than ethnic orientations. Wey-Amaewhule (2018) pointed out that when this is done, it will have a positive impact on the scheme such as the provision of required educational resources. The respondents also suggested the need for power sharing among all ethnic groups in the scheme. This means that all ethnic groups should have some form of representation as this will help to ensure checks and balances. There was also the suggestion that educational activities should be free from ethnic bias and all ethnic groups must be active participants in the implementation of the programme as this is important for the programme to succeed in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The parents and principals both agreed that ethnicity affects the implementation of the UBE programme and there was no difference in their opinion concerning this. The respondents both agreed that ethnicity results to educational disenfranchisement in the scheme and this can only be corrected through collective action and participation in the implementation of the UBE scheme.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were proffered based on the findings of the study:

1. The government across all levels need to make more financial commitment to the implementation of the UBE programme as this will help to ensure that adequate resources are available to meet the educational expectations of all ethnic groups in the country.
2. The legislative arms of government must ensure that laws are put in place to protect the educational rights of minority groups across all levels and ensure that their interest is put into consideration in the process of planning and implementation of the UBE programme.
3. Collective participation should be encouraged at all levels of implementation of the UBE scheme irrespective of whether members belong to majority or minority ethnic groups and this will help to ensure that their interest is also given the required attention in the scheme.

References

- Adedayo, M. S. (2015). Education and politics: Its implications for national transformation in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Policy and Administration Research*, 5(8), 40-45
- Akinrotimi, A. A. & Olowe, P. K. (2016). Challenges in the implementation of early childhood education in Nigeria: The way forward. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(7), 33-38
- Amaewhule, B. (2015). *Accessibility of basic education of children from low income families in Rivers State*. Masters Dissertation submitted to Rivers State University
- Ategwu, E. (2021). Implementation of universal basic education programme in Cross River State, Nigeria: Philosophical implication on teachers, nomads and migrant fishermen. *International Research Journal of Education and Technology*, 1(7), 38-55
- Daminabo, D. A. F. (2019). Education, ethnicity and restructuring debate in Nigeria: The issues of schooling system. *RIK International Journal of Philosophy, Art and Culture*, 3(5), 122-130
- Daura, A. H. & Audu, A. R. (2015). Challenges of the implementation of the universal basic education programme in Yobe State, Nigeria and the prospects for 2015 and beyond: *Global Journal of Politics and Law Research*, 3(3), 72-95
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). *National policy on education*. Lagos: NERDC Press
- Guda, S. T. & Mando, P. N. (2020). Politics of educational policies and programmes for the underserved groups in Nigeria: *Benue State University Journal of Educational Management*, 2(1), 147-156
- Imam, H. (2012). Educational policy in Nigeria from the colonial era to the post-independence period: *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, 1, 181-204
- Kingsley, C. E. (2021). Perceived teacher's culture and teaching of environmental education at the universal basic education (UBE) level in Cross River State, Nigeria: *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 20, 163-171
- Osarenren-Osaghae, R. I. & Irabor, Q. O. (2018). Educational policies and programmes implementations: A case study of education funding, universal basic education (UBE) and teacher education. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 10(8), 91-102

- Shittu, A. (2021). *Impact of universal basic education (UBE) programme on the learning of basic science in junior secondary schools in Bosso Local Government Area Niger State*. Project submitted to the Department of Science Education, School of Science and Technology Education, Federal University of Technology, Minna
- Uriah, O.A. & Obi, P. O. (2019). Race, ethnic relations and the development of education in Rivers State, Nigeria: *KIU Journal of Social Science*, 5(3), 293-301
- Wey-Amaewhule, B. (2018). Accessibility of basic education to children from low income families in Rivers State: *International Journal of Innovative Social & Science Education Research*, 6(2), 88-95