

Stakeholders' Ownership and Funding of Universal Basic Education Commission to Enhance Quality Assurance in the 21st Century

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Abstract

The study investigated stakeholders' ownership and funding of Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) to enhance quality education. Two research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The area of study was Imo State. The sample of the study consist of 80 respondents. "Stakeholder Ownership and Funding of UBE for Quality Assurance Questionnaire" (SOFUBEQAQ) was used to collect data. It was a self-structured questionnaire having 4-point scale. Face and content validity were established by experts in Educational Management, School Administration and Measurement and Evaluation. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the reliability of the instrument which yielded coefficient index of 0.85 while Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded a coefficient of 0.76. The research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis. The result showed that stakeholders' ownership of UBEC has enhanced quality assurance in terms of infrastructure, equipment and teaching. The study also revealed that proper funding of UBEC has enhanced quality assurance in primary education. It was recommended among others that partnership between private sector and government should be encouraged to improve quality assurance.

Key Words: Ownership, Funding, UBEC, Primary Education, Quality Assurance

INTRODUCTION

Education is defined as the continuous process which society is established to help members of the society nourish in born traits and potentials that enables him or her face life's challenges. It is an agent of stability, promotes technological advancement, provision of high caliber of human resources, the need for quality education is needful in the face of technological advancement. In order to achieve the aforementioned benefits of education (Onumah, 2019). The constitution lists the following as its educational goals: The government's policy should be focused on guaranteeing equitable and sufficient educational opportunities at all levels. Science and technology will be promoted by the government. To this end, the government must immediately provide: (a) free, universal, and compulsory primary education; (b) free secondary education; (c) free university education; and (d) a free adult literacy program in order to combat illiteracy (CFRN Const. Chap. II & 18).

The federal government of Nigeria launched universal basic education (UBE) on September 30, 1999. This was the fourth significant attempt by succeeding administrations to make basic (primary) education available to all Nigerians (Uko-Aviomoh, Okoh, & Omatseye, 2007). The objectives of Universal Basic Education—free, mandatory, and universal primary education—have not been met in recent years. One may wonder why UPE, UBEC, No Child Is Left Behind failed after a while? One major issue bedeviling the effective of these programme may be inadequate funding. Hence the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) specified that, for educational systems of developing nations to witness stability, at least 26 percent of such nations' budget must be channeled to the education sector (Ekaette, et al., 2019).

Proper funding and ownership of education seem to be a way out of the numerous challenges facing the UBEC in particular and educational sector and policies in general. Poor financing of education has led to falling standards in the quality of education as compared to the 70's and 80's when there was low demand for formal education (Oweh, 2013). In this 21st century, more emphasis on education as agent of change, a vehicle to bridge the gap between rich and poor has increased the demand for education at the primary level of education, despite numerous policies to improve primary education yet poor quality of Education (shortage of teachers, inadequate equipment, school facilities, inadequate instructional material, poor monitoring and supervision of teaching and learning activities.)

Educational financing does not end at determining how much money should be made available

to schools and other educational institutions but goes a bit further to show how the monies are spent or utilized. According to Vaizay (2013), financing of education has been an intractable problem for government in most developing countries because of the uncontrolled increase in school age population, most parents who were not privileged to get formal education believe that education is the key to success hence encourage their wards to get formal education. The increase in demand for formal education makes it difficult for a sole individual or government to own nor fund education. Nigeria being a third world country is plagued with the growing trend of insecurity. Economic recession has its impact on funding of education. Government is faced with more emerging issue on every sector hence seems to leverage on what is available to cater for funding of education (Sani, 2019). Based on UNESCO standards, a country ought to budget 26 % of her budget to fund education to attain quality assurance and sustainable development (Onumah,2019)

Apart from funding another issue that affect UBEC and the actualization of its goal in recent times is ownership? Public ownership of most primary institutions has done more harm than good to primary education. The emergence of private secondary ownership of tertiary, secondary and primary education has reduced the number of wards going to public educational institutions, It has brought a healthy competition to the formal monopoly of education by government. This competition between government owned school and private owned school has drastically reduced some irregularities in primary education such as over populated classes, pressure on instructional materials, equipment and facilities. These benefits should be harnessed to promote quality assurance in primary education since primary education is the foundation on which secondary and tertiary education is built on.

Statement of Problem

Education is essential for significant development and progress. No country can surpass its level of education. The rise or fall of any nation's economy is directly related to its educational system. The growing concern of stakeholders of the state funding of education has left the sector bedeviled with incessant industrial strikes, dilapidated infrastructure, poor working conditions, inadequate and obsolete instructional materials among others. The chart below shows the trend of funding of education from 2010 to 2019.

Table 1: States with the highest budget in each geopolitical zone and percentage of education funding

Year	Enugu	Rivers	Bauchi	Lagos	Kano	Kwara
2010	13.0	16.0	6.8	18.41	20.0	6.26
2011	16.0	13.2	5.72	13.9	3.29	10.84
2012	16.0	10.3	14.01	12.65	2.61	9.72
2013	16.0	3.72	9.2	12.20	3.65	25.0
2014	6.21	6.18	5.38	15.81	9.89	17.04
2015	6.30	2.59	5.55	16.8	13.14	25.0
2016	10.41	15.13	19.73	17.11	19.18	7.04
2017	12.0	6.38	20.0	7.14	8.16	6.97
2018	12.01	9.80	18.8	12.07	12.57	9.72
2019	10.35	11.25	5.43	12.0	14.02	17.94

Source: Nigeria Bureau of Statistics

Hence, the problem is? How will education survive with growing trends in school age population and inadequate funding and ownership issues? Could private/public partnership be a sure way to increasing quality education? These are questions this study addressed. Thus the researcher investigated stakeholders' ownership and funding of UBEC for quality assurance in 21st century.

METHODOLOGY

A survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Imo state. The population of the study consisted of managerial staff of primary schools in Imo state. Purposive sampling was employed, and the study's sample size consisted of 80 management staff members from Imo State's elementary schools. Purposive sampling was used to select managerial staff which are level 14 and above for the study because of their wealth of experience on issues of ownership and funding of UBEC in enhancing quality education.

The "stakeholder ownership and funding of UBE for quality assurance questionnaire" (SOFUBEQAQ) is a self-structured questionnaire with Very High Extent (VHE) (4.0), High Extent (HE) (3), Low Extent (LE) (2), and Very Low Extent (VLE) (1). Biodata were collected in Section A, stakeholder ownership of primary education was measured in Section B, and stakeholder funding of primary education was measured in Section C.

Three experts in Educational Management, School Administration and Measurement and Evaluation all from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, validated the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established by administering it on twenty managerial staff outside the study area. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the reliability of the instrument which yielded coefficient index of 0.85 while Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded a coefficient of 0.74. The research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while the

hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research question 1: To what extent does private/public sector ownership enhance quality assurance in primary education?

Table 1: Frequency and Mean ratings of the after extent does ownership enhance quality assurance in primary education.

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	X	SD	RMK
1	Private organization ownership of primary education will enhance learning.	50	8	10	12	2.23	1.021	High
2	Public organization ownership of primary education will promote quality education.	18	4	18	40	2.38	1.003	Low
3	Supervision of teaching and non-teaching staff should be left for by private sector	30	21	20	9	2.67	1.058	High
4	Supervision of teaching and non-teaching staff should be left for by public sector	6	24	47	7	2.87	1.073	Low
5	Allowing public to own infrastructure and manpower in primary education will enhance quality assurance	30	39	2	9	3.91	1.721	High
6	Allowing private to own infrastructure and manpower in primary education will enhance quality assurance	22	27	12	19	2.78	1.123	High
Grand mean						2.82		High

The result in table 1 shows that 3 out of 6 items measuring the extent to which stakeholders (public and private sector) ownership of UBEC has enhanced the quality of education had means above 2.50 in favour of private ownership of primary education while 1 out of 6 items measuring the extent to which stakeholders (public and private sector) ownership of UBEC has enhanced the quality of education had means above 2.50 in favour of public ownership of primary education. The grand mean of 2.82 summarily indicates that to a high extent private ownership of primary education will enhance quality assurance.

Research question 2: To what extent does private/public sector funding enhance quality assurance in primary education?

Table 2: Frequency and Mean ratings on the extent private/public sector funding enhance quality assurance in primary education.

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	X	SD	RMK
1	Liaising with private sector to procure infrastructure can improve performance	50	8	10	12	2.67	.623	High
2	Provision of laboratory equipment by Public/private organization will promote learning.	18	34	18	10	2.83	.781	High
3	Public and private sector to jointly procurement of library equipment will enhance learning.	30	41	2	7	3.48	.813	High
4	The private sector funding of primary education will enhance learning.	6	24	47	7	2.43	.438	low
5	Allowing public sector to fund primary education will enhance improved quality	16	37	8	9	3.01	.572	High
6	Public and private sector Supervision of teaching process in line with international standard can enhanced learning	38	35	6	1	2.75	.673	High
7	Public/private organization funding of procurement and manpower development will enhance quality assurance.	32	2	11	9	2.63	.761	High
8	Only private or public sector funding of education can lead to sustainable growth in primary education.	8	3	38	31	2.23	.892	Low
Grand Mean						2.63		

The result in table 2 show that 6 out of 8 of the items measuring the extent public /private funding of UBEC has enhance primary education with quality education had means above 2.50 in favor of joint public and private funding. Thus, response above 2.50 were tagged as high response while response below 2.50 were tagged as low response. The grand mean of 2.67 shows a high extent to which joint public and private funding of UBEC enhance quality

assurance.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between ownership and funding by stakeholders to enhance quality education.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between ownership and funding of UBEC for quality education in primary school.

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	r	Sig	Decision
Ownership	80	35.00	3.23	79	.704	.005	Reject
Funding	80	26.25	2.46				Ho

*Significant at $P < 0.05$

Table 3 reveals that the r value of 704. At $df = 79$, where $P < 0.05$. This indicates that there is a high positive significant relationship between ownership and funding of UBEC for quality education in primary school. Hence the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between ownership and funding of UBEC for quality education in primary school is therefore rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDING

The findings of this study show that respondents agree that private ownership will enhance quality assurance in primary education as against public ownership. The findings of this study is in affirmation with Sani (2021). He opined that the fallen standards in instructional materials and teachers' remuneration can be traced to ownership issues and inefficient management in public sector which adversely affects quality assurance.

The findings of this study reveals that respondents agree that joint private/ public funding of primary education will enhance quality assurance. The findings of this study reveals funding of education at primary level using partnership will increase quality of education. This finding is supported by Ogbodo (2014). In his paper on partnership for education finance in Nigeria, he asserted that funding of education should not be a sole responsibility of the private sector or government sector. He suggested that the special tax levied on profit of joint stock companies and the revenue earmarked for tertiary education should also be extended to UBEC since it's

the cradle of education system. If there is school drop-out at primary level, there will be no need of TETFUND. Subsequently UNICEF (2023) in her one-day seminar for assessing Foundations Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) in Abuja found out that the 12 percent allocated to primary education is counterproductive. There is poor public sector funding for primary education in the country.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, it was concluded that stakeholders' ownership of UBEC has enhanced quality assurance in terms of infrastructure, equipment and teaching. The study also revealed that proper funding of UBEC has enhanced quality assurance in primary education. A sure solution to this problem is joint ownership and funding of primary education for quality assurance, accountability and stable growth in primary education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study:

1. There should be public /private partnership funding of primary education for stability, consistency, and continuity of the education sector; the zig-zag trend in the allocation to the education sector should be abolished.
2. Funds allocated to the educational sector should be used purposefully and judiciously in pursuing educational policies and programmes in the country hence strict accountability measures should be enacted with punishment for offenders. This can be achieved through honesty, discipline, integrity, and patriotism
3. As recommended by UNESCO, the Federal Government of Nigeria should devote at least 26% of its budget to education in order to appropriately fund this sector. This will give room for effective payment of teachers' salaries, elimination of strike actions, provision of school plants and facilities, the overall running of the entire educational system, and rapid economic growth in terms of human development index as the quality of education improves.
4. There should be adequate supervision and placement of qualified and experienced individuals with credible integrity to oversee the formulation and implementation of educational policies in Nigeria.

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