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Repositioning Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Anambra State for Sustainable Development through Effective Communication (Pp. 274-286)

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Abstract

UBE programme which is hoped to eradicate illiteracy and lead to the acquisition of manipulative skills and all rounded comprehensive education that fully equips the recipient to attain full potentials and contribute meaningfully to the development of the state and the nation has not been fully implemented in Anambra State. This paper, therefore, aimed at repositioning UBE programme in Anambra State for sustainable Development through effective communication. Four research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study. From a population of 270 principals and 5,949 teachers in the government owned secondary schools in Anambra State, 60 principals and 600 teachers were selected using proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire of 29 items validated by two experts in educational management and policy and an expert in measurement and evaluation. The instrument was tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha and it yielded coefficients of 0.81, 0.78, 0.88 and 0.76 respectively for each of the sections. Analysis was done using weighted mean for the research questions and t-test for the null hypotheses

tested as 0.05 level of significance. Findings indicated that through effective communication, teachers who are the principal actors in the implementation of UBE programme will be fully involved and thereby enhance the achievement of the UBE objectives. Based on the findings conclusion were drawn and recommendations made.

Introduction

The introduction of Universal Basic Education UBE on nine years compulsory education is one of the several reform initiatives by the Federal Government of Nigeria aimed at promoting societal development in particular and the social well being of Nigerians in general. The focus of the UBE according to Obioma (2008) is on the issue of access, equity and quality of teaching and learning that will meet the present day challenges globally. The absence of a viable and effective administrative machinery to coordinate secondary school educational policies and standard is regarded by Onuh and Onyemauche (2008) as a major factor inhibiting efficient school management in Nigeria. Findings by Onuh and Ofojebe (2008) indicated that facilities, instructional materials, social mobilization and human resources are not adequately provided for the effective implementation of UBE in Anambra State for sustainable development. In another study by Nwogbo, Okorji and Ezeugbo (2008) it was equally found out that Junior Secondary School (JSS) teachers are not adequately prepared and involved towards UBE programme in the management of education for sustainable development in Anambra State.

In essence, the reports of these studies show that teachers are not yet fully involved in the implementation of the UBE programme in Anambra State. Although the role of the government according to FRN (2004), among others for the success of UBE are to oversee, monitor, initiate and intervene in major areas of need such as in payment of salaries, provision of infrastructure and furnishing of schools. The actual implementation, which greatly determines success of UBE Programme lies with the teachers. Adamechi and Romaine (2000) opined that teachers are the principal actors in the implementation of UBE and other educational policies. In recognition of the important role of teachers in the successful implementation of UBE, the FRN (2002) through the UBE guideline specified that teachers must be integral part of the processes of UBE conceptualization, planning and execution. Through the findings of Nwogbo et al (2008), it is obvious that these

guidelines with respect to teachers are not heeded. There is therefore, need to reposition the UBE programme in Anambra State.

Repositioning according to Eheazu (2005) implies putting any programme in a better position to achieve its goals and purpose. One of the greatest challenges of educational administration in Nigeria today is fostering of effective communication that would enhance repositioning. The need for repositioning UBE becomes more crucial when one considers the objective of the UBE scheme which is to provide a holistic access and efficient delivery of quality basic education for all children of school age and adults directed to attainment of education for all. In the light of the foregoing, the establishment of an appropriate communication pattern, channel and skills in the school system is a fundamental task which needs to be approached by all school administrators.

Statement of Problem

The school as a social organisation or institution where people interact, involves a lot of human interactions, to realize its predetermined goals. The achievements of such goals and the security of activities are possible through effective communication between individuals in the school. However, some administrators have been greatly criticized for neglecting effective communication in their schools. Cole (2004) warned that qualified and dedicated teachers could be frustrated and rendered unproductive due to lack of effective communication in the school organisation. Ocho (2002), reported that confrontation, tension and disagreement among head teacher, teachers and students exist in some schools and are commonly associated with negative results such as communication gap, indiscipline, close organizational climate, staff truancy and individual rivalry among staff. Thus one begins to wonder if the UBE implementation level in Anambra State which is reported to be very low (Onuh and Ofojebe, 2008 and Nwogbo et al, 2008) is associated with ineffective communication. This is because when the teachers who are the basic or principal actors in the implementation of UBE programme do not understand what is expected of them, the tendency to be committed to goal implementation may not be high. This affects negatively the effective implementation of UBE. It therefore becomes imperative to carry out an empirical study on ways through which effective communication could be used for repositioning UBE programme in Anambra State.

The questions then are – could UBE programme be repositioned in Anambra State? Could effective communication be used in repositioning the UBE programme? These questions constituted the problem of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to identify the effective communication that could be employed in repositioning UBE in Anambra State for sustainable development. Specifically the purpose of the study includes.

1. to ascertain the type/pattern of communication that should be used in schools.
2. to ascertain how often the principals should communicate with their teachers.
3. to ascertain the channel of communication to be used in schools
4. to ascertain the communication skills that principals should use in secondary school administration.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used for the study

1. What type/pattern of communication should principals and teachers use in secondary schools?
2. How often should principals communicate with their teachers?
3. What channel of communication should be used in schools?
4. What communication skills should principals use in secondary school administration?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the type/pattern of communication to be used by principals and teachers in secondary schools.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on how often principals should communicate with their teachers.
3. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the channel of communication to be used in schools
4. There is no significant difference between the mean rating of principals and teachers on the communication skills to be used by principals in secondary school administration.

Methodology

The study was a descriptive survey. The design was used in this study to collect data from principals and teachers in Anambra State secondary schools in order to identify how effective communication could be used in repositioning UBE in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 6219 respondents. Based on data collected from the Anambra State Education Commission Awka as at September, 2008, there were 270 secondary school principals and 5949 secondary school teachers in Anambra State. The sample for the study was 660 respondents representing the entire population of principals and teachers. The proportionate stratified – random sampling technique was adopted by stratifying the secondary schools based on the education zones where they are located. From each of the education zone 10 schools were randomly selected giving a total number of 60 schools because Anambra State has 6 education zones. All the principals of the selected schools (N=60) and 10 teachers (N=600) were chosen as sample for the study.

The researchers constructed a questionnaire titled Effective Communication for UBE Repositioning Questionnaire (ECUBERQ) for data collection. The instrument has two parts – part A and part B. Part A was on personal data of respondents. Part B has 4 section with items based on each of the research questions. The responses were structured on a 4 point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA - 4 points), Agree (A-3 points), Disagree (D-2 points) and Strongly Disagree (SD – 1 point). To ascertain the validity of the instrument, the draft of the instrument together with the purpose of study and research questions were submitted to two experts in the Department of Educational Management and Policy of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, as well as an expert in the Department of Measurement and Evaluation. Their criticism and amendments were effected before the final draft was produced.

To test for reliability, the Crombach Alpha was applied. A pilot study was done using 10 principals and 50 teachers from Oji River Local Government Area of Enugu State. The mean ratings were coded and subjected to statistical analysis. Each section of instrument yielded a coefficient of 0.81, 0.78, 0.88 and 0.76 respectively and were considered satisfactory for the study.

The instrument was personally administered on the respondents by the researchers with the help five research assistants. The copies of the

questionnaire were collected back immediately to avoid instrument mortality. All the 660 copies of questionnaire were retrieved and used for the study. Mean scores were used in answering the research questions. The mid point for 4 point which is 2.5 was used as acceptance level of any item. Therefore any item with mean score below 2.5 was rejected while any item with 2.5 and above was accepted. T-test was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The data in table I showed that the principals and teachers agreed that items 1 – 4 should be the pattern/type of communication to be used by principals and teachers in the school; while items 5 – 7 were rejected. In summary the table has a section mean of 2.59 for principals and 2.53 for teachers. This indicated that the respondents generally agreed that a particular type/pattern of communication should be used by principals and teachers in the schools.

The data in table 2 shows that the respondent agreed or accepted that all the items should be ways in which principals should frequently communicate with teachers. In summary, the table has section mean of 3.42 for principals and 3.48 for teachers. These mean scores imply that principals should communicate with teachers regularly.

The data in table 3 above showed that only items 17 and 19 had mean ratings below 2.5. The rest of the items have mean scores of 2.5 and above indicating that they are appropriate channels of communication in schools.

In summary, the table has section mean ratings of 3.04 and 3.15 for principals and teachers respectively. This indicated that both the principals and teachers accepted the communication channels listed in the section.

The data in table 4 showed that all the items have mean scores above 2.5 except item 27 that has 3.11 for teachers and 2.11 for principals. This indicated that principals rejected the item while the teachers accepted it. The table has section mean scores of 2.89 for principals and 3.11 teachers respectively. This means that the respondents generally accepted the skills should be adopted by the principals in secondary school administration.

From table 5 calculated at 0.05 level of significance and 658 degree of freedom, the calculated t of 0.179 was less than the critical t value of 1.960. It

is therefore concluded that the mean ratings of principals and teachers did not differ in all ramifications. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted or upheld.

Table 6 indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of the principals and teachers since calculated t of 0.064 is less than t -critical of 1.960 tested at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore upheld.

Table 7 has a cal- t of 0.078 which is less than critical t of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that the null hypothesis was upheld because no significant difference exists between the mean ratings of the respondents.

The result on table 8 indicate that the t -calculated of 0.24 is less than the critical t of 1.960 tested at 0.05 level of significance, there by making the null hypothesis to be upheld.

Discussion

The findings of research question one showed that the respondents are unanimous in their mean rating. It can therefore be deduced that the respondents believe that if the communication patterns indicated are effectively used in schools, the teachers will be more committed thereby enhancing the repositioning of UBE Programme in Anambra State. This finding agrees with Anohu (2004), who noted that since communication is the life wire of every organisation, principals should be allowed to receive information as well as pass information. There was equally no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondent on the communication pattern in schools.

In response to research question two, the principals and teachers agreed that there should be regular communication between the principals and teachers in the school. The views of the principals and teachers did not differ in all ramifications. Blake and Monton (1985) characterized school head who use regular communication as transactional. They continued that the school heads are strongly on schedules, communicate clear and precise information which helps teachers to keep to goal attainment. Supporting this view, Uzoechina (2004) stated that as they do this, teachers avoid getting into trouble and consequently, engage in more disciplined behaviour.

Furthermore, the findings of research question 3 revealed the channels that principals should use for communication in schools. Also the respondents' mean ratings did not differ. This finding is in line with Coch and French (2006) who examined the degrees of the participation in an organisation and found that the greater the participation, the better the communication and the better the relationships between the boss and immediate subordinates.

Also, the findings of the fourth research question revealed that principals should use more of creative communication skills in school administration. When they do this, teachers are then expected to work with principals towards attaining school goals. Cole (2004) noted that unless goals are properly articulated and their implementation strategies made clear, such goals might not be achieved. The findings agrees with that of Coch and French (2006), who found that principals should verbalize support and facilitate free flow of communication between them and the teachers.

Implication of the Findings

The findings of this study highlight that through the effective communication in secondary schools in Anambra State; the teachers will be more involved and then participate in the achievement of educational goals. From this findings therefore, the UBE Programme could be repositioned and benefits reaped in Anambra State secondary schools.

Recommendations

1. Principals should not use staff meetings as grounds for issuing orders, it should be used as avenue for discussing vital issues of school administration.
2. In – service training should be organized for principals on communication patterns and skills by the Ministry of Education.
3. Communication between the principals and the teachers should be regular.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that through effective communication the UBE Programme could be repositioned in Anambra State. Thus, through effective communication, teachers in the school who are the principal actors in the implementation of UBE will be fully involved and help to achieve the objectives.

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Table I: Mean scores of principals and Teacher on Pattern/type of communication

S/No.	Item	Principals	Teachers
1.	Teachers should receive instructions from their immediate superiors	2.82	3.23
2.	Principals should insist on presenting conflicting issues and reaching compromise with teachers	3.22	3.56
3.	Grievances, complaints and requests should be made known to principals through the vice principals	2.64	2.16
4.	Teachers should be allowed to discuss directly with the principals.	3.10	3.12
5.	Teachers should only communicate verbally with their superiors	2.00	1.95
6.	Principals must always use written information.	2.43	1.46
7.	Information should always go down to teachers without allowing them to communicate upwards	2.33	1.32
	Section Mean	2.59	2.53

Table 2: Mean scores of Principals and Teachers on Frequency of communication

S/No.	Item	Principals	Teachers
8.	Teachers should always be summoned for staff meeting to air their view and contribute to the growth of the school.	3.08	3.55
9.	Every decision reached on goal implementation should always be documented and timely communicated to teachers	3.24	3.42
10.	Quarries should always be sent to defaulting teachers	3.38	3.59
11.	Teachers should be regularly reminded of their responsibilities through daily briefings	3.60	3.62
12.	Newsletters should often be used to inform teachers of the responsibilities	2.75	3.01
13.	Written information should always be pasted on notice boards	3.42	3.47
14.	Teachers should regularly be reminded of new policies through memos and notice	3.56	3.71
	Section Mean	3.42	3.48

Table 3: Mean Scores of principals and teachers on channels of communication to be used in secondary school?

S/No.	Item	Principals	Teachers
15.	Information should be received through verbal means	3.38	3.38
16.	Message should be circulated through written means	2.94	3.19
17.	Principals should send students to orally communicate vital information to teachers	2.14	2.45
18.	Information should be remitted through intercom.	3.24	3.69
19.	Vital information should be relayed through the grapevine.	2.24	2.22

20.	Principals should adopt open door policies to encourage free communication	3.48	3.56
21.	Principals should adopt both formal and informal communication systems.	3.00	2.81
22.	Circulars from external bodies like zonal and state boards should be made available to teachers.	3.14	3.56
23.	Principals should visit teachers in class and staff rooms and give them vital information.	3.31	3.25
24.	Staff meeting should be held regularly for briefing on school affairs	3.50	3.44
	Section Mean	3.04	3.13

Table 4: Mean scores of Principals and Teachers on communication skills

S/No.	Item	Principals	Teachers
25.	Principals should use visionary skills in discussing the school's vision for improving student's academic performances with teachers	3.01	3.19
26.	Strategic skills in discussing his strategic plans for improved students' discipline	3.12	2.79
27.	Motivation skills in supporting teachers to talk about their grievances	2.11	3.01
28.	Empathic skills in listening to teachers problems and advising them	3.01	3.07
29.	Information skills in providing vital information, guidelines and patterns of job performance	3.21	3.48
	Section Mean	2.89	3.11

Table 5: t-test on mean scores of principals and teachers on pattern/type of communication

Type Respondent	of	No	\bar{X}	SD	Df	Cal t	Crit T	P
Principals		60	2.59	0.98	658	0.179	1.960	0.05
Teachers		600	2.53	0.59				

Table 6 t-test on mean score of principals and teachers on the frequency of communication

Type Respondent	of	No	\bar{X}	SD	Df	Cal T	Crit T	P
Principals		60	3.42	0.73	658	0.064	1.960	0.05
Teachers		600	3.48	0.76				

Table 7: t-test on the mean scores of principals and teachers on channels of communication

Type Respondent	of	No	\bar{X}	SD	Df	Cal T	Crit T	P
Principals		60	3.04	0.84	658	0.178	1.960	0.05
Teachers		600	3.15	0.93				

Table 8: t-test on mean scores of principals and teachers on the communication skills to be used by principals

Type Respondent	of	No	\bar{X}	SD	Df	Cal T	Crit T	P
Principals		60	2.89	0.876	658	0.24	1.960	0.05
Teachers		600	3.11	1.03				