

African Research Review

An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal , Ethiopia

Vol. 4 (2) April, 2010

ISSN 1994-9057 (Print)

ISSN 2070-0083 (Online)

Parental Involvement and Effective Nation's Implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE)

(Pp. 311-321)

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Abstract

This study was carried out to determine parental involvement in their children's education. The feed back of the parent's involvement informed on the effective nation's implementation of the UBE. Data for the study was derived from 500 parents/guardians in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State. Using the one sample mean (population t-test) and the independent t-test, the hypotheses tested revealed that: (1) parental involvement in their children's education was significantly lower; (2) female parents were more

involved in the education of their children/wards. Recommendations were therefore made at improving parental involvement in their children's education for effective nation's implementation of UBE.

Introduction

The importance of education in any nation cannot be overemphasized. Education is a prerequisite for development. Technological, socio-economical and environmental advancements all depend on education. Through education, a society can be easily transformed. The Obasanjo administration in 1999 did not make any mistake when it introduced the Universal Basic Education (UBE). This education is not programmed only for children in Primary Schools and Junior Secondary School but for all citizens who in one way or the other might have dropped out of school. According to Yanware (2008), it provides reading, writing and numeracy skills as well as providing a variety of formal and non-formal education. Instead of the six (6) years in the Primary School as it used to be, the Basic Education stresses on nine (9) that is three years of Lower Basic Education level, three years of Middle Basic Education level and three years of Upper Basic Education level. Apart from this, the Universal Basic Education is for every Nigerian child as well as out of school children, including adolescents and adults. This is to enable them acquire quality numeracy, literacy, communication and life skills as well as ethical, moral and civic values.

The programme is also concerned with the day care, nursery and kindergarten children; pastoral nomad and the migrant fishermen's children. Schools have been built by government for this people that move from one place to another along their route. It is widened in scope, structure and even in nature than the former Universal Primary Education scheme (UPE). It provides educational opportunity for all. As a programme that all citizens are eager to see its success, all hands must be on deck for Universal Basic Education. The government, teachers, educators, parents and even individuals in the society must come together to make the programme succeed.

The child is the centre of education and should not be marginalized in any way that will prevent him/her from having an all round education that will enhance his/her development educationally, technologically, economically, socially and morally to the development of the nation. This therefore calls for parental involvement in education which invariably implies parents' investment in education of their children that will eventually bring about the much desired development and stability of the nation.

Olatonye and Ogunkola (2008) posit that traditionally, parental involvement in education included contributions to their children's home-based activities (like helping with homework, encouraging reading and school attendance), and school-based activities (like attending Parents Teachers' Association meeting, Parent/Teacher conferences, and participating in fund raising activities). Uzoehina and Obidike (2008) contend that parental involvement in children's education now is manifested in their interest in school activities and active participation in children's school work. Some of these activities are fund-raising, inter-house sports, involvement in school's decision-making, information dissemination, monitoring of children's school and enforcing pupils and staff discipline.

In his view, Akinwunmi (2004) says that parents' school involvement is a major factor that helps in improving the school child effectiveness through quality of education. In this case, parents take time off their work duties to visit children's schools for meetings with teachers and counsellors. This way, they have an update on their children's capabilities and look for ways to proffer solutions such as getting lesson teachers to help with extra tuitions of their children, providing the necessary learning materials required, helping children maintain their study timetable and studying accordingly, and so forth. In diverse ways, parents are involved in the education of their children. According to Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2004), parents at times are the classroom teachers, functional members of the Parents/Teachers Association, members of the school decision-making team on programmes and parents at home assisting children in learning activities such as writing out their assignments, projects, etc.

Despite the various ways in which parents may be involved in students' education, many studies have shown that many parents because of one reason or the other cannot effectively be involved thereby being obstacles to their children's educational attainment. Johnson (1996) found out that many parents, due to hard measures, have become poor and can no longer provide adequately for their children in areas such as provision of textbooks, school uniforms, good medical care and many more. These have caused most pupils to drop out of schools. Shittu (2004) found parental deprivations due to death or divorce or absconding of one of the parents as resulting in lack of payment of school fee, purchase of books and uniforms. Such a child, he added, may play truant; thus, affecting his performance adversely. Adiotome (2006) emphasises that many children whose parents are not involved in their

studies, failed to comply with school rules and regulations, cheat in examinations, fail to do assignments and buy recommended textbooks, failed to come to school on time and regularly and manifest untidy dressing habits.

Parents and the Issue of Effective Implementation of Universal Basic Education

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) as discussed so far aims at providing education for all its citizens right from childhood to adulthood. This programme which is both formal and non-formal needs support from parents for both the individuals and groups for its total realization. Parents as citizen of this great nation that want to see their children occupy enviable positions in the society are expected to be involved with the interactive process of Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) in order to be well informed of the school process especially with the provision of textual materials and other learning aids for their children (Ejue, 1997). The mass media, he also added, should as well endeavour to provide information to the parents who are part of the masses, on the importance of learning materials for their children. This information need to portray the positive and negative effects of provision and non-provision of textual materials on children education.

Obot (1997) observes that parents have the intimate knowledge of their children and have the heaviest responsibility for their upbringing. Therefore, they are to prepare their children for an all round development by providing the children with not only the learning materials, food , etc, but especially, the right emotional climate that will enhance not only smooth transition to school but foster interest and the right learning attitude. She went on to add that some family environment set the scene for early emotional tension through physical deprivation, parental injustice, quarrelling or rejection, abuse of child, etc. These conditions tend to provoke serious stress on the child's emotional development while in primary school thereby not meeting the academic demand of the school.

The Parents-Teachers Association was formed on the basis of the positive contributions of the association to the child's wellbeing. This also reveals that the parents and teachers should work hand in hand in imparting knowledge to the child. For whatever a child learns from the home is exhibited either in class or at any other place outside the school system. Thus the monitoring of the activities of the child by parents will help to expose the effectiveness or otherwise of the class teacher. Where teachers are not qualified to cater for the children, through the PTA, parents could make this

known in order to get qualified ones. In a situation where qualified teachers are not posted on time to the school, the PTA could assist by employing teachers to assist until the Ministry of Education sends some teachers.

More so, parents, through the PTA, should try to make the work of the teachers less cumbersome by providing the students with the right environment for learning by assisting with classroom building. According to Okunola (2004), it is only in the understanding of parents and teachers working together in the education of the children as partners that parents will be willing to share the sense of purpose, mutual respect and willingness in participation. Uzoechina and Obidike (2008) added that parental involvement is not a friendly acquaintance with teachers but obligations from parents. This participation must be seen in area of development of educational policies and curriculum issues that affect the destiny of children. A high level of parental involvement will no doubt goad primary education to more effective and more efficient performance. Bukoye (2004) argued that mothers were more involved in children's education than the fathers. In agreement Ijaiya (2004) contend that mother's over celebrated their children's academic achievement and therefore should be actively involved. Hoffman (1994) posits that often times parents use the nature of their work as an excuse to evade involvement but never the less, even working class mothers visits their children's school.

Statement of the Problem

The children indeed are the hope for the future, if they are not taken care of today, the future may be bleak for them. Despite knowing this, many parents irrespective of their socio-economic background tend either to lay all educational commitment of both parents only on one parent, oftentimes the mothers, who are expected to attend the PTA meetings, conferencing with teachers, etc. Many of the parents also have never seen the state of the school buildings, the library or the dormitory. Thus, without even the contributions of the parents (fathers and mothers) who are expected to exert not only influence on the lives of their children but also be role models, motivators of learning, providers of the necessary materials and environment for learning; children in school are bound not to meet the goal of education and UBE cannot be a reality education.

Purpose of the Study

To investigate the involvement of parents in the education of their children in the UBE scheme

Methodology

The study is basically a survey design. The population of the study consisted of all parents whose children/wards are in the Basic Educational level of the educational system in Calabar Municipality. Five hundred (500) parents/guardians who were attending various PTA meetings at the beginning of the term during 2008/2009 session in primary schools within Calabar Municipality were used as the sample for the study.

The instrument used was a 14 item Parents/Guardians Involvement Questionnaire comprising of two sections. Section A consists of four (4) items requiring information like sex, occupation, educational qualification and age. Section B consisted of ten (10) dichotomously scored items, overall to measure parental involvement in the education of their children. They were to cooperate by ticking “Yes” or “No” against each item. Face and content validation proceedings were adapted to ensure professionally acceptable, validation standards. Fifty (50) parents who were not part of the sample were administered the questionnaire. A split half reliability estimate was used to arrive at a coefficient of 0.75. The instrument was administered to 50 parents/guardians with the assistance of the head teachers of the various primary schools in Calabar Municipality.

The one-sample mean or population T-test and independent T-test were used in the analysis of the two hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1: Parental involvement in their children’s education is not significantly high.

To test this hypothesis, the researchers reasoned that for the involvement of parents to be judged significantly high, the score made on it should be significantly greater than 5.00 (which is half of the dichotomously scored items) measuring this variable. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is that the mean score representing parental involvement in their children education is not significantly higher than 5.00

$$\begin{array}{l} H_0 \quad : \quad \mu \quad = \quad 5.00 \\ H_1 \quad : \quad \mu \quad > \quad 5.00 \end{array}$$

This hypothesis was tested with a t-test of one sample mean or population t-test. The result is presented in Table 1.

The result shows that the mean score for parental involvement (4.50) is significantly lower than the hypothesized reference value of 5.00 ($t = 1.96$; $P = .05$). This means that parental involvement in the education of their children is significantly low. The calculated absolute t-value of 45.45 is however higher than the critical t-value of 1.96 (two tailed test). The null hypothesis is therefore retained. In other words, parental involvement is not significantly high.

Hypothesis 2: Male parents are not significantly different from their female counterparts in their involvement in the education of children.

The statistical analysis technique used to test this hypothesis was the independent t-test analysis. The results of the analysis are presented in table 2.

The result shows that mean score of female parents (5.02) is significantly higher than that of male parents (4.25). The absolute calculated t value of 2.04 is also greater than the critical t value of 1.96 at .05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternate. In other words, female parents tend to be more involved in the education of their wards/children.

Discussion of Findings

Parental involvement in the education of their children was used to predict the effectiveness of the implementation of the UBE. This sees the parents in the position of providing their children with social, emotional and academic requirements to perform better at school as well as fostering the provision of infrastructures, staff and being members of the decision making team that will ensure the effective implementation of the UBE.

The study found out that parents have not recognized their roles therefore they have not functioned appropriately. The result of the first hypothesis of the study revealed that parental involvement in the education of their children was significantly low. This is in support of Uzoehina and Obidike (2008) who affirmed that parental involvement is more than providing the children with the essential requirements for better performance at school and friendly acquaintance with the teachers; but also includes an obligation to participate in area of development of educational policies and curriculum issues. The findings was also in line with Hixson (2006) who explained that parental involvement in education promotes better co-operation between parents and

school, allowing the combination of efforts to build the school the way it will achieve its educational goal as well as assist children to succeed.

Hypothesis two also revealed that female parents were more involved in the education of their children. The reasons for this finding might be in the situations around women and the fact that Nigerian society has become gender permissive as seen in the inclusion of women in economic, political, religious and social sectors of the nation. These have nurtured positive attitude to education in women.

The findings confirms that of Ijaiya (2004) who found that mothers over celebrated their children's academic achievement and would therefore endeavour attend to matters affecting their education. Bukoye (204) also opined from his study that as more resources flow from the community to a working mother through her social net work she uses these to enrich the quality of her child's care in terms of giving qualitative education, adequate health care, time for leisure, etc. Hoffman (1994) also reported that even working class mothers spend as much time if not more with the children. They ensure they visit the schools when fathers can not.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it is concluded that parents have not be very responsible to their obligations towards their children's education. They are in positions to impact on children's education through the provisions of threat free psychological home environment, educational materials and ensuring that the UBE scheme is successfully implemented. They need to compliment the work of the teachers by supervising and monitoring their children's academic activities on one hand while supporting the UBE through prompt decisions and contributions to school.

Counselling Implication/Recommendation

For effective understanding of the diverse ways parents could be involved in the education of their children, the school counsellor should organize an awareness workshop for the Parents/Teachers Association. Here parents should be counselled on the need to:

1. Visit schools to find about the progress of their children
2. Help the children with their take home assignments so that these could be properly done

3. Provide funds for the renovation of dilapidated buildings or provide any help in the school.
4. Ensure that their children go to school on time, regularly and provide them with required school materials.
5. Visit school and present talks on topics of interest to the children
6. Work in co-operation with teachers for the good of their children

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TABLE 1: A population t-test analysis of whether parental involvement in their children education is significantly high

Variable	x	SD	t	df
Parental Involvement	4.50	5.62	45.45	490
Deference mean score = 5.00				

***p < .05; t critical = 1.96**

TABLE 2: Independent t-test analysis of the difference of male and female parents' involvement in their children's education

Variable	N	x	SD	t	df
Male Parents	200	4.25	5.68	2.04	598
Female Parents	300	5.02	6.05		

* P = .05 (t critical = 1.96)