

INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' DECISION MAKING AND MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE) PROGRAMME IN SCHOOLS IN SOUTH EASTERN NIGERIA

BY

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of principals' decision making and motivational strategies on the sustainability of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in South Eastern Nigeria. It was guided by two (2) specific objectives. Two (2) research questions were raised and answered. Two (2) hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a survey research design. The study area was South Eastern Nigeria. The total population of the study is 19,645 teachers. This comprised all the teachers in all the 1352 junior secondary schools in South Eastern Nigeria. The sample size for this study is 386 and it was realized using Krejcie and Morgan Table for sample size determination. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Principals' Decision Making and Motivational Strategies on the Sustainability of Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme Questionnaire" constructed by the researcher." This instrument was duly validated by five experts and Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.89. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation and inferential statistics of Chi-square. The result of the findings revealed that; the study found that principals remain flexible in their decision-making process; principals provide constructive feedback to staff members, recognizing their strengths and providing suggestions for areas of improvement. The study concluded that Principals' administrative strategies of decision making and motivational positively influence the sustainability of UBE programme in South Eastern Nigeria. The study recommended among others that principals should establish clear priorities and goals that align with the sustainability of the UBE program. This can involve identifying critical tasks that directly contribute to the program's success and ensuring that they allocate sufficient time to these priorities.

Keywords: *Principal, Decision, Motivation, Strategies*

INTRODUCTION

Education is seen as the backbone of development in any nation. Education further enhances the application of man's achievement towards improvement of the environment. In every known great nation, therefore, national development was preceded and accomplished by educational advancement. Today, there is an increasing faith in the casual relationship between education and economic development especially in the developing countries like Nigeria. Education has been seen as a vehicle for economic, social-cultural and political development of nations and individual (Obayan, 2016). Basic Education in Nigeria is into three stages namely; 1-year of pre-primary, 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary. Pre-primary education is the one-year education given to children aged prior to their entering primary school. Primary education is the education given to children aged 6-12 years. While junior secondary education is the education which a child receives immediately after primary education.

The objectives of junior secondary education according to National Policy on Education (2013) are; (1) to provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship and educational advancement (2) to develop patriotic young people equipped to contribute to social development and the performance of their civic responsibilities (3) to inculcate values and raise morally upright individuals capable of independent

thinking, and who appreciate the dignity of labour (4) to inspire national consciousness and harmonious co-existence irrespective of differences in endowment, religion, colour, ethnic and socio-economic background. In achieving these objectives, the management of the schools must be of high priority to educational stakeholders like the principals, teachers, parents and the government.

Management refers to the process of dealing with or controlling people or things. Management is a social process designed to ensure the cooperation, participation, intervention and involvement of others in the effective achievement of a given or predetermined objective. Educational management involves the process of planning and of forecasting, decision-making and formulating educational policies with the aim of attaining set education goals (Uko, 2015). It involves the application of the process of planning organizing, coordinating, controlling, supervising and evaluating human and material resources with the explicit purpose of achieving educational goals and objectives (Okorji & Unachukwu, 2014). Therefore, the principal as the school administrator is at the helm of implementation of education policies. The principal is the person responsible for administrative practices of the school using the resources at his/her disposal in such a way that the school's objectives are achieved. The principal performs managerial functions such as planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, communicating and motivating both staff and students towards the realization of both instructional and educational objectives. The management of academic and administrative affairs of schools traditionally falls within the capacity of the principal. Formal education in Nigeria is rapidly changing and technically tailored towards meeting certain set goals, such as "education for all" (Nwaogu, 2013. pp.78). The requirements of these various goals from the principals as school administrators are centered on the advancement of teaching and learning through the implementation of school curriculum.

Principals' management strategies refer to the techniques and methods that school principals use to effectively manage their schools and ensure that they provide the best possible education to their students. Principals as the chief custodians of all academic and extracurricular activities in the secondary schools, employ various strategies in the management of the school. According to Odumodu (2011), principals occupy a central position in management of secondary education in Nigeria as far as education of the child is concerned. Principals by virtue of their positions are the managers of schools and their quality of managerial functions determine to a large extent the sustainability of school programmes. Principals provide teachers including other personnel in the school with the needed management supports to effectively function on their jobs. The principals in the secondary schools control the day to day activities of the school for achievement of educational objectives. The principals in essence carry out specific administrative functions or responsibilities which include staff-personnel functions, students-personnel functions, financial management function, educational facilities management function and school-community relationship functions for achievement of educational objectives as identified by Nwahaw (2011) and Akpakwu (2012). Principals' administrative strategies are multi-faceted constructs that include time management strategy, instructional supervision strategy, decision making strategy, motivational strategy, financial management strategy and facilities management strategy.

Principals' decision-making strategies refer to the approach that school principals use to make choices and take actions related to their leadership responsibilities. It is the process of selecting a course of action that will solve a problem. It is the process of selecting the best and most preferred and workable action among other options or alternative courses of action available, either towards solving problems or the achievement of an objective (Akpakwu, 2012). The tasks involved in making decision by principal are goal setting, deployment and coordination of human and material resources for effective curriculum planning, implementation, evaluation and review of both learning and administrative activities in order to achieve the set educational goals in secondary schools. The task of making a decision by school principals is very important because of the need to improve the quality of interaction among the teaching and learning resource elements. This includes teacher-teacher interaction, teacher-learners' interaction, learner-learner interaction, teacher-material interaction, and learner-material interaction in the school system. The interactive actions also require adjustment and modification of educational programmes, activities and techniques for the purpose of improving the teaching-learning process and achieve the set educational goals in secondary schools. Effective teaching and learning activities can only occur in an enabling environment where the principal possesses a high level of imagination, initiative, vision, and techniques in making a decision (Duze, 2011). Pro-active decision making by principals may help motivate teachers to perform better in their task and this may help in the sustainability of UBE programme.

Principals' motivational strategies refer to the methods and techniques used by school principals to encourage and inspire their staff, students, and community. Principals' motivational strategy direct and control the behaviour of staff to achieve maximum output (Onyali & Nnebedum, 2016). Motivation is the willingness to exert high levels of effort towards organizational goals, conditioned by the efforts and ability to satisfy some individual needs (Orodho, 2013). Lomak (2013) opines that motivation arouses the interest of an individual to take a move towards a certain goal. The Two-Factor Theory, also known as Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, suggests that there are two types of factors that influence teachers' motivation in the workplace: hygiene factors and motivators. Hygiene factors include things like job security, working conditions, salary,

company policies, and interpersonal relationships. These factors are essential to prevent dissatisfaction, but they do not necessarily motivate employees. On the other hand, motivators are factors that lead to job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation. These factors include things like recognition, meaningful work, achievement, responsibility, and opportunities for personal growth and development. Motivated teachers are resilient, creative and committed in the quest for enhancing teaching and learning in the school, thereby offering the kind of qualitative education needed for achieving a sustainable economic development (Osakwe, 2010). Enoh (2002) asserts that school principals should use various incentives to motivate teachers because human behaviour is very difficult to understand. According to Double (2013), principal motivational strategy can be in form of allowances, bonuses, on-the-job training programmes, promotion of teachers, provision of good working environment, maintaining high degree of relationship with teachers and improving the teachers' general wellbeing. Adoption of these motivational strategies by principals may bring about high job performance in staff and thus enhances the sustainability of school programmes.

Statement of the Problem

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was created to ensure the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying solid foundation for life-long learning.

However, in the present day situation, the sustainability of the various objectives of the UBE programme may not be attainable as many children are still seen roaming on streets of major cities, towns and villages without being in school. A cursory look at all these aberrations to the aims and objectives of the UBE programmes, one would be left with no doubt that something is wrong somewhere. Some researchers have pointed at principals and teachers as critical stakeholders are saddled with responsibilities like the implementation of school programme and its sustainability. It is expected that school principals as one of the major stakeholders in the UBE programme could adopt appropriate management strategies in running the day to day activities of the school. However, personal observation by the researcher as an indigene of South Eastern Nigeria has shown that principals in UBE schools in the area seem to exhibit poor management strategies. This is evident in the areas of poor instructional supervision, conflict among teachers, poor vision of the principals, poor principal-teacher relationship and poor administrative style of the principals among others. These situations appear to have led to poor academic achievement among the secondary school students, high drop-out rate, and high rate of examination malpractice, poor reading and writing cultures among others which are negative indications to the sustainability of the UBE programme.

If this is left unchecked, it may hamper the implementation and sustainability of the UBE programme. It is on this basis that the present study sought to examine influence of principals' administrative strategies on the sustainability of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in schools in South Eastern Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine influence of principals' administrative strategies on the sustainability of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in South Eastern Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study are to;

1. establish influence of principals' decision making strategy on the sustainability of UBE programme
2. examine influence of principals' motivational strategy on the sustainability of UBE programme

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to help guide the study.

1. What is influence of principals' decision making strategy on the sustainability of UBE programme?
2. What is influence of principals' motivational strategy on the sustainability of UBE programme?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Principals' decision making strategy does not significantly influence the sustainability of UBE programme
2. Principals' motivational strategy does not significantly influence the sustainability of UBE programme

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted survey research design. Survey research design according to Emaikwu (2015) is one, which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from a few group of people considered

being a representative sample of the entire population. The study was carried out in South Eastern Zone, Nigeria. The South Eastern Zone is one of the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The zone comprises 5 states namely: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. The total population of the study is 19645 teachers. This comprised all the teachers in all the 1352 junior secondary schools in South Eastern Nigeria (Universal Basic Education Board, South Eastern Zonal Officer Unit, 2021). The sample size for this study was 386. The sample size was obtained using Krejcie and Morgan Table for sample size determination. The study adopted a multi-stage sampling procedure. The study used a structured questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The instrument is titled "Influence of Principals' Decision Making and Motivational Strategies on the Sustainability of Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme. The instrument was designed and structured on a four-point rating scales with the response continuum of Strongly Agree for 4 points, Agree for 3 points, Disagree for 2 points and Strongly Disagree for 1 point for positively worded items and 1, 2, 3, 4 for negatively worded items. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation. Five experts: two in the field of Educational Administration and Planning and three in Measurement and Evaluation, all from the Department of Educational Foundations and General Studies (EFOGENS), Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi validated the instrument. Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used to obtain the internal consistency of the instrument. The overall reliability coefficient obtained for the instrument was 0.89 and this is an indication that the instrument is reliable enough to be used for the study since the reliability estimate is close to 1. Data for the study were collected using the direct delivery and retrieval approach. Data collected for the research questions were analysed using descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation while the hypotheses formulated were tested using Chi-square goodness of fit. A criterion Mean of 2.50 was established such that a mean score of 2.50 and above were for agree while a mean score below 2.50 was for disagree. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance such that Asymp sig. value of 0.05 and below were for rejecting the hypotheses while a Asymp sig. value above 0.05 was for not rejecting the hypotheses.

RESULTS

The results of the study were presented according to research questions answered and hypotheses tested as follows:

Research Question One

What is the influence of principals' decision making strategy on the sustainability of UBE programme in schools in South Eastern Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of respondents on the influence of principals' decision making strategy on the sustainability of UBE programme in schools in South Eastern Nigeria

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
1	gather and analyze data to inform their decision-making process	386	2.86	0.78	Agree
2	seek input from stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, and students, to ensure that their decisions align with the needs of the community	386	2.53	0.92	Agree
3	consult with experts and other professionals, both within and outside of their school, to gather information and advice	386	3.08	0.74	Agree
4	work collaboratively with their leadership team and staff to ensure that decisions are made in a collective and inclusive manner	386	2.95	0.89	Agree
5	reflect on past decisions and outcomes in order to learn from them and improve their decision-making skills	386	3.12	0.58	Agree
6	assess the risks and benefits of each decision to ensure that they make informed and strategic choices	386	2.74	1.00	Agree
7	consider ethical implications of their decisions, such as equity and fairness, to ensure that they align with their school's values and mission	386	3.01	0.79	Agree
8	consider the availability of resources, such as funding and staffing, when making decisions	386	2.68	0.63	Agree
9	ensure that their decisions align with their school's strategic goals and objectives	386	2.51	0.82	Agree

10	remain flexible in their decision-making process, recognizing that new information and changing circumstances may require them to adapt their choices	386	3.21	0.66	Agree
Grand Mean			2.89		

1.0-1.99=Strongly Disagree, 2.0-2.49=Disagree, 2.50-3.00=Agree, 3.01-4.0=Strongly Agree

Data presented in Table 1 revealed that all the 10 items on influence of principals' decision making strategy on the sustainability of UBE programme in schools in South Eastern Nigeria had their mean values ranged from 2.51 to 3.21, indicating that their mean values were above the cut-off point of mean 2.50. The grand mean of 2.89 shown in the Table indicates that the respondents agreed that principals' decision making strategy has positive influence on the sustainability of UBE programme in schools in South Eastern Nigeria. The Table further showed that the standard deviation of the items ranged from 0.58 to 1.00, indicating that the respondents were not too far from the mean and from the opinion of one another in their responses on the influence of principals' decision making strategy on the sustainability of UBE programme in schools in South Eastern Nigeria

Research Question Two

What is the influence of principals' motivational strategy on the sustainability of UBE programme in schools in South Eastern Nigeria?

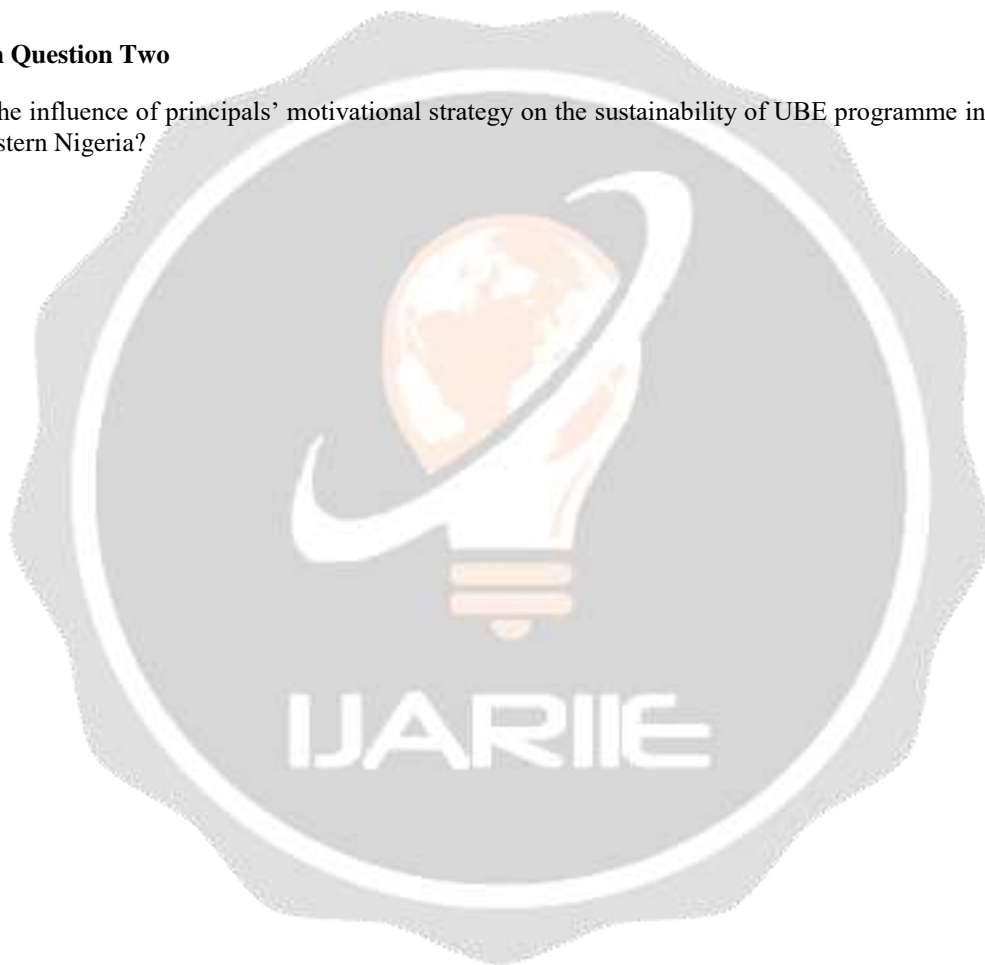


Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of respondents on the influence of principals' motivational strategy on the sustainability of UBE programme in schools in South Eastern Nigeria

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1	Grants teachers' permission for course training	386	2.89	0.84	Agree
2	Facilitates teachers' promotion	386	2.73	0.92	Agree
3	Facilitates loans for teachers	386	2.51	0.62	Agree
4	Creates opportunity for personal growth of teachers	386	3.12	0.76	Agree
5	Ensure fringe benefits for outstanding students	386	2.96	0.68	Agree
6	Facilitates prompt payment of teachers' salaries	386	3.09	0.98	Agree
7	Creates conducive environment for teaching and learning	386	2.55	0.75	Agree
8	Facilitates leave and leave allowances for teachers	386	3.29	0.62	Agree
9	Shows regards and recognition for teachers	386	2.67	1.00	Agree
10	work collaboratively with staff members to set goals that are challenging and achievable, providing motivation to strive towards success	386	3.04	0.72	Agree
11	provide opportunities for staff members to develop their skills and knowledge, which increases motivation and engagement	386	2.81	0.83	Agree
12	provide staff members with the autonomy to make decisions and take ownership over their work, which increases motivation and engagement	386	2.50	0.77	Agree
13	provide constructive feedback to staff members, recognizing their strengths and providing suggestions for areas of improvement	386	3.19	0.94	Agree
Grand Mean			2.79		

1.0-1.99=Strongly Disagree, 2.0-2.49=Disagree, 2.50-3.00=Agree, 3.01-4.0=Strongly Agree

Data presented in Table 2 revealed that all the 13 items on influence of principals' motivational strategy on the sustainability of UBE programme in schools in South Eastern Nigeria had their mean values ranged from 2.50 to 3.29, indicating that their mean values were above the cut-off point of mean 2.50. The grand mean of 2.79 shown in the Table indicates that the respondents agreed that principals' motivational strategy has positive influence on the sustainability of UBE programme in schools in South Eastern Nigeria. The Table further showed that the standard deviation of the items ranged from 0.62 to 1.00, indicating that the respondents were not too far from the mean and from the opinion of one another in their responses on the influence of principals' motivational strategy on the sustainability of UBE programme in schools in South Eastern Nigeria

Research Hypothesis One

Principals' decision making strategy does not significantly influence the sustainability of UBE programme

Table 3: Chi-square goodness of fit on the influence of principals' decision making strategy on the sustainability of UBE programme in South Eastern Nigeria

	Observed N	Expected N	df	Chi-square	Asymp. sig	Sig. value
SD	71	96.5	3	13.710	0.003	0.05
D	91	96.5				
A	121	96.5				
SA	103	96.5				
Total	386					

df= degree of freedom

The data presented on Table 3 shows that the Asymp.Sig value of 0.003 is less than the set significant value of 0.05 and this shows that the test of hypothesis is significant. This implies that Principals' decision making strategy significantly influences the sustainability of UBE programme. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

Research Hypothesis Two

Principals' motivational strategy does not significantly influence the sustainability of UBE programme

Table 4: Chi-square goodness of fit on the influence of principals' motivational strategy on the sustainability of UBE programme in South Eastern Nigeria

	Observed N	Expected N	df	Chi-square	Asymp. sig	Sig. value
SD	30	96.5	3	69.399	0.000	0.05
D	99	96.5				
A	118	96.5				
SA	139	96.5				
Total	386					

df= degree of freedom

Discussion of Findings

Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that Principals' decision making strategy has positive influence on the sustainability of UBE programme. The study found that principals remain flexible in their decision-making process, recognizing that new information and changing circumstances may require them to adapt their choices; reflect on past decisions and outcomes in order to learn from them and improve their decision-making skills; consult with experts and other professionals, both within and outside of their school, to gather information and advice. The findings of this study collaborate with that of Okereke, Joseph and Anyanwu (2021) who conducted a study on the influence of principals' decision making strategies on students' discipline in public secondary schools and found that principals' decision making strategies to a great extent enhances students' discipline. The findings of this study also conform with that of Isah (2012) who carried out a study titled "Assessment of Decision Making Process in Secondary Schools and found that principals' decision making strategies determine to a large extent the funding and provision of infrastructure in the school.

Moreover, the findings of this study revealed that Principals' motivational strategy positively influences the sustainability of UBE programme. The findings showed that principals provide constructive feedback to staff members, recognizing their strengths and providing suggestions for areas of improvement; work collaboratively with staff members to set goals that are challenging and achievable, providing motivation to strive towards success; Facilitates leave and leave allowances for teachers; Creates opportunity for personal growth of teachers. The findings of this study agree with that of Acheck (2014) who conducted a study on motivational Strategies used by Principals in the management of secondary schools and found that principals' use of motivational strategies like empathetic, supportive, caring enhances students' academic performance and teachers job satisfaction. The findings of this study also agree with that of Chaudhry, Munawar and Sittar (2017) who carried out a study titled "Role of Principals' Motivational Strategies on Performance of Elementary School Teachers Regarding their Academic Qualification and found that principals' motivational strategies play a significant role on the performance of teachers.

Conclusion

The Universal Basic Education programme is key to the eradication of illiteracy and consequently aid in the development of the nation. As such, the sustainability of the programme is critical and can be achieved through appropriate use of administrative strategies by school principals and other relevant stakeholders in the educational sector like teachers, government and parents. In view of this and as evident from the findings of this study, it is thus, concluded that the adoption of administrative strategies of decision making and motivation by Principals can have positive influence the sustainability of UBE programme in South Eastern Zone, Nigeria.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Principals should implement mechanisms for evaluating the outcomes and impacts of decisions made within the UBE program. They should regularly assess the effectiveness of their decisions and the influence it has on the program sustainability.
2. Educational policymakers should re-develop a clear vision for the UBE program and create a strategic plan that outlines the goals, objectives, and steps needed to achieve sustainability. This plan should guide decision-making and provide a roadmap for the program's development and long-term success.

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