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EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION: IMPLICATION FOR NATIONAL COHESION AND GLOBAL COMPETIVENESS

Anashie, Annastasia Iwang (Ph.D)
Department of Educational Management
University of Calabar
Calabar - Nigeria
annaiwang20@gmail.com

&

Ogar-Ikwen, Theresa Andorshiye
Department of Educational Management
University of Calabar, Calabar - Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine government's and administrators' level of commitment to the management of basic education programme for national cohesion and global competitiveness in Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, two hypotheses were formulated. Literature review was done according to the variables under study. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 230 principals out of 256 and the simple random sampling technique was used to select 230 teachers out of 5, 128 in public secondary schools in Cross River State. The questionnaire titled "Effective Management of Basic Education" (EMBA) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts IN THE College of Education of Education University of Calabar and found to attain reliability co- efficient of .79. Population t-test analysis was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The results of the analysis revealed that government's and administrators' level of commitment to the management of basic education programme was not significantly high in Cross River State. Based on the findings it was concluded that the level of commitment by both government and administrators to the management of basic education programme was not significantly high. It was therefore recommended among others that government should show more commitment by providing sufficient funds for full realization of basic education goals and provide enabling environment for effective management of basic education.

Keywords: Effective management, Basic education, National Cohesion and Global Competitiveness.

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Introduction

Management is viewed differently by different people. Obi (2004) elucidated that management is a process that is designed to ensure the intervention, cooperation, participation and involvement in achieving given objectives. Management has to do with planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating, directing and controlling of human, material and financial resources for the achievement of organizational goals. Agarwal (2009) and Dauda (2010) 0pined that management involves policy formulation and the direction of activities towards the fulfillment of organizational goals.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) described education as a necessary tool for nation building. It also sees education as an instrument for effective national development with a philosophy based on development of an individual into a sound and effective citizen; and it makes provision for equal educational opportunities for all. According to Offem & Anashie (2021), education is one of the most important means of empowering every individual with the essential skills, knowledge and self-confidence necessary to participate in societal development. Education is the process of disseminating information with the motive of developing the Cognitive, Psycho-motor, and Affective Domains of an individual. It is therefore, a comprehensive training of an individual's mental, intellectual, moral, physical, vocational, technological capabilities and the acquisition of knowledge for the development and benefit of the individual and society. Education is considered a steering engine for individual and national development. Education is as old as man himself. It starts informally from the home where older members of the family instruct the younger ones with the purpose of raising well- trained and respected citizens to function in the formal education setting where children are taught the basics in schools, with the same aim of raising well- trained and respected citizens who will be self - reliant and could compete with their counterparts anywhere in the world. Information delivery services enhance distance education programmes (Igajah et al 2023).

In some years back, both traditional and formal education recorded high level of expected achievements. Then, it was observed that all levels of academic endeavours produced high quality graduates who could compete favourably with other graduates in other parts of the world. Nigerian certificates were equally well recognized and unquestionable. Along the line, things went wrong, as a down turn in the Nigerian educational system started growing. Falling standards of education became the language of the system. This has affected all spheres of life and all facets of the nation like religion, economy, health, science and technology, education, governance, politics, national image and global competitiveness. To this extent some Nigerian graduates cannot successfully compete in the global market today. This is evident in examination malpractices at various levels of education, certificates forgery and high rate of failures at both internal and external examinations.

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Basic education is the foundation of formal education as it serves as the ladder to other educational pursuits. This is confirmed by FRN (2004) which observed that since the rest of the education system is built upon it, the primary level is the key to the success or failure of the whole system. Therefore, if the foundation is not solid, other levels may definitely collapse. The study of Anashie & Uko (2018) confirmed the above statement as they stated that, quality early childhood education gives a child a solid and unshakeable foundation. They went further to state that with quality childhood education, it can be assured that the society will have a more vibrant workforce, a less crime- ridden society, a healthier environment and a well-functioning civil institutions.

Universal Basic Education in Nigeria was introduced in 1999 with the aim of providing qualitative and free education for all children from primary to junior secondary school who are of school age. According to Ikoro (2008), the essence of the initiation of Universal Basic Education Programme was to align with other nations to eradicate illiteracy globally. Thus, FRN (2004) states that, at the end of the programme, each beneficiary should be able to acquire appropriate and relevant skills and values for the development of an individual and the society. This stage is the foundation to all educational development. FRN (2004) stated that basic education has a duration of nine (9) years. This is divided into three – the lower basic for primary 1-3 (ages 6-8), the middle basic for primary 4-6 (ages 9-11) and the upper basic for Junior secondary school (JSS) 1-3 (ages 12-14). According to Anashie & Offem (2022), the curriculum was designed to enable students have all round education. The curriculum was designed to ensure that learners receive all round education in terms of knowledge, aptitude, skills, values and techniques (Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council, 2013). Salawu (2006), stated that the aim of basic education was to eradicate illiteracy, poverty and ignorance, to create political consciousness and accelerate national development and integration. Universal Basic Education Commission (2005) stated the following as its objectives;

i. Ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative skills as well as the ethnical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning;
ii. Ensuring unfettered access to nine (9) years of formal basic education;
iii. Reducing drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal school system through improved, relevance, quality and efficient system of education; and
iv. The provision of free Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school going age.

It is the duty of the school administrator to develop a conducive teaching and learning environment in line with government' policies for the achievement of basic education goals. The administrator is an important factor in the realization of the educational goals. Anashie and Offem (2019) stated that it is the responsibility of the

administrator to guide, direct, and plan activities that will lead to the availability and effective utilization of resources for the realization of institutional goals. Administrators should have a vision for improving the quality of teaching and learning by outlining strategies that will target at the assessment of both teachers and students for optimum productivity. Ubana et al (2024) observed that administrators supervisory role plays a significant role on quality service secondary school delivery. Online resources and management work as potential tools for administrative competence (Edeh et al 2025). The study of Ayo-vaughan, Ajani and Oyebade (2025) revealed that school managers' supervisory roles to a high extent affect the performance of post basic education teachers in another study by Ategwu, Anashie, Adie and Ken- Akla (2022), it was revealed that supervision of implementation of educational policy has not impacted on the productivity of public secondary school teachers in secondary schools in Ibusa, Delta State. The role of an administrator in ensuring smooth running of a school cannot be over emphasized as he ensures availability of quality teachers, monitors curriculum delivery, conducts examinations, ensures that available funds are used to maintain minimum standards, facilitates provision of basic needs for both teachers and students and recommends to the government the needs of the school. Managing basic education entails harnessing and integrating human, material and financial resources towards the attainment of educational goals and objectives. The administrator should be concerned with the relevance and impact of education to the learner, nation and globe. Attainment of goals can be measured or assessed through students' academic achievement, provision of qualified teachers, teachers' job performance, provision of necessary infrastructure and the provision of a conducive teaching and learning environment. According to Usani et al (2025) enhancing Students' Satisfaction with Research Supervision promote learning process.

Government has put in place several measures for the effective management of the programme. On 26th may, 2004, the Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act was passed into law and committees were formed to ensure effective implementation of the Bill. This Act covers the following areas: Federal Government intervention for uniform and qualitative basic education, Right of a child to compulsory, free universal basic education, Services in public primary and junior secondary schools are free of charge, Duty of parents to ensure the education of his child, Section 2 and 3 not applicable to a child resident outside Nigeria, and Magistrates' Courts to have jurisdiction over certain offices, Financing of Universal Basic Education among others. Also, Department of Basic and Secondary Education, Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria was mandated to do the following among others; (i) Ensuring quality of teachers; (ii) Monitoring curriculum delivery in basic and secondary schools; (iii) Formulation, planning,

implementation and co-ordination of policies for early childhood care development education (ECCDE); (iv) Monitoring/supervision of basic education examination nationwide in collaboration with state education resource centres; (v) Provision of functional literacy and continuing education for adults and youths who never had the advantage of formal education; (vi) Promoting multi-lingual education – foreign and Nigerian languages; and (vii) Initiate and formulate policies for basic and secondary education.

Its duties are equally to create awareness, maintain minimum standards in basic education centres, organize capacity building for caregivers, monitor enrolment drive and coordinate workshops. NERDC (2007), in line with the above, developed a national early childhood curriculum for ages 0-5 to prepare children for primary school education and for the improvement of educational standards. This curriculum was carefully planned to cover areas like physical, effective/psychosocial and cognitive development, food and nutrition, health, water, environmental sanitation, safety measures and protective issues, stating the role of parents, caregivers and teachers, specifying the expected activities of parents, caregivers, teachers and learners. Equally, caring/learning materials were listed including a guide on how to evaluate achievement. Furthermore, developmental milestones for some months and years were stated for the different stages of life for each child. The curriculum planners adopted an integrated approach in addressing early childhood care programmes and expect the children, their families, the communities and the globe to reap sustainable gains if the programme yields its dividends. Ettah et al (2025) analysis of net returns and mean difference improves sustainable growth.

In 2013, NERDC, reviewed the 2007 Basic Education Curriculum for effective curriculum delivery. This was in line with best practices in the globe as approved by the National Council on Education (NCE). And in 2015, NERDC embarked on monitoring of the implementation of the plan to ensure compliance. This reform in the UBE programme aimed at eliminating distortion and inconsistencies in basic education delivery. Also, National Research Council (2001) in Anashie & Offem (2022) observed that education for all children plays the role of providing the experiences that a child needs to learn skills. Researches have shown that the UBE programme has faced the following challenges among others; (a) Most schools lack learning resources like text books, libraries, ICT centers, classrooms; (b) Inadequate facilities: This is supported by Bello and Atanda (2016) who observed that most UBE institutions lack physical facilities like equipment, tools, workshop and laboratories; (c) Lack of proper monitoring: FRN (2009) stated that inspectorate shall be provided at the Federal, State and Local government levels with the aim of monitoring and maintaining standards. Contrary to this, Mbuk (2010) opined that, monitoring and supervision was left in the

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hands of school officials in most UBE schools as most teachers neither prepare nor plan their lessons before delivery; (d) Poor quality of teachers – United Nation Education Scientific Children Organization (2006) observed that between 2005 and 2006, about 50% of primary school teachers did not possess Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) which is the minimum teaching qualification in Nigeria. Skilled and talented educators are needed to guide students to achieve set goals. The teachers' grade II programme was designed for primary school teachers. NCE teachers are trained to specialize in particular fields of study not in all the subjects offered in a particular class in the primary school. FRN (2004) stated that the quality and success of any educational system depends on teachers. Equally, Okoro (2004) confirmed this as he observed that the strength of any educational system depends on the teachers;

i. Over population: government is unable to make provision for the increasing population as existing facilities are either dilapidated or not available and more schools and facilities are not provided. According to Mshelia (2016), most primary and junior secondary schools have overcrowded class size which hinders effective teaching and learning process;
ii. Fluctuating budgetary allocation – between 2007 and 2022, the budget allocation to education has fluctuated from 5.10% to 10.12% while UNESCO bench mark is 26% meaning education is underfunded in Nigeria. Ojineme and Rabi'u (2009) observed that education sector is facing budgeting discrimination and
iii. Underfunding which has led to dwindling resources and deterioration of standards. Olagbenji (2015) also, observed that poor funding of basic education programme has resulted to a number of problems like inadequate manpower and poor infrastructural facilities. Ukeje (2003) observed that Nigeria budget allocation is erratic and poor.

The sustainability of the UBE programme depends mostly on the government and administrative heads who are expected to show more commitment by ensuring that it is meticulously implemented, monitored and accessible to all children. If this is done young Nigerians will be sure of a proper head start that will place them at par with their counterparts in the world.

Implication for National Cohesion and Global Competitiveness

Nigeria is a multi- ethnic, political and religious society where each group is identified based on their culture, ideas, belief, language etc. Thus, Universal Basic can be used as a vehicle that can enhance national unity or cohesion by integrating the various groups into one nation. The word cohesion refers to togetherness or unity. Cohesion is a conscious attempt by diverse groups to be united or stick together. Udeh (2014) refer to

cohesion as the act to stick people together. Cohesion involves the construction of an integrated citizenry with a sense of belonging among members of diverse religion or group.

The achievement of effective management of basic education for national cohesion requires an integrated citizenry, mutual tolerance and the cultivation of shared values. This can be best driven through unified/centralized curriculum, equal allocation of national resources, patriotism, uniform national educational goals, unifying diverse communities, recruitment of qualified teachers among others. Omokhodion (2008) and Ajayi (2007) observed that teachers in Nigeria are poorly motivated, this determine their productivity. Opoh, Unimna and Ogbaji (2014) added that most teachers who are overloaded with the task of teaching are unqualified.

The following are the implications of management of basic education for national cohesion: promotion of equal distribution of national resources, equal access to education, uninterrupted access to education, Prevents school drop-outs, produces an educated work force, creates peaceful coexistence among citizens. It also brings about value for individuals, common vision and sense of belonging, sustainable economic development, equal opportunities for every citizen, improved socio-economic wellbeing, unified approach to issues and a lot more.

Globalization can be referred to as consciously compressing the contemporary world into a single village. According to Ikoro and Ezeanym (2017), globalization does not only bind nations and societies but also create consciousness of being part of a global system. World Economic Forum (2013) view competitiveness as a set of factors, institutions and policies that determines the level of production of a country. Meaning the goods produced by any country must undergo a prevailing global assessment. Wikipedia (2013) observed that global competence is required for global competitiveness. Effective management of basic education for global competitiveness requires a drastic systematic shift in key areas across the globe. Among which are: adequate investment in the provision of modern infrastructure, training and retraining of teachers and technology - driven curricula. Ubana et al (2024) assert that artificial intelligence (AI) is a tool combating unethical practices. It also requires prioritizing digital literacy by various governments, critical thinking, acquiring life-long skills and production of highly skilled graduates for the global economy. Other areas that needs to be targeted by all educational systems are innovation driven teaching methods, maintaining safe well-equipped learning environment especially the infrastructural resources, provision of reliable internet connectivity in schools, provision of digital devices to both students and teachers for effective teaching and learning, exposing students to globally standardized curriculum, introduction of basic entrepreneurial skills, global consciousness, innovative thinking among

others. Andong et al (2025) assert that incorporating digital technology promotes adult literacy education programmes. Vocational training programmes significantly promote economic empowerment (Helen et al 2025).

Statement of the problem

There is the saying that no nation can rise above its level of education. This seems to be the case of Nigeria as there is a clear indication that educational programmes are unable to meet the challenging needs of the country, assessing the rate of brain drain of teachers, inadequate infrastructures, the current rate of out- of - school children, unemployment in Nigeria and the night mere of insecurity which has thrown the nation into chaos. The 6-3-3-4 system of education plan which aimed at producing self-reliant citizens who are expected to be useful to themselves and the society, through the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills, technical skills and vocational training at the basic education level is now a mirage. Basic education programme seems not to be geared towards diversifying educational services and solving societal problems as intended. This has led to high rate of unemployment, unsafe schools and society, high rate of school drop-out. Many primary and Junior Secondary School leavers can neither produce simple handicraft like brooms nor invent or make any innovative discoveries that will lead to societal advancement. This has affected the quality of education at the basic education level which is the foundation for sound educational development.

Nigeria has good educational policies but the problem may be linked to the following: lack of effective implementation, poor planning and continuity of the programmes among others. The government needs to show more commitment by providing enabling environment for effective teaching and learning. Lack of adequate commitment could be seen in poor or dilapidated state of infrastructures, inadequate monitoring of curriculum delivery, unequal accessibility to education by all children due to the rising number of out-of- school children. Poor budgetary allocation in Nigeria is reflected in Poor funding and monitoring of education which has pose one of the greatest challenges facing the educational system in Nigeria. Equally, the UBE programmes must align with those of other nations of the world to enable the Nigerian education system compete favourably with other nations of the world. Therefore, this study is designed to investigate government's and administrators' level of commitment to the management of basic education programmes for national cohesion and global competitiveness.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate government and administrators' level of commitment to the realization of basic education programmes for national cohesion and global competitiveness. The study specifically evaluated:

1. Government' level of commitment to the implementation of basic education programme; and

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2. School administrators' level of commitment to the implementation of basic education programme.

Research hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were postulated for the study;

H_{O1}: Government's level of commitment to the management of basic education programme is not significantly high.

H_{O2}: School administrators' level of commitment to the management of basic education programme is not significantly high.

Methodology

This study examined government and administrators' level of commitment to the management of basic education programmes in Cross River State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study. This design was considered appropriate because it allows the researchers to make inference and generalization of the population, by selecting and studying the sample for the study. The purposive sampling technique was used to select two hundred and thirty (230) principals out of 256 and four hundred and sixty (460) teachers out of 5130 in all public secondary schools in Cross River State as respondents for the study. The questionnaire titled "Effective Management of Basic Education (EMBE) was used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to validation by two (2) experts in Management and Evaluation Department, College of Education, University of Calabar, Nigeria. The reliability estimate was established through slip-half method and coefficient of internal consistency of .79 was found. This value was high enough to consider the instrument reliable to be used for the study. Population t-test was the inferential statistics adopted to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

Presentation of Results

In this section each hypothesis is re-stated, and the result of data analysis carried out will be presented. Each hypothesis of the study was tested at .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis one

Government's level of commitment to the management of basic education programme is not significantly high.

Table 1: Population t-test Analysis of whether Government's Level of Commitment to the Management of Basic Education Programme is high (N=230)

Variables	N	X	SD	t-value	Sig. level
Sample mean	230	25.22	1.89		
				1.83	.00
Reference mean	230	25.00	0.00		

Significant at P< .05, critical t=1.96, df=229

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The results of the analysis presented in Table 1 have shown the mean and standard deviation of government's level of commitment to management of basic education programme. The comparison of each of these sample means with the reference mean score of 25.00 yielded t-value of 1.83. The calculated t-value is less than the critical t value of .000 at .05 level of significance with 229 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that Government's level of commitment to the management of Basic Education is significantly high.

Hypothesis two: Administrators' level of commitment to the management of basic education programme is not significantly high.

Table 2: Population t-test Analysis of whether Administrators' level of Commitment to the management of Basic Education Programme is high (N=230)

Variables	N	X	SD	t-value	Sig. level
Sample mean	230	25.20	1.96		
				1.54	0.00
Reference mean	230	25.00	0.00		

Significant at P<.05, df=229

The results of the analysis presented in Table 2 shows the mean and the standard deviation of administrators' level of management of basic education programme. The comparison of each of these sample means with the reference mean score of 25.00 yielded t-value of 1.54. The calculated t-value is higher than the p-value of .00 at .05 level of significance with 229 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that Administrators' level of commitment to the management of basic education programme is significantly high.

Discussion of findings

The findings are in line with the view of Baikie (2000) who observed that the Federal Ministry of Education has put in place steps to counter envisaged problems of the implementation of UBE programmes, this include: pre- service training; planning, supervision, monitoring and evaluation; provision of infrastructural facilities; curriculum development; availability of needed funds; welfare and motivation among others. But this findings are in contrast with the views of Bello and Atanda (2016) who observed that many UBE schools do not have adequate physical facilities like equipment,

tools, workshops and laboratories which cannot bring about national cohesion and global competitiveness. Also Ukeje (2000) and Ibukun (2005) observed that the problem of Nigeria is not adequate knowledge and policies but that of effective planning and sustained implementation. This implies that without effective planning, effective implementation will be hampered. Adakola (2008) stated that most schools in Nigeria are under staffed and full of unqualified teachers, due to the fact that government cannot properly fund schools. This is confirmed by Olubor (2003), who observed that most schools in Nigeria lack facilities and are underfunded. Though the UBE Act (2004), stipulated that all primary and junior secondary schools should be well funded by the government to cater for the feeding programme, instructional materials, school grounds etc. Nwaogu (2005) stated that it is the duty of school administrators to direct the basic objectives of the UBE programme and if they fail to do that, it will hinder the implementation of the scheme. This is in agreement with the findings of Anashie and offem (2019) which stated that it is the responsibility of the administrator to guide, direct, and plan activities that will lead to the availability and effective utilization of resources for the realization of institutional goals.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that basic education is foundation on which other educational development depends on. Thus, government's and administrators' level of commitment to the management of basic education programme is significantly high but the review revealed that most schools still encounter a lot of challenges like under funding, lack of basic facilities, lack of qualified trained staff among others.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations were made;

1. Government should show more commitment by providing sufficient funds for full realization of basic education goals and provide enabling environment for effective management of basic education in Nigeria.
2. School administrators and government should ensure proper monitoring of the UBE programme for optimum productivity.
3. Government should continuously review the curriculum to enable learners meet up with the global challenges.
4. Government and education stakeholders should constantly organize retraining programmes for teachers to equip them with the skills for global competitiveness

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