Special Policies and Infrastructural Facilities of Ube Programme and Educational Development of the Girl-Child in Bayelsa State

Dr. Diepreye Okodoko
Department of Educational Management
Niger Delta University
Wilberforce Island
Bayelsa State
Okooko2001@gmail.com

Silon Ebiye Franca
Department of Educational Management
Niger Delta University
Wilberforce Island
Bayelsa State
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Abstract
The research examined UBE program policies and infrastructure and Bayelsa State female education. The study used correlational survey research. The survey included 4,445 female Junior Secondary two and three pupils from Ogbia, Sagbama, and Southern Ijaw school zones in Bayelsa. The research included 556 female students (13% of the population) recruited using proportional stratified random selection. The Special Policies and Infrastructural Facilities of UBE Programme and Educational Development of the Girl-Child Questionnaire collected data. The research supervisor and two measurement and evaluation specialists from the department of educational foundations, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island Bayelsa State, validated the instrument. The reliability coefficient values of the instrument internal consistencies were obtained with the application of Cronbach's Alpha method. The reliability coefficient values stood at .821, .832 and .811 for special policies, infrastructural facilities and educational development of the girl-child respectively. The data were analyzed with the application of model summary of simple regression analysis and PPMC analysis for the research questions and hypotheses respectively with the support of the SPSS version 26. The study concludes that special policies of UBE programme have significant relationship with educational development of girl-child in schools. The study equally recommended that policies makers should formulate special policies on enrolment, promotion, etc that favour and encourages the education of the girl-child. This will arouse the educational interest of girls and give them a sense of belonging.

Keywords*: UBE Programme, Special Policies, Infrastructural Facilities, Educational Development, Girl-Child*

INTRODUCTION

According to UNICEF (2014), education is fundamental to individual and community growth and development, and a fundamental human right. All aspects of a society's sustainable growth depend on education as its basis. On the other hand, Oke (2010) noted that education is an instrument through which production of all human capital becomes functional to operates all

the social institution of society, therefore, to deny society the benefits of education is detrimental to deny the society the right of existence and development. Former president Olusegun Obasanjo launched the Universal Basic Education program in Nigeria in September 1999 to provide free, universal, and compulsory nine-year basic education for all Nigerian children, adult literacy and non-formal education, skills acquisition programs, and education for special groups like nomads and migrants, girls and women, Almajiri, street children, and disabled people. Universal Basic Education (UBE) was adopted in 1999 to achieve EFA aims. It is being applied to meet EFA's education goals, particularly for females. Government would care for girls via UBE, according to Jatau (2008). To abolish all barriers to girls' basic education, UBE goals will address gender problems and gender disparities in education quality and access.

Consequently, the girl child in the past has commonly been taught household chores as cooking, caring for siblings, caring for the sick in the family and cleaning of the house. According to Agusiobo, (2016) a wife has always been expected to work in the farm with the family of her husband. For all its importance, her reproductive work was undervalued and not remunerated.

Nigeria was compelled to provide equal access for boys and girls after the 1993 QuagaDougou Declaration, which was a product of the 1990 Jomitien World Conference on Education for All (EFA), which sought to achieve universal education by the year 2000 (Omuhammed 1999). In 1993, a National, Zonal, and State Task Force on the education of the girl child was established to address administrative practices and traditional norms that prevent girls from receiving an education. This was in response to the resolutions and recommendations made at the QuagaDougou Conference in Burkina Faso.

Since its inception in 1977, the National Policy on Education (NPE) has always fought for equal educational opportunities for girls and boys. Its succeeding editions in 1981, 1988, and 2004 further reinforced this commitment. As to the NPE (2004), every Nigerian kid is entitled to equal educational opportunities, regardless of any actual or perceived disability, tailored to their individual talents.

In Bayelsa State, there is a widespread perception among parents and the community that the quality of education has declined below anticipated standards. Multiple alleged causative variables may account for the substandard conditions. The noticeable deterioration of infrastructure used by UBE schools has emerged as a significant worry for both the government and the populace. The financial allocation for education in the state is very insufficient, being much less than 26% of the yearly budget.

UBE has been implemented in Bayelsa State for around ten years. The primary objective is to equip children and other disadvantaged groups with fundamental skills in reading, numeracy, and communication to enhance their livelihoods, so contributing to national development. The objective was to realign the education system, particularly the UBE program, to address individual needs and enable significant contributions towards fulfilling the developmental aspirations of the state and the Nigerian nation.

We appreciate the Federal Republic of Nigeria's UBE plan and the Convention on the Rights of the Child for their noteworthy efforts in resolving the economic and intellectual deficits of women. In order to free girls from the shackles of slavery, underage marriage, forced prostitution, domestic servitude, and street hawking, Melchings (2012) said that education is the key. According to the 2001 conference on the economic rights of Nigerian women, educating girls is essential for the economic and intellectual emancipation of women in Nigeria. The Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey (2005) found that between forty-five and fifty

percent of Nigeria's population consists of people aged zero to fifteen. From 1999 to 2008, female student enrolment in the UBE program consistently surpassed male enrolment in all of South-South Nigeria's states (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers) (Durkheim 2006). This enrolment status is not enough to prevent over 10 million school-age children from not being enrolled in formal education, which has led to a rise in illiteracy (Akunga, 2010). More than 68% of these children are female.
Girls and all children in Nigeria have free admission to elementary and junior high school thanks to a nine-year initiative launched by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) that aims to improve the lives of low-income women. Some have questioned the UBE program's ability to improve females' access to education in Bayelsa State throughout the years. The researcher has consistently been concerned about this, which is why this examination has been initiated. Examining how UBE has affected female students' academic performance in Bayelsa State is the overarching goal of this study. Different civilisations throughout the world place different importance on gender. The gender complex, according to Fant (2008), consists of claims that, when directed at individuals, may either bring about positive outcomes like social validation, authority, respect, and esteem or negative outcomes like social exclusion. The individual may be implied to be less important or inferior. The social position of women and girls is often dictated by cultural norms and assumptions, according to Fant, who referenced Pauline and Tembon (1999).

The traditional role of a woman is confined to the home sphere, namely the kitchen. The parents see the education their daughters get at home as just as vital as the education their sons receive at school since they anticipate their daughters to marry and become housewives. As a result, growing up at home with mum is a typical way for girls to learn housekeeping skills and habits that will serve them well as spouses and moms. Parents see their daughters' formal education as a challenge to long-standing cultural mores because of these socio-cultural attitudes. Some people discount females' formal education because they think it isn't suitable for them. Many parents' views that a girl's education is primarily for the benefit of another family get in the way of her girls' opportunities to get an education. Fant (2008) posits that the Bimobas, a tribe in Ghana, engaged in a collective philosophical investigation over the rationale of investing in a resource that would eventually be possessed by another. The author documented a parent's statement during an interview: “I evaluated the advantages of educating only boys and concluded that it is a squander of time and resources to educate girls, who, upon completion, will marry and integrate into another family, providing us with no material benefits (Fant, 2008).

Jatua (2008) identified poor parental support for girls’ education, society’s poor attitude towards, girl child education, poverty, economic issues, cultural and religious bias as factors responsible for the participation of the girl child in formal education. Other factors includes: poor and negative parental and community attitudes, a version to western education which is seen as incompatible with the Islamic education, early marriage, girl children are forced to marry against their will, teenage pregnancy, large family size making parents to decide who goes to school and who stays at home and in many cases the girls are left behind to carry out domestic chores; the boys are better prized and they carry the family name; girls are accorded a lower status in the family (Agusiobo, 2016).
Uzobo, Ogbanga and Jackson, (2014) studied Government education policies and rural educational development: A Study of Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.The poor state of the rural schools and their predicament accompanied by unfavourable government educational policies toward the rural schools in Nigeria was the sole purpose that motivated

the study. Relevant literature reviewed showed that the rural schools in Nigeria are in a … sorry" state. The urban bias hypothesis served as the theoretical framework for the investigation. The research used an exploratory and survey strategy. The research sampled a population of 226 individuals. The mean, standard deviation, and chi-square (χ^2) were used for data analysis. The research indicated that governmental educational policies are not directed towards the advancement of the rural education sector, since almost all rural human and material educational resources are inadequate and neglected. The research emphasised the urgent need for the formulation of specific education strategies to enhance the rural education sector.

The impact of UBE on the economic and social possibilities for females in South-South Nigeria was studied by Ekpo et al. (2010). In order to direct the investigation, the study established four research questions and three null hypotheses. The study design used was an ex-post facto approach. Using a proportionate stratified random selection procedure, 1,500 female students were selected from a pool of 15,000 in six schools located in South-South Nigeria. Two surveys were used to gather information: the Universal Basic Education and Socio-Economic Prospects of the Girl-Child Questionnaire (UBESPGQ) and the Parents' Willingness to Retain the Girl-Child in School Questionnaire (PWRGSQ). A group of six seasoned researchers verified these tools. Using Cronbach's alpha, we found that UBESPGQ had a reliability coefficient of 0.77 and PWRGSQ a reliability value of 0.86. Keeping daughters enrolled in UBE programs was the preferred choice of parents, according to the statistics. In addition, there was an extremely low student-to-equipment ratio since the facilities and equipment needed for effective vocational training were inadequate. There was a large gap in parental readiness to keep their female children in the nine-year UBE program between the wealthy and the poor, the educated and the uneducated. It was believed that UBE had a significant impact on the economic and social prospects available to female children in South-South Nigeria. The impact of UBS on girls' future economic and social opportunities, however, will remain a pipe dream until sufficient resources are made available.

Yusuf and Ajere (2010) examined the effects of the Universal Basic Education program on children in South West Nigeria. The research aims to analyse the goals and issues related to the implementation of Universal Basic Education and to provide potential solutions to address the obstacles faced by the program. Three research questions were established to direct the investigation. The study used an ex post facto research design. The study population included 18,000 elementary school children. The tool used in the research was the questionnaire titled Impact of Universal Basic Education on the Nigerian Child (IUBENCQ). A reliability coefficient of 0.79 was derived via Cronbach's alpha. The findings indicated that primary school learners have access to free education; yet, they lack free textbooks for all courses, instructors are insufficiently motivated, and teaching and learning resources are inadequate. The report advises that federal and state governments provide sufficient monies to enable impoverished parents to contribute directly to this level of education, and that regular funding be provided to the federal government for the disbursement of instructors' wages. Regular oversight and examination by the inspectorate division is also necessary.

Statement of the problem

The Universal Basic Education project (UBE) was initiated on 29th September 1999 to provide nine years of free and obligatory education including elementary and junior secondary levels. The primary objective of the government is to guarantee unrestricted access to nine (9) years of mandatory, free, universal, and high-quality education to facilitate the attainment of requisite

literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative, and life skills, thereby establishing a robust foundation for lifelong learning (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Current figures reveal that more than 5.5 million females in Nigeria are not enrolled in school (UNESCO, 2014). The primary school enrolment percentage is 56% for females and 61% for boys. Forty percent of women and twenty-eight percent of men have never had formal education; dropout rates are elevated in the sixth grade of elementary school, with females exhibiting greater rates than boys (NPC, 2009).

In several instances, female children are relegated to domestic responsibilities; they often engage in child labour, street vending, begging, trafficking, prostitution, and are regularly pulled from educational institutions to serve as domestic workers in houses for financial gain. This has led to many crimes, including pickpocketing, the selling of questionable items, and the trafficking of females for commercial sex activity. The consequence is the emergence of a cohort of impoverished, illiterate young females with little education, without the tools to secure a respectable livelihood (Agusiobo, 2016).

The aforementioned social problems the adolescent girls face have created a great source of concern to all stakeholders, hence the need for this research work. Therefore, the research problem is to examine the relationship between special policies and infrastructural facilities of UBE programme and the educational development of the girl-child in Bayelsa State.

Purpose of the study

The research aimed to investigate the specific policies and infrastructural provisions of the UBE program and the educational advancement of the girl-child in Bayelsa State. The explicit aims are to:

1. Determine the relationship between special polices of UBE programme and educational development of the girl-child in Bayelsa State.
2 Ascertain the relationship between infrastructural facilities of UBE programme and educational development of the girl-child in Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between special polices of UBE programme and educational development of the girl-child in Bayelsa State?
2 What is the relationship between infrastructural facilities of UBE programme and educational development of the girl-child in Bayelsa State?

Hypotheses

The researchers formulate the following hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between special polices of UBE programme and educational development of the girl-child in Bayelsa State.
2 There is no significant relationship between infrastructural facilities of UBE programme and educational development of the girl-child in Bayelsa State.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a correlational survey research approach. The research population included 4,445 female students in Junior Secondary classes two and three from the Ogbia, Sagbama, and Southern Ijaw educational zones of Bayelsa State. A sample of 556 female students, about 13% of the total population, participated in the research and were chosen using the proportional stratified random sampling method. The data collection tool used in the research was a questionnaire entitled Special Policies and Infrastructural Facilities of UBE Programme and

Educational Development of the Girl-Child Questionnaire (SPIFUPEDGCQ), including 15 questions. The instrument's validity was assessed by the research supervisor and two specialists in measurement and assessment from the Department of Educational Foundations at Niger Delta University. The dependability of the instrument's internal consistencies for different variables was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha technique. The questionnaire was given once to twenty (20) female students in JSS II and III across five (5) schools in the Ahoada West LGA of Rivers State, who were excluded from the initial core research sample. The dependability coefficients were .821, .832, and .811 for specific policies, infrastructural facilities, and educational development of the girl-child. The acquired results demonstrated the robustness of the reliability coefficient of the equipment used for data collection in the investigation. The data were analysed using the model summary of simple regression analysis and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis for the study questions and hypotheses, respectively, using SPSS version 26.

Results

Research question: One

What is the relationship between special policies of UBE programme and the educational development of the girl child in Bayelsa State?

Table 1: Model summary of simple regression analysis of the relationship between special policies of UBE programme and the educational development of the girl child

Variables	N	R	R^2
Special policies of UBE programme* Educational development of the girl child	556	.425	.181

Table 1 displays a correlation coefficient (r-value) of .425 and a coefficient of determination (r^2-value) of .181. This indicates that 18.1% of the overall variation in the educational development of the girl-child may be ascribed to the specific policies of the UBE program. In light of the association between the two variables, a PPMC study was conducted to ascertain the significance of the relationship (See Table 3).

Research question: Two

What is the relationship between infrastructural facilities of UBE programme and the educational development of the girl child in Bayelsa State?

Table 2: Model summary of simple regression analysis of the relationship between infrastructural facilities of **UBE programme and the educational development of the girl child**

Variables	N	R	R^2
Infrastructural facilities of UBE programme* Educational development of the girl child	556	.415	.172

Table 2 indicates a correlation coefficient (r-value) of .415 and a coefficient of determination (r^2-value) of .172. Seventeen point two percent of the overall variation in the educational development of the girl-child may be ascribed to the infrastructural amenities of the UBE program. In light of the association between the two variables, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) study was conducted to determine the significance of the relationship (See Table 4).

Hypothesis One

No substantial correlation exists between the specific policies of the UBE program and the educational advancement of the girl-child in Bayelsa State.

Table 3: PPMC analysis of the relationship between special policies of UBE programme and the educational development of the girl-child

Variables	N	df	r.cal.	Sig.	Decision at P < 0.05
Special policies of UBE programme	556	554	.425	.000	*
Educational development of the girl-child	556				

***** = Significant at 0.05 alpha Level; N = 556.

Table 3 demonstrates that the PPMC analysis is substantial at the p < .05 alpha level, since the calculated p-value of .000 is below the threshold of .05, with 554 degrees of freedom and an r-value of .425. Consequently, the null hypothesis positing that there is no substantial correlation between the specific policies of the UBE program and the educational advancement of the girl-child in Bayelsa State is rejected. The alternative proposition asserts that a substantial correlation exists between the UBE program's particular policies and the educational advancement of the girl-child in Bayelsa State.

Hypothesis Two

There is no substantial connection between infrastructural facilities of UBE programme and the educational development of the girl-child in Bayelsa State.

Table 4: PPMC analysis of the relationship between infrastructural facilities of UBE programme and the educational development of the girl-child

Variables	N	df	r.cal.	Sig.	Decision at P < 0.05
Infrastructural facilities of UBE programme	556	554	.415	.000	*
Educational development of the girl-child	556				

***** = Significant at 0.05 alpha Level; N = 556.

Table 4 indicates that the PPMC analysis is substantial at the p < .05 alpha level, since the calculated p-value of .000 is below the threshold p-value of .05, with 554 degrees of freedom and an r-value of .415. Consequently, the null hypothesis positing that there is no significant correlation between the infrastructural facilities of the UBE project and the educational advancement of the girl-child in Bayelsa State is rejected. The alternative proposition asserts that a substantial correlation exists between the infrastructural facilities of the UBE program and the educational advancement of the girl-child in Bayelsa State.

Summary of Findings

1. There is a substantial relationship between special policies of UBE programme and educational development of the girl-child in Bayelsa State.
2. There is a significant relationship between infrastructural facilities of UBE programme and educational development of the girl-child in Bayelsa State.

Discussion of Findings

The result in Table 3 indicates that, there is a positive relationship between special policies of UBE programme and the educational development of the girl-child in Bayelsa State with a correlation coefficient r-value of .425. This indicates low magnitude with a positive direction.

The positive relationship between special policies of UBE programme and educational development of the girl-child means that, as scores of special policies of UBE programme increase, there is a corresponding increase in educational development of the girl-child scores and the revise is the case.

Utilising PPMC analysis to evaluate the null hypothesis yielded a p-value of .000, which was deemed statistically significant at the .05 alpha level with 554 degrees of freedom. The findings indicate a substantial positive correlation between the specialised strategies of the UBE program and the educational advancement of the girl-child in Bayelsa State. The findings indicated that the UBE programme in the state lacks specific policies that promote or support the education of the girl-child. There are no policies that facilitate girls' enrolment, advancement, or incentives that provide educational possibilities for the girl-child. This aligns with the findings of Ifeijeh and Odaro (2011). The authors noted that several states and local governments fail to recognise the specific needs of the populace, resulting in many females lacking access to education. The African Girls Education Initiative (AGEI, 2001–2003) is one of several government programs in Nigeria that have worked to ensure that girls have equal access to education and other basic rights, such as the opportunity to grow up and play an active role in society. Child-Friendly School Initiative (CFSI), the females' Education Project (GEP, Phases 1: 2004–2008; Phase 2: 2008–2012; Phase 3: 2012–2019), SAGEN, and the building of schools exclusively for females. The goal of all these initiatives was to ensure that young women and girls in Nigeria had the opportunity to get an excellent education. The lack of specific policies supporting girl-child education has detrimental effects on girls and young women. The conclusion is that a cohort of illiterate girls and women with little education is formed, without the tools to secure a respectable career, perhaps leading them to engage in hawking, begging, trafficking, or commercial sex exploitation (UNICEF, 2014). Table 4 indicates a good association between the infrastructural facilities of the UBE programme and the educational growth of the girl-child in Bayelsa State, with a correlation coefficient r-value of .415. This signifies a modest magnitude with a favourable orientation. The positive relationship between infrastructural facilities of UBE programme and educational development of the girl-child means that, as scores of infrastructural facilities of UBE programme increase, there is a corresponding increase in educational development of the girl-child scores and the revise is the case.

However, when PPMC analysis was utilized to test the null hypothesis, it revealed r-value of .415 which was found to be statistically significant at .05 alpha level with 554 degrees of freedom. The result therefore shows that, there is a significant positive relationship between infrastructural facilities of UBE programme and educational development of the girl-child in Bayelsa State. Infrastructure in this study refers to school buildings, classroom blocks, office blocks, students hostels, desk and lockers, recreational grounds, toilet facilities etc. infrastructure is very important in the creation of a safe and healthy environment for teaching and learning. This implies that the presence of adequate infrastructure in schools will enable the students to comfortable seat and learn most of the skills required for them in UBE programme and the reverse will be the case. This is in line with the statement of Amoako (2014) who stated that school infrastructure such as classroom, chairs, lockers, workshops etc help students in the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills. Ovuru (2016) reported that government has renovated dilapidated primary and secondary schools in Bayelsa state, it is a good step to improve academic activities but still most of our school lack classrooms to accommodate the students and, in most cases, the available classrooms are overcrowded. The implication of this is that our children may sit under trees and in open fields for instructional purposes, this definitely undermine the quality of instruction hence hinder the educational

development of students. This aligns with the National School Services Study, which indicated that there are just 284,650 courses accommodating nearly 20 million students. Of the total, only 120,695 classrooms were in satisfactory condition, whilst 83,506 classrooms are used by various courses due to space constraints.

Conclusion

1. Special policies of UBE programme have significant relationship with educational development of the girl-child in Bayelsa State.
2. Infrastructural facilities of UBE programme have significant relationship with educational development of the girl-child in Bayelsa State

Recommendations

The following suggestions are given in light of the study's results:

1. Policies makers should formulate special policies on enrolment, promotion, etc that favour and encourages the education of the girl-child. This will arouse the educational interest of girls and give them a sense of belonging.

2. Government and public individuals should build classroom blocks and provide teaching materials/equipment to schools. This will help reduce the problem of lack of classrooms and student-equipment ratio.

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