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## **Administrative Competency Needs of Secondary School Principals for Effective Ube Administration at the J.S.S Level in Anambra State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

In the present dispensation, where Education is the bedrock of any National Development, Universal Basic Education (UBE), which was launched on 30th September, 1990, by the then President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo requires adequate administrative competency needs of the principals for effective UBE Administration at J.S.S. level in Anambra State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. The population for the study was 246 principals at the J.S.S. level in Anambra State, Nigeria. The instrument used for study was Administrative Skill Survey Questionnaire (ASSQ); Mean and Standard Deviation were used for analyzing the research questions. The following major findings emerged: the principals agreed that with their knowledge they can effect changes in the curriculum, create healthy environment for teachers and students to learn. The principals equally agreed that when teachers are well-motivated they are regular and punctual to school. The major recommendation is that the government at all levels should provide useful information to the principals on the skills needed for instructional leadership for administrative competence needed for effective UBE administration at J.S.S level in Anambra State, Nigeria.

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background of the Study**

The rationale behind the introduction Universal Basic Education (UBE) system of educational programme in Nigeria, Anambra State inclusive, is basically the fact that many Nigerians (both youths and adults) are still illiterate. They do not contribute towards national development. Many declarations have been made but the United Nations (2011) Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 (two) Statement on education aims at achieving Universal Basic Education at the primary and secondary school level. Thus, ensuring that children completes a full cycle of primary and secondary education. The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 5 on gender parity and equality in education by 2015, and the education-for-all-by-2015 policy are outcomes of world education forum held in Dakar, Senegal (2000), endorsing comprehensive vision of education anchored in human rights affirming the importance of learning at all ages and emphasizing the need for special measures to reach the most disadvantaged groups in the society.

In line with the above declaration on education is the section 18 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which States that government should eradicate illiteracy and to this end government should provide:

- ❖ free compulsory primary education;
- ❖ free compulsory junior secondary education.; and
- ❖ free adult literacy programme.

In a bid to achieve the eradication of illiteracy in our country Nigeria, Anambra State in particular has kept faith with the Jometein Thailand Global Declaration (1998) on education failure. The federal government under the leadership of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme on 30th September 1999 in Sokoto State. This educational programme was so laudable and most welcomed by all Nigerians with much joy. It is a panacea for improving the literacy level of many illiterate Nigerians, who could not gain access to basic education. The big question here is, how far will the UBE achieve its earlier stipulated goals without competent administrators in Anambra State and Nigeria as a whole? Universal Basic Education according to Federal Ministry of Education (FME) (1999) is the type of education given at the foundation level of education. Obayan (2000) described basic education as the learning needed to build firm roots for literacy and numeracy, inculcating basic life skills and more importantly consolidating the skills of learning how to learn.

In Nigeria presently, and Anambra State in particular, universal basic education means the first nine years of schooling, involving six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary school. This in line with the national policy on education (2004:13), section 3, which States that Basic Education shall be of 9 years duration. The Administration of the six years primary education is under a schoolhead known as “headmaster” or “headmistress”. In the secondary school system, the Administration of the three years junior secondary school education is under a school head known as “principal”, Ugwuoke (2011).

The Federal Ministry of Education outlined the UBE objectives (2006) as:

1. developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and strong commitment to its vigorous promotion;
2. provision of free compulsory UBE for every Nigerian child;
3. reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out rate from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency;
4. ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate level of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for, life-long learning; and
5. catering for the learning needs of the young persons who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.

The above objectives if well planned and pursued will improve the educational level of all Nigerian citizens, including Anambra. It should be recalled that similar educational programme to the UBE programmes have been launched in the past: UPE and others by past Nigerian governments but could not thrive.

According to Denga (2002), administrative competency is geared towards restructuring and re-culturing of educational system. Restructuring, he says deals with changes in the formal structure of educational system in terms of organizational roles etc., while re-culturing on the other hand is concerned with changing the values, norms,

incentives, skills and relationship in school organisation to faster higher administrative functions. It is in view of the indispensable role of principals in school administration that gave impetus to the need to state clearly the objectives of Nigerian education and to produce a crop of credible men and women who are knowledgeable in the administration of educational programmes and on whose shoulders fall the great responsibility to steer the education industry of the country. More importantly, they are saddled with the responsibility of educational objectives to concrete behavioural activities, which are vital for the achievement of the country's educational goals, Anambra State in particular, (Mgbodile, 1986). Although Universal Primary Education (UPE) was launched nationwide in 1976, limited success was achieved, as attendance was not compulsory for pupils of school-going age. However, with the passage of the UBE act, every tier of government in the country Nigeria, Anambra State inclusive, was mandated to provide free compulsory nine-years Universal Basic Education for her pupils. Ibukun (2003) pointed out that the problem of Nigeria, Anambra State in particular, does not lie with the knowledge and adequate policies but with effective planning and sustainable implementation. Ndin, Ezike & Nwana (1997) attributed the failure of such educational programmes in Nigeria and of course Anambra State to several factors. Among these factors are inadequate human resources, inadequate training, poor motivation, inadequate basic infrastructural facilities, inadequate data, inadequate funding, embezzlement, people's poor attitude to work, lack of leadership and administrative competency etc. He posits that decision making is an integral part of planning, and that it is a very crucial aspect of school administration and that it is very essential for the success of instructional management.

Therefore, it is imperative that secondary school principals should be knowledgeable in the art of decision making for effective school administration. Olele as cited in Perete (1998), agreed that principals as the chief executive in secondary school should poses skills, technical knowledge needed for effective administration that will be of immense benefits to the school needs, pupils and staff. His success, he asserts, leads to effective administration. The term, effective administration of principals, can be defined as a careful systematic arrangement of resources for the realization of the objectives of the school, (Igwe, 1990). The principal being an educational leader working in an organization, which is a social system is tasked with a whole lot of challenges, which include supervision of instruction, staff management, decision making, curriculum development, delegation of duties, provision of instructional materials needed for teachers to perform effectively. He coordinates some formal structures like administrative units, maintenance of a healthy learning environment. Owing to all these, he needs to step up from his administrative role to an effective leadership position where he motivates and integrates the needs of teachers' potentials through division of labour, hierarchy of authority and effective managerial behaviour in actualizing the organizational goals and objectives. Anuna (2004) wrote that school principals serve as consultants to the teachers by stimulating them into improving the students with the best instruction. This gives synergic effect in the school or the end chain that link the work effort of teachers and groups to an organizations purpose. Administrative competency has become an important issue is the school system, hence the need for principals to improve their knowledge, administrative skills, attitudes and behaviour while on the job is rarely questioned. It is

based on this that the researcher examined the administrative competency needs of principals for effective UBE administration at J.S.S level in Anambra State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Today, Nigeria, as one of the countries of the sub-Saharan Africa, is lagging behind in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The leaders of 189 countries of the world during the Millennium Summit of September 2000, unlike some of her counterparts in other countries of the world are equally lagging behind in MDGs (Ejeh, 2010). The disheartening and persistent failure of well-formulated educational programmes has been a matter of concern to many Nigerians and the government. In Anambra State, Nigeria, the low academic achievement is equally alarming, especially in the administrative incompetency of educational administrators – principals. They lack advancement, owing to consistent neglect of re-training or re-education schemes. The fear now is, will Universal Basic Education (UBE) fail like other educational programmes as the nation is helping to achieve some of the Millennium Development Goals through it (Nebula, 2009). The point is not or how well a particular programme has been formulated but the implementation. Based on this, many scholars argue that the demand for effective implementation is urgent and that the traditional methods of preparing school principals are no longer adequate to meet the leadership challenges posed by schools on the principal. As the chief executive officer, the heaviest weight of programme implementation lies on him.

It is based on this that the researcher examined the administrative competency needs of principals for effective UBE administration of J.S.S level in Anambra State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the administrative competency needs of school principals for effective UBE administration at JSS level in Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically the study examined:

1. the instructional administrative skills needed by principals for effective UBE Administration in Anambra State, Nigeria;
2. the personnel management skills needed by principals for effective UBE administration, in Anambra State, Nigeria; and
3. the financial and managerial skills needed by principals for effective UBE administration in Anambra State, Nigeria.

### **Scope of the Study**

The study is limited to administrative competency needs of school principals for effective UBE administration at JSS level in Anambra State, Nigeria. The following administrative skills formed the focus of the study, instructional leadership skills, personnel administrative skills and financial management skills.

### **Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do principals' administrative instructional leadership skills influence effective UBE administration in Anambra State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent do principals personnel administrative skills influence with the staff in effective UBE administration in Anambra State, Nigeria?
3. To what extent do the principals financial management skills influence effective UBE administration in Anambra State, Nigeria?

## Research Method

### Design of the Study

The design of the study is a descriptive survey. This is because it seeks to identify administrative competency needs of principals for effective UBE administration at JSS level in Anambra State, Nigeria. According to Nworgu (2006), descriptive survey design is concerned with collecting data from a sample of a population in order to describe conditions or relationships that exists, opinions that are held, process that are going on, effects that are evident or trends that are developing.

### Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Anambra State, Nigeria, which is made up of six educational zones, namely Awka, Aguata, Nnewi, Onitsha, Ogidi and Otuocha. Anambra State, Nigeria and is bounded on the East by Enugu State, in the west by Delta State, in the North by Kogi State and in the South by Imo State and River State.

### Population of the Study

The population for the study consists of principals of all the junior secondary schools owned by the State government. The principals were particularly chosen to be used in this study because the focus of this study is on their opinion on administrative competency needs of principals for effective UBE administration at J.S.S level. The preliminary survey of junior secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria, shows that these were 264 principals. These principals were from public secondary schools controlled by the Anambra State Education Commission. The researcher decided to use only government- controlled schools because they benefited more from UBE dividends. However, due to the manageable size of the population, the entire population was used.

**Table 1:** below shows the number of schools in each educational zone:

S/No.	Educational Zone	No. of School
1	Aguata	47
2	Awka	75
3	Nnewi	34
4	Onitsha	38
5	Ogidi	39
6	Oyi	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>264</b>

**Source:** Annual School Census, Department of Planning, Research and Statistics (PRS), Ministry of Education Anambra State, Nigeria.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

There was no sampling, since all the principals were used, because of the manageable size.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire, entitled administrative skills survey questionnaire (ASSQ). The instrument was in two parts, part A sought information on personal data, while part B was a twelve-(12)-item questionnaire developed by the researcher, with a fair point Likert rating scale assigned numerical values as follow strongly Agree (SA) (4), Agree (A) (3), Disagree (D), (2) Strongly Disagree (SD) (1) designed to elicit in information from the respondents (the principals) to answer research questions. The questions were arranged in three (3) clusters to elicit information regarding the instructional leadership skill, personnel management skills and financial management skills needed by the principals for effective UBE administration at J.S.S level of secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.

### **Face-Validation of the Instrument**

The instrument was subjected to face validation by 2 experts in Adult Education and 3 experts in measurement and evaluation, all from the University of Nigeria Nsukka. They were requested to rate the relevance, adequacy and comprehensiveness of the items. Their expert observation, comments and suggestions were incorporated in the modification of the questionnaire consisting of 12 items.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

Based on the result of trial testing, the internal consistency reliability coefficient using cronbach alpha method was established for each of the sub-sections of the instrument. The rationale for this trial testing is because the items are not dichotomously scored. The reliability indices for the items in various sections are 0.75, 0.68, 0.73 and 0.15 and far all the items in the instrument are 0.56.

### **Method of Data Collection**

Questionnaires were administered to the 264 principals on their meeting day. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the principals personally. The essence of administering the questionnaire personally to the principals was to make clarifications on items whenever the need arose. This reduced likely errors that could have occurred in the process of filling the responses to item on the instrument. Based on this, 99% return rate of the instrument was achieved.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the three research questions. Any range above 2.50 is agreed on while any range below 2.50 is disagreed on.

### **Results**

Data was analysed according to the research questions:

### Research Question 1

To what extent do principals administrative competency skills influence effective UBE administration in Anambra State, Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Mean rating ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviation (S) of the administrative competency needs influence effective UBE administration in Anambra State, Nigeria.

S/N	Items on Principal Administrative Competency needs for Effective UBE Administration	$\bar{x}$	S	Interpretation
1	The principals are knowledgeable and it helps to effect changes in the curriculum.	2.8	1.06	Agree
2	The principals create healthy environment for both the teachers and pupil for better understanding.	3.2	1.31	Agree
3	There is always clarity of communication for the objective of UBE to be achieved.	2.12	1.21	Disagree
4	The principals monitor teachers and students for teaching and learning to be improved	3.0	1.11	Agree

In table 2 above, the principals agree that their knowledge helps them to effect changes in the curriculum. They agree also that they create healthy environment for both the teachers and students for better understanding. They equally agree that they monitor teachers and students for teaching and learning to be improved, which they disagree about clarity of communication for the objective of UBE to be achieved.

### Research Question 2

To what extent do principals personnel administrative skill influence with the staff in effective UBE administration in Anambra State, Nigeria?

**Table 3:** Mean rating ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviation (S) of the principal personal administrative influence with staff in effective UBE administration in Anambra State, Nigeria.

S/N	Items on Principal personal growth influence with staff in effective UBE Administration	$\bar{x}$	S	Interpretation
5	Motivates teachers to be regular and punctual to school	3.1	1.11	Agree
6	Relates with teachers well and involve the teachers in planning and decision making	2.3	1.20	Disagree
7	Discipline teachers when they offend and fail in their duty	3.4	1.32	Agree
8	Encourages the teachers to create new innovations that will help to achieve UBE in school	2.1	1.20	Disagree

From the table 3 above the principals agreed that they motivate teachers to be regular and punctual to school. They equally agreed that they discipline teachers when they offend and fail in their duty. While they disagree to relate to teachers well and involve them in planning and decision making, they also disagree that they do not encourage teachers to create innovations that will help to achieve UBE in school.

### Research Question 3

To what extent do the principals financial management skills influence effective UBE administration in Anambra State, Nigeria?

**Table 4:** Mean rating  $\bar{x}$  and standard deviation (S) of the principal financial management skills influence effective UBE administration in Anambra State, Nigeria.

S/N	Items on Principal financial management for effective UBE Administration	$\bar{x}$	S	Interpretation
9	Principal raises fund for school improvement and manages the facilities	2.7	1.21	Agree
10	Encourages teachers to collect money from the students instead of their handiwork.	2.2	1.21	Disagree
11	Encourages students produce craft of their locality and encourages innovation in school	2.1	1.20	Disagree
12	Uses PTA money for propagating the school and students to achieve their goals and objectives	2.4	1.21	Disagree

Table 4 above shows that the principal agreed with item 9, that they raise funds for school improvement and manages the facilities well. While in items 10, 11, 12 they disagreed that they the principals do not encourage the teachers to collect money from the students. The principals also disagrees that they do not encourage the students to produce craft of their locality and innovation in the school. They equally disagree using the PTA money for propagating the school and students to achieve their goals and objectives.

### Summary of the Findings

From the table, it was revealed that majority of the principals agreed that with their knowledge they can effect changes in the curriculum, create healthy environment for teachers and students to learn. They equally agreed that when teachers and students are well monitored, teaching and learning are more effective.

The principals equally agreed that when teachers are motivated they are regular and punctual to school. They also agreed that teachers perform better and at their best when disciplined for an offence in performing their duty.

The principals equally agreed that they raise funds for school improvement and efficiency.

### **Discussing of Findings**

From table 2 above, the principals agree that with their knowledge they can effect changes in the curriculum and create healthy environment for teachers and students to learn. The type of relationship that exists between the principals, teachers and students determines the standard of the school. Conducive and healthy environment motivates the teachers and students to work hard towards achieving effective administration in the school. But where the relationship is not cordial, the reverse is the case. This is buttressed by (Polloway, Patton, Smith and Podeaque, 1991), when they said that education must be sensitive to the environment/conditions in which the students' presence will need to adapt and function, hence the challenge to design curriculum based on subsequent environments as attitude approach towards achieving administration competency of principals for effective administration in schools. The principals equally agreed that when teachers and students are well monitored that teaching and learning more effective. It was further reintegrated for the fact that it is what teachers think, what teachers believe, and what teachers do at the classroom that ultimately shape the kind of learning that students get. There is no disputing the fact that principals and teachers determine the quality of education. Hence the administrative competency needs of principals for effective administration of UBE at J.S.S. level, in the Anambra, State Nigeria.

From table 3 above, the principals agreed that when teachers are motivated that they are regular and punctual to school. Since teaching is a profession, and the progress and achievement of students depend on how teachers' coordinate their work, teachers level of satisfaction at work must be increased by motivation from the principals Bass and Avovas (1990) view the importance of effective administration as the ability to motivate the teachers to think of playing their roles towards successful implementation of UBE in schools of Anambra State, Nigeria. The principals equally agreed that teachers are at their best when disciplined for an offence, when performing their duty. The national policy on education (2006), Stated that disciplining teachers would modify bad behaviour in students through non-confrontational and non-physical methods. Principals believe that to discipline the teachers that it should be done in a moderate way that it will not expose the teachers to all and sundry to enable it to serve as a corrective measure hence administrative competency of principals in the effective administration of UBE is J.S.S. level in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Table 4 above shows that the principals raise funds for school improvement and efficiency, yet the UBE programme is not succeeding the way it should in Anambra State, Nigeria. The principal in Anambra, Nigeria should realize that funding is a vital factor that determines either failure or success of any programme, UBE programmes inclusive. As such inadequate funding has affected the implementation of UBE seriously. Agha-Okro (2005) lamented that the UBE is ill-fated as regards funding and that its products so far in different part of Nigeria, Anambra State inclusive are uncultured, unskilled, literate and uneducated individuals who went to waist their time and energy in school buildings and environment. Pinye (2004) advised that funding the UBE programme is not the organisation of grand and costly education capitals or setting up and lavish inauguration of numerous education commission, but rather the actual implementation activities such as due attention to the plight of teachers, ensuring

activities for funds the UBE would not have been launched, with insufficient funding syndrome the UBE is doomed. Hence the administrative competency needs of principals for effective administration of UBE at J.S.S level, in Anambra State, Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this research.

1. Recognizing the importance of UBE for national development, the government at all levels should provide the principals and other school administrators with useful information on the skills needed for instructional leadership for administrative competency needed for effective UBE administration at J.S.S level in Anambra State, Nigeria. Whatever there shall be mutual cooperation between the principals, teachers and students for effective administration in the schools at JSS level in Anambra State, Nigeria.
2. Government through its appropriate agents, such as ministry of education, should provide possible solutions to all the challenges affecting the effective supervision of UBE programmes in all the schools in Anambra State, Nigeria inclusive. These problems of not checking poses as threat in achieving the noble dreams of UBE.
3. Multimedia approach should be adopted by the government to redeem the hope of Nigerians Anambra State in achieving accessible, affordable and qualitative education for all Nigerians of school going age by 2015.
4. The government should help educational planners and policy makers in their future planning. Since the principals are in direct conduct with the users of the curriculum/programmes and have the functions of planning, implementation and feedback.
5. Government should work and harmonise modalities for coordinating and formalizing procedures, policies, establish standard and regulate secondary school system by including training and development programmes and various ways of assessing or evaluating the principals who have undergone training to bring out the most administrative competency needed for effective UBE administration at J.S.S level in Anambra State, Nigeria.
6. Education is for all and as such, it is the responsibility of all. All hands should be on deck to taking Nigerian educational future to the enviable heights, hence the principals, teachers giving out their best to achieve this long awaited dream and good results.

### **Conclusion**

For administrative competency needs of principals for effective UBE administration at J.S.S level of Anambra State, Nigeria. All hands must be on deck, the government and all the stakeholders in the administration of UBE programmes in Anambra State in getting them information the present State of affairs as per the adequacy of human resources, the adequacy of infrastructural facilities and the adequacy of funds in the implementation of UBE programmes in J.S.S in Anambra State, Nigeria.

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