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School Location Factors and Learners Access to the Universal Basic Education Programme Facilities in Edo Sate, Nigeria

Isah Emmanuel Aileonokhuoya and Oshogwe Okwegwa
Department of Educational Management, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria
Tel: +2348138436380   Email: emmanisah1959@yahoo.com

Abstract

The problem of access, equity and quality areof concern to stakeholders due to perceived decline in numeracy and literacy in Nigeria.Insinuations arethat the UBE programmeis failing.Previous researches pinpointed funding among others. Some other factors yet to be wellinvestigated include locational factors; home distance, rural - urban settings and school site as they influence access (enrolment) to UBE in Edo state (2010 - 2015). The survey research design with a population consisting of all public primary schools was adopted. The Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to select 1 senatorial district (Edo North).Various sampling techniqueswere used to select 998 primary 6 pupils and 786 Junior secondary school students. Two instruments titled 'School Location Factors and School Access Questionnaire 1 & 2' (SLFSAQ) guided the study. SLFSAQ1 is a checklist while SLFSAQ 2 (r-0.85) elicited primary information. SLFSAQ 2 is designed after the Likert scale type. Instrument validity was established by colleagues in the Department of Educational Management, University of Ibadan. 5 research questions and 5 hypotheses guided the study.The hypotheses were analysed using chi-square for hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 while multiple regression analysis was adopted for hypotheses 4 and 5 @ $p<0.05$. A significant relationship existed between home distance and school location X^2(df=15,27)=2087.16; $p<0.05$. Also, a significant relationship exist between rural-urban location and access to schools X^2(df=2,27)=1088.73;$p<0.05$. The relationship between school site and learners acess is X^2 (df=27,30)=2071.13. The independent variables jointly contributed to access to UBE R=0.687 while F=df$_{(3,16287)}$ = 26.605, $p<0.05$. Geographical location made the highest contribution β=0.186;$p<0.05$. Recommendations included the need for more mass mobilisations especially in rural areas, schools should be located in centrally accessible areas with modest distribution of resources (personnel).

Key Words: School Location, School Site, Rural Urban, Access to UBE
Word Count: 284

Introduction

The problem of access and equity to education is not new and has elicited conferences, workshops and concern among various stakeholders in education locally and globally to indicate its importance. According to Oyebade, Oladipo and Adetoro (2007), access to education implies making it possible for anyone who needs education to receive it. The opinion and ideas on access by Oyebade et al is similar to that of the Education Sector Analysis (ESA) of the (FRN, 2003). Such description by scholars is not far from the perception which stakeholders have concerning education. Education either as a good or as a consumption good is not negotiable in importance hence Isah and Akinwumi (2016) citing other scholars as Osokoya (2003), Okebukola (2013) saw the all importance of education describing it variously as either light, life or progress. The description of education is not far from the postulations of the early fathers of knowledge as Plato, Aristotle and Socrates. Knowledge therefore could be regarded as power, progress and development.

On the issue of knowledge sharing and dissemination in Nigeria, Babalola (2011) explained that ignorance and illiteracy are still very paramount in the society.

Globally, the issue of illiteracy and ignorance were found by stakeholders to be major problems to global developments in all fronts hence the issue of basic education became a major item in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) which was expected to end in the year 2015. Another focus on the essence of education and its dissemination could be found in the FRN (2004) document where the goals of Nigeria's education were well spelt out. The document expected all Nigerian citizens to have access to education and with it creating just and egalitarian society.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) was officially launched through its enabling act in Nigeria in the year 2004. The act has among its object to ensure that all Nigerians have access to education for 9 years regarded as basic education. The act of the UBE has also as its objective to increase literacy and numeracy among its citizens. However from the foregoing, how do we conceptualize basic education? The FRN (2004) UBE Act in its implementation guideline has the following guidelines;

(i)   Ensuring that school age children are in school

(ii)   100% transition to JSS at the end of the six years of primary education

(iii)   Completers of UBE to possess literacy, numeracy and basic life skills as well as ethical moral and civic values

(iv)   All teachers of basic education institutions to possess the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE)

(v)   Review of Basic education curriculum to conform to the agenda

(vi)   Establish 100% awareness on HIV/AIDs in schools

(vii)   Establishment of an effective institutional framework for monitoring learning and teaching

(viii) Active involvement in and participation and eventual ownership of schools by local communities.

From the perception of scholars, and institutions, what is UBE? The Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2000) described UBE as the foundation for sustainable lifelong learning that provides reading, writing and numeracy skills. The UBE act (2004), further described UBE as early childhood care education and nine years of formal schooling, adult literacy, non-formal education, skills acquisition programmes and the education of special groups as migrant, nomadic , girl-child, women, almajiri, street children and disabled groups education. Further to the foregoing, the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA, 1990) cited in Ukeje(2000), described Basic education as that type of education that encompasses education for the non-formal sector, integrated learning, improved health and nutrition, mobilization of family and community resources. Again, Aluede (2006) also explains that universal means education for the whole world while basic means that 'on what it rests'. Again Nwana (2000), described basic education as fundamental education. Obidike (2005), also sees UBE as an educational programme that is compulsory for all aimed at eradicating illiteracy among citizens between the ages of (3-16)years. Several opinions differ on what UBE is as explained by Tahir (2006), Poopola (2001), Oladosu (2001) and Ajaye (2002). Others are Akpan (2009) who see the UBE from divers scholarly perspectives. However, a unifying factor in all descriptions is the fact that the UBE has the major responsibility of facilitating 9 year education for all.Babalola (2000), summarized the objectives of the UBE to include;

(i)   Provision of universal access to education

(ii)   Provision of a conducive learning environment

(iii)   Eradication of illiteracy as well as the ability to communicate effectively

Despite the fact that the global and national goals of the UBE are laudable, it is clear that several challenges lie ahead despite its operation formally in Nigeria from 1999 when the informal launching was done by the then Head of State Chief OlusegunObasanjo in Sokoto State. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2009) in a national survey after 10 years in the implementation of the UBE found that 3.6 million children of primary school age were not attending any school contrary to the provisions of the guidelines to the UBE. Again, the study of the NBS (2009) found that a wide gap existed between enrolment of pupils/students in rural and urban centres with 3.1% in rural against 12.3% enrolment in urban. Again, in 2010 according to www.punchonline Dr. Sam Egwu then minister of education reported that 11million children were not enrolled in any school at all attributing the cause of the problem to absence of schools or the distribution of schools indicating a problem of school location.

According to UNESCO (2005), access to education implies that the government of any nation is able to provide enough educational facilities for all its citizens. It also deals with the ability to appropriately forecast and report the levels of efficiency in schools both internal and external efficiency. It involves knowing the number of pupils/students in school, out of school children, repeaters, drop out etc.

In Nigeria, the structure of educational provision which is not exclusive but … makes the provision of education to include the state governments. Again the UBE act 2004 provides for a Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and the state Universal Basic Education Commission (SUBEB) charged with coordination of the implementation of UBE pogramme and several responsibilities as follows;

(i)   Ensuring effective management of basic schools through their respective organs

(ii)   Management of early child care centres (ECCC), primary, nomadic and Junior secondary schools

(iii)   Enquiring into and advising state

governments on the funding and orderly development of Basic education in the state

(iv)   Advising UBEC on possible intervention by the commission in the provision of adequate basic facilities which shall include the use of basic national curricula, syllabi and other necessary instructional materials in use in early childhood care development centres, primary and JSS in states.

(v)   Carrying out from time to time a personnel audit of teaching and non-teaching staff in primary and Junior secondary schools in concert with the Primary and Post primary education boards in the states.

(vi)   Supporting national capacity building for teachers and managers of Basic education in the states.

The last item in these terms of reference is
...

(xxi) Carrying out mass mobilizationand sensitization of the general public and to enter into partnership with communities and stakeholders on basic education with the aim of achieving the overall objectives of performance in the states.

The last objective is quite sensitive as it includes an assessment of the enrolment status of states and the levels of access of pupils/students to basic schools. The significance of a study of this nature cannot be undermined as it is focusing on a state in the South south geopolitical zone of Nigeria characterized with several short comings educationally that includes; poverty, low enrolment in schools, poor levels of numeracy and literacy(Isah&Babayemi, 2009). Edo state falls in-between the lowland and upland states in the Niger Delta region hence a study of this nature will be of immense benefit to policy makers on resources allocation and utilization. It is also beneficial to indigenes of the region/state who have an empirical perception of their problem with the aim of seeking for solutions.

A core problem to school enrolment in Nigeria is access. With the Nature of Edo state, there are low land areas such as Edo south and high land areas such as Edo North. Areas such as Igarra in Akoko-Edo, Okpella in Estako East are heavy high land areas

characterized with rock mountain terrain with villages scattered all over the mountainous zones. Again, areas around Agenebode still in Estako East are low land riverine areas where access to school could be by boat or canoe especially in places like Udaba, Osomhegbe, Ekperi and others. Other places like Jattu, Auchi, SouthIbie in Etsako-west are plain terrains. This study investigated the ease of access of pupils/students in these environments to school enrolment especially access to UBE knowing the objective of the programme.

Statement of the Problem

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria is a celebrated programme with the objective of enabling citizens acquire literacy and numeracy in the first 9 years of schoolingi.e from primary 1 to JSS 3 known as basic school 1-9. To this effect, there is an act of the National Assembly for Nigeria known as the UBE act of 2004. In recent times, complaints of perceived falling levels in literacy and numeracy by stake holders seem to indicate that the educational future of Nigerian children or by extension the UBE programme could be complicated if theforementionedissues are not addressed. Researchers are yet to discover the real problems. Previously, funding was among the most significant problems perceived by researchers with Nigeria's economic challenges seen as foundational while others identified included teaching personnel shortages, infrastructural deficiencies and others. However, over the years, the UBE policy has began to address some of the aforementioned problems and yet the problems persists. There is a UBE counterpart funding programme designed to lift the UBE programme from the doldrums and make funds available for its development. There is also the Federal government teachers programme in the the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) that employ and train teachersfor state schools. An overview of the UBE policy shows that researchers at one time or the other had pinpointed the issue of funding, infrastructure and access but the policy did not show much work on locational factors. Schoollocated far from students' residence could affectstudent'snegatively. Locational factors could influence enrolment causing it to drop due to the frustration on getting to school daily. What therefore constitute these locational factors?Locational factors include; home distance from school, rural and urban index, the school site and the issue of school fees. This study therefore investigated 3 of these indices (location i.e home-school distance, rural-urban and

school site) to find out the relationship that exists between the independent variable school locational factors (Home distance, rural-urban location, school site) and the dependent variable (UBE progamme) in Edo state of Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study

H_{o1}: There is no significant relationship between home distance and leaners access to the UBE schools in Edo state, Nigeria.

H_{o2}:   There is no significant relationship between learners access to the UBE schools in rural and urban locations in Edo state, Nigeria.

H_{o3}:   There is no significant relationship between school site and learners access to UBE schools in Edo State, Nigeria.

H_{o4}:   Home distance, rural-urban location and school site will not significantly jointly influence learner's access to the UBE programme in Edo State, Nigeria.

H_{o5}: There is no significant relative contribution of school location factors (Home distance, rural-urban location and school site) to learner's access to the UBE programme in Edo State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The design is particularly good for large populations as it allows the use of representations (sample), giving every member of the population the opportunity of being selected. It is suitable for generalizations. The total study population consisted of all basic schools in Edo State i.e (Primaries 1-6 and JSS 1-3). The study adopted the multi-stage sampling procedure to select its respondent population. The first stage consisted of selecting the geographical location using simple random sampling technique to select Edo North senatorial district. The selection of 1 out of 3 represented nearly 35%. Edo North consist of 6 Local Government Areas (LGA)s thus; Akoko Edo, Etsako East, Etsako Central, Estako West, Owan East and Owan West. The 6 LGAs have a total of 259 primary schools and 95 Junior Secondary Schools (JSS), totaling 354. They also have a total number of 13,211 pupils in primary 6 and 7,711 students in JSS 3 i.e Basic 9. Estako East, West and Central were purposively selected for the study due to their cohesion in culture, language and location.

Table 1: Study Sample

LGA	Primary Schools	No of Pupils in Prim 6	25% sample no. of Schools	15% sample of Primary 6 pupils	No of JSS	No of JSS 3 students in LGAs	50% sample of JSS respondents in Basic 7 & 8	25% sample of Basic 9 students
Etsako East	51	2,976	15	745	14	1,473	6	368
Estako Central	29	530	5	132	7	150	3	37
Estako West	48	3,146	12	786	21	1,524	12	381
Total	128	6,652	32	998	42	3,147	21	786

Field Survey 2016

From Table 1, it is seen that the number of schools sampled were 74 while the respondent sample was 1,784.

The study instruments consisted of a researcher designed questionnaire titled, School Location Factors and Access to Universal Basic Education Questionnaire (SLFAUBEQ). SLFAUBEQ was structured into 2 sections with section A eliciting respondents biodata while section B elicited responses on other variables using the 4 point Likert scale of SA (Strongly Agree) = 4 points, A (Agree) = 3 points, D (Disagree) = 2 points and SD (Strongly Disagree) = 1 point. The test items were validated by colleagues in the Department of Educational Management of the University of Ibadan. A trial test conducted on similar subjects different from the target population using the method of split half and the cronbach alpha statistic yielded r-0.85 considered high and reliable. The hypotheses were tested at $p < 0.05$ level of significance using chi-square for hypotheses 1-3 and multiple regression analysis for hypotheses 4 and 5.

Results and Findings
Hypotheses
Hypothesis 1
There is no significant relationship between home distance and leaners access to the UBE schools in Edo state, Nigeria.

able 2: Relationship between Home-school Distance and Learners Access to UBE in Edo State

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev.	X^2	df	P	Remark
Home-School Distance	1,632	10.316	2.869	2087.16	(15,27)	<0.05	Significant
Access to UBE	1,632	26.0636	3.782				

The chi-square test result indicates X^2(df=15,27)=2087.16;p<0.05 indicates a rejection of the null hypothesis hence home distance affects learners access to UBE in Edo state, Nigeria. School location affects learners access. The longer the distance, the less access by learners and consequently lower enrolment in schools.

Hypothesis 2
There is no significant relationship between learners access to the UBE schools in rural and urban locations in Edo state, Nigeria.

Table 3: Relationship between Rural and Urban Learners Access to UBE

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev.	X^2	df	P	Remark
Urban-Rural Locations	1,632	1.6646	0.4735	1088.73	(2,27)	<0.05	significant
Access to UBE	1,632	26.06636	3.7829				

The result X^2(df=2,27)=1088.73;p<0.05 indicates an acceptance of the null hypothesis which means that rural-urban location influences access to UBE programmes in Edo State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3
There is no significant relationship between school site and learners access to UBE schools in Edo State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Relationship between School Site and Learners Access to UBE

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev.	X^2	df	P	Remark
School Site Location	1,632	28.2197	4.086	2071.13	(27,30)	<0.05	significant
Enrolment into UBE	1,632	26.0636	3.782				

The result X2(27,30)=2071.13;p<0.05 indicates that the null hypothesis is accepted that school site does affect learners enrolment (access) to UBE programmes in Edo State, Nigeria

Hypothesis 4
Home distance, rural-urban location and school site will not significantly jointly influence learner's access to the UBE programme in Edo State, Nigeria

Table 5: Relationship between School Site and Learners Access to UBE

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
I	Regression	1091.390	3	363.797	26.605	0.000^b
	Residual	22534.937	1628	13.674		
	Total	23626.326	1651			

Model Summary	
Model	1
R	0.687^a
R Square	0.472
Adjusted R^2	0.429
Std Error of the Estimate	3.60128

The correlation among the 3 variables (Home distance, rural-urban and school site location) taken together correlate properly and positively at R = 0.687' indicating that all independent variables could influence learners access to the UBE programmes to an extent. R^2 = 0.472 indicates that the independent variables explain the variance in the dependent variable up to 47.2% while 52.8% are yet to be determined (other) factors not researched here. R = 0.687 shows the level of multiple correlation which is significant [f(df=3,16287) = 26.605,

p<0.05]. There is a significant joint contribution of all independent variables to learners access to UBE programmes in Edo State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 5
There is no significant relative contribution of school location factors (Home distance, rural-urban location and school site) to learner's access to the UBE programme in Edo State, Nigeria.

Table 6: Relative Contributions of the Independent Variables to the Dependent variable

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant);	21.791	0.739		29.479	0.000
Home Distance	0.071	0.032	0.054	2.206	0.028
School Site	-0.786	0.193	-0.098	-4.064	0.000
Urban-rural	0.172	0.022	0.186	7.679	0.000

Rural urban location made the highest single contribution to access to UBE programmes with $\beta = 0.186$, $p<0.05$ which is significant followed by home-school distance $\beta = 0.054$, $p<0.05$ also significant and school site location $\beta = -0.098$, $p<0.05$. All independent variables made significant relative contribution to the dependent variable.

Discussion of Findings
The Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2000) described basic education as the foundation for lifelong sustainable education and to that effect it is expected to be accessible to all. Access has to do with gaining entrance or making use of a facility or object without interference or hindrance. Ease of access to education shows how efficient the education system is. Owolabi (2002), explains that access to education is the measure of the extent to which a country is able to satisfy house hold demand for education. Tables 1,2,3,4 and 5 indicated the extent to which pupils and students can access educational facilities. Results in the Tables indicated show that in Edo state, public schools are within reach of pupils and students while facilities appear enough but the quality of the type of education is not within the scope of this study. Table 5 showed that enrolment rates were not completely steady on a year in year out basis. From the works of Abidogun (2006), more still requires to be done on rates in enrolment in Nigeria which is evident in Table 5 concerning Edo state. It is also clear that what is applicable in Edo state is still applicable in many states of Nigeria.

The finding on the relationship between home-distance in Table 7 is in line with the findings of Arubayi (2005), that distance travelled to schools by pupils has relationship with school attendance and access. Other factors that affect access and enrolment are visible in Table 4. Again Table 11 is also in consonance. Edho (2009) explain that several factors fight rural communities which include absence of teachers in the rural setting. Ajayi (2006), found a significant difference between the academic performance of rural-urban location students. These differences are accountable in facilities, access and

other. Finally, students still pay fees and levies in a way as shown in Table 6. This negates the provision of the FRN (2004) that education will be free and compulsory as soon as practicable.

Conclusion
The study finds that a positive significant relationship exists among the independent variables - Access, School home distance and rural urban location. Again, the 3 independent variables jointly and relatively on the dependent variable Universal Basic Education (UBE).

Recommendations
Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

1. Universal Basic Education Commission should embark on mass mobilization and sensitization for access to UBE in Nigeria.
2. Government should provide means of mobility to enable pupils and students reach schools easily.
3. Equitable distribution of resources between rural and urban location schools especially teachers.
4. More schools should be provided in rural locations
5. Compensations should be given to rural teachers to make it more attractive.
6. Government should ensure policy reforms to discourage school drop outs especially completion of primary 6 i.e basic 6 in the UBE.

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