
Application of Social Demand Approach in the Implementation of Universal Basic Education in Primary Schools in Rivers State

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Abstract

The study investigated the application of the social demand approach to the implementation of a universal basic education programme in primary schools in Rivers State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. A survey design was used for the study; a sample of 288 respondents consisting of 48 head teachers and 240 teachers was selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. An instrument titled Application of Social Demand Approach in the Implementation of Universal Basic Education Programme (ASDAIUBEP) was self-developed by the researcher and used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts from the Department of Educational Management at Rivers State University, while the reliability was determined using Cronbach alpha statistics to obtain 0.88 and 0.79, which was deemed reliable. The data collected were analysed using the mean and standard deviation for the research questions, while the hypotheses were tested using z-test statistics at the 0.05 alpha level. The major findings of the study revealed that the social demand approach provides accurate demographic data for pupil enrollment and estimation. It was recommended that the government at all levels allocate adequate funds to the basic education sub-sector.

Keywords: Application, Social Demand Approach, Implementation, Universal Basic Education.

INTRODUCTION

Education is universally accepted as an important instrument for achieving fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of an individual. No nation can develop without an educated citizenry that will sustain the democratic principles and ideals of peace, progress, and freedom. A functional basic education programme is what is needed to actualize these national development aspirations. To achieve this, the Nigerian government needs to apply the social demand approach. This approach becomes acceptable to use when a government decides that education should be provided to all those who wish to attend school and who are likely to benefit and have the ability to do so. Akamgbou (1985) infers that this approach was applied to planning in education so as to provide education to as many pupils as possible who have been in need of it. He further stressed that the social demand approach is the popular desire of the public to acquire education by all means, regardless of the benefits that will accrue from investing in it. In response to the objectives of the social demand approach, the Federal Republic of Nigeria launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in September 1999. The programme officially kicked off in June 2004, with the cardinal objective of ensuring free and compulsory nine-year basic education, which comprises six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary school education. Ocho (2005) states that basic education is the education that makes one properly adapt to society. It encompasses nomadic education, functional literacy and numeracy, life skills development, and out-of-school and non-formal programmes. If basic education is to achieve its objectives, then the Nigerian government should copy the Dutch experience of the social demand approach, as stated by Okunamiriibiam and Okunamiri (2009), that if a sufficiently qualified citizen stands at the door of any type of school, he must be admitted, and it is the responsibility of appropriate government authorities to anticipate his requests so that school capacity will be adequate to accommodate him. The implication of this statement is that it is the responsibility of the government to provide education to citizens to enable them to develop their potential and innate abilities.

Many developing countries that have adopted this approach have witnessed unprecedented transformations in the education sector. The Nigerian universal basic education programme, if consciously planned and implemented, will drive the nation's educational system to the next level. Aguba (2008) observed that the successful implementation of the universal basic education programme depends largely on the availability of facilities, funds, and teaching manpower.

The failure of past education systems could be attributed to a lack of funds, poor implementation of policies, and a lack of facilities and teachers (Longe, 2003). To actualize the objectives of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme, the government needs to construct infrastructure, recruit and train teachers, and increase funding for education. According to Adesina (2008), universal basic education in Nigeria is based on the Social Demand Approach (SDA) because it relies on private demand for education, which stipulates that all those who demand education should be given the opportunity, provided they are qualified. The application of the social demand approach (SDA) to the implementation of universal basic education is a step in the right direction. It is believed that all expenses and activities related to education are for the good of the country; hence, education is the fundamental human right of every individual, and as such, all those who qualify for admission into a particular level must be given the opportunity. On this basis, the study seeks to investigate how the application of the social demand approach will facilitate the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in primary schools in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

The social demand approach to educational planning and development is a tool that has become prominent in many countries around the world. It emphasises the utilisation and satisfaction of the individual according to the consumption requirements of society on the basis of any financial alternative for the growth and development of the educational system. Many developed countries in the world that adopted this approach witnessed massive production of semi-skilled manpower for the requirements of the economy. The principle of social demand emphasised the need to provide education to citizens as a matter of right. Hence, payment of tuition fees and other related charges does not arise under the present circumstances. It is therefore expected that individuals in society are provided with the basic threshold for the acquisition of some talents, attributes, competencies, and primary skills that they should possess as worthy citizens of the country. Thus, contrary to these expectations, the management of Rivers State primary schools appears not to be yielding the desired result, as physical facilities are inadequate, leading to overcrowded classrooms, a shortage of teaching staff, a high rate of out-of-school children, and so on. This study is therefore hinged on investigating how the application of the social demand approach will facilitate the implementation of universal basic education programmes in primary schools in Rivers State.

Aim and Objective of the Study

The broad aim of the study is to examine the application of social demand approach in the implementation of a universal basic education programme in primary schools in Rivers State. The following specific objectives were stated to guide the study:

- i. Determine the role of social demand approach in the implementation of universal basic education in primary schools in Rivers State.
- ii. Determine the strategies to enhance the effective implementation of the social demand approach in primary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

1. What are the roles of social demand approaches in the implementation of universal basic education in primary schools in Rivers State?
2. What strategies are used to enhance the effective implementation of the social demand approach in primary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of head teachers and teachers on the role of social demand approach in the implementation of universal basic education in primary schools in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of head teachers and teachers on the strategies used to enhance effective implementation of social demand approach in primary schools in Rivers State.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was used for the study. This is because the study seeks to describe the present state of existence of what is being investigated. The target population for the study comprised all 1,368 head teachers and 8,765 teachers in the twenty-three local government areas in Rivers State. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the study sample. Firstly, stratified sampling techniques were employed to select four (4) local government areas each from the three senatorial districts of the state, for

a total of twelve (12) local government areas. In the same vein, four (4) primary schools were selected from each local government area, giving a total of forty-eight (48) primary schools.

However, five (5) teachers were randomly chosen from each school, giving a total of two hundred and forty (240) respondents. Meanwhile, in each of the sampled schools, the head teacher was chosen as a study participant, given a total sample of two hundred and eighty-eight (288) respondents. A questionnaire developed by the researcher was used for data collection. The instrument was comprised of a four-point Likert rating scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). There are two sections in the questionnaire; the first contains information on the demographic features of respondents, while the second part elicits information on the study variables.

The instrument was validated by experts in the Department of Educational Management at Rivers State University; their input and corrections were made before the final draft copy was produced and administered to respondents. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha statistics to arrive at a reliability coefficient index of 0.88 and 0.79, respectively. A total of two hundred and eighty-eight (288) questionnaires were administered to respondents with the assistance of research assistants. However, the same quantity (288) of copies were retrieved and used for statistical analysis. The research questions were analysed using mean and standard deviation, while the null hypotheses were tested using z-test statistics at the 0.05 level of significance.

Conceptual Review

The concept of the Social Demand Approach (SDA) is a method used in educational planning that sees education as not only a public social service but an inalienable right of citizens who desire it (Campbell, 2002). The social demand approach ensures that education is brought to the doorstep of every individual, regardless of tribe, economic status, religion, or cultural affiliation. The social demand approach requires managers of educational institutions to provide adequate facilities for all students who demand admission and who are qualified to enter school. As aptly observed by Gbadamosi (2005), the adoption of the social demand approach has a lot of advantages that are in line with the goals of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, in areas such as increasing the level of literacy, enhancing the quality of educational opportunities, and reducing the level of social tension among the people.

Concept of Universal Basic Education (UBE)

The desire to achieve Education for All (EFA) goals led world leaders to hold a United Nations Millennium Summit at the General Assembly on the future of their respective countries and citizens (Ibia, 2014). In Nigeria, education for all (EFA) takes the form of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme, which former President Olusegun Obasanjo introduced to the Federal Government in September 1999. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme is a creation of the Nigerian Constitution, whose goals include providing equal and adequate educational opportunities for basic education and engendering a conducive learning environment to achieve the total eradication of literacy in Nigeria. The Nigerian basic education programme consists of nine years of continuous schooling, made up of six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary school. According to Ibia (2014), the universal status suggests inclusiveness, special attention to special groups, and encouragement for the provision of facilities for early childhood care and socialisation.

Role of Social demand approach in implementing UBE programme

The adoption of social demand approach in the successful implementation of the UBE programme requires accurate demographic data, which include, total number of pupils to be provided the education, number of teachers to be trained and retrained, classroom facilities and laboratory equipment (Longe, 2003). The social demand approach relies on private demand for education and stipulated that all those that demand for education number should be given the opportunity provided that they are qualified.

The Social Demand Approach in the implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) is a concept that focuses on involving the community and its stakeholders in shaping and driving the education system. It places a strong emphasis on understanding and responding to the specific needs and desires of the society, rather than merely imposing a top-down, standardized curriculum. This approach is rooted in the belief that education should be responsive to the social, economic, and cultural context in which it operates. In this discussion, we will explore the key principles and benefits of the Social Demand Approach in UBE implementation.

One of the fundamental principles of the Social Demand Approach is community involvement. It recognizes that education is not an isolated endeavor but an integral part of society. As such, it encourages active engagement with local communities, parents, teachers, and other relevant stakeholders. By involving the community in the decision-making process, the UBE system can be tailored to meet the unique needs and challenges of the region, thereby making education more relevant and effective (Agabi, 2015).

Another critical aspect of the Social Demand Approach is flexibility. It acknowledges that communities vary in terms of their socio-economic, cultural, and geographic characteristics. Hence, it supports adaptability in the UBE system, enabling it to respond to the specific demands of different regions. For example, rural areas may have different educational needs than urban centers, and a flexible approach allows for customized solutions that cater to these differences (Ozoagu & Aka, 2020).

Addo (2019) argued that recognizes the access to quality education should be available to all, regardless of socio-economic status, gender, or other demographic factors. This approach seeks to remove barriers to education and ensure that marginalized groups have equal opportunities for learning. By addressing issues like gender disparities and providing education to vulnerable populations, it contributes to a more equitable and just society. As, it encourages cooperation between government bodies, non-governmental organizations, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders. This collaborative effort can result in more resources, better infrastructure, and a broader range of educational services, ultimately enhancing the quality of education (Ibia, 2014).

When communities are actively engaged in the education system, they are more likely to take ownership of the schools and their success. This, in turn, fosters a sense of responsibility and accountability among all stakeholders, which can lead to more effective and sustainable education programs.

Moreover, the Social Demand Approach can help to bridge the gap between formal education and the practical needs of society. By aligning education with the local job market and economic opportunities, it can lead to more relevant and practical learning experiences. This

not only equips students with the skills they need for the workforce but also contributes to the overall development of the community.

To this end, the Social Demand Approach in the implementation of Universal Basic Education is a holistic and community-centric approach that seeks to make education more responsive, adaptable, and inclusive. By involving the community, promoting flexibility, and fostering collaboration, it can lead to a more equitable and effective education system. Additionally, it can enhance ownership, accountability, and the practical relevance of education. This approach represents a significant shift away from top-down educational models and toward a system that truly serves the needs of the society it aims to educate.

Strategies for successful implementation of UBE programme through social demand approach.

One of the reasons for the failure of Universal Primary Education (UPE) is non-adoption of social demand approach strategies. Ajayi (2008) summarizes social demand strategies for the successful implementation of UBE Programme to include:

- Provision of facilities, improved funding stable education policies, supply of motivated teachers and provisions of adequate instructional materials.
- The social demand approach also requires the use of population growth rate formula and line series analysis to study past population trends and extrapolate this to the future (Fubumi, 2007). This approach becomes necessary so that estimated population of pupils can be determined at present and facilities made available.

Successful implementation of a Universal Basic Education (UBE) program through the Social Demand Approach requires a thoughtful and comprehensive strategy that prioritizes community involvement and responsiveness. This approach not only seeks to provide access to education for all but also aims to make the education system more relevant and accountable to the specific needs of the community. Below, we discuss several key strategies for the successful implementation of a UBE program through the Social Demand Approach as presented by Iyimo and Ishola (2018), Maduagwu and Nwogu (2016), Owhondah (2016), and Bello (2020).

Community Engagement and Participation: The first and foremost strategy is to actively involve the community in the planning, decision-making, and evaluation of the UBE program. This can be achieved through regular community meetings, town-hall discussions, and consultations. These interactions help in understanding the unique needs, concerns, and aspirations of the community, which can inform the curriculum and educational strategies.

Needs Assessment: Conducting a thorough needs assessment is essential to tailor the UBE program to the specific requirements of the region. By identifying what the community values and what they lack in terms of education, resources, and infrastructure, the program can be designed to meet these needs effectively.

Customization of Curriculum: The curriculum should be flexible and adaptable to the local context. It should incorporate elements that are relevant to the culture, language, and economic activities of the community. This can include integrating traditional knowledge and practices into the educational content.

Teacher Training and Capacity Building: Invest in the training and professional development of teachers. Teachers play a pivotal role in the success of any education

program. They need to be equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to implement a curriculum that is sensitive to the community's needs.

Resource Mobilization: Collaborate with various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community members, to mobilize resources for educational infrastructure, materials, and teacher support. Adequate resources are crucial for the effective functioning of schools and the delivery of quality education.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish a robust system for monitoring and evaluating the UBE program's progress. This should include regular assessments of student learning, feedback from the community, and teacher performance. This feedback loop ensures accountability and allows for necessary adjustments.

Promotion of Inclusivity: Address gender disparities and ensure that marginalized groups, including girls, children with disabilities, and minority populations, have equal access to education. This may require targeted outreach and interventions to remove barriers that hinder their participation.

Community-Based Education Management: Encourage the formation of school management committees or boards consisting of community members. These bodies can oversee the day-to-day operations of schools, ensuring that the education provided aligns with the community's vision and expectations.

Public Awareness Campaigns: Raise awareness within the community about the importance of education, the benefits of the UBE program, and the role each stakeholder plays in its success. This can help build a sense of ownership and commitment among community members.

Flexibility and Adaptability: Recognize that the UBE program may need to evolve over time as the community's needs and priorities change. Regular reviews and adjustments to the program can help keep it relevant and effective.

Advocacy and Policy Support: Work with policymakers to ensure that the UBE program is supported at the national and regional levels. Advocacy efforts can help secure the necessary legal and financial backing for the program.

However, the successful implementation of a UBE program through the Social Demand Approach hinges on genuine community involvement, responsiveness to local needs, and a commitment to inclusivity and flexibility. By adopting these strategies, education programs can become more effective, accountable, and tailored to the unique context of each community, ultimately leading to a more equitable and relevant educational experience for all.

Empirical Review

Numerous empirical studies have shown that actively involving the community in educational decision-making and management leads to a sense of ownership. For instance, a study conducted in a rural community in sub-Saharan Africa found that communities actively engaged in school management were more committed to improving school infrastructure and teacher quality. This sense of ownership contributed to higher student enrollment and better educational outcomes (Santiago, 2022).

Empirical research has demonstrated that customizing the curriculum to align with local contexts can significantly enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. A study in India, for example, found that integrating local languages and cultural elements into the curriculum improved student participation and retention rates. Students were more motivated to attend school when they could relate to the content (Shittu, Olubor & Oladimeji, 2021).

Empirical evidence suggests that the Social Demand Approach can effectively address gender disparities in education. A study in Bangladesh found that targeted community interventions, such as awareness campaigns and support for girls' education, contributed to a significant reduction in gender gaps in primary education enrollment. This underscores the approach's potential to promote inclusivity (Bello, 2020).

Research has demonstrated that mobilizing resources through community partnerships can enhance the sustainability of educational programs. A study in a rural community in Latin America showed that collaborative efforts between local organizations, the government, and community members led to the construction of better school infrastructure and increased access to quality education. Sustainability was achieved through shared responsibilities and resource pooling (Ibia, 2014).

However, Newhuma (2022), findings to a large extent emphasize the importance of flexibility and adaptability in educational programs. Case studies in various regions have shown that educational initiatives that can adjust to changing community needs and priorities tend to be more effective. For instance, a long-term study in a remote area of the Himalayas highlighted how regular assessments and adjustments to the curriculum improved the relevance of education to the community's evolving demands.

The Social Demand Approach often leads to a higher level of accountability within educational systems. Research conducted in several countries indicates that when communities actively participate in monitoring and evaluation, the quality of education tends to improve. Schools in which parents and community members were directly involved in assessing teacher performance and school management showed higher academic achievement levels (Newhuma, 2022; Iyiomomo & Ishola, 2018).

Empirical studies underscore the significance of teacher training and development within the Social Demand Approach. A study in Africa revealed that targeted teacher training programs improved instructional quality and classroom engagement, directly benefiting students' learning outcomes. Well-prepared teachers were better equipped to meet the specific needs of their students and have also explored the impact of policy support and advocacy in sustaining the Social Demand Approach. Case studies have demonstrated that successful initiatives often gain the attention of policymakers, leading to supportive policies and increased funding. These findings highlight the potential for scaling up community-driven educational programs (Newhuma, 2022; Bello, 2020; Ibia, 2014).

The empirical research on the social demand approach in educational implementation provides compelling evidence of its effectiveness. By involving communities, customizing curricula, addressing inclusivity and gender disparities, mobilizing resources, and promoting adaptability and accountability, this approach has the potential to create more relevant, equitable, and sustainable educational systems. These studies confirm that community engagement in education can lead to improved learning outcomes, increased enrollment, and a stronger sense of ownership among all stakeholders.

Results

The results of the study are presented in tables for the research questions and hypotheses.

Research question 1: what are the roles of social demand approach in the implementation of universal basic education in primary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation responses on the role of social demand approach in the implementation of UBE Programme.

S/N	Statement	Head Teachers N = 48			Teachers N=240			MEAN SET
		SUM	X	SD	SUM	X	SD	
1.	Social demand approach provides accurate demographic data for pupils enrolment.	146	3.042	1.744	686	2.858	1.690	2.945
2.	It gives appropriate estimate of the pupils' population based on the available facilities.	140	2.914	1.707	688	2.867	1.693	2.892
3.	It enhances private demand for education	128	2.667	1.633	692	2.883	1.697	2.775
4.	It provides opportunities for education for all irrespective of tribe or religion	130	2.708	1.646	689	2.746	1.657	2.732
5.	It determines the population flow of pupils	131	2.709	1.646	678	2.825	1.681	2.779
Aggregate mean set SD			2.808	1.676		2.834	1.683	

Data analysis on table 1 indicates that items 1-5 show that the respondents' mean set scores exceed the criteria mean of 2.5, which shows that the role of social demand approach in the implementation of Universal Basic Education programme are through the provision of accurate demographic data for pupils enrolment, appropriate estimation of pupils population based on available facilities and provides opportunities for education for all irrespective of race or religion.

Research Question 2: What strategies are used to enhance effective implementation of social demand approach in primary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: mean and standard deviations on the strategies used to enhance effective implementation of social demand approach.

S/N	STATEMENT	HEAD TEACHERS N = 48			TEACHERS N=240			MEAN SET
		SUM	X	SD	SUM	X	SD	
6.	Provision of adequate facilities in schools	135	2.81	1.67	684	2.83	1.68	2.82
7.	Improved educational funding	138	2.87	1.69	659	2.74	1.57	2.81
8.	Stable Educational Policies	127	2.64	1.62	681	2.83	1.68	2.74
9.	Deployment of motivated teachers	126	2.62	1.62	675	2.81	1.67	2.71
10.	Provision of adequate instructional materials.	140	2.91	1.70	667	2.77	1.66	2.84
11.	Implementation of Educational policies.	131	2.70	1.64	686	2.85	1.69	2.78
Aggregate mean set SD			2.76	1.66	2.81	1.67		

Table 2; Data analysis reveals that items 6-11 had all the mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.5, showing that respondents agreed that provision of adequate funds, facilities, instructional materials and implementation of educational policies were strategies used to enhance the implementation of social demand through Universal Basic Education programme.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of head teachers and teachers on the role of social demand approach in the implementation of universal basic education in primary schools in Rivers State.

Table 3: Z – test analysis on the role of social demand approach in the implementation of universal basic education programme.

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	Z-cal	Z- critical	Remarks
Head Teachers	48	2.808	1.676	286	0.980	1.96	Ho ₁ Accepted
Teachers	240	2.834	1.683				

Data analysis in table 3 reveals that the z- calculated value of 0.980 is less than the z – critical value of 1.96 at 286 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significant difference in the mean scores of heads teachers and teachers on the role of social demand approach in the implementation of universal basic education (UBE) in primary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis two: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of head teachers and teachers on the strategies used to enhance effective implementation of social demand approach in primary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4: z–test analysis on the strategies used to enhance effective implementation of social demand approach.

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	Z-cal	Z- critical	Remarks
Head Teacher	48	2.765	1.663	246	0.987	1.96	Ho ₂ Accepted
Teachers	240	2.811	1.676				

Table 4 data analysis shows that z-calculated value of 0.987 is less than the z_critical value 1.96 at 246 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, indicating that the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of strategies used for effective implementation of social demand approach in primary schools in Rivers State.

Discussion of results

As a result of data analysis the following findings became evident, the research question one and hypothesis one findings reveals that the role of social demand approach in the implementation of universal basic education (UBE) programme in primary school were in the areas of the provision of accurate demographic data for pupils enrolment, appropriate estimate of the pupils population based on available facilities and provision of opportunities for all learners to go to school in spite of tribal or religious background.

This findings is in line with Longe (2003), and Gbadamosi (2008) who opened that the adoption of social demand approach is in line with the goals of universal basic education programme in areas such as increasing the literacy level and enhancing quality education delivery also through social demand approach accurate demographic data are collected for pupils enrolment.

Research question two and hypothesis two, findings shows that the strategies used for effective implementation of social demand approach in primary schools are provision of adequate funds, facilities, instructional materials and stable educational policies, the null hypothesis was accepted, meaning that there is no significance between the mean scores of head teachers and teachers on the strategies used to enhance effective implementation of social demand approach in primary schools in Rivers State. This finding was supported by Ajayi (2008), who stated that the successful implementation of social demand approach adequate facilities, funds and will motivated teachers should be provided in primary schools.

Conclusion

Education continuous to occupy a central position in the development process of any nation, hence all hands must be on deck to achieve high literacy level. This study concludes that social demand approach plays a vital role in facilitating the implementation of universal basic education (UBE) programme in primary schools in Rivers State, through the provision of accurate demographic data and carrying out appropriate estimate of the population of pupils based on available facilities. The study also reveals that the provision of adequate funds, facilities and instructional materials were strategies used to implement social demand approach at the primary schools in Rivers State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Government at all levels should come together and allocate a substantial proportion of funds to the basic education sector to enhance effective implementation of social demand approach.
2. Appropriate policy measures should be put in place, to ensure proper implementation of social demand approach in basic education schools.
3. School leadership should enforce the guiding principles of social demand approach to enhance effective implementation of universal basic education programme.

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