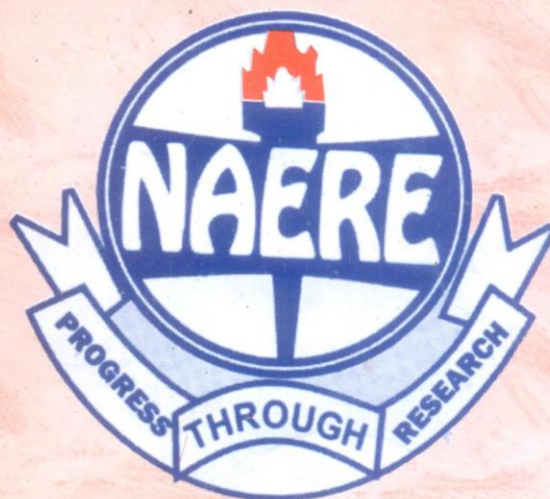


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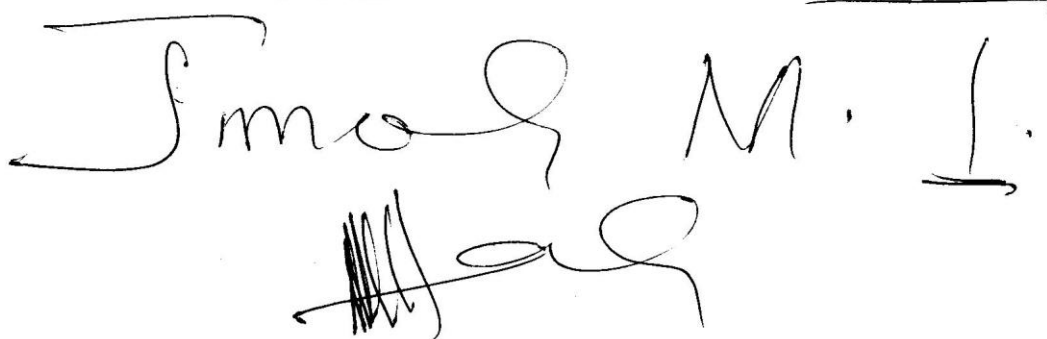
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Assessment in the Nigerian Education System and the Transformation Agenda: The Need for Change.....	1-8
Professor Abubakar Hamman-Tukur	
Evaluation of the Interactive Relationship of Curriculum and Public Examinations at the Upper Primary School Level in Nigeria.....	9-18
Obinne A. D. E (Mrs), Aduloju, M. O. (Mrs), & Christiana I. Agi (Mrs)	
Re-conceptualization of Education Benchmarks and Standards: The Starting Point for School Reform.....	19-25
Dr. Mayowa O. Ogunjimi, Dr. Henry O. Owolabi & Sheu, Adaramaja Lukman	
Teachers' Awareness of Life Skills in Universal Basic Education (UBE) schools in Kwara State, Nigeria	26-35
Jimoh, Mohammed Idris Olatunji, Dorcas Sola Balogun, Abdurasaq Olatunji	
Vocational and Functional Education for Graduate Employability: Advocacy for an Integrated Approach through Community Resources.....	36-46
Dr. Otunla, Adekunle Olusola	
Developing and Validation of Economic Attitude Scale Using Exploratory Factor Analysis.....	47-64
Ogbebor, U. Charity.and UBA, Ekpo. James	
Attitude of Students and Lecturers Towards Blended Learning in Colleges of Education in Southwestern Nigeria.....	65-74
Olayiwola, I.O. Olayiwolasola; Omoteso, B.A	
Capacity Building Needs of Primary School Teachers in the Management of School Farm for Effective Teaching of Agriculture in Enugu State, Nigeria.....	75-82
Alaribe, M. O., Kelly_M A, Onipede, O. And Olaitan, S. O.	

An Empirical Verification of Sato's Modified Caution Index Analysing Response Pattern: Applications in Validating Educational Tests.....	83-94
Dr.(Mrs.) M. E. Umobong; Dr.(Mrs.) I. M. Akubuiro And Dr.(Mrs.) A. D. E. Obinne	
Job Entry Requirements and Graduate Employability Using Ekiti State as a Case Study.....	95-106
Ibidiran, O. V. and Olaojo S. O.	
Maintaining Standards in the Training of Secondary School Teachers for Proper Students' Evaluation.....	107-114
Ajuonuma Juliet O.	
Competency Improvement Needs Of Lecturers Of Agricultural Education In Maintenance Of Equipment In Universities In South-eastern Nigeria For Production of Employable Graduates.....	115-124
F.O Ifeanyieze; A. Iheji & E. C. Ishiwu	
Relevance Of Employability Skills To Nigerian University Graduates....	125-134
Dr. Leah Olubunmi Oni	
Functional Education Through Provision of Quality Textbooks and Libraries in Nigerian Primary Schools.....	135-145
Fagbola, Bolanle Oluyemisi	
Issues And The Revision Of Nine (9) Year Basic Education Curriculum In Nigeria. Implications For Graduate Employability.....	146-153
Dr. Stanley I. Ikoro	
The Taxonomy Of Functionality Of Tertiary Education For Graduate Employability In Nigeria.....	154-166
Ojebiyi Olufemi Adesola And Fasakin Lawson Sunday	
Relevance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as An Integral Tool for Entrepreneurship Education.....	167-174
Dr Emmanuel E. Inyiagu	
Students' Evaluation of Teachers' Teaching Effectiveness in Senior Secondary Schools in Ile-Ife.....	175-184
Elizabeth Ozofu Ogedanba	

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Teachers' Awareness of Life Skills in Universal Basic Education (UBE) schools in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

If the country is to achieve objectives of the National Policy on Education in the modern world, then literacy, numeracy and life skills in particular in Universal Basic Education must be assessed. The main purpose of this study is to assess the level of teachers' awareness of life skills on the implementation Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Kwara State, Nigeria. Three research questions and three hypotheses were raised, answered and tested respectively at level of significance 0.05. The research type adopted was a descriptive survey type. The population for this study consisted of the entire teachers of primary schools in Nigeria while the target populations were the teachers of primary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. Stratified and proportional random samplings techniques were used to select respondents on the basis of senatorial districts. A total of 1086 teachers formed the sampled size. The researcher used a self-developed questionnaire titled "Teachers' Awareness on Life Skills" (TALS) to elicit information from the respondents (Teachers). The validity of the questionnaire was ascertained using face and content validity approaches while split half method of reliability was used and obtained 0.725 coefficient. All the three hypotheses tested were rejected which implied that primary schools teachers had low level of awareness of life skills on the implementation Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Kwara State, Nigeria based on teachers' gender, senatorial districts and their cadres. It could be concluded that proper attention was not given to life skills as in literacy and numeracy. It could also be concluded that there is under utilization of child centre approach in the existing structures in various schools that could assist in the realization of life skills. One of the recommendations put forward was that more focused life skills education in line with UBE objectives could be established and Ministry of Education could set up its supervisory roles on the process and progress of life skills education in schools.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria like any other countries around the world has over the years sought to improve its education system by introducing reforms and making plans based on the education needs of the country. The Nigerian government introduced the Universal Basic Education (UBE) as an educational programme in 1999 in conformity with the Education For All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Emechebe, 20012). This programme (UBE) came as a replacement of Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) is broader in scope than Universal Primary Education (UPE). The former programme focused only on the educational opportunities to primary school age children while the UBE stresses the inclusion of day care, nursery and kindergarten children, girls and women, youth and adults, pastoral nomad, migrant fishermen's children, refugees, school dropout, children from under privileged homes such as the poor, street and hawking children, rural and remote population and disabled.

The broad aim of UBE is to give solid foundation to all the above mentioned categories of learners through the inculcation of appropriate life-long learning experiences. One of the six EFA goals articulated in the Dakar 2000 conference communiqué included improving quality of all aspect of education in order to ensure desirable learning outcomes as emphasized in the targets of UBE. That, UBE is for all categories of learners so as to acquire literacy, numeracy, manipulative communication and essentially life skills which helps in laying solid foundation for life-long learning experiences and to become a useful member of the society (Ojoqwu, 2009).

The introduction of life skills into Nigerian educational system is via UBE which came against the backdrop that the previous educational system (UPE) focused mainly on such skills like cognitive skills and vocational skills. However, different countries of the world have defined life skills differently depending on their educational needs. According to World Health Organization (1997) life skills could be defined as the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individual to deal effectively with the demand and challenges of everyday life. Life skills are a group of psycho-social and interpersonal skills which could assist an individual to become a valuable member of the society in which he or she belongs. Skills that could be said to be life skills according to World Health Organization (1997) are innumerable. It is suggested that there are core set of skills that are at heart of skilled-based and could be used to promote well-being of children and adolescent. These includes decision making, problem solving, communicate effectively, think critically and creatively, cope with stress and emotion, have empathy and self-awareness (World Health Organization, 1997).

Life skills can generally be applied to various aspect of life. For example, if properly managed, it can serve as effective way of preventing school dropout and violent free among young people and can lay a solid foundation for skills demanded in today's job market. Life skills acquisition can influence the way an individual feel about

him/her self. It can equally influence the way we are perceived

The basic aim of schooling is to have a desirable change in behaviour as a result of learning experiences through logical and systematic ways of exposing the learners to skills, tasks, concepts and principles. For any learner to achieve this desirable change in behaviours, teachers in the class room have crucial roles to play towards the successful delivery of UBE programmes, life skills inclusive. For any educational programme to be well implemented, teachers are the foundations and wheels upon which an educational programme is moved or rotated so as to sustained national development. This collaborate the National Policy on Education (2004) which observed that no nation's education is above the education of her teachers. However, If the country is genuinely interested in achieving the goal contained in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) to make citizen function effectively in the modern world, then literacy, numeracy and life skills in UBE must be assessed. This has become even more necessary in the view of the fact that the first set of JSS beneficiaries graduated in June 2011. It is expected that by September 2014, the cohort of pupils that benefitted from the use of UBE at the primary school level will be entering class one of the Junior Secondary School. This study therefore, assesses teachers' level of awareness on the implementation of life skills as a means of successful delivery of UBE programme in Kwara State, Nigeria. The main purpose of this study is to assess the level of awareness of teachers in basic schools on the implementation of life skills as a means of successful delivery of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Kwara State, Nigeria.

METHOD

The research design adopted is a descriptive survey type. It gave a clear picture. situations and allowed assessment of opinions of primary school teachers on awareness of life skills in UBE schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. The population for this study consisted of the entire teachers of primary schools in Nigeria while the target populations were the teachers of primary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. As at the time of this report, records available at the Kwara State Universal Basic Education Board, Ilorin 2013 shows that there are 339 public primary schools in Kwara Central Senatorial District (KWCS D), 653 in Kwara North Senatorial District (KNSD) and 457 in Kwara South Senatorial District (KSSD) making a total of 1449.

Based on the stratification, these schools were given identification or code numbers KCSD001 to KCSD0339, KNSD001 to KNSD653 and KSSD001 to WSD457 respectively. These identification numbers were written on pieces of papers, wrapped and put in a container, out which proportionally 25% of them were picked through dip hat method. The code numbers (KCSD001 to KCSD0339) of the first category (Kwara Central Senatorial District) were put in a container, wrapped and mix together. Eighty-five (85) pieces of papers were then randomly picked. The same procedures were carried out to other two categories (Kwara North and South Senatorial Districts). Therefore, 163 and 114 schools were then sampled in North and South Senatorial

Districts respectively. Thus, a total of 362 schools were used for this study. In each of the schools selected, one head teacher and two teachers in 2012/2013 academic session making a total of 1086 teachers formed the sampled size for this study and responded the questionnaire prepared,

The researcher used a self-developed questionnaire titled "Teachers' Awareness on Life Skills" (TALS) to elicit information from the respondents (Teachers). However, this consisted of two sections (A and B). Section A contained six items of demographic characteristics (Gender, Districts, Status, Educational qualification and teaching experience) of the respondents. Section B contained seven statements that addressed the objectives of this study. However, there is no "right" or "wrong" answer. The only correct responses are those that are true for you.

The validity of the questionnaire was ascertained using face and content validity approach. This approach was used to determine the extent to which the statements in the questionnaire correspond with the focus of this study (research objectives). The reliability of the questionnaire was established by employing split half reliability method. To do this, the questionnaire was administered to 20 teachers in primary schools, Kogi State who were not be part of the final respondents of this study. The data collected were collated on statistical coding sheets and subjected to split half reliability estimate and 0. 725 coefficient was obtained.

RESULTS

Responses of the respondents were scored according to the format of each section on statistical coding sheets. Descriptive statistic inform of percentage was used to describe demographic characteristics of the respondents and answered all the research questions raised. Three research hypotheses were postulated and tested using Chi-Square (X^2) inferential statistic at level of significance 0.05 with the use of SPSS 20.0 package Window version.

Research Question 1: What is the level of teachers' awareness on the implementation of life skills in UBE schools in Kwara State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Level Teachers' Awareness of Life Skills in UBE Programme in Kwara State, Nigeria

Awareness of Life Skills	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	885	81.5
High	201	18.5
Total	1086	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 2 indicates that out of 1086 respondents sampled, 885 (81.5%) heard low level of awareness while the rest 201 (18.5%) heard high level of awareness. This implies that teachers' level of awareness on the implementation of life skills in UBE schools in Kwara State, Nigeria is very low. Field observations shows that serious attentions were not given to life skills by their employer (Government-Ministry of Education)

Research Question 2: What components of life skills do you promote often in your school?

Table 3: Components of Life Skills do you Promote often in your School

Components	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Decision making	122	11.2
Creative thinking	229	21.1
Critical thinking	97	8.9
Effective communication	430	39.6
Coping with emotion	41	3.8
Coping with stress	58	5.3
Problem solving	45	4.1
Empathy	39	3.6
Self esteem	25	2.3
Total	1086	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 3 showed that out of nine components of life skills identified, effective communication with 430 (39.9%) is the most prominent in all the schools sampled, followed by creative thinking 229 (21.1%), decision making 122 (11.2%). Others skills followed in different proportions. Reactions from the teachers indicated that most of these skills were already embedded under the school co-curriculum activities; hence ability to communicate effectively which is one of the goals of primary education as pointed by the National Policy of Education 2004 is being achieved.

Research Question 3: How did you promote life skills in your schools?

Table 4: Ways of Life Skills are promoted in the schools

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
talks on the assembly	489	45.0
during class lesson	85	7.8
in the school club and society	158	14.5
inviting guest or resource person	42	3.9
through the school prefects	135	12.4
through the duty masters	177	16.3
Total	1086	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 4 indicated that out of six ways by which life skills are promoted in schools, talks on the assembly carried 45.0%, followed through the duty masters and mistresses with 16.3%, it is followed by 14.5% and through the school prefects. The study established that assembly talks were the major means of teachers used to promote life skills. Field survey shows that most of these activities are already in existence in the school but are not tagged life skills and the degree of their usage or application varies from one school to another.

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of teachers in the implementation of life skills in UBE schools in Kwara State, Nigeria on the basis of gender.

Teachers' Awareness of Life Skills in Universal Basic Education (UBE) schools in Kwara State, Nigeria

Table 5: Difference in the Level of Awareness of Teachers in the Implementation of Life Skills in UBE Schools in Kwara State, Nigeria on the Basis of Gender

Gender	Counts	Level of awareness of live skills		Total	df	Cal. X^2	Sig.	Decision
		Low	High					
Male	Observed	515	79	394	1	0.975	0.323	NS
	Expected	321.1	72.9	394.0				
Female	Observed	570	122	692				
	Expected	563.9	128.1	692.0				
Total	Observed	885	201	1086				
	Expected	885.0	201.0	1086.0				

Critical Level of Sig. = 0.05

Table 5 showed that the calculated X^2 -value is 0.975 with 0.323 calculated level of significance computed at critical level of significance. Since the calculated level of significance is greater than the critical level of significance, hypothesis one is accepted. This implies that no significant difference existed in the level of awareness of teachers in the implementation of life skills in UBE schools in Kwara State, Nigeria on the basis of gender. Field observations revealed that much emphases were laid on cognitive (Literacy and numeracy) expense of other school co-curriculum, believing that pupils that are able to read and write will certainly be able manage his/her life for him/her self effectively. This could also be attributed to inadequate teachers' interest and knowledge in the life skills.

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of teachers in the implementation of life skills in UBE schools in Kwara State, Nigeria on the basis of Senatorial district.

Table 6: Difference in the Level of Awareness of Teachers in the Implementation of Life Skills in UBE Schools in Kwara State, Nigeria on the Basis of Senatorial Districts

Districts	Counts	Level of awareness of live skills		Total	df	Cal. X^2	Sig.	Decision
		Low	High					
Kwara Central	Observed	210	45	255	2	5.376	0.068	NS
	Expected	198.4	56.6	255.0				
Kwara North	Observed	357	101	458				
	Expected	356.4	101.6	458.0				
Kwara South	Observed	278	95	373				
	Expected	290.2	82.8	373.0				
Total	Observed	845	241	1086				
	Expected	845.0	241.0	1086.0				

Critical Level of Sig.= 0.05

Table 6 showed that the calculated X^2 -value is 5.376 with 0.068 calculated level of significance computed at critical level of significance. Since the calculated level of significance is greater than the critical level of significance, hypothesis two is accepted. This implies that no significant difference existed in the level of awareness of teachers in the implementation of life skills in UBE schools in Kwara State, Nigeria on the basis of senatorial districts. This is attributable to little attention given to it at the expense of literacy and numeracy, hence inadequate publicity is given to it by the government. This could also be attributed to no provision for life skills programmes in the school activities.

HO₃: There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of head teachers, and class room teachers in the implementation of life skills in UBE schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Teachers' Awareness of Life Skills in Universal Basic Education (UBE) schools in Kwara State, Nigeria

Table 7: Difference in the Level of Awareness of Head Teachers and Class room Teachers in the Implementation of Life Skills in UBE Schools in Kwara State, Nigeria

Teachers' Cadre	Counts	Level of awareness of live skills		Total	df	Cal. X^2	Sig.	Decision
		Low	High					
Head Teachers	Observed	299	63	362	1	0.440	0.507	NS
	Expected	295.0	67.0	362.0				
Teachers	Observed	586	138	724				
	Expected	590.0	134.0	724.0				
Total	Observed	885	201	1086				
	Expected	885.0	201.1	1086.				

Critical Level of Sig. = 0.05

Table 7 showed that the calculated X^2 -value is 0.0440 with 0.507 calculated level of significance computed at critical level of significance. Since the calculated level of significance is greater than the critical level of significance, hypothesis three is accepted. This implies that no significant difference existed in the level of awareness of head teachers and teachers in the implementation of life skills in UBE schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. This could also be attributed to un-care attitude of head teachers on the life skills.

Conclusion

Based on the data collected, analyzed, interpreted and discussed, it could be concluded that head teachers and teachers were not aware of life skills, despite their significant roles in the implementation of UBE programme. Inadequate attention was not given by the Government to life skills as in literacy and numeracy. It could also be concluded that there is under utilization of child centre approach in the existing structures that could assist in the realization of life skills, therefore, there is need to bridge the gap.

Recommendations

From the preceding discussions and conclusion reached, the following recommendations were put forward;

1. Academic subjects should be balanced with extra-curricular activities which involve the use of structures like school clubs and societies and religion organization within the school system should be maximally used through regular meetings, practices and competitions both within and between the

- schools could be organized that are child centre that could promote life skills.
2. A more focused life skills education in line with UBE objectives could be established and Ministry of Education could set up its supervisory roles on the process and progress of life skills education in schools.
3. Life skills programmes could be integrated into class teaching-learning process and be examined like other school subjects.
4. Workshops, conferences, seminars and refresher courses for teachers should be organized by the Government because they are the wheels upon which educational objectives are attained.
5. There is need to prepare and distribute training manual on life skills as it was done to literacy and numeracy textbooks and materials distributed to schools. Copies of these could be stocked into the school library.
6. Posting or recruitment of specially trained personnel to schools or training of school counselors to handle this programme.

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