

**ARABIC AND ISLAMIC STUDIES TEACHERS' PERCEIVED PROBLEMS
ASSOCIATED WITH THE ATTAINMENT OF THE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION
GOALS IN NORTH-CENTRAL, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This paper examined the Arabic and Islamic Studies Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived factors militating against the attainment of the UBE goals in North central, Nigeria. The population for the study was all the UBE teachers in North-central, Nigeria. Accidental sampling technique was used to select nine hundred and twenty-four teachers teaching Arabic and Islamic Studies in the central. The researchers adopted descriptive survey research type while structure questionnaire with 18 question items was used to collect data from the respondents. The instrument was validated by three experts and yielded a coefficient of 0.75 when subjected to a test-retest reliability procedure. The percentage was used to answer research question one, t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to tested hypotheses postulated at 0.05 alpha level. The study revealed that poor condition of service of the UBE teachers, poor and uncondusive teaching-learning environment for the implementation of the UBE curriculum, inadequacy of educational facilities, inadequate funding and mismanagement of the little fund available were among the factors militating against the attainment of the UBE goals. Also, the respondents' gender, qualifications and teaching experience did not influence their perceptions significantly. Therefore, it was concluded that the UBE curriculum implementation process requires urgent attention to redress the problems so as to achieve the set UBE goals.

Keyword: Universal Primary Education, Universal Basic Education, Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers, Perceived problems, North-central

Introduction

Universal Basic Education scheme occupies a significant place in the Nigerian Educational policy. The scheme is aimed at ensuring that all Nigerian children have access to free and fundamental basic education that will make life easier for them and brighten the Nigeria future. However, in recent time, it has been observed that, the Universal Basic Education curriculum implementation process requires urgent redress owing to factors constituting barriers for the attainment of the scheme set goals. Child Right Act (CRA) evolved because of the realization of the world that children require special care as well as legal protection before and after birth. The evolvement of this Act however, took place at the international level at the end of the First World War in 1924. Nigeria as a nation, gave this act recognition by passing it into law in 2003 (Adamu, 2004). A very important aspect of this Act that is of concern to this paper is the child right to education. For children to be given this right, Universal Primary Education (UPE) constitutes one of the educational policies that had been adopted by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Historically, the beginning of this programme can be traced back to the Western region in 1955. In this historic year, people began to enrol their children in the UPE schools till the year 1960 when the schools witnessed a very huge number of pupils. Within this period, the number of pupils enrolled was up to the 90% of the children of primary school age living in the region. In the Eastern region, the UPE scheme started in 1957, but experienced certain problems which could not make it to stay long. Regarding the Northern region, the scheme was not being operated at all, due to the fact that all the northern primary schools were financed with the public funds. This was the situation of the scheme in Nigeria, before the formation of the then Nigerian regions into twelve states in 1967 (Fafunwa 1974). It was later introduced across the country in 1976 with the aim of providing free and qualitative educational opportunities for the Nigerian children of school age to be useful not only for themselves but also for the nation (Gedions & Sorkaa cited in Anaduaka & Okafor, 2013). The implication of this is that if all school age children were properly educated, the life of these will be better not only for themselves but also for the whole nation.

It is noteworthy that the UPE scheme explained above could be continued owing to some challenges that bedevilled it. According to Fafunwa (1986) the scheme's existence ceased due to lack of fund, improper planning and implementation among others. According to Ogunsanmi and Ibimiluyi (2004) and Edho (2009), the collapse of the scheme was attributed to lack of accurate data on children that the scheme ought to consider for planning; inadequacy of teachers, lack of proper provision for their welfare; inadequate funding; poor supervision of personnel and management of the available resources. In order to address these challenges and to achieve the goals of the Education For All (EFA) and that of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which set 2015 for all children of primary school age to be given free and accessible primary education, the Universal Basic Education is now introduced (Ogunsanmi & Ibimiluyi, 2004 & Joy, Michael, Nkiruka & Ikwumelu, 2013). It should be noted that it is the former Universal Primary Education (UPE) that was now restructured in 1999 by the then President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Olusegun Obasanjo to be Universal Basic Education (UBE); which is, among other components, to now cover the junior secondary school (Oyelade, 2004).

Adewole (2000) defined UBE as a process whereby fundamental knowledge that will be useful to all categories of the Nigerians is passed from one generation to another. The main components of the programme have been analytically observed to be three namely: Universal, Basic and Education. The term 'universal' suggests that the scheme is meant for every category of Nigerian citizens irrespective of race, social, economic, religious and educational background.

The 'basic' implies the essence of acquiring fundamental or primary knowledge on which other forms of knowledge can be built in the future while the word 'education' connotes a life-long process of acquiring knowledge, skill and attitude that are capable of making the Nigerian citizens useful to themselves and to their society at large. Moreover, Fabunmi (2004) sees UBE as early child, pre-primary, primary and junior secondary education aimed at providing basic functional literacy or skills for every Nigerian. The researchers concluded that, UBE is a compulsory and free education system that provides every Nigerian, irrespective of age or diverse backgrounds with easy access to fundamental skills, knowledge and attitude necessary for both individual and national development.

The aims of the scheme are to, among others eradicate illiteracy, ignorance, poverty and to enhance the Nigerian educational system. Though the UBE bill was signed into law in 2004, its implementation commenced in 2000/2001 school year (Okugbe 2009 cited in Ogunsanmi & Ibimiluyi, 2014). To achieve the above aims, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) enacted a law in 2004, stipulating that all the states and local governments, as a binding responsibility, shall provide free, compulsory and universal basic education for children of primary school age (education for all 2015 National Review). Supporting this statement, the National Policy on Education (2013) states that basic education to be provided by the Nigerian government shall be free, compulsory, universal and qualitative. It enumerated the objectives of the scheme thus:

Reducing the incidence of drop-out from formal school system, through improved relevance quality and efficiency; provision of free, universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school age; ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy and numeracy, communicative and life skills, ethical, rural, social and civic values needed for the solid foundation for life-long learning;

As noted earlier, the UBE evolved to address the problems faced by the UPE and to expand its scope to cater for the primary school children up to JSS 3. Greater attention on the teacher training programme, provision of enough educational facilities, especially school buildings; and to include adult literacy, citizenship, religious and moral education programmes in the new UBE scheme (Ogunsanmi & Ibimiluyi, 2014). Incidentally, there have been many empirical and theoretical research findings on the problems inhibiting the success of UBE in Nigeria. For instance, Eddy and Akpan (2009) found that poor planning is one of the major obstacles hindering the successful implementation of UBE in Akwa Ibom State Nigerian. Moreover, they added that majority of their respondents agreed that inadequate funding, inadequate number of teachers coupled with their sub-standard, poor implementation and population explosion constituted other major challenges towards the prospect of UBE in Akwa Ibom State. Poor funding seems to be a common challenge of UBE as earlier observed by various researchers.

Similarly, Joy, Michael, Nkiruka and Ikwumelu (2013) observed that achieving the objective of making the UBE free was being hindered by the levies charged by some of the stakeholders of the scheme, such as UBE board, Ministry of Education. They noted further that the objective of making the scheme universal was not being achieved either due to that, the scheme, as it is being implemented failed to cater for the needs of the adults and other special needs' people in the society, it also focuses more on the formal system of education neglecting some informal learning situations. This therefore, implies that, for the scheme to be universal, it has to involve all the categories of people in the society who require basic education for survival,

and also take care of all the teaching learning situations. Furthermore, infrastructure, personnel and most especially inadequacy of fund were the major problems blocking the achievement of the scheme goals. Mvendaga (2014) found that there was adequate number of teachers, but no provision for training and re-training workshop for the teachers to update their teaching skills. Also, another challenge found in the study was the gross inadequacy of facilities which also lack quality in public and private schools in Birnin Kebbi Local Government Area. However, higher percentage of infrastructure was recorded for private schools than public schools.

Other challenges as viewed by Amoge, 2016 include: governments' attitude, political will towards UBE implementation, poverty, literacy level of parents, poor infrastructure, and inadequate teachers and last but not the least corruption. Moreso, the levied money being collected in many UBE schools making children who are of poor economic background to be out of school. Olumode (2010) cited in Amoge (2016) discovered that there was a grossly low number of classrooms/schools; seats, to the extent that pupils sit on bare floor, lack of good chalkboards and good health facilities. This has an implication for effective teaching-learning delivery, because availability of conducive learning environment tends to enhance attainment of instructional objectives.

The implication of the above is that there are some indispensable facilities that need to be put in place if the UBE scheme in Nigeria is to succeed. These facilities include among others, as suggested by Ogunsanmi and Ibimiyi (2004) establishing corporate and collaboration with individuals, private organisations, government in and outside the country, provision of enough funds for procuring teaching-learning facilities and for Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' salary.

Statement of the Problem

It was observed that good educational policies are usually formulated in Nigeria, but a number of problems are encountered in the course of implementation, thereby blocking the attainment of the policies set goals. This might be the reason behind the inconstancies in the attainment of Universal Basic Education goals based on the peoples' assumption that Nigeria fails to put in place proper implementation of policy to succeed. For instance, the UPE policy as good as it is bedevilled with poor implementation of the blueprint, which resultantly made it collapsed and replaced with UBE programme. Similarly, a number of problems seem to be facing the attainment of the UBE goals in North-central Nigeria as observed by the present researchers, it seems some things have gone wrong somewhere. Researchers have worked on Universal Basic Education in Nigeria, for instance, Otaru, (2015) worked on the role of teachers in the implementation of the revised 9-years basic education curriculum on Religion and National values in Nigeria. Obiunu (2011) examined teachers' perception of the UBE programme as an educational reform policy. The present researchers observed that despite all efforts put in place by the government at all levels, the goals of UBE has not been attained. There is need for empirical studies to confirm or refute the assertion Therefore, this paper examined Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of UBE goals in North-central Nigeria. This is the vacuum in research part which this study filled.

The purpose of the study was to examine:
the Universal Basic Education Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE gaols in North-central, Nigeria;

the significant difference in Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals in North-central based on gender;
the significant difference in Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals in North-central based on qualification;
the significant difference in Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals in North-central based on teaching experience.

Research Questions

The following question was answered in the course of the study:

1. What are the UBE Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals in North-central, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study:

- H0₁:** There is no significant difference in Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals in North-central based on gender.
- H0₂:** There is no significant difference in Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals based on qualification.
- H0₃:** There is no significant difference in Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals based on teaching experience.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research type was adopted in carrying out this research. The population for the study includes all the UBE teachers in North-central, Nigeria, while the target population was all Basic One to Basic Six Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers in the central. Nine hundred and twenty-four (924) teachers teaching Arabic and Islamic Studies were sampled across the public schools where both Arabic and Islamic studies are offered as a school subject in the central using accidental sampling technique. Researchers designed structure questionnaire of 18 item questions was used for data collection from the respondents entitled "Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals in North-central, Nigeria". The instrument was validated by three experts in Measurement and Evaluation unit of Department of Social Sciences Education Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, test re-test method was employed and subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) and yielded 0.75 using a Cronbach alpha method. The data collected were analysed using the percentage to answer the research question, t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the corresponding hypotheses postulated all at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Research Question: What are the UBE Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals in North-central, Nigeria?

Participants' responses on the factors militating against effective implementation of the UBE Curriculum were subjected to percentage analysis. Given that the questionnaire items were structured in a four-response-type (Strongly Agree; Agree; Disagree; and Strongly Disagree),

such items that were either strongly agreed or agreed were categorized as “Agreed” while such items that were either disagreed or strongly disagreed were summed up as “Disagreed. Thus, the statistics of the respondents were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Percentage Analysis Showing Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers’ Perceived Problems Associated with the Attainment of the UBE Goals in North-central, Nigeria

N	Statement	Agreed (%)	Disagreed (%)	Total (%)	Rank	Remark
1	Unavailability and inadequacy of educational facilities and resources in UBE schools	761 (82.4%)	163(17.6%)	924 (100%)	4 th	Perceived
2	Poor maintenance of the existing educational facilities and resources	683 (74.0%)	241(26.0%)	924 (100%)	7 th	Perceived
3	Inadequate funding and mismanagement of fund allocated for the attainment of UBE goals	736 (79.7%)	188(20.3%)	924 (100%)	5 th	Perceived
4	Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers’ laziness in conducting periodic and progressive continuous assessment for pupils and students in UBE schools	371 (40.2%)	553(59.8%)	924 (100%)	15 th	Not Perceived
5	Dominance of unqualified teachers (implementers) in the UBE school system	629 (68.1%)	295(31.9%)	924 (100%)	12 th	Perceived
6	Lack/inadequacy of teachers in the areas of science, technical and vocational subjects that were included in UBE curriculum	794 (86.0%)	130(14.0%)	924 (100%)	3 rd	Perceived
7	Non-equitable distribution of the recommended textbooks and other learning materials across all the UBE schools	668 (72.3%)	256(27.7%)	924 (100%)	9 th	Perceived
8	Inability of UBE teachers to integrate new teaching methods and techniques for the implementation of the new curriculum	389 (42.1%)	535(57.9%)	924 (100%)	14 th	Not Perceived
9	Poor and uncondusive teaching environment for the implementation of UBE curriculum	819 (88.7%)	105(11.3%)	924 (100%)	2 nd	Perceived
10	Lack of quality control such as supervision, monitoring, inspection, motivation and evaluation of the UBE programme and its implementers	622 (67.4%)	302(32.6%)	924 (100%)	13 th	Perceived
11	Inadequate Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers’ on-the-job training and development for the attainment of UBE goals	726 (78.6%)	198 (21.4%)	924 (100%)	6 th	Perceived
12	Poor condition of service of the UBE teachers	829 (89.8%)	95 (10.2%)	924 (100%)	1 st	Perceived

13	Insufficiency of managerial skill and competency on the part of the head teachers of the UBE schools	637 (69.0%)	287 (31.0%)	924 (100%)	11 th	Perceived
14	Non-proper orientation of teachers about the goals of the new UBE curriculum and ways they could be smoothly attained.	672 (72.8%)	252 (27.2%)	924 (100%)	8 th	Perceived
15	UBE pupils/students' home factors such as parental inability to provide adequate academic aids and support to their wards given their family size, structure, socio-economic and educational status	298 (32.3%)	626 (67.7%)	924 (100%)	16	Not Perceived
16	Government's (via Ministry of Education) reluctance to organise seminar and conference for UBE Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' training for successful implementation of the UBE curriculum	645 (69.9%)	279 (30.1%)	924 (100%)	10 th	Perceived
17	Lackadaisical attitudes and interest of teachers to embark on further studies for higher teaching qualification(s)	255 (27.6%)	669 (72.4%)	924 (100%)	17 th	Not Perceived
18	Students' negative attitudes from disarticulation of J.S.S from S.S.S.	189(80.5%)	735 (79.5%)	924 (100%)	18 th	Not Perceived

As shown in Table 1, ranked 1st 2nd, 3rd up to 13th were the items that were agreed by the majority of the respondents as the problem associated with the attainment of the UBE goals. This implies that poor condition of service of the UBE teachers, poor and uncondusive teaching environment for the implementation of UBE curriculum, inadequate funding and mismanagement of fund allocated for the attainment of UBE curriculum, unavailability and inadequacy of educational facilities and resources in UBE schools, inadequate funding and mismanagement of fund allocated for the attainment of UBE goals; inadequate Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' on-the-job training and development for the attainment of UBE goals; poor maintenance of the existing educational facilities and resources; non-proper orientation of teachers about the goals of the new UBE curriculum and ways they could be smoothly attained.

Moreso, non-equitable distribution of the recommended textbooks and other learning materials across all the UBE schools government's (via Ministry of Education) reluctance to organise seminar and conference for UBE Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' training for successful implementation of the UBE curriculum; insufficiency of managerial skill and competency on the part of the head teachers of the UBE schools; dominance of unqualified teachers (implementers) in the UBE school system and lack of quality control such as supervision, monitoring, inspection, motivation and evaluation of the UBE programme and its implementers are factors militating against effective implementation of the UBE curriculum as perceived by teachers in North-central.

However, ranked 14th15th up to 18th were items whose majority of the respondents disagreed with. This implies that inability of UBE teachers to integrate new teaching methods and techniques for the implementation of the new curriculum; Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers'

laziness in conducting periodic and progressive continuous assessment for pupils and students in UBE schools; UBE pupils/students' home factors such as parental inability to provide adequate academic aids and support to their wards given their family size, structure, socio-economic and educational status; lackadaisical attitudes and interest of teachers to embark on further studies for higher teaching qualification(s) and students' negative attitudes from disarticulation of J.S.S from S.S.S. are not factors militating against effective implementation of the UBE curriculum as perceived by the teachers in North-central.

Hypotheses

Hypotheses postulated for this study were tested using the independent t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 significance level.

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant difference in Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals in North-central based on gender.*

Table 2: t-test Statistics Showing the Difference in Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' Perceived Problems Associated with the Attainment of the UBE Goals in North-central Based on Gender

Gender	No	Mean	S.D.	df	t-value	Sig	Remark
Male	81	14.264	2.665	922	1.66	0.09	NS
Female	69	13.661	3.312				

*Insignificance at $p > 0.05$

Table 2 shows that the cal. t-value is 1.656 obtained with a p-value of 0.09 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.09 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals in North-central based on gender ($t_{(922)} = 1.66, p > 0.05$).

Hypothesis Two: *There is no significant difference in Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals based on qualification.*

Table 3: ANOVA Summary of the Difference in Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' Perceived Problems Associated with the Attainment of the UBE Goals in North-central Based on Qualifications

Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	121.248	3	40.416			
Within Groups	16584.344	920	18.026	2.242	0.063	NS
Total	16705.592	923				

*Insignificance at $p > 0.05$

Table 3 shows that the F-value is 2.242 obtained with a p-value of 0.063 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.063 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals in North-central based on qualifications ($t_{(3, 920)} = 2.242, p > 0.05$).

Hypothesis Three: *There is no significant difference in Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals based on teaching experience*

Table 4: ANOVA Summary of the Difference in Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' Perceived Problems Associated with the Attainment of the UBE Goals in North-central Based on Teaching Experience

Variable	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	132.645	2	66.322			
Within Groups	24856.465	921	26.988	2.457	0.062	NS
Total	8329.110	923				

$p > 0.05$

As shown in table 4, the F-value is 2.457 obtained with a p-value of 0.062. computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.062 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis three is not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' perceived problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals in North-central based teaching experience ($t_{(2, 921)} = 2.457, p > 0.05$).

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study showed that part of the major obstacles hindering the achievement of the UBE goals as perceived by majority of Arabic and Islamic Studies UBE teachers in North-central, are: poor condition of service of the UBE teachers, poor and uncondusive teaching environment for the implementation of UBE curriculum, inadequacy of teachers in the areas of science, technical and vocational subjects in the UBE curriculum, unavailability and inadequacy of educational facilities and resources in the UBE schools, inadequate funding and mismanagement of the little fund allocated for the attainment of the UBE goals, inadequate Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' on-the-job training and development for the attainment of the UBE goals. The finding is corroborated with Oturu (2015) and Obiunu (2011) in their individual studies found that teachers encountered problems in the implementation of the UBE goals in Nigeria.

Moreso, poor maintenance of the existing educational facilities and resources, non-proper orientation of teachers about the goals of the new UBE curriculum and how they could be smoothly attained, non-equitable distribution of the recommended textbooks and other learning materials across the UBE schools, government's reluctance to organise seminar and conference for the UBE Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' training for the successful implementation of the UBE curriculum, insufficiency of the managerial skill and competency on the part of the head

teachers of the UBE schools, dominance of unqualified teachers, and the least problem ranked 13th is lack of adequate quality control such as supervision, monitoring, inspection, motivation and evaluation of the UBE programme and its implementers. The reasons behind the obstacles might be due to the insincerity in the part of the government by not fulfilling the promises made in the area of human capacity development and provision of relevant teaching resources. The finding also align with Otaru (2015) and Obiunu (2011) who found that there is no adequate and proper monitoring strategy to ensure maximum results and adequate instructional resources and equipped libraries are not provided.

Incidentally, it should be noted that, it is one task to develop a good curriculum and it is another to ensure effective process required in the implementation of the curriculum to achieve its aims. Based on this statement, the above findings imply that the UBE curriculum is accurate. It can further be interpreted that Nigerian Government, through the Ministry of Education exerted the required amount of effort to have a well-designed UBE curriculum, but such considerable effort was not directed to the process of implementing the curriculum, and when this is the case, the success of any curriculum will be a mirage.

Furthermore, poor condition of service of the UBE teachers as found in this study might be because of substandard of UBE teachers coupled with their inadequacy as noted by Eddy and Akpan (2009) and Otaru (2015) which they said are among the challenges facing UBE in Akwa Ibom State and Nigeria. The findings also in support the findings of Mvendaga (2014) and Amoge (2016) who respectively stated that inadequacy of infrastructural facilities and classroom, seats, chalkboard, are among the problems facing UBE scheme. Inadequate funding or its mismanagement corroborates the findings of Eddy and Akpan (2009), Micheal, Nkiruka, and Ikwumelu (2013) and Amoge (2016) who all asserted that inadequate funding and mismanagement of the little provided are obstacles to achieving UBE goals. This is very crucial to redress, because success of any curriculum is significantly determined, among other factors, by availability of adequate funding and its judicious management. Similarly, problems of inadequate teachers on-the-job training and lack of orientation for the teachers on how to achieve UBE goal are in line with the statement of Mvendaga (2014) that no provision to update UBE Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' skills. As for the problems of poor maintenance of existing teaching facilities and non-equitable distribution of some materials, the finding support those of Ogunsanmi and Ibimiluyi (2004) and Edho (2009) who observed that UBE collapsed because of poor management of the resources provided. Failure of government to organise seminars for the teachers also agrees with Amoge (2016) who stated that poor government attitude towards UBE implementation is a major challenge. Unqualified teachers in the UBE schools and lack of quality supervision, motivation and evaluation of the UBE scheme are respectively supported by Eddy and Akpan (2009), Ibimuluyi (2004) and Edho (2009) who respectively highlighted sub-standard of teachers and poor supervision as challenges of the scheme.

With respect to the hypothesis 1, the study revealed that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of both male and female Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers of UBE regarding the problem associated with the attainment of UBE goals in North-central. This, in other words, means that to a large extent, they perceived the UBE problems the same manner. The findings align with the findings of Amadi (2010) and Adebayo (2010) who, among others, found that there is no gender difference in the academic performance of students. This finding, however, disagrees with the assertion of Larsen –Freeman & long (1991) who found that females are better than males in both first and second language acquisition. The findings negate that of Musa and

Abdullahi (2008) who found that there was a significant difference in the performance of male and female students and teachers. However, the implication of this finding is that gender has no effect on the perceptions of the respondents.

As for the hypothesis 2, the study found that based on Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' qualifications no significant difference existed in the perceptions of the teachers on the problem associated with the attainment of UBE goals. This also implies that the respondents' qualifications have no effect on the teachers' perceptions on the problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals. The findings negate Abdullahi (2011) who found that qualified teachers had higher attitude score than the unqualified teachers.

Finally, findings three showed that, based on teachers' experience there is no significant difference in the perceptions of the Arabic and Islamic Studies on the problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals in North-central Nigeria. This implied that teaching experience did not influence the respondents' perceptions. This is not in line with Abdullahi (2011) who reported that teachers' experience has significance difference on the use of instructional materials in the teaching of Arabic Language. Also, Adedoyin (1998), and Ojo (2007). They found that experienced teachers improve their students' achievements through effective teaching with the instructional resources.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that there are a number of problems associated with the attainment of the UBE goals in North-central Nigeria which need to be addressed urgently so as to achieve the aims of the scheme. These challenges include, among others poor condition of service of the UBE teachers, poor and uncondusive teaching-learning environment for the implementation of the UBE curriculum, unavailability and inadequacy of educational facilities, inadequate funding and mismanagement of the fund made available, dominance of unqualified teachers, lack of workshop to upgrade Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' skill etc. Also, it was revealed that Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers' gender, qualifications and teaching experience did not influence the respondents' perceptions on the factors militating the attainment of the UBE goals in North-central; in other words no significant difference was found in their perceptions. Finally, based on the above findings, it can be concluded that not the UBE scheme itself that is faulty, but rather the implementation process. Therefore, to address the problems the following recommendations are made.

Recommendations

1. There is the need for the provision of more fund which also needs to be monitored so that it would be channelled to the right direction
2. More teachers should be employed based on teaching qualifications, and the existing teachers should be given opportunity to update their teaching skills through seminar, workshop or in-service training.
3. There is the need for the Federal Government to pay the UBE teachers at the right time and ensure that they are well paid
4. There is the need for the Federal Government also to make provision for adequate educational facilities and set up a team for periodic inspection of the facilities.
5. There is the need for the Federal Government to pay greater attention to the UBE curriculum implementation process.

6. All the UBE stakeholders, such as teachers, school managers, parents, individuals etc. should ensure that all hands are on deck to achieve the aims of the UBE scheme.

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