

Free and Compulsory Education Policy and Primary Education Development in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria (2016–2023)

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Abstract

Although education is critical to the development of any country, as the bedrock for transformation, over the years, this sector has seemed to have been neglected and has become unaffordable to the majority of ordinary citizens. It is on this note that this study investigated the impact of the free and compulsory education policy on the development of primary education in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, between 2016 and 2023. The study was anchored on the policy implementation theory. The research adopted a descriptive survey design and drew a sample of 400 respondents from a population of 2,333,039 using the Taro Yamane formula. Data collected via structured questionnaires were analysed using simple percentages and the Chi-Square statistical tool. Findings revealed that the policy significantly increased pupils' enrollment, improved academic performance, and enhanced school completion rates. However, challenges such as uneven implementation, infrastructural gaps, and a lack of adequate teachers hindered optimal outcomes. The study, therefore, recommended that the infrastructural gap should be filled for optimal outcomes as well as the recruitment of more teachers to enhance pedagogical training, community sensitisation, and targeted support systems to improve the effectiveness of the policy.

Keywords: Free and compulsory education policy, primary education, school enrollment, academic performance, completion rate.

Introduction

Education plays a pivotal role in the social, economic, and intellectual development of individuals and nations. It is universally regarded as a key instrument for human capital development and a foundation for sustainable national growth (Atakpa & Akpan, 2022). Recognising this, the Federal Government of Nigeria, in its 1981 National Policy on Education, declared education as an “instrument par excellence” for effective national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981). In line with this vision, the Universal Basic Education (UBEC) programme was launched in 1999 to provide free, compulsory, and universal access to nine years of basic education for all Nigerian children (Ukpe, 2020).

Akwa Ibom State, in support of this national agenda, adopted a free and compulsory education policy in 2007. The policy aimed to eliminate financial and socio-cultural barriers to education by providing tuition-free schooling, textbooks, uniforms, and learning materials to pupils from primary to senior secondary levels. Subventions were also allocated per pupil to public schools to facilitate operational costs.

Despite this ambitious initiative, the state has continued to face persistent challenges in its primary education sector. While there has been a notable increase in enrollment figures, disparities remain in the quality of learning and retention. Many pupils, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds, still struggle with poor academic performance, often exacerbated by overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching materials, and the recruitment of unqualified teachers. Moreover, completion rates remain a concern, as factors such as poverty, child labour, parental apathy, and infrastructural deficiencies contribute to high dropout rates.

These challenges point to a gap between policy intent and educational outcomes. The increase in access to education has not consistently translated into improved learning achievements or sustainable school attendance. In many public primary schools across Akwa Ibom State, the quality of instruction and the learning environment remain suboptimal, raising questions about the effectiveness of the policy in fulfilling its core objectives.

It is within this context that this study seeks to assess the actual impact of the free and compulsory education policy on the development of primary education in Akwa Ibom State between 2016 and 2023. Specifically, the study examines how the policy has influenced pupils' enrollment, academic performance, and completion rates. The goal is to provide evidence-based insights that can inform policy improvements and strengthen the delivery of basic education in the state.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to assess the impact of the free and compulsory education policy on the development of primary education in Akwa Ibom State from 2016 to 2023. The specific objectives include:

1. To determine the extent to which the free and compulsory education policy has helped increase pupils' enrollment in primary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
2. To examine how free and compulsory education policy has contributed to academic performance in primary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
3. To assess the extent to which free and compulsory education policy has influenced school completion rates of pupils in the primary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were raised to guide the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the free and compulsory education policy and increased school enrollment in primary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the free and compulsory education policy and academic performance in primary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between the free and compulsory education policy and pupils' rate of completion in primary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Literature Review

Free and Compulsory Education in Nigeria

Education is an instrument for national development and social change, vital for the promotion of a progressive and united nation. Based on the Nigerian philosophy of education, education is compulsory and a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender, social status, religion, ethnic background and any peculiar individual challenges (Nneji, 2021). Policies and strategies

intended to reform the entire system to provide not only access, but also to improve the quality of education and widen participation have been adopted by the government, among which are the provision of vocational training schools for adults, nomadic education and the provision of basic education for children to encourage the Nigerian traditional schooling system.

Traditional schooling in the context of this research is the conventional primary and secondary education offered in Nigeria. Basic Education, according to the Nigeria National Policy on Education, is the education given to children aged 0-15 years. It encompasses the Early Childhood Education (0-4) and 10 years of formal schooling. Free and compulsory education in Nigeria has its roots in various policy initiatives and legislative actions. One of the earliest steps towards this goal was the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy introduced in 1976. The UPE policy aimed to provide free and compulsory education for children at the primary level. However, the successful implementation of UPE faced various challenges, including inadequate funding and infrastructural limitations (Nwanna, 2014).

Subsequently, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in 1999. The UBE Act prescribed nine years of basic education, that is, six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education, free and compulsory for all children. The programme was launched to address the shortcomings of the UPE policy and to provide a more comprehensive and sustainable framework for free and compulsory education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Adequate funding is crucial for the success of free and compulsory education. However, the education sector in Nigeria often struggles with insufficient budgetary allocations, which can lead to inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers, and insufficient learning materials (Okonkwo & Ekong, 2017). Many schools in Nigeria lack proper infrastructure, like classrooms, libraries, and sanitary facilities. Additionally, the quality of education can vary widely between urban and rural areas, with urban schools generally having better facilities and more qualified teachers (Babalola, 2015).

In some parts of Nigeria, particularly in the Northern regions, security concerns, including the threat of terrorism and kidnapping, have affected school attendance and access to education. These security challenges can be significant barriers to the implementation of compulsory education (USAID, 2020). In some areas, cultural norms and societal attitudes can discourage the education of girls, leading to gender disparities in enrollment and attendance. Cultural beliefs, early marriages, and child labour can hinder children's access to education (Okonkwo & Ekong, 2017). The policy has contributed to increased enrollment in schools, particularly at the primary level. It has helped reduce the financial barriers that prevented many children from accessing education.

Free and compulsory education has promoted gender parity by encouraging the enrollment of girls in schools, which is essential for achieving gender equality in education. The policy has improved literacy rates by making education accessible to a broader population, resulting in a more educated workforce. Free and compulsory education is instrumental in developing human capital, enabling individuals to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to the country's economic and social development. Education is a key tool for breaking the cycle of poverty. By providing free education, Nigeria can empower its citizens to escape poverty and achieve a better quality of life (FGN, 1981).

For purposes of policy coordination and monitoring, the Federal Government instituted a Universal Basic Education (UBE) with the objectives of developing entire citizenry, reducing the incidence of drop-outs from formal school system, ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communicative and life skills, as well as the ethical, moral, security and civic values needed for the laying of a solid foundation for life-long learning, among other objectives. The major elements and structure of the Nigerian UBE as stipulated by the National Policy indicate that Basic Education provided by the Government

shall be free, compulsory, universal and qualitative, comprising 1 year of Kindergarten, 6 years of Primary, and 3 years of Junior Secondary Education. The implementation of Basic Education subsumed the Nigerian traditional schooling system, with reforms in school structure and the curriculum to meet work and self-reliance demands. The element of it being 'free and compulsory' conveys the 'Free Traditional Schooling' in Nigeria, which is a major consideration in this discourse (Akpabio & Sammy 2014).

The free and compulsory education policy in Nigeria has led to the establishment of State Universal Basic Education Offices for the administration of the programme. Such establishments have been mandated to manage material and human resources for the effective running of Basic Education Institutions in Nigeria. The free and compulsory basic education of Nigeria's traditional schooling system has led to an increased participation of pupils in the system across the nation. However, issues of quality and effectiveness of the programme has long bordered researchers and administrators. Increased enrolment rates might be piling pressure on existing facilities if the land and infrastructural facilities, learning equipment, and human resources are not increasing commensurately. Consequently, according to Ubong & Akpan (2022), learning and instructional environments and/or situations would deteriorate, and thus, the much-expected increased academic performances and skills development would be impaired.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Policy Implementation Theory, propounded by Pressman & Wildavsky (1973). The theory emphasises the processes, actors, and contextual factors that determine whether a public policy is effectively translated from design into practice. It argues that the success of a policy depends not only on its formulation but also on clear objectives, adequate resources, effective communication, stakeholder engagement, and institutional capacity. Implementation theorists maintain that even well-designed policies may fail if these conditions are weak or undermined by political and administrative challenges (Okonkwo & Ekong, 2017).

The relevance of the theory to this study lies in its ability to explain why the free and compulsory education policy in Akwa Ibom State does not automatically guarantee improved outcomes. Increases in school enrolment, better academic performance, and higher completion rates depend on how effectively the policy is executed in practice. This includes removing cost barriers, sensitising communities, improving school infrastructure, recruiting and supporting teachers, and sustaining monitoring mechanisms. By applying the policy implementation theory, the study assesses not just the declaration of free and compulsory education but also the extent to which its implementation has translated into real improvements in enrolment, learning, and retention at the primary school level.

Methodology

This study employed the survey research design, which is considered appropriate for investigations that require collecting data directly from individuals to understand attitudes, perceptions, or behaviours regarding a phenomenon. The study employed both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected through self-administered questionnaires, while secondary data were sourced from relevant literature, official government records, journal articles, websites, and reports. The data gathered from the administration of the questionnaire were tabulated and analysed using simple percentage and chi-square analysis techniques for the test of the hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance.

The population of the study comprised pupils and teachers in public primary schools across Akwa Ibom State, as well as staff of the Local Education Authorities (LEAs), totalling 2,333,039 individuals (Akwa Ibom State Universal Basic Education Board, 2023). To ensure

a manageable and representative subset of this large population, the Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the appropriate sample size. This technique enabled the selection of a statistically significant sample for generalising the findings to the broader population. The resulting sample was purposefully distributed among the key stakeholder groups to ensure that Relevant insights could be drawn from multiple perspectives. Using the Taro Yamane formula, 400 respondents were arrived at.

Free and Compulsory Education Policy in Akwa Ibom State

In 2009, Akwa Ibom State, under the leadership of Governor Godswill Akpabio, launched a free and compulsory education policy, extending from primary to senior secondary school level. This policy aimed at addressing the issue of illiteracy rate in the State, developing human capital, improving social and economic empowerment and poverty alleviation in making education accessible to all Akwa Ibom residents. This was enshrined in the Child Rights Law in 2008, which provided for free and compulsory education, abolished PTA levies, introduced subventions to schools, and established sanctions for parents or children who failed to comply (Akwa Ibom State Child Rights Law, 2008; ICIR, 2022; Akwa Ibom State Government, 2025).

Free and Compulsory Education Policy and Pupil Enrollment

Enrollment is the first indicator of access and inclusivity in education systems. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004, which underpins free and compulsory education in Nigeria, mandates basic education for all children and prohibits the charging of fees in public schools (FGN, 2004)

UNESCO (2015) notes that despite tuition-free policies, hidden costs such as uniforms, transportation, and learning materials can still limit attendance. Moreover, USAID (2020) points out that community-level factors like lack of awareness, insecurity, and gender norms continue to affect enrollment in some parts of Nigeria.

Table I: School Enrollment in Akwa Ibom State

Before the Free and Compulsory Education Policy		During the Free and Compulsory Education Policy	
School Session	Percentage Report%	School Session	Percentage Report%
1998/1999	47	2016/2017	60
1999/2000	43	2017/2018	63
2000/2001	41	2018/2019	65
2001/2002	40	2019/2020	67
2002/2003	38	2020/2021	69
2003/2004	36	2021/2022	71
2004/2005	34	2022/2023	73
2005/2006	30	2023/2024	75

Source: Researcher's Compilation from PRS, SUBEB (2025).

The Table indicates a downward trend in school enrolment before the introduction of the Free and Compulsory Education Policy, with enrolment declining from 47% in the 1998/1999 session to 30% in 2005/2006. In contrast, following the implementation of the policy, enrolment rates demonstrated a steady upward trajectory, increasing from 60% in 2016/2017 to 75% in 2023/2024. These findings suggest that the Free and Compulsory Education Policy

significantly contributed to improving school participation rates and reversing the earlier pattern of decline.

Free and Compulsory Education Policy and Academic Performance

According to Okonkwo & Ekong (2017), improvements in academic performance place pressure on existing infrastructure, leading to overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching aids, and strained teacher capacity.

Table II: Academic Performance of Pupils in Akwa Ibom State

Before the Free and Compulsory Education Policy		During the Free and Compulsory Education Policy	
School Session	Percentage Report%	School Session	Percentage Report%
1998/1999	42	2016/2017	51
1999/2000	39	2017/2018	53
2000/2001	38	2018/2019	55
2001/2002	36	2019/2020	56
2002/2003	34	2020/2021	60
2003/2004	33	2021/2022	63
2004/2005	32	2022/2023	65
2005/2006	31	2023/2024	70

Source: Researcher's Compilation from PRS, SUBEB (2025)

The data in Table II reveal that students' academic performance was relatively low before the implementation of the Free and Compulsory Education Policy, declining from 42% in 1998/1999 to 31% in 2005/2006. However, during the policy period, performance showed a marked improvement, rising steadily from 51% in 2016/2017 to 70% in 2023/2024. This trend indicates that the policy not only enhanced school enrolment but also positively influenced students' academic achievement over time.

Free and Compulsory Education Policy and Pupil Completion Rates

Ensuring that pupils not only enrol but also complete primary education is critical to the long-term success of any education policy. Completion rates reflect the stability and sustainability of the learning system. UNESCO (2015) highlights that while enrollment has improved across Nigeria, many pupils do not transit to or complete the final stages of basic education. In Akwa Ibom State, the policy has enhanced completion rate as the issues of withdrawal and absenteeism are addressed, while the issue of conflicting communities is cautioned with punishment meted and inadequate provision of facilities is improved (Akpabio & Sammy, 2014). While Okonkwo & Ekong (2017) suggest that with the involvement of a task force for proper enforcement of parents/guardians on child labour, the policy would continue to enhance more successes on the part of completion rate in primary schools across the state.

Table III: Pupils' Rate of Completion

Before the Free and Compulsory Education Policy		During the Free and Compulsory Education Policy	
School Session	Percentage Report%	School Session	Percentage Report%
1998/1999	49	2016/2017	53
1999/2000	47	2017/2018	56
2000/2001	44	2018/2019	57
2001/2002	40	2019/2020	59
2002/2003	38	2020/2021	61
2003/2004	35	2021/2022	64
2004/2005	33	2022/2023	68
2005/2006	32	2023/2024	71

Source: Researcher's Compilation from PRS, SUBEB (2025).

Table III shows that pupils' rate of completion declined before the free and compulsory education policy, dropping from 49% in 1998/1999 to 32% in 2005/2006. In contrast, completion rates improved steadily during the policy period, increasing from 53% in 2016/2017 to 71% in 2023/2024. This suggests that the policy had a positive effect on ensuring more pupils not only enrolled in school but also completed their education.

Test of Hypotheses

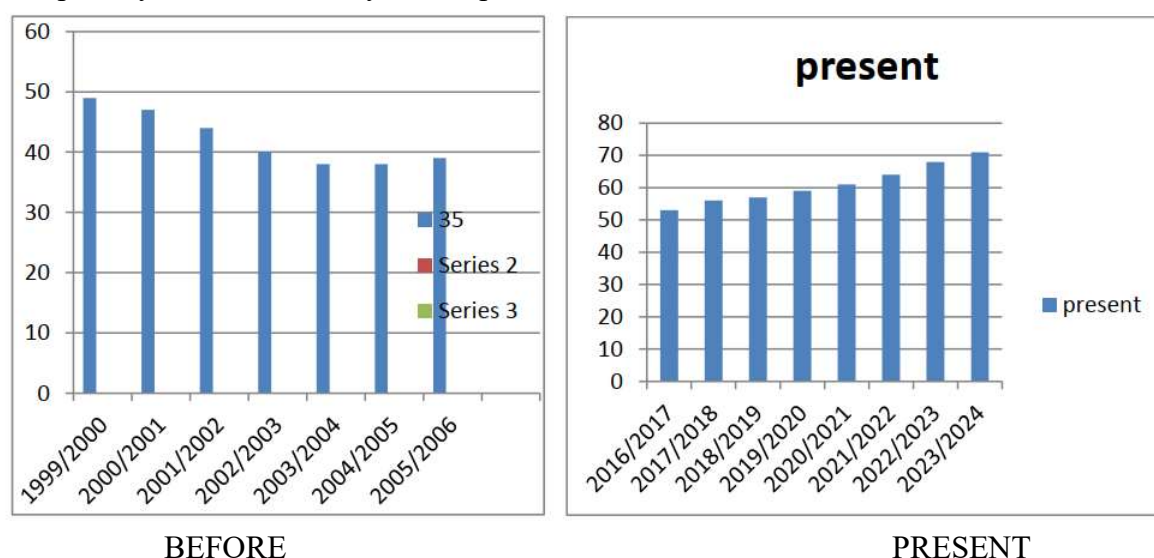
H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between the free and compulsory education policy and increased school enrollment in primary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 1: Showing whether the free and compulsory education policy increases or decreases school enrollment in primary schools in Akwa Ibom State

OPTIONS	Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	$\frac{(Fo-Fe)^2}{Fe}$
Strongly Agreed	105	30	75	5625	187.5
Agreed	95	27.1	67.9	4610.41	170.12
Undecided	60	17.2	42.8	1831.84	106.5
Disagreed	60	17.2	42.8	1831.84	106.5
Strongly Disagreed	30	8.5	21.5	462.25	54.38
Σ	350				625

Comparing the test statistic with critical value χ^2

χ^2 calculated = 625 > χ^2 table value of 5.99

Fig. I: Graphical Representation of School Enrollment Before and During the Free and Compulsory Education Policy and Implementation

Source: PRS SUBEB Researchers' computation

Decision

Findings from secondary sources suggest that the policy has played a vital role in improving access to education, especially among disadvantaged groups. Data from the study revealed that 57.1% of respondents agreed that the policy led to a significant increase in enrollment. Additionally, 55.7% acknowledged that the provision of free textbooks and learning materials played a key role in encouraging enrollment, especially among pupils from low-income families.

This is corroborated by the hypothesis test in Table 1, where the calculated Chi-square value ($X^2 = 625$) far exceeds the critical value ($X^2 \text{ table} = 5.99$), indicating a statistically significant relationship between the free and compulsory education policy and increased enrollment. Therefore, **Hypothesis 1 (H_{01})** is rejected.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the free and compulsory education policy and academic performance in primary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

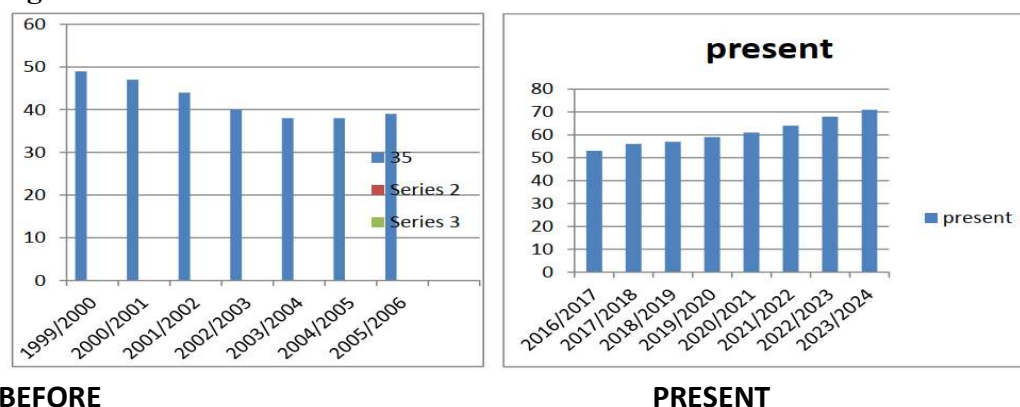
Table 2: Showing how free and compulsory education policy enhances academic performance or not in primary schools in Akwa Ibom State

OPTIONS	Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	$\frac{(Fo-Fe)^2}{Fe}$
Strongly Agreed	90	25.7	64.3	4134.39	160.87
Agreed	85	24.3	60.7	3684.39	151.62
Undecided	60	17.2	42.8	1831.84	106.5
Disagreed	75	21.4	53.6	2872.96	134.26
Strongly Disagreed	40	11.4	28.6	817.96	71.75
Σ	350				625

Comparing the test statistically with the critical value x^2
 x^2 calculated = 625 > x^2 table value of 5.99

Graphical Representation of Academic Performance Before and During the Free and Compulsory Education Policy and Implementation.

Fig. 2



Source: PRS SUBEB Researchers' computation

Decision

Supporting data show that 48.5% of respondents agreed that the policy led to a reduction in grade repetition and school dropouts. Furthermore, 55.7% affirmed that pupils' academic performance in core subjects such as mathematics, science, and language improved as a result of the policy.

The statistical analysis in Table 2 reveals a calculated Chi-square value of $X^2 = 625$, which surpasses the critical table value of 5.99. This supports the conclusion that there is a significant relationship between the free and compulsory education policy and academic performance. Thus, Hypothesis 2 (H_{02}) is also rejected.

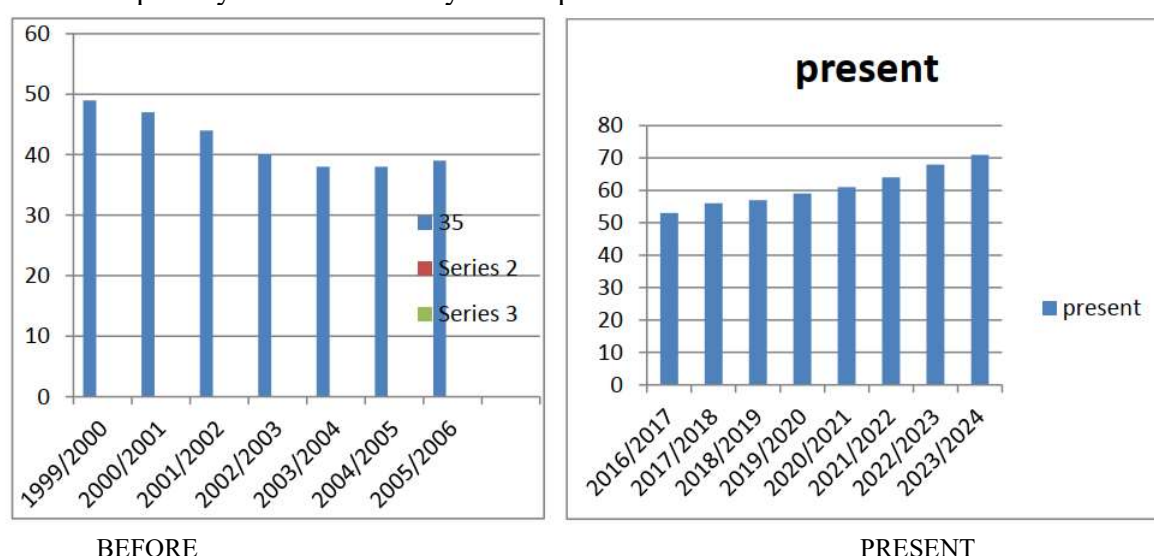
H_{03} : There is no significant relationship between the free and compulsory education policy and pupils' rate of completion in primary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 3: Showing whether the free and compulsory education policy increases or decreases pupils' rate of completion in primary schools in Akwa Ibom State

OPTIONS	Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	$\frac{(Fo-Fe)^2}{Fe}$
Strongly Agreed	105	30	75	5625	187.5
Agreed	95	27.1	67.9	4610.41	170.12
Undecided	60	17.2	42.8	1831.84	106.5
Disagreed	60	17.2	42.8	1831.84	106.5
Strongly Disagreed	30	8.5	21.5	462.25	54.38
Σ	350				625

Comparing the test statistic with the critical value x^2
 X^2 calculated = 625 > x^2 table value of 5.99

Fig. 3: Graphical Representation of Pupils' Rate of Completion Before and During the Free and Compulsory Education Policy and Implementation.



Source: PRS SUBEB Researchers' computation

Decision

Survey data revealed that 57.1% of respondents agreed that the policy increased school completion, while 48.5% confirmed that it facilitated the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school. These responses suggest that the policy has helped reduce dropout rates by lessening the financial burden on families and improving pupils' motivation to complete their education.

The result in Table 3 indicates a calculated Chi-square value of $X^2 = 625$, exceeding the critical value of 5.99. This statistically supports a significant relationship between the policy and increased completion rates, leading to the rejection of Hypothesis 3

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis examined whether the free and compulsory education policy has significantly increased pupil enrollment in primary schools in Akwa Ibom State between 2016 and 2023. The Chi-Square analysis in Table 1 yielded a calculated value of 625, which far exceeds the critical value of 5.99, confirming a statistically significant relationship between the policy and school enrollment. As a result, the null hypothesis (H_{01}), which states that there is no significant relationship between the free and compulsory education policy and increased school enrollment in primary schools in Akwa Ibom State, was rejected.

These findings are consistent with the study of Ubong & Kabambwe. (2023), who observed that the implementation of the free education policy in Akwa Ibom State led to marked improvements in access and government investment in education. Supporting documentation from the Planning, Research, and Statistics Department of the Akwa Ibom State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) Table I, and graphical representation in Figure 1 revealed a downward trend in school enrollment between 1998/1999 – 2005 – 2006 indicating “before” the introduction of the policy whereas between 2016/2017 – 2023/2024 demonstrate a notable increase in school enrollment during the policy era with overall average of 61.13%

Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis investigated the relationship between the free and compulsory education policy and the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools. As shown in Table.2,

the Chi-Square value of 625 again exceeds the critical threshold of 5.99, confirming a significant relationship. The null hypothesis (H_{02}) that the policy does not enhance academic performance is thus rejected.

These results align with findings by Haambuloo (2018), who argued that free education policies improve academic performance and raise educational standards. Background information from SUBEB Table II and graphical representation in Figure 2 below illustrate a decline in academic performance from 198/1999 – 2005/2006 before the introduction of the policy while from 2016/2017 – 2023/2024 overall average of 62.63% which corroborates that there have been measurable improvements in academic outcomes, suggesting that the removal of financial barriers, along with improved access to instructional materials has had a positive effect on learning.

Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis assessed whether the policy has influenced the rate of school completion among primary school pupils. Table 3 presents a Chi-Square value of 625, which again exceeds the critical value of 5.99, indicating a statistically significant effect. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) that the policy does not affect school completion rates is rejected.

This finding echoes the assertion of Okoroma (2006), who reported a 70% increase in completion rates following the introduction of similar education policies. Additionally, records from SUBEB in Table III and graphical representation in Figure 3 show a downward trend between 1998/1999 – 2005/2006 before the introduction of the policy with overall average of 45.25% whereas 2016/2017 – 2023/2024 which indicate a significant growth in school completion rates since the policy's implementation with overall average of 62.16% highlighting its positive long-term impact.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of the free and compulsory education policy on the development of primary education in Akwa Ibom State between 2016 and 2023. The research focused on three key indicators of primary school development: pupil enrollment, academic performance, and completion rate. These elements served as the basis for evaluating the relationship between the policy and the progress of public primary education in the state. The free and compulsory education policy was conceptualised as a government initiative to provide basic education at no cost to pupils, while mandating school attendance for all children of school age as stipulated by law.

Based on the research findings, the study concludes that the free and compulsory education policy has contributed significantly to the development of primary education in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the policy has significantly enhanced pupil enrollment, particularly among children from low-income families, by eliminating tuition fees and reducing other financial barriers. It has had a positive impact on academic performance, as evidenced by improved results in core subjects and reductions in grade repetition and dropout rates, though challenges such as teacher quality and resource gaps persist. The policy has increased pupil completion rates, with more pupils progressing from enrollment to graduation, supported by interventions such as free materials and feeding programs. In all, while the policy has made commendable progress in expanding access to education and improving educational outcomes, continued attention to implementation quality, infrastructure development, and teacher training will be necessary to sustain and deepen these gains.

Recommendations

In light of these findings, the following recommendations are made to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the free and compulsory education policy in Akwa Ibom State:

1. Since the policy has increased school enrollment, state and local governments should ensure its continuity by providing adequate building and classroom infrastructures for schools and also intensify community-based awareness campaigns to educate parents and guardians on the importance of enrolling and retaining their children in school. Local education authorities should collaborate with community leaders and civil society organisations to enforce school attendance laws, especially in rural and underserved areas.
2. To improve academic performance, the state and local governments should invest more in the timely provision of textbooks, instructional materials, and digital learning tools. Schools should also benefit from periodic academic assessments and remedial programs to support struggling learners.
3. The Ministry of Education should adopt strategic interventions aimed at reducing dropout rates. These may include school counselling services, monitoring systems for pupil attendance and progress, and conditional incentives (e.g., scholarships or meal programs) that encourage pupils to remain in school until completion of the primary cycle.

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