

IMPACT OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION POLICY ON THE LEVEL OF PUPILS DROP-OUT IN PLATEAU AND NASARAWA STATES, NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

This study looked at how the introduction of the Universal Basic Education program affected the number of students who dropped out in Plateau and Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The research uses a descriptive survey design and Plateau and Nasarawa states were chosen as case study. The states were divided into local government areas using a stratified manner. Thirty (30) schools and six (6) UBE offices were chosen at random from six (6) local governments in each of the two States; finally, purposive sampling was employed to pick five (5) teachers from each of the 30 schools and five (5) respondents from each of the six UBE offices. A total of 180 people (teachers and UBE employees) were surveyed. The respondents were polled using a closed-ended questionnaire. To address the study's research questions, inferential statistics of means and standard deviation were used. With the use of SPSS, regression and correlation analyses were done to evaluate the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings demonstrate that UBE policies are at a high average stage of implementation in Plateau and Nasarawa State, Nigeria, with a mean score of 3.75, while pupil drop-out is at a low average stage, with a mean score of 2.45, due to UBE policy implementation. With a 0.000 level of significance, the hypothesis shows that the implementation of the UBE policy has a significant impact on pupil dropout in Plateau and Nasarawa State, Nigeria. More funding, better teacher welfare schemes, restructuring of professional but qualified teachers into the scheme, increased community participation in UBE policy implementation, and greater improvement in structures and infrastructural facilities for easier learning and better teacher performance were all recommended in the study.

Keywords: North-Central, Implementation, Policy, Dropout, Education

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Introduction

Education is concerned with the transmission of values such as skills, knowledge, and well planned programs and activities that can help learners reach their full potential for personal and national growth (Anadulia & Okafor, cited in Uyag, Ojong-Ejoh & Ejeje, 2017). It is critical to underline that the value of education cannot be overstated. It allows people to gain knowledge, skills, wisdom, and characteristics that are beneficial to both human and national growth.

According to Magdalene, Peter, and David (2016), education is the process through which ignorance is eradicated, productivity and leadership abilities are learned, and it is the key to the world's future technological growth. On this point, many government and international players are pushing many youngsters, particularly those from the poorest countries, to attend school in order to ensure a bright future for themselves (Salih & Jamil, 2015).

Human and societal progress are built on the foundation of basic education. It is the foundation for all subsequent levels of education and a prerequisite for national growth and development. Despite the importance of education development, Nigeria appears to be slipping behind, with alarming numbers of children who are not in school. Nigeria is commonly acknowledged to have the world's biggest number of out-of-school children.

This dreadful scenario necessitates a slew of new programs and policies to close the gap in school enrollment and retention, particularly in Northern Nigeria. To back up this claim, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Funds (UNICEF) (2018) reported that Nigeria still has the world's greatest number of out-of-school children, at 13.2 million. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of those youngsters live in Northern Nigeria, and sixty percent (60%) of out-of-school children are girls, according to the research. The following statistics account of out-of-school youngsters, with girls accounting for the largest proportion, is not just alarming but also frightening. This is not a good argument for a developing country like Nigeria. With the high level of instability, rape, girl-child abuse, child labor, and other issues, the amount of children who are out of school should be a national concern that requires immediate response.

Pernille Ironside, UNICEF's Deputy Representative in Nigeria, noted, "According to the ministerial strategic plan, Nigeria has 13.2 million out-of-school children aged 4 to 14. According to her data, Bauchi state has the biggest number of out-of-school children, with 1.1 million, followed by Katsina with 781,500. Hamid Bobboyi, Executive Secretary of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), stated that the number of out-of-school children increased from 10.5 million to 13.2 million between 2010 and 2015.

As a result, on September 30, 1999, the Federal Government of Nigeria launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Sokoto, Sokoto State, in an effort to revitalize the educational system and the need to achieve Education for All (EFA) as part of the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This was the outcome of the world conference on education, popularly known as education for all (EFA), held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. The conference's outcome was to be followed by all countries in order to reduce dropout out and illiteracy rates in every society (Federal Ministry of Education, 2000). The development came in the face of obstacles that have hampered Nigeria's educational progress. Its goals are to eliminate illiteracy, ignorance, and poverty, as well as to stimulate and accelerate national development, political awareness, and national integration.

Statement of Problem

According to a number of previous studies on the subject of assessing the implementation of the Universal Basic Education program in Nigeria, Tyoakaa (2014) conducted a study on "Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria: personnel and Infrastructural Assessment in Birnin Kebbi Local Government Area." Similarly, Oladimeji and Ogungebi (2019) published an article titled "Assessment of the Implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme in South West Nigeria: Issues, Problems, and Prospects." It was highlighted that the two studies under consideration were only concerned in the personnel and infrastructure aspects of the UBE's missions, rather than the issue of enrolment, which is key to President Olusegun Obasanjo's declaration of the UBE on September 30, 1999. As a result, this study aims to fill up this gap by conducting rigorous research on the impact of UBE on primary school enrolment and attrition, particularly in Plateau and Nasarawa State, Nigeria, where such studies are scarce in comparison to other parts of the country.

Similarly, Uzomah and Okereke (2010) conducted research on the "Impact of the 9-year Universal Basic Education programme in public primary and junior secondary schools in Imo State"; Wilson (2016) conducted research on "Teachers' challenges and job performance under the Universal Basic Education scheme in River State, Nigeria

(2007-2015); and Ugorji, Ewuim, Agu, Ogbu, Christ, and Ogu (2018). When looking at the prior studies mentioned above, it is clear that none of them were undertaken to address UBE implementation in Pleateau and Nasarawa State, Nigeria. This discrepancy has been well-documented. As a result, there is a need for this study to fill in the gaps in knowledge about the performance of the UBE program in Pleateau and Nasarawa State, Nigeria, especially since northern Nigeria suffers from poor enrolment of kids, especially the Gild-child, and other aspects of education in general.

The time periods and dates of earlier investigations have also been a subject of worry for this study. It's important to note that only a few studies have been conducted recently. To that end, the purpose of this study is to fill in the vacuum by conducting it in an attempt to rethink the implementation tactics of the UBE program in order to reduce school dropout for lifelong education and meaningful living for students in Pleateau and Nasarawa State, Nigeria today and in the future.

Research Questions

1. How far has the UBE policy been implemented?
2. How many students have dropped out as a result of the UBE policy's implementation?

Research Objectives

1. Determine the extent to which the UBE policy has been implemented.
2. To assess the number of students who have dropped out as a result of the adoption of the UBE policy.

Hypothesis

Hi: In Pleateau and Nasarawa State, Nigeria, the introduction of the UBE policy had no substantial influence on pupil dropout.

Review of the Literature

Nigeria's Universal Basic Education (UBE) Policy

An examination of the UBE strategy reveals that, given its major drive and specific objectives, the policy has faced a number of difficulties. Insufficient money is a major difficulty for the UBE program. The federal government assumed responsibility for

paying basic education by shifting the burden to states and local governments. Local governments are responsible for paying elementary school teachers' wages and allowances. Despite this, shared responsibility for UBE financing among the three tiers of government funding has remained an albatross in Nigeria's implementation of the UBE. According to Ejere (2011), Anaduaka and Okafor (2013), financing remained a significant barrier to UBE implementation in Nigeria... Estimated funds for upgrading existing school structures and constructing new ones have barely been allocated. The majority of schools are dilapidated, with no libraries, laboratories, classrooms, or other support services.

Finance is one of the problems confronting the education sector, according to Adedeji, Okemakinde, and Sempebwa (2008), owing to drastic reductions in both the actual and proportion of government funds allocated to the sector, despite UNESCO's recommendations of allocating 26 percent of national income to the sector. In 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014, Nigeria allocated only 6.4 percent, 7.5 percent, 8.4 percent, 8.7 percent, and 10.6 percent of its yearly budget to education, respectively, in defiance of this suggestion. According to Ladan (2012), cited in Opoh, Okou, and Ikang (2015), the low level of fiscal allocation to the sector, which is below UNESCO's threshold of 26% of the total budget, has had a significant impact on the implementation of government policy on education in the country, particularly the UBE, since its inception.

This means that finance is the lifeblood that keeps education going. The implementation will inevitably fail if there are insufficient financial resources to feed into the UBE system. The length of time it takes to achieve progress in UBE is determined by the funding challenges.

An Act of the National Assembly established the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) to coordinate and oversee proper implementation of the UBE program's objectives. The UBEC coordinates UBE operations and implementation over the first nine years of its gestation, from 2001 to 2009, and beyond (Taiwo, 2011). The goal is to stimulate and accelerate national development, political awareness, and national integration by ensuring that effective linkages exist between government and

civic society organizations, as well as private providers and communities, in order for teachers to successfully implement curricula.

In his presidential address in the State of the Nigerian Educational System, Obasanjo, reported in Joyce, & Francis (2014), declared that educating a child is closing the prison gate to that youngster. To a greater extent, the aforementioned comment from former President Olusegun Obasanjo bolstered the importance of education to youngsters. "The children of the poor whom you denied education would not give peace to the children of the educated rich," Obafemi Owolowo remarked in 1961. The Junior Secondary School must be split from the Senior Secondary School due to the necessity of the UBE Act. At the end of primary six (6), there is also a provision for the removal of selection/elimination policies (Ugomah& Okereke) (2010). Furthermore, because the UBE Scheme includes Junior Secondary Schools, the national policy on education stipulated that the objectives of Junior Secondary Schools include effective thinking, communication skills, making relevant judgments, making the pupil a useful member of one's family, understanding basic facts about health and sanitation, understanding and appreciating one's role as a useful member of one's family, understanding and appreciating one's role as a useful member of one's family, understanding and appreciating one's role as a useful member (Babalola, 2000).

According to the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), UBE was established to eliminate distortions and inconsistencies in basic education delivery, strengthen the execution of national policy, and provide widespread access to and high-quality basic education across Nigeria.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) vision is that after nine years of continuous education, every child would have gained adequate and relevant skills and values and will be employable, allowing him or her to contribute their fair share to national progress. The UBE Act of 2004 covers the following topics:

- i. Child development and schooling in the early years (ECCDE)
- ii. Primary education for six years

- iii. Completion of three years of junior secondary school. 2006) (Tahir) (Tahir, 2006)
(Tahir, 2006)

Furthermore, the policy's goals were specified in the U.B.E. implementation guideline as follows:

- a. Ensuring that youngsters of school age attend classes.
- b. At the end of six years of elementary school, 100% of students will transfer to JSS.
- c. Fundamental Education graduates should be literate, numerate, and have basic life skills, as well as ethical, moral, and civic principles.
- d. All teachers in Basic Education institutions must have a Nigerian education certificate.
- e. A review of the basic education curriculum to ensure that it complies with the reform objectives.
- f. Achieving 100 percent HIV/AIDS awareness in schools.
- g. Establishment of a sound institutional framework for assessing and monitoring teaching and learning.
- h. Local communities' active involvement, participation, and eventual ownership of schools. www.ubec.gov.ng

Theoretical Framework

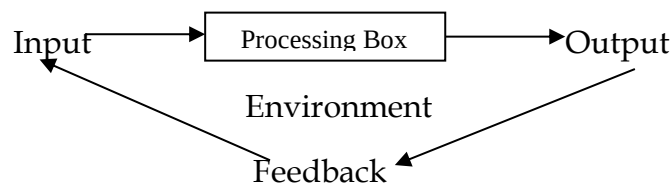
Theory of Systems

David Easton's 1965 systems theory was used in this investigation. According to this idea, the system is divided into various components, but each portion interacts with and is interdependent on the others. The UBE has features that are comparable to those seen in other systems. Ugorji, Ewuim, Agu, Ogbu, and Ogu (Ugorji, Ewuim, Agu, Ogbu, and Ogu) (2008). To be termed a system, an object must have a known structure or logically structured parts, and these parts or elements must interrelate in a law-governed manner to accomplish a goal or generate an ordered consequence within a particular context. The input-process-output and feedback analysis are critical components of this paradigm.

This theory is pertinent to this study since the effectiveness of a UBE program or policy is greatly dependent on the participation of policymakers, political executives, and target beneficiaries in achieving those goals and objectives. These goals include, among others, ensuring continuous access to a 9-year formal education by providing free and compulsory basic education to all children of school-going age, reducing school dropout, and improving the relevance, quality, and efficiency of literacy, numeracy, life skills, and values acquisition for lifelong education and useful living.

All efforts put in place for the successful execution of the UBE program, such as administrative structures, skills, funding, action plans, and effective collaboration with other education stakeholders, are considered inputs for this study. The degree of interaction and interconnectedness of these inputs has both negative and positive implications for the UBE program's execution in the research area.

Thus, what is central to this theory is, the quality of input inserted or feed into the system determined the end product which is the impact of the policy.



Source:- David Easton, 1965

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

A descriptive survey study design was used by the researcher. According to Best and Kahn (2006), descriptive research describes and interprets what it is. It is concerned with existing situations or relationships, behaviors that are prevalent, attitudes and processes that are taking place, effects that are being felt, or emerging trends. As a result, the approach is regarded appropriate since it determines the influence of UBE policy implementation on pupil dropout.

Techniques for Population, Sample, and Sampling

The study's participants included all public primary schools in Plateau and Nasarawa State, Nigeria, as well as UBEC officials. Plateau and Nasarawa were purposefully chosen states. In local government, a stratified technique was employed to separate the states. Each state has three (3) local governments chosen at random. In addition, five (5) schools and one (1) UBE office were chosen from each of the six local governments using a simple random sample technique. Specifically, thirty (30) schools and six (6) UBE offices were chosen; ultimately, purposive sampling was utilized to choose five (5) teachers from each of the 30 schools and five (5) respondents from each of the six UBE offices. Out of the....targeted population, a sample size of 180 respondents (teachers and UBE workers) was calculated.

Data Collection Instruments

Researchers created questionnaires titled "Policy Implementation Questionnaire (PIQ)" and "Pupils Drop-out Questionnaire (PDQ)" that were used to collect data for the study. All teaching staff from sampled public primary schools and UBE workers in Plateau and Nasarawa State, Nigeria were given the questionnaire. The two instruments' elements were scaled as follows: Very High = 5, High = 4, Moderate = 3, Low = 2, Very Low = 1. Experts in school administration and planning validated the questionnaire, and all of their adjustments and observations were taken into account before the final output. Cronbach Alpha statistics revealed that the instruments' reliability coefficients were 0.73 and 0.69, respectively.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher personally went to the sampled public primary schools and UBEC offices in the two states in Plateau and Nasarawa State, Nigeria, with the help of research assistants, to administer the instruments raised, which were immediately retrieved.

Analytical Techniques

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software's suitable statistical methods. The following statistical tools were used to give exact analysis and interpretation when evaluating the data. To address the study's research questions, inferential statistics of means and standard deviation were used. The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance using regression and correlation analysis.

RESULTS

Discussions of the Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of UBE policy implementation?

Table 1.1 Level of UBE Policy Implementation

S/N	Level of UBE Policy Implementation	Mean	Std. Dev.	Verbal Interpretation
1	The implementation of six year of primary education	4.98	0.233	Very High
2	The implementation of transition plan to JSS after six years in primary education	4.97	0.257	Very High
3	The implementation of health awareness program	3.25	1.321	Moderate
4	The implementation of framework for monitoring of learning and teaching	3.20	1.356	Moderate
5	Reviewing of basic education curriculum	3.38	1.188	Moderate
6	Ensuring school-age children are in school	3.45	1.192	Moderate

7	Providing good teaching and learning condition for teachers and pupils	3.41	1.180	Moderate
8	Providing adequate teachers that have Nigerian Certificate of Education.	3.36	1.253	Moderate

Average Mean Scores: 3.75

Minimum Mean Value: ≥ 2.50

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 1.1 present the mean score responses on the level of UBE policy implementation in North-Central Nigeria. Data shows that the policy of six year in primary education is at it very high level of implementation with means score of 4.98; the policy of transition plan to JSS after six years in primary education is also at it high level of implementation with means score of 4.97; implementation of health awareness program is moderate with means scores of 3.25; framework for monitoring of learning and teaching is moderately implemented with mean score of 3.20; Reviewing of basic education curriculum is moderately implemented with mean scores of 3.38; Ensuring school-age children are in school is moderately implemented with mean scores of 3.45; Providing good teaching and learning condition for teachers and pupils is moderately implemented with mean scores of 3.41; Providing adequate teachers that have Nigerian Certificate of Education is moderately implemented with mean scores of 3.36. The average mean score is 3.75 which is above minimum mean value of 2.50. This means that the UBE policies are at the high stage of implementation in North-Central Nigeria.

Research Question 2: Is the level of pupils drop-out due to UBE policy implementation?

Table1.2 Level of Pupils Drop-Out

S/N	Level of Pupils Drop-Out Due to UBE Policy Implementation	Mean	Std. Dev.	Verbal Interpretation
1	Number of pupils drop-out due to poor learning condition.	2.07	1.172	Low
2	Number of pupils that are transferred to private schools due to poor teaching method	2.73	1.252	Moderate
3	Number of pupils that are transferred to private schools due to lack of updated curricula	2.07	1.172	Low
4	Number of pupils that are transferred to private schools due to scarcity of teachers	2.64	1.179	Moderate
5	Numbers of unmonitored absentees among pupils	1.71	1.059	Low
6	Numbers of pupils who are unaware of their health issues	3.38	1.188	Moderate
7	The nature of monitoring teaching process	1.97	1.247	Low
8	The nature of monitoring pupils' learning process	3.04	1.396	Moderate

Average Mean Scores: 2.45

Minimum Mean Value: ≥ 2.50

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 1.2 present the mean score responses on the level of pupils drop-out due to UBE policy implementation. Data shows that the moderate number of pupils that are transferred to private schools due to poor teaching method is moderate with mean score of 2.73; number of pupils that are transferred to private schools due to lack of updated curricula is low with mean score of 2.07; number of pupils that are transferred to private schools due to scarcity of teachers is moderate with mean score of 2.64; the numbers of unmonitored absentees among pupils is low with mean score of 1.71; the numbers of pupils who are unaware of health issues is moderate with mean score of 3.38; the nature of monitoring teaching process is low with mean score of 1.97 and the nature of monitoring pupils' learning process is moderate with mean score of 3.04. The average mean score is 2.45 which is below the minimum mean value of 2.50. This means that level of pupils drop-out is low due to UBE policy implementation.

Hypothesis Test

The study also tested the hypothesis which stated that UBE policy implementation does not have significant impact on pupils drop-out in North-Central Nigeria. The statistical test results (regression and correlation analyses) of each null hypothesis were set at 95% confidence level (0.05) as shown in the table below.

Table 1.3: Model Summary for the Impact of UBE Policy Implementation on Pupils' Drop-Out

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.937 ^a	.879	.879	.37072
a. Predictors: (Constant), UBE Policy Implementation				

An R-squared of 87.9% was obtained. This implied that the simple linear model with UBE Policy Implementation as the independent variable explained 87.9% of the

variations in Pupils' Drop-Out. This meant that when UBE Policy Implementation increase the Pupils' Drop-Out changed by 87.9%.

Table 1.4: ANOVA Results Showing the Impact of UBE Policy Implementation on Pupils' Drop-Out.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	694.375	4	694.375	5052.458	.000 ^b
	Residual	95.791	167	.137		
	Total	790.166	168			
a. Dependent Variable: Pupils' Drop-out						
b. Predictors: (Constant), UBE Policy Implementation						

A p-value of less than 0.05 (p-value=0.000) was obtained. This implies that the simple linear model with UBE Policy Implementation as independent variable is significant. Therefore, as UBE Policy Implementation increases, the level Pupils' Drop-Out decreases. The results of the analysis were as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 1.5: Coefficient Results Showing the Impact of UBE Policy Implementation on Pupils' Drop-Out.

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.051	.015		-7.770	.000
	UBE Policy Implementation	.283	.036	.937	71.081	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Pupils' Drop-out						

From the results in the table above, correlation coefficients show that UBE Policy Implementation (X) was impacting (p-value = 0.000) and influenced the level of Pupils' Drop-out (Y). The fitted model from this analysis is shown as follows: $Y = 1.051 + 0.283X$. The hypothesis test results suggest that UBE Policy Implementation have a positive impact on level of Pupils' Drop-out. This finding indicates that the higher the UBE Policy Implementation increases, the lower the level of Pupils' Drop-out will be in north-central Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussions of Findings

The study's premise that the introduction of the UBE policy has no substantial impact on pupil dropout in Plateau and Nasarawa State, Nigeria was rejected. As a result, the implementation of the UBE strategy has a major impact on pupil dropout in Plateau and Nasarawa State, Nigeria. This means that when the number of UBE policies is implemented, the number of students who drop out decreases. This study supported Ezike's (2018) findings that the classroom environment and students'

academic involvement influenced student performance. As a result, a negative classroom environment might discourage students and make them less motivated to study, affecting their interest in classroom activities and, as a result, their attendance at school.

It is partially implemented to provide appropriate teachers with a Nigerian Certificate of Education. As a result, Visco (2020) identified teachers to be one of the elements influencing students' performance. Teachers with complete teaching pedagogies, technical skills, and competency aid in the improvement and delivery of high-quality education. The aforementioned findings supported the findings of Quiambao et al. (2015), who found that teachers make a significant influence to students' academic progress.

One of UBE's aims is to ensure that all school-aged children are in school 100 percent of the time. However, according to the results of this survey, ensuring school-age children attend school is moderately implemented, with a mean score of 3.45. As a result, as stated by Charles, Ikoh, Iyamba, and Charles (2006) as home help ship or domestic labor, the achievement of these aims is severely hampered. As a result of poverty, many parents, according to Oloko (1990), send their children to work as domestic assistance, such as home helpers or domestic employees, or as hawkers to supplement family income.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The report clearly shows that Universal Basic Education has played a significant influence in lowering the number of students who drop out in Pleateau and Nasarawa State, Nigeria. This is accomplished by ensuring that company policies are followed to the letter. Nonetheless, the government's readiness to remedy the identified deficiencies is critical to the successful development and execution of the UBE program. As a crucial actor in the UBE program, the government, according to this document, should ensure that:

1. Only professional, qualified, and skilled teachers should be considered during the recruitment process.

2. Teachers must be exposed to ongoing training and retraining in order to keep up with changing trends, particularly in the area of information technology (IT).
3. There should be more effort and resources devoted to raising health awareness among students.
4. More resources, mechanisms, and infrastructure should be provided for the successful implementation of the UBE policy and the monitoring of absenteeism and dropout in schools.
5. In order to fulfill the policy implementation goals, the monitoring/teacher performance evaluation procedures, as well as the dropout rate of students, should be strengthened.

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