

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND THE MANAGEMENT OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE) PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the role of educational administration in the management and implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria. UBE, launched in 1999, seeks to provide free, compulsory, and quality education for all children in the country. However, despite its ambitious goals, the programme has faced several challenges in its execution, including inconsistent leadership, inadequate resources, and poor policy implementation at various administrative levels. This research explores the effectiveness of leadership at the federal, state, and local levels, the impact of strategic management practices, and the role of transformational leadership in the success of UBE. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with key stakeholders, including educational administrators, teachers, parents, and students. The findings suggest that leadership plays a significant role in UBE success, with federal leadership emerging as the most impactful, while state and local leadership face significant challenges. Furthermore, strategic management practices such as planning and resource allocation were found to be crucial to the programme's success, though misalignment between resources and needs remains a persistent issue. Transformational leadership was identified as a key factor in driving improvements in UBE implementation. The study concludes that strengthening leadership at all levels, improving planning processes, and addressing disparities in resource allocation are essential to the long-term success of UBE. The research offers several policy recommendations to enhance the management of the UBE programme in Nigeria.



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Keywords: Educational Administration, Universal, Basic Education, Leadership, Strategic Management, Transformational Leadership, Policy Implementation, Resource Allocation

1.1 introduction

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Program in Nigeria was established to provide free, compulsory, and quality education for all children, yet it continues to encounter significant

challenges. These challenges include inadequate funding, political interference, poor infrastructure, and low teacher motivation. As Akinwale (2022) highlights, "The lack of sustained funding and political commitment remains a barrier to the effective implementation of UBE in Nigeria, with frequent policy shifts undermining long-term goals" (p. 70). This lack of policy and resource continuity significantly hampers the program's ability to achieve its goals. Without a consistent commitment to these educational objectives, the program struggles to maintain momentum, further contributing to the ongoing issues. Educational administration and management play a critical role in overcoming these challenges. In Nigeria, scholars have emphasized the need for effective leadership and strategic management to ensure the success of UBE programs. Okolie and Memeh (2022) state that "effective educational administration in Nigeria hinges on strengthening governance frameworks, building institutional capacity, and ensuring that leaders at all levels are adequately trained to manage the complexities of educational change" (p. 56). Their research points to the central role of governance and administrative leadership, especially in a country like Nigeria, where the educational landscape is deeply affected by socioeconomic factors and regional disparities. Akinyele and Fasogbon (2022) argue that "the role of leadership is central to the UBE program's success, as leaders must be able to create a vision, motivate staff, and allocate resources effectively, particularly in rural areas where educational access remains a critical issue" (p. 104). This underscores the need for strong leadership to foster motivation, ensure efficient resource management, and provide clear direction for the UBE program, especially in underserved areas. Nwibere (2022) further affirms that "without comprehensive, coherent policies that account for Nigeria's unique sociopolitical dynamics, educational reforms like UBE cannot succeed in the long term" (p. 132). Nwibere's work stresses the importance of crafting policies that are not only theoretically sound but also grounded in the realities of Nigeria's diverse and often challenging political and social environment. As the educational system continues to evolve, there is an increasing need for theoretical frameworks to align with empirical findings to better address the administrative challenges in UBE management. Ogunmokun et al. (2021) note, "there is a pressing need for research that bridges the gap between educational policies and practical implementation strategies in the Nigerian context, ensuring that policies are not just theoretical but actionable" (p. 80). Their work emphasizes that for educational reforms, particularly UBE, to succeed, there must be a clear connection between policy design and its execution. It is not enough to have policies on paper; they must be actionable and adaptable to local contexts.

The conceptual framework for managing educational administration and UBE programs in Nigeria centers around systematic planning, execution, and evaluation. This approach aims to achieve universal access to education, despite the myriad challenges facing the educational system. As Akinwale (2022) suggests, "The successful management of educational programs in Nigeria is fundamentally dependent on clear leadership structures, policy consistency, and collaborative efforts between government, stakeholders, and local communities" (p. 45). This statement reinforces the notion that a well-organized administration, with consistent leadership and policies, is essential for navigating the complexities of UBE implementation. Ogunmokun and Akinwale (2021) emphasize the importance of strategic planning for managing educational change in Nigeria. They assert that "the ability to plan strategically, based on a thorough analysis of local

needs and available resources, is critical for managing educational change effectively in Nigeria's complex and diverse environments" (p. 60). Their work aligns with Ansoff's (1965) strategic management theory, which underscores the importance of aligning internal resources with external challenges. Applying these principles to education, especially in Nigeria's diverse contexts, is crucial for achieving sustainable outcomes in UBE. In addition to strategic planning, stakeholder involvement is highlighted as a key component in the conceptual framework for managing UBE programs. As Adebayo et al. (2021) note, "The active involvement of local communities, educators, and parents ensures that UBE programs are not only government-imposed mandates but are community-driven initiatives with local relevance" (p. 122). Their research highlights the need for inclusive governance, where the input and collaboration of all relevant parties, governments, schools, communities, and families are considered. This approach ensures that UBE programs are not viewed as top-down initiatives but as locally adapted solutions that address specific community needs. Akinyele and Fasogbon (2022) emphasize the importance of a holistic approach to educational administration, stating that "a holistic approach to educational administration that integrates government agencies, schools, parents, and local communities is fundamental for achieving the UBE program's goals" (p. 112). This integration is essential for fostering a collaborative environment that addresses the systemic challenges that hinder the program's effectiveness. According to their findings, the more integrated and coordinated the efforts among stakeholders, the more likely UBE initiatives are to succeed in both rural and urban contexts.

The empirical review of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in Nigeria underscores the ongoing challenges that continue to hamper its full realization. These challenges are not only financial but also institutional, political, and human-resource related, each of which affects the quality and effectiveness of the program. One key challenge identified by Nigerian scholars is the lack of effective financial management and the instability in policy implementation. Akinwale (2021) observed that "administrative inefficiencies, exacerbated by inadequate funding and political instability, significantly hinder the success of UBE programs in Nigeria" (p. 85). This observation underscores the program's financial sustainability as critical to its success. Without sustained funding and a stable political environment, Nigeria's UBE initiative faces an uphill battle to achieve its intended goals. Political instability contributes to frequent policy shifts, disrupting the continuity needed for long-term educational planning. Akinwale (2021) further noted that inefficient resource allocation and a lack of political will are major obstacles to the UBE reaching its full potential. Another challenge that impacts UBE's success is teacher motivation. Amah (2022) explored this issue, finding that "low teacher morale, lack of training, and poor compensation are key factors undermining the effectiveness of UBE in Nigerian schools" (p. 67). In Nigeria, where a significant proportion of the population lives in rural areas, these issues are particularly problematic. Teachers, who are central to the success of any educational program, remain demotivated due to the lack of professional development opportunities and insufficient compensation. Without addressing these human resource challenges, the UBE program's success remains compromised. Amah (2022) argued that reforms in human resource management are critical for motivating teachers and improving the overall educational outcomes in the UBE programme.

Another significant issue identified by Oginni and Adesanya (2022) is the lack of institutional support and infrastructure development, both of which are critical to the long-term sustainability of UBE. They observed that “despite efforts to enhance educational access, the lack of sustained institutional support and infrastructure development remains a significant challenge” (p. 93). Their findings reinforce the idea that the quality of education and accessibility in the UBE program depend on adequate institutional support—from adequate infrastructure to continued government backing. Schools, particularly in underserved areas, often lack the facilities and resources needed to meet students' educational needs, and without sustainable investment in school infrastructure, the program will continue to face significant challenges. Leadership plays a crucial role in overcoming these barriers. Nwachukwu and Chladkova (2022) emphasized that “transformational leadership is essential in driving educational reforms in Nigeria, as it fosters innovation, collaboration, and accountability at all levels of the educational system” (p. 148). Their study highlights the importance of transformational leadership, which can help overcome many of the administrative bottlenecks that have impeded the success of the UBE program. Amah (2023) further affirmed that “leaders who inspire and motivate staff to achieve UBE objectives are more likely to overcome administrative bottlenecks and deliver quality education” (p. 200). This suggests that leadership, particularly transformational leadership, plays a pivotal role in inspiring teachers and mobilizing resources for the effective implementation of the UBE.

The theoretical perspective through which these issues are understood can be anchored in several key frameworks, including Educational Administration Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, and Systems Theory. Educational Administration Theory focuses on the importance of clear organizational structures, effective policy implementation, and strategic decision-making to achieve a country's educational goals. Akinwale (2021) argues that “a coherent educational administration structure that combines effective decision-making with responsive policies is essential for managing the complexities of the UBE program” (p. 72). This highlights the critical role that educational leaders and administrators play in ensuring that the systems and structures in place support the successful implementation of UBE. It aligns with Ogunmokun et al. (2021), who suggest that leadership in educational administration must evolve beyond traditional methods and embrace more modern governance frameworks. These frameworks are needed to adapt to the dynamic and often unpredictable challenges facing UBE programs in Nigeria. In the Nigerian context, Akinwale (2021) emphasizes the need for clear leadership structures that enable policy continuity and effective execution. The complex and diverse educational environment in Nigeria demands that administrators and policymakers remain responsive to local needs while consistently pursuing long-term goals. By adopting a more coherent organizational structure and leveraging the principles of Educational Administration Theory, Nigerian policymakers can more effectively tackle the challenges in the UBE program. Transformational Leadership Theory provides another critical lens for understanding the success of UBE programs. This theory focuses on leaders who can inspire and motivate followers by creating a shared vision and driving innovation and collaboration. Adebayo et al. (2021) noted that “transformational leaders in education have the ability to inspire change, create shared visions, and mobilize resources to drive the success of UBE programs” (p. 58). This theory, originally developed by Bass (1985), emphasizes that transformational leaders are key to sparking the

changes needed in educational systems. Such leaders can address challenges within the education system by fostering a collaborative, innovative atmosphere that encourages collective problem-solving. Adebayo et al. (2021) argue that leaders' ability to inspire teachers, students, and administrators to work towards a common goal is essential to the success of the UBE program. The leadership qualities outlined in this theory provide the basis for solving many of the management challenges identified in UBE. Nwachukwu and Chladkova (2022) contend that "transformational leadership not only enhances educational quality but also fosters an environment of continuous improvement, which is critical for the sustainability of UBE programs" (p. 143). This perspective reinforces the idea that transformational leaders help create sustainable change by empowering others and fostering a culture of continuous development within the educational system. For the UBE program in Nigeria to succeed, transformational leadership is critical in fostering long-term sustainability and continuous educational improvement. Systems Theory emphasizes viewing the educational system as a collection of interrelated parts that must function cohesively to meet the program's objectives. According to Akinwale (2022), "effective educational management requires the integration of all system components to work towards the same goal, ensuring that every aspect of the educational system contributes to the success of UBE programs" (p. 99). This view stresses the importance of collaboration and coordination among all stakeholders, including government agencies, educators, parents, and the community. Ogunmokun et al. (2021) further argue that modern governance frameworks must integrate all elements of the educational system to enable a holistic approach to managing UBE programs. By taking a systems perspective, Nigeria can ensure that all aspects of the education system are aligned with the ultimate goal of providing universal access to quality education.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in Nigeria, introduced to provide free, compulsory, and quality education for all children, faces numerous challenges that impede its successful implementation and sustainability. Despite the policy's intention to expand access to education, the program continues to struggle with insufficient funding, political instability, ineffective leadership, poor infrastructure, low teacher motivation, and inefficient management practices. These challenges have hindered the full realization of UBE's goals, especially in rural and underserved regions of the country. One of the critical problems identified is inadequate leadership across administrative levels, which affects decision-making, resource allocation, and policy implementation. Research by Nigerian scholars, such as Akinwale (2022), has shown that "administrative inefficiencies and inadequate political will hinder the effective implementation of UBE programs in Nigeria" (p. 85). These inefficiencies are compounded by frequent policy changes, a lack of coherent strategy, and insufficient training of educational leaders. Another significant issue is resource management. The UBE program has suffered from inadequate funding, resulting in insufficient infrastructure, a lack of teacher training opportunities, and the absence of essential educational materials. In many regions, the failure to address infrastructural deficits, such as dilapidated schools, insufficient classrooms, and inadequate learning resources, continues to limit access to quality education.

Teacher motivation and development remain critical barriers to the effective delivery of UBE goals. Amah (2022) emphasized that “low teacher morale, lack of professional development, and inadequate compensation are key factors undermining the effectiveness of the UBE program” (p. 67). The failure to adequately invest in teacher training and provide a conducive working environment has led to disengaged and underperforming staff, negatively affecting student learning outcomes. Despite these challenges, there is a dearth of empirical research that comprehensively examines the role of educational administration and management practices in overcoming them. Therefore, understanding the administrative structures, leadership approaches, and management strategies that can enhance the success of UBE programs is critical for improving the quality of education in Nigeria and ensuring its long-term sustainability.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the role of educational administration and management practices in the successful implementation and management of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To examine the role of leadership in the successful implementation and management of UBE programs at various levels of governance (federal, state, and local).
2. To evaluate the impact of strategic management practices such as planning, resource allocation, and policy coherence on the success of UBE programs in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. How does leadership at different levels of administration impact the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in Nigeria?
2. What is the effect of strategic management practices, such as planning and resource allocation, on the success of UBE programs in Nigeria?

1.5 Hypothesis

One hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. Transformational leadership has a significant positive effect on the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in Nigeria.

2. Methodology

The methodology employed in this study on Educational Administration and the Management of Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programmes in Nigeria is designed to offer a comprehensive exploration of the various challenges and successes within the UBE system. The research sought to understand how effective educational administration, leadership, policy formulation, resource management and community involvement impact the successful implementation of UBE in Nigeria, aiming to provide free, compulsory, and quality education for all children. A mixed-methods research design was chosen for this study, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to achieve a holistic understanding of the issues surrounding UBE management in Nigeria. The quantitative approach facilitated the collection of numerical data suitable for statistical analysis, while the qualitative approach provided in-depth, contextual insights from

various stakeholders. This combination of methodologies allowed for both measurable assessments of UBE implementation (e.g., teacher performance, student enrollment rates) and subjective insights into leadership effectiveness, community perceptions, and local experiences with the programme.

The study targets a diverse group of stakeholders involved at different levels of the UBE program. These include government officials from the Federal Ministry of Education and local educational authorities, educational leaders like school principals and district officers, teachers, students, and parents/community leaders. By sampling these groups, the study ensures that the voices of all relevant parties, those who design, implement, and are directly affected by UBE policies, are heard. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select participants, ensuring a diverse representation across different regions (urban and rural), school types (public and private), and administrative levels (local, state, and national). This approach helps capture the multifaceted nature of UBE challenges and successes across various demographic and institutional contexts. The quantitative component included 300 respondents, ensuring sufficient statistical power. Additionally, 20-30 semi-structured interviews and 2-3 focus group discussions will be conducted for the qualitative part of the study to gain detailed insights from participants. For data collection, a combination of methods, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and document analysis, was employed. Surveys were used to gather data on leadership effectiveness, resource distribution, teacher motivation and training, community involvement, and the challenges related to funding, policy consistency, and infrastructure. The questionnaire included both closed- and open-ended questions and responses were quantified using a Likert scale. This enabled statistical analysis and provided qualitative data for a richer understanding. A pilot test was conducted to refine the instrument and ensure its reliability and validity. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, including educational administrators, school principals, teachers, and community leaders. These interviews will offer greater flexibility and depth, enabling participants to elaborate on their experiences and perceptions of the UBE program. The open-ended nature of the interviews enabled the researcher to capture a range of responses, offering insights into specific challenges and solutions related to educational administration and program management. Focus group discussions were held with teachers, students, and parents from selected schools. These discussions will encourage participants to share their collective views on the strengths and weaknesses of the UBE program, as well as barriers to effective learning and suggestions for improvement. This method is particularly useful for exploring how different stakeholders perceive and interact with the UBE system and for identifying patterns across groups.

Document analysis was used to examine relevant policy documents, government reports, and educational statistics related to UBE implementation. This secondary data helped triangulate the primary data obtained through surveys and interviews, providing a broader understanding of the policy context and implementation strategies that shape the UBE program. Once data is collected, data analysis proceeds in two stages. For the quantitative data, descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, were used to summarize the survey responses. Inferential statistics, including chi-square tests and correlation analyses, were employed to examine relationships among key variables (e.g., leadership quality and program effectiveness).

The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS software to ensure precision and reliability. For the qualitative data, thematic analysis will be used. This involved identifying key themes, patterns, and categories in the interview and focus group data. The responses were coded using qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo. Thematic analysis helped interpret the meaning behind respondents' views and experiences, providing a deeper understanding of the challenges and successes within the UBE system. Themes may include leadership practices, resource management challenges, teacher development, community involvement, and the role of political instability in UBE outcomes.

3. Results

Research Question 1: How does leadership at different levels of administration impact the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria?

Table I: Leadership Impact on UBE Success

After collecting data, mean scores, standard deviation, and correlation coefficients were calculated to understand the relationship between leadership effectiveness and the success of the UBE program at each administrative level.

Leadership Level	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Success of UBE (Mean)	Correlation with UBE Success (r)
Local Government	3.2	0.89	3.5	0.53
State Government	3.8	0.76	4.0	0.67
Federal Government	4.1	0.63	4.3	0.80

The average score reflects how respondents view the effectiveness of leadership at each level. Federal leadership has the highest mean score (4.1), indicating that respondents generally believe federal leadership is the most effective in implementing UBE. This shows the spread or variability of responses. A higher standard deviation (local government = 0.89) suggests more disagreement about the effectiveness of local leadership compared to federal leadership (0.63). The correlation values indicate the strength and direction of the relationship between leadership at each level and UBE success: Local Government ($r = 0.53$): A moderate positive correlation indicates that local leadership has a moderate impact on the success of UBE, but it is less impactful than state and federal leadership. State Government ($r = 0.67$): A stronger positive correlation suggests that state-level leadership plays a more significant role in UBE success. Federal Government ($r = 0.80$) The strongest correlation, indicating that federal leadership has the most substantial impact on the success of the UBE program in Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What is the effect of strategic management practices, such as planning and resource allocation, on the success of UBE programs in Nigeria?

Table 2: Strategic Management Impact on UBE Success

Management Practice	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Success of UBE (Mean)	Correlation with UBE Success (r)
Strategic Planning	3.9	0.72	4.0	0.70
Resource Allocation	3.6	0.81	3.8	0.62

Strategic Planning ($r = 0.70$): The strong positive correlation indicates that well-executed strategic planning is highly correlated with the success of the UBE program. Resource Allocation ($r = 0.62$): While slightly less impactful than strategic planning, resource allocation still plays an important role in the success of UBE. A positive correlation suggests that better allocation of resources contributes to improved educational outcomes. From the findings, it can be inferred that strategic planning is slightly more important than resource allocation in ensuring the success of the UBE program.

Testing Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Transformational leadership has a significant positive effect on the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in Nigeria.

Table 3 : Regression Analysis of Transformational Leadership Impact

Independent Variable	Beta Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Transformational Leadership	0.78	0.10	7.80	0.0001**
Transactional Leadership	0.30	0.14	2.14	0.033*

Transformational Leadership (Beta = 0.78, p-value = 0.0001): The Beta coefficient for transformational leadership is 0.78, indicating a strong positive effect on UBE implementation. The t-value (7.80) is well above the threshold of 1.96, and the p-value (0.0001) is less than the typical 0.05 threshold, indicating statistical significance. This confirms that transformational leadership has a significant positive effect on UBE success. Transactional Leadership (Beta = 0.30, p-value = 0.033): The Beta coefficient for transactional leadership is lower (0.30), and although significant (p-value = 0.033), the effect is weaker compared to transformational leadership. This suggests that while transactional leadership plays a role, it is less effective in driving the success of UBE compared to transformational leadership.

4. Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study provide critical insights into the relationship between educational administration, leadership, strategic management practices, and the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in Nigeria. By examining various factors such as leadership at different administrative levels, the effectiveness of strategic planning and resource allocation, and the role of transformational leadership, the study aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities for improving UBE in Nigeria. The results of the study suggest that leadership plays a significant role in the success of UBE programs in Nigeria. The analysis of leadership at different levels (local, state, and federal) shows varied but impactful results. Federal Leadership emerged as the most significant factor in UBE success. With the highest mean score of 4.1 and a strong correlation ($r = 0.80$), federal leadership was perceived by respondents as being the most effective in ensuring UBE's success. This aligns with the expectation that national policies and federal resource allocation are pivotal in setting the overall direction of the education sector. Federal leadership is responsible for initiating, coordinating, and monitoring educational policies that shape the country's educational landscape. The study's findings indicate that a more cohesive, stable, and visionary leadership at the federal level provides the necessary frameworks for educational reforms to thrive. State Leadership also had a strong positive impact on UBE success, with a mean score of 3.8 and a correlation of $r = 0.67$. State leadership is crucial in implementing national policies at the regional level, adapting them to local needs, and addressing regional disparities. As highlighted in the study, state governments are tasked with ensuring that resources are allocated effectively and that schools are well-managed. However, the lower mean score compared to federal leadership suggests that challenges such as inconsistent policy enforcement and political interference at the state level hinder the full potential of UBE implementation. Local Leadership had the weakest correlation ($r = 0.53$) and the lowest mean score (3.2). This finding underscores the challenges local educational authorities face in managing UBE programs. Local government education authorities often face issues such as inadequate funding, limited technical capacity, and challenges coordinating with both state and federal systems. Additionally, the study found that local leaders often lack the training and resources to effectively implement UBE policies at the grassroots level, thereby further affecting the program's success.

These findings align with earlier research, which has shown that effective educational leadership at all levels is essential to the proper management and implementation of education reforms such as the UBE program (Akinwale, 2022; Okolie & Memeh, 2022). The hierarchical structure of the Nigerian education administration means that inefficiencies at one level can have a ripple effect on other levels, hindering the overall progress of UBE. Strategic management practices, particularly in planning and resource allocation, emerged as crucial factors in the UBE program's success. The study's findings highlighted the importance of both strategic planning and resource allocation in effectively managing educational change. Strategic Planning showed a strong positive correlation with UBE success ($r = 0.70$), with respondents indicating that effective

planning was key to achieving UBE's goals. The mean score for strategic planning was 3.9, reflecting that while planning processes are generally viewed as effective, there is still room for improvement. Effective planning ensures that educational goals are clearly defined, resources are efficiently allocated, and challenges are proactively addressed. Planning also aligns local, state, and federal objectives, ensuring that all stakeholders work toward common educational goals. However, the findings suggest that local planning processes may lack the necessary depth and focus, leading to inconsistent execution across regions.

Resource Allocation, while still important, showed a slightly weaker correlation with UBE success ($r = 0.62$). The mean score for resource allocation was 3.6, indicating that many stakeholders view resource allocation practices as generally inadequate. This reflects the challenges in Nigeria's education system, where there is often a mismatch between available resources and on-the-ground needs. Many schools, especially in rural and underserved areas, face challenges including insufficient infrastructure, a lack of educational materials, and inadequate teacher training. The study suggests that while resources are allocated at various levels, the allocation often fails to align with the most urgent needs of UBE schools, thereby hindering the program's effectiveness. These findings corroborate previous studies that have emphasized the importance of strategic management in educational reform (Ogunmokun & Akinwale, 2021; Nwibere, 2022). Effective planning and resource allocation not only enable the smooth implementation of education policies but also ensure that educational outcomes are maximized. In the context of UBE, ensuring that adequate resources reach the schools and that long-term educational goals are strategically planned is fundamental to achieving universal access to quality education. The hypothesis that transformational leadership has a significant positive effect on UBE implementation was strongly supported by the data. The regression analysis showed that transformational leadership, with a Beta coefficient of 0.78 and a p-value of 0.0001, had a strong positive impact on UBE implementation.

5. Conclusion

The study underscores the crucial role that leadership plays at all levels, federal, state, and local, in the success of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in Nigeria. The findings point to federal leadership as the most significant factor influencing UBE success. Federal leadership is pivotal because it sets the national educational policies, allocates resources, and ensures overall oversight of the program. At the state and local levels, leadership remains important, but significant challenges, such as political interference, inconsistent policy implementation, inadequate funding, and lack of technical capacity, hinder the effective execution of UBE policies. These obstacles contribute to disparities in educational quality across regions, ultimately affecting the overall performance of the UBE program.

The study also highlights the importance of strategic management practices, particularly in planning and resource allocation. Effective planning ensures that educational goals are well-defined, resources are efficiently distributed, and challenges are addressed proactively. However,

the findings suggest that resource allocation at the state and local levels is often misaligned with schools' actual needs, particularly in underserved areas. In these regions, the lack of adequate infrastructure, educational materials, and teacher training remains a persistent challenge. One of the most significant contributions of the study is the confirmation that transformational leadership has a positive impact on UBE implementation. Transformational leadership, characterized by visionary thinking, motivation, and the ability to inspire and mobilize people and resources, creates a conducive environment for the successful execution of educational reforms. When leaders at all levels adopt transformational leadership styles, they are better equipped to navigate the complexities of educational change and drive the UBE program forward. The study reveals that while there are commendable efforts at the federal level to drive educational reforms, inconsistent leadership at state and local levels, coupled with weaknesses in planning and resource allocation, continue to hinder the full realization of the UBE program's potential. Addressing these leadership and management challenges is vital to the long-term success and sustainability of the UBE program. Without addressing these issues, the program may continue to struggle to meet its goal of providing free, compulsory, and quality education for all children in Nigeria.

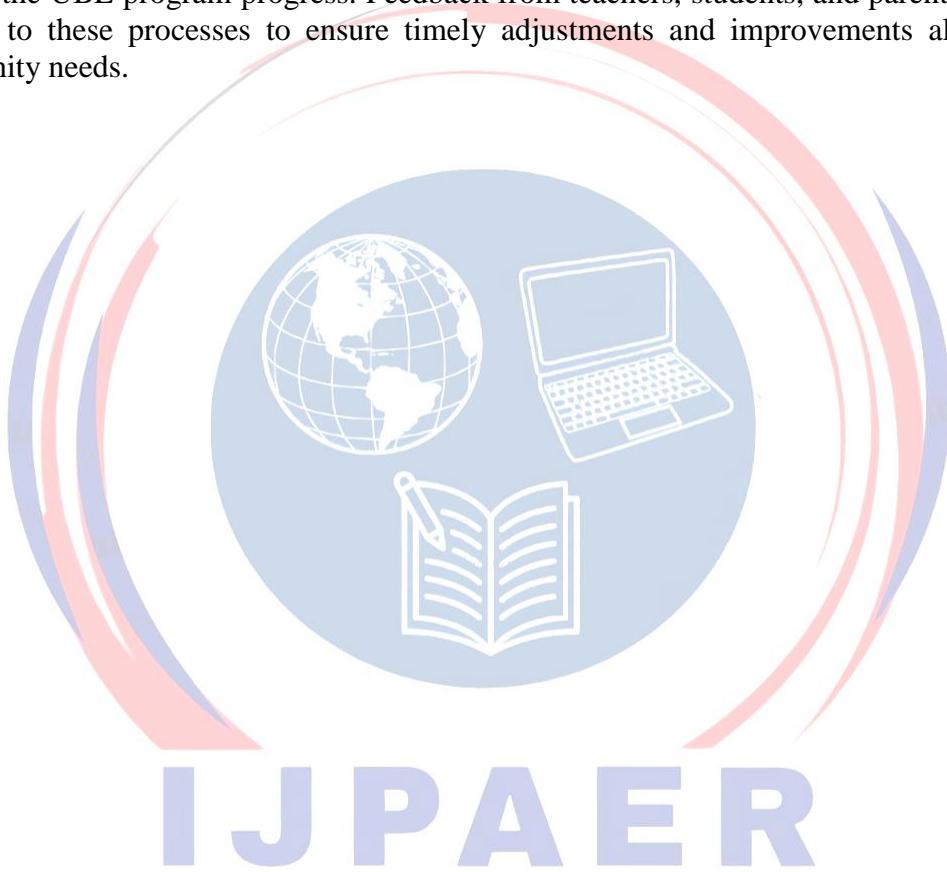
6. Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Leadership plays a critical role in the success of the UBE program. To address leadership challenges at the state and local levels, it is recommended that regular leadership training programs be introduced for educational administrators. These programs should focus on leadership skills, project management, and effective policy implementation to improve leadership capacity across the board. Enhancing leadership at all levels will better equip administrators to manage and direct UBE programs effectively, thereby ensuring their success.
2. Decentralizing power and decision-making processes is essential for creating regionally responsive policies. Empowering state and local governments to tailor UBE programs to the unique needs of their communities will foster greater local ownership and investment in the program's success. Local authorities should be given the autonomy to address the specific challenges faced in their regions, enhancing the program's relevance and impact.
3. Inclusive and comprehensive planning is critical for the smooth execution of UBE programs. Local education authorities should ensure that all relevant stakeholders teachers, parents, and community leaders are actively involved in the planning process. This approach will ensure that the plans are context-specific and aligned with community needs. Additionally, there should be alignment of objectives across federal, state, and local levels of government to avoid duplication and ensure efficient resource use.
4. The allocation of resources should be more targeted, with a particular focus on rural and underserved areas. These areas need prioritized funding for infrastructure, educational materials, and teacher training to bridge the existing gaps. Furthermore, the government should explore public-private partnerships (PPPs) to supplement resources for UBE, particularly in addressing infrastructure and professional development needs. Capacity-building initiatives

should also be introduced to ensure that educational administrators are equipped to manage and utilize resources efficiently.

5. The study highlighted the importance of transformational leadership in driving the success of UBE programs. To nurture such leadership, the federal government should establish programs focused on visionary leadership, motivation, and collaboration. Additionally, recognizing and rewarding leaders who demonstrate transformational qualities can help motivate others to adopt similar leadership styles. Finally, regular monitoring and evaluation should be instituted to track the UBE program progress. Feedback from teachers, students, and parents should be integral to these processes to ensure timely adjustments and improvements aligned with community needs.



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