

From Policy to Practice: Educational Policy Implementation and School Administration in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effectiveness of educational policy implementation in Nigeria, with particular attention to the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy and its influence on school administration. It seeks to assess the extent to which the UBE policy and related educational policies are implemented, evaluate their effectiveness, explore how they shape administrative practices in schools, and identify the challenges school administrators encounter during the implementation process. Adopting a descriptive mixed-methods research design, the study was conducted across public and private primary and junior secondary schools in Nigeria to capture diverse administrative and institutional contexts. Data were collected from key education stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, policymakers, and education officials, through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. This approach enabled a balanced understanding of both the measurable outcomes of policy implementation and the lived experiences of those responsible for translating policy into practice. The findings indicate that the level of educational policy implementation in Ondo State is moderate, with progress constrained by challenges such as inadequate funding, limited professional training, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and delays in policy execution. Nevertheless, the study reveals that educational policies particularly the UBE policy have had a positive influence on school administration by improving administrative efficiency, strengthening leadership practices, and enhancing organisational processes within schools. The study concludes that while educational policies have considerable potential to strengthen school administration and improve educational outcomes, their effectiveness depends largely on the availability of adequate resources, sustained capacity building for school leaders, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Strengthening these areas is essential for ensuring that educational policies achieve their intended goals and contribute meaningfully to improved school management and educational quality in Ondo State.

Keywords: Administration, Teacher, Policy, School Management, Stakeholders

INTRODUCTION

Education is a vital instrument for national development and societal transformation. In Nigeria, educational policies serve as strategic frameworks aimed at ensuring access, equity, and quality across all levels of education. Nigeria, located in the western region of Africa, has witnessed a series of policy reforms since independence, each shaping the structure, administration, and effectiveness of the educational system. The purpose of evaluating these policies is to understand their direct and indirect implications on administrative processes, school leadership, infrastructure development, teacher management, and overall learning outcomes. Historically, educational policy reforms in Nigeria have mirrored national trends, focusing on areas such as free and

compulsory education, technical and vocational education expansion, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme, and more recently, ICT integration and teacher professional development. According to Sanni (2024), Nigeria has implemented strategies to boost female participation in technical and vocational education through administrative reforms at different University, highlighting how policy drives administrative change to achieve educational equity (Sanni, 2024).

The challenges associated with policy implementation, however, are multidimensional. These include inadequate funding, poor monitoring mechanisms, politicization of education, and insufficient training for administrators. A study by Ogunkan et al. (2024) emphasized the role of spatial governance and infrastructure disparities in shaping education delivery across urban and rural settings in southwestern Nigeria, with Ondo State as a case in point. This underscores the administrative strain in policy execution in marginalized communities (Ogunkan et al., 2024). Moreover, policies targeting youth restiveness and unemployment have indirectly impacted educational management. A report by E. CO et al. (2024) posits that the governance of resources and youth engagement in Nigeria is closely tied to educational access and policy effectiveness, further influencing school administrative practices (E. CO et al., 2024).

In the broader context, educational policies are often evaluated based on their alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Abubakar et al. (2024) provide a comprehensive regional analysis of how African nations, including Nigeria, tailor educational reforms to meet SDG targets. These policy designs are thus part of a continental effort toward educational inclusiveness and sustainability (Abubakar et al., 2024). A critical aspect of policy evaluation is the dynamic between federal directives and state-level implementation. The country's responsiveness to national frameworks like the UBE or the National Policy on Education (NPE) has necessitated a recalibration of administrative structures, leading to institutional reforms, changes in supervisory mechanisms, and curriculum revisions. However, these reforms often encounter resistance or lag due to bureaucratic inefficiencies or lack of localized adaptation.

The study focuses on the evaluation of educational policies, emphasizing their impact on school administration which includes leadership practices, decision-making processes, resource allocation, staff management, and accountability frameworks. The central problem under investigation is the dissonance between policy design and real-world administration. For instance, the introduction of policies promoting vocational education for women has not been fully matched by administrative readiness or adequate facilities in schools (Sanni, 2024). Furthermore, regional disparities within the state, coupled with poor stakeholder engagement, have led to uneven implementation and inconsistent results.

Scholars like E. CO et al. (2024) highlight the role of governance and resource management in shaping youth-focused educational interventions, particularly in politically sensitive regions like the Niger Delta. Their findings indicate that policies without localized administrative support and participatory governance are bound to face resistance or inefficiency (E. CO et al., 2024). Similarly, Abubakar et al. (2024) underscore the necessity for alignment between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and administrative mechanisms in educational institutions (Abubakar et al., 2024). This study, therefore, seeks to bridge the knowledge gap by evaluating how educational policy reforms translate into administrative realities in Nigeria, identifying systemic bottlenecks, and recommending evidence-based strategies for improved alignment and outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

Despite numerous educational reforms and policy interventions introduced in Nigeria over the years, the translation of these policies into meaningful administrative practices remains fraught with challenges particularly at the state level. In Ondo State, key educational policies such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE), the Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) policy, and frameworks for Teacher Professional Development have been adopted with the explicit goals of strengthening school leadership, improving teaching quality, and enhancing student outcomes.

However, empirical evidence and on-the-ground realities suggest a persistent disconnect between policy intent and administrative execution. Administrative inefficiency, lack of infrastructure, poor policy alignment, and inadequate stakeholder involvement have been frequently cited as significant barriers to successful policy implementation in the state (Sanni, 2024). School administrators often lack the capacity, autonomy, or resources to implement these reforms effectively. As Ogunkan et al. (2024) highlight, regional disparities and systemic governance failures further complicate the situation, resulting in inconsistent educational experiences across urban and rural schools.

Moreover, political interference and insufficient monitoring mechanisms hinder sustainable policy implementation. According to E. CO et al. (2024), such deficiencies are particularly problematic in regions like Ondo, where policies meant to address youth restiveness and unemployment are closely tied to education. When

administrative frameworks are not strengthened to support these initiatives, the result is policy redundancy or outright failure.

Another pressing issue is policy overload without capacity matching. Administrators are often burdened with implementing multiple, sometimes conflicting mandates without adequate training or structural support. Abubakar et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of aligning educational policies with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), yet Ondo State's administrative structures are not fully equipped to manage this alignment effectively leading to gaps in execution and poor educational outcomes.

In light of these challenges, this study seeks to critically evaluate how the implementation of UBE, TVE, and teacher professional development policies are affecting the actual functioning of school administration in Nigeria. The central concern is not the lack of policies, but the inadequacy of the administrative apparatus to translate these policies into practice. This misalignment has serious implications for educational quality, equity, and long-term development in the country.

Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of educational policy implementation and its impact on school administration in Ondo State, Nigeria. To achieve this overarching aim, the specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. Assess the level of implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy in Nigeria;
- ii. Evaluate the effectiveness of these educational policies including the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy;
- iii. Examine how Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy have shaped administrative practices at the institutional level; and
- iv. Identify and analyse the challenges faced by school administrators in the process of implementing Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for multiple stakeholders within the educational ecosystem in Nigeria and beyond. First, it provides empirical insights for policymakers, revealing gaps between policy design and implementation, and guiding more context-responsive policy formulation. Second, it equips educational administrators with data that highlights operational challenges and offers a basis for capacity-building programs. Third, teachers and teacher unions will benefit from a clearer understanding of how policies affect their roles and responsibilities, fostering better advocacy.

Additionally, this study contributes to the academic literature on education policy evaluation in Sub-Saharan Africa, filling a knowledge gap concerning regional-specific dynamics. It also aids non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donor agencies in designing more effective interventions aligned with policy realities and administrative capacities.

The findings of this study will provide a foundation for improving educational governance and policy execution in Nigeria. By identifying strengths and weaknesses in the current system, the research can inform reforms that are evidence-driven and tailored to local contexts. School administrators will be able to adapt strategies that align with actual policy expectations, while policymakers will better understand where support systems need reinforcement. Ultimately, students and communities stand to gain the most, as more efficient administration and policy adherence should lead to improved educational quality, access, and equity.

Concept of Educational Policy

Educational policy refers to the principles, strategies, and laws that guide the structure and delivery of education within a country or region. It is a framework that shapes the direction of education, affecting curriculum design, teaching methods, funding, teacher development, and educational outcomes. According to Sanni (2024), educational policies are designed to ensure access, equity, and quality education for all students, reflecting the values and priorities of governments and society. Policies in education often evolve in response to social, political, and economic needs, aiming to foster national development and societal transformation. Educational policy also plays a crucial role in addressing societal issues such as gender inequality, unemployment, and youth restiveness. In Ondo State, for example, the policy aimed at increasing female participation in technical and vocational education has met with mixed results. While there has been an increase in female enrolment in technical courses at the university level, administrative readiness and infrastructure remain inadequate to support these changes (Ogunkan et al., 2024). This highlights the critical need for aligning educational reforms with local

administrative realities to ensure that policies are not just theoretical but are actively implemented to bring about tangible improvements.

The concept of educational policy encompasses the strategic planning and legislative framework that governs educational systems, shaping how education is delivered, financed, and evaluated across different contexts. At its core, educational policy is a product and a process driven by political ideologies, socioeconomic dynamics, and cultural narratives that aims to influence educational practice and outcomes on a systemic level. As noted by Ball (2021), educational policy is inherently political and shaped by a range of actors including governments, international organizations, private interests, and civil society, each with different agendas. This multiplicity results in a contested space where policies may either reinforce existing inequities or aim to dismantle them.

Recent literature emphasizes the importance of evaluating educational policies not only in terms of their objectives but also in relation to their outcomes. According to Abubakar et al. (2024), the success of educational policies should be measured against global educational frameworks, such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The integration of SDG targets into national and regional educational policies in Nigeria ensures that policies are more inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to the evolving needs of the population. However, challenges related to governance, policy overload, and resource allocation often derail the achievement of these goals at the local level (E. CO et al., 2024). Lingard and Sellar (2022) highlight how global actors such as the OECD and UNESCO contribute to policy borrowing and lending, influencing national education agendas through comparative assessments like PISA. Such processes have led to a shift in policy discourse from equity and access to performance, standardization, and accountability. The neoliberal turn in education characterized by market-driven reforms, privatization, and datafication, has also been extensively examined in recent literature. Verger, Fontdevila, and Zancajo (2022) argue that these reforms often prioritise efficiency over inclusiveness, reshaping the purpose of education in a global knowledge economy.

In the context of Nigeria, educational policies have undergone significant transformations to address diverse challenges such as low enrolment rates, inadequate infrastructure, and inequality in access to quality education. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy, introduced in the early 2000s, aimed to provide free, compulsory, and universal education for children up to the junior secondary level (Ogunkan et al., 2024). Despite the policy's noble goals, its implementation has faced numerous challenges, including inadequate funding, poor monitoring systems, and political interference. According to E. CO et al. (2024), these barriers hinder the full realization of the UBE's objectives, particularly in rural and marginalized regions, where educational infrastructure is weak and administrative support is minimal. In sum, educational policy is a dynamic and multifaceted concept shaped by ideological, economic, cultural, and technological forces. Contemporary scholarship calls for more democratic, inclusive, and critically informed approaches to policy-making ones that not only respond to global trends but also honor local needs and values. Understanding the complexities behind educational policy is essential for designing systems that are equitable, effective, and sustainable in an increasingly interconnected world.

Theoretical Review

Systems Theory

For the purpose of this study the Systems Theory, originally developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1949, provides the most appropriate theoretical lens. Bertalanffy, an Austrian biologist, proposed Systems Theory as a conceptual framework for understanding the interrelatedness and interdependence of various parts within a whole system. Though initially grounded in biology, the theory has since been widely applied across disciplines, including education, organizational studies, and policy analysis.

Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1901–1972) was a pioneering biologist who challenged reductionist thinking by advocating for a holistic view of biological organisms. His General Systems Theory (GST) argued that to understand any component effectively, one must examine its function within the larger system. In educational administration, this translates to viewing schools not as isolated entities but as sub-systems embedded within the broader educational, political, and socio-economic environments.

Systems Theory posits that schools, as open systems, interact continuously with their external environments receiving inputs (e.g., policies, funding, teachers), engaging in transformation processes (e.g., teaching, administration, curriculum implementation), and producing outputs (e.g., student achievement, administrative reports). Feedback loops allow for adjustment and regulation. In the context of Ondo State, educational policies enacted at the federal or state levels serve as inputs, which are then processed by school administrators into practices that ultimately shape educational outcomes.

Despite its strengths, Systems Theory has been criticized for being too abstract and generalized, making it sometimes difficult to apply empirically to complex, real-world education systems. Scholars like Scott (1992) argue that it may oversimplify power dynamics and contextual specificities, particularly in settings with entrenched

bureaucratic or political influences. Additionally, critics such as Hoy and Miskel (2005) caution that Systems Theory assumes a level of rationality and equilibrium that may not exist in practice especially in regions with unstable funding, political interference, or inconsistent leadership, which are often observed in Nigerian educational administration.

Nonetheless, researchers such as Okoroma (2006) and Ogunode (2021) have adapted Systems Theory to Nigerian educational contexts with useful insights. Okoroma noted that many failures in Nigerian policy implementation stem from a breakdown in the systems chain typically due to poor feedback mechanisms or misalignment between policy inputs and administrative capacity. Ogunode further argues that unless all components of the system are properly aligned teachers trained, facilities available, budgets disbursed educational policies, no matter how well-conceived, will fail at the point of implementation.

Relevance to the Current Study

Systems Theory is particularly relevant to the present study for several reasons. First, it provides a structured framework to analyze how educational policies are designed, disseminated, interpreted, and executed within school administrative systems in Niger. It enables a systemic evaluation of the roles of different actors state policymakers, local education authorities, principals, and teachers in the transformation process. Second, it emphasizes the importance of feedback mechanisms, which are essential for evaluating the success or failure of policy implementation. In the context of Ondo State, where administrative feedback is often weak or non-existent, Systems Theory draws attention to the need for better monitoring and evaluative systems.

Moreover, Systems Theory aligns with the current study's interest in exploring both the internal administrative practices and their external constraints (e.g., government policies, community pressures, budgetary limitations). It allows the researcher to situate school administrative responses within a broader web of systemic interdependencies, rather than treating them in isolation.

Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have been conducted to examine how educational policies affect school administration in Nigeria, particularly in terms of implementation, effectiveness, and challenges. Ololube (2013), in his work *Educational Management, Planning and Supervision: Model for Effective Implementation*, sought to evaluate the impact of educational policies on school planning and supervision. Using a quantitative survey design, he sampled 450 school administrators and teachers in Rivers State through stratified random sampling. Data were gathered using structured questionnaires and policy document analysis. The findings revealed that despite the existence of well-formulated policies, their implementation was grossly ineffective, largely due to poor funding, lack of adequate training for school leaders, and political interference in administrative appointments. Only 27% of respondents believed educational policies had a positive influence on their administrative duties. Furthermore, over 65% of participants were unaware of the full content of the current policy frameworks guiding their schools. The study concluded that a significant gap exists between policy creation and grassroots implementation, highlighting the need for a more inclusive approach to policy dissemination and leadership development.

In another study, Akinwumi and Yusuf (2015) explored the Effects of Educational Policy on School Governance in Nigerian Public Schools, focusing on federal reforms and their correlation with administrative performance. Employing a mixed-methods design, the study involved 320 respondents from Lagos and Ogun States. Principals were selected purposively, while teachers were randomly sampled. Data were collected through structured interviews, focus group discussions, and a policy implementation checklist. The results indicated that frequent changes in government resulted in discontinuity of educational policies, which disrupted administrative planning and reduced policy effectiveness. However, schools under the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy framework showed relatively better administrative structures, including improved documentation and staff accountability. A significant finding was that 72% of principals had not received training on current policy guidelines, which contributed to weak policy implementation. The researchers concluded that policy inconsistency and inadequate training hinder effective school governance. This study called for more empirical analysis of how professional development of school leaders could enhance policy adoption and school performance.

Eze and Ezeaku (2020), in their research titled *Policy Implementation and Administrative Efficiency in Nigerian Basic Education System*, aimed to evaluate how policy implementation influences administrative effectiveness in public primary schools. The study employed a descriptive survey design and selected 210 headteachers and education officers in Enugu State through multistage sampling. Instruments used included a Policy Implementation Observation Guide (PIOG) and a school records checklist. The findings revealed that

insufficient monitoring, lack of infrastructure, and inadequate communication between policymakers and school heads significantly limited policy implementation. Graphs from the study showed that less than 35% of schools met the administrative performance benchmarks as stipulated by policy guidelines. The study concluded that centralized policymaking without localized input results in ineffective execution and low efficiency at the school level. The authors recommended decentralization of policy planning and better stakeholder collaboration to close the implementation gap. Notably, this study identified a gap in the literature regarding the role of digital tools in enhancing administrative compliance with policy provisions, suggesting a need for further research in that direction.

Adepoju, (2019) *An Evaluation of Educational Policies and Their Implementation in Nigerian Secondary Schools: Implications for Educational Administration*. The study aimed to examine how Nigerian educational policies are implemented in secondary schools, with specific focus on implications for educational administrators. The objectives included identifying policy implementation challenges, assessing administrative capacity, and evaluating outcomes on school performance. A descriptive survey design was employed, and data were collected from 210 secondary school principals across six Southwestern states, including Ondo. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used. A structured questionnaire titled “Educational Policy Implementation Assessment Questionnaire (EPIAQ)” was the main instrument. Findings revealed significant disparities between policy design and practical implementation, largely due to underfunding, inconsistent government priorities, and inadequate training of administrators. Notably, 63% of respondents reported a lack of alignment between federal policies and school realities. The study concluded that the effectiveness of educational policies is significantly influenced by administrative competence and local contextual factors. It suggested that current policies lack mechanisms for adaptability and feedback integration. A key gap identified is the absence of longitudinal evaluation studies tracking policy outcomes at the school level over time.

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive research design. This allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the effects of educational policies on school administration. The research was conducted through a pre-test and post-test approach to evaluate how the policies impacted educational outcomes in Ondo State.

Research Settings

The study was conducted in various public and private schools within Nigeria. These settings were chosen for their diversity in administration and student demographics, making them ideal for understanding the broader impact of the educational policies.

Study Population

The target population for this study comprised key stakeholders who were involved in the formulation, implementation, and operational management of educational policies within public primary and junior secondary schools across Nigeria. Specifically, this include: school administrators (such as principals, head teachers, and vice principals), classroom teachers (both senior and junior levels), and policy makers and education officials from relevant government bodies such as the State Ministry of Education and the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). These groups were selected as the focus population because they are expected to play direct and complementary roles in the administration and execution of educational policies, particularly those related to the Universal Basic Education (UBE). Their participation was crucial in providing informed perspectives on the alignment between policy intent and administrative realities in the state’s educational system.

Criteria for Inclusion

School administrators and teachers in public schools. Individuals who have been involved in policy implementation or administrative duties related to education in the past five years.

Sample Size

The sample size was determined using a formula for finite populations (Cochran, 1977). Given the estimated population of school administrators and teachers in Nigeria, the sample size was calculated as 384 participants. The sample size was established using Cochran's formula (1977).

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

$$e^2$$

Where: The Z table contains Z.

P is the estimated population percentage, while Z values of 1.96 are obtained at a 95% level of confidence. Thus, we will assume that 50% of pregnant women attending antenatal clinic have a general q of 1 and an error margin of e equal to the desired degree of precision. We assume a precision of error of 5% and a confidence level of 95%. E has a value of 0.05.

$$n_o = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

$$n_o = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n_o = \frac{(3.842) (0.25)}{0.0025}$$

$$n_o = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025}$$

$$n_o = 384$$

Sampling Technique

This study employed a stratified random sampling technique to select participants from the population of educational stakeholders in Nigeria. The strata was based on school type (public or private) and geographical location (urban and rural areas). This approach ensured that different categories of schools and regions are adequately represented, allowing the study to capture diverse perspectives on the implementation of educational policies across various contexts within the state.

Within each stratum, participants were randomly selected from four key stakeholder groups. The first group consisted of school administrators, including principals, vice principals, and head teachers. These individuals were sampled because they play a critical role in the implementation, supervision, and internal coordination of educational policies. Their participation in the study involve providing detailed information on how they interpret and enforce policy as the Universal Basic Education (UBE), They also offer insights into the administrative challenges they face in policy execution.

The second group includes classroom teachers, both at junior and senior levels. Teachers were selected because they are directly responsible for translating policy into classroom practice. Their responses was used to assess the impact of educational policies on teaching methods, access to training, professional development, curriculum delivery, and resource availability. Teachers were also reflect on how administrative support or lack thereof affects their ability to implement policy-driven reforms effectively.

The third group consist of policy makers and education officials from institutions such as the State Ministry of Education and the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). These participants were purposively selected due to their strategic involvement in policy formulation, oversight, and monitoring. Their role in the study was to clarify the original intentions behind each policy, the mechanisms put in place for enforcement, and the structural support provided to schools for implementation.

Research Instrument

Data for this study was collected using quantitative instruments. The quantitative data was obtained through a structured questionnaire. This approach provide a comprehensive understanding of the effects of educational policies on school administration in Nigeria. The questionnaire was designed to assess the awareness and effectiveness of educational policies, their impact on school administration, and the challenges faced by administrators. It consisted of five main sections:

Part A: Demographic information such as age, gender, academic qualification, and years of experience.

Part B: The level of implementation of educational policies in Ondo State.

Part C: The effectiveness of educational policies in improving administrative efficiency and decision-making.

Part D: The influence of educational policies, particularly the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy, on school administrative practices.

Part E: The challenges faced by administrators in implementing educational policies.

Validity of Instrument

The instrument was be reviewed by experts in educational policy and administration to ensure content validity. Feedback from these experts was incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire. Additionally, a pilot study was conducted to further validate the instrument.

Reliability of Research Instrument

The reliability of the research instrument was tested using the test-retest method. A reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained, which indicates a high level of consistency and reliability of the instrument for the study.

Method of Data Collection

Data collection was carried out over a period of four weeks. The researcher personally administer the questionnaires to the selected respondents in their respective schools. Follow-up visits was made to ensure that participants complete the questionnaires correctly and return them within the stipulated time. The data was collected through direct submission and retrieval from the participants to ensure a high response rate and data accuracy.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected through the questionnaire were analysed using the both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations summarise responses, while inferential statistics determine relationships and differences among study variables.

To answer the first research objective on the level of UBE policy implementation in Ondo State, descriptive statistics was used and as well tested using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) when more than two groups are compared.

For the second research objective on policy effectiveness, descriptive statistics was also be used. The associated hypothesis was tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation to determine the relationship between policy implementation and effectiveness.

The third research objective, which focuses on how the UBE policy influences administrative practices, was examined using mean and standard deviation, while the hypothesis was tested using the Simple Linear Regression to assess the influence of policy implementation on administrative practices.

For the fourth research objective on challenges faced by administrators, descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage was used to identify the key challenges. The corresponding hypothesis was tested using the Chi-square Test of Independence, depending on the level of measurement of the variables involved.

Socio-Demographic Data

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	178	46.4
	Female	206	53.6
Total (Gender)		384	100
Age Group	18 to 25 years	72	18.8
	26 to 35 years	126	32.8
	36 to 45 years	104	27.1
	46 to 60 years	62	16.1
	60 years and above	20	5.2
Total (Age Group)		384	100
Highest Level of Education	Tertiary (University or College)	214	55.7
	Postgraduate (Masters or Doctorate)	132	34.4
	Others	38	9.9
Total (Education)		384	100
Years in the Education Sector	Less than 10 years	138	35.9
	10 to 15 years	114	29.7
	15 to 20 years	78	20.3
	More than 20 years	54	14.1
Total (Years in Sector)		384	100

Note. The table shows the demographic characteristics of respondents, including gender, age, education level, and years of experience in the education sector.

The demographic characteristics of the 384 respondents show a fairly balanced representation across gender, age, education level, and years of involvement in the education sector. The gender distribution indicates that female respondents constitute a slightly higher proportion, representing 53.6 percent, while males account for 46.4 percent. This suggests that more females participated in the study. The age distribution reveals that the

highest number of respondents fall within the 26 to 35 year age group with 32.8 percent, followed by those aged 36 to 45 years who represent 27.1 percent. Respondents aged 18 to 25 years make up 18.8 percent, while those aged 46 to 60 years constitute 16.1 percent. Only 5.2 percent of the respondents are above 60 years. This indicates that the majority of the participants are within the active working age bracket.

In terms of educational qualification, most respondents possess tertiary education representing 55.7 percent. Additionally, 34.4 percent have postgraduate qualifications such as Masters or Doctorate degrees, while 9.9 percent fall under the category of other educational levels. This reflects that the sample is highly educated as expected within the education sector. Regarding years of involvement in the education sector, 35.9 percent of the respondents have less than 10 years of experience, making them the largest group. Those with 10 to 15 years of experience constitute 29.7 percent, while 20.3 percent have 15 to 20 years of experience. Respondents with more than 20 years of involvement represent 14.1 percent. This shows that the study includes participants with varying levels of professional experience, capturing both relatively new entrants and long standing practitioners in the sector.

The difference in the level of implementation of key educational policies, including the Universal Basic Education (UBE), in Nigeria.

Table 4.6 One-Way ANOVA Level of Implementation of Educational Policies by School Type

Source of Variation	SS (Sum of Squares)	df	MS (Mean Square)	F	p-value
Between Groups	4.32	2	2.16	4.57	0.012*
Within Groups	44.50	381	0.117		
Total	48.82	383			

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

The results of the One-Way ANOVA indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of implementation of key educational policies, including the Universal Basic Education (UBE), across different school types in Nigeria. The analysis produced an F-value of 4.57 with a p-value of 0.012, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This means that the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no difference in policy implementation among the school groups, is rejected.

The relationship between the implementation of educational policies and their effectiveness, including the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy, in Nigeria.

Table 4.7: Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Table

Variables	Policy Implementation (X)	Policy Effectiveness (Y)
Policy Implementation (X)	1	0.70*
Policy Effectiveness (Y)	0.70*	1

*Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed)

The Spearman's correlation analysis indicates a strong positive relationship ($\rho = 0.70$) between the implementation of educational policies and their effectiveness in Nigeria. The relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This finding suggests that schools with higher levels of policy implementation tend to report higher effectiveness in areas such as decision-making, resource utilization, staff management, and leadership.

The relationship between the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy and administrative practices at the institutional level in Nigeria.

Table 4.8: Regression Coefficients

Predictor (X)	B	SE B	β	T	p-value
Constant	1.50	0.12		12.50	0.000*
UBE Policy	0.45	0.05	0.62	9.00	0.000*

Table 4.9 Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p-value
0.62	0.38	0.37	81.0	0.000*

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

The regression analysis shows that the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy is a significant predictor of administrative practices at the institutional level in Nigeria. The model explains 38% of the variance in administrative practices ($R^2 = 0.38$), indicating a moderate effect size. The regression coefficient ($B = 0.45$, $p = 0.000$) is positive and significant, suggesting that for every one-unit increase in the UBE policy implementation

score, administrative practices improve by 0.45 units on average. The F-test ($F = 81.0, p < 0.05$) confirms that the model as a whole is statistically significant.

The relationship between the challenges faced by school administrators and the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy in Nigeria.

Table 4.10: Contingency Table

Challenges vs. Implementation	High UBE Implementation	Low UBE Implementation	Total
High Challenges	50	120	170
Low Challenges	110	104	214
Total	160	224	384

Table 4.11: Chi Square Test of Association Between Challenges and UBE Implementation

Challenges vs Implementation	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	(O minus E) ² / E
High Challenges, High Implementation	50	70.83	6.13
High Challenges, Low Implementation	120	99.17	4.39
Low Challenges, High Implementation	110	89.17	4.84
Low Challenges, Low Implementation	104	124.83	2.96
Total Chi square (χ^2)			18.32

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

The Chi-square test of independence indicates a **statistically significant association** between the challenges faced by school administrators and the level of UBE policy implementation ($\chi^2 = 18.32, p < 0.05$). In practical terms, schools where administrators face more challenges, such as inadequate funding, political interference, poor monitoring, and bureaucratic inefficiencies, tend to have **lower levels of UBE policy implementation**. Conversely, schools with fewer administrative challenges are more likely to implement the UBE policy effectively. These findings suggest that addressing administrative challenges is critical to improving the implementation of UBE in Nigeria. This means that H_{04} is rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis of the data provides clear insights into the hypotheses tested regarding educational policy implementation and its effects in Nigeria. The results showed a statistically significant difference in the level of implementation of key educational policies across different school types, suggesting that some schools are more effective in applying policies such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE) framework. This supports the notion that contextual factors, including administrative capacity and resource availability, influence how policies are enacted, and aligns with previous studies highlighting gaps between policy formulation and practical execution (Ololube, 2013; Adepoju, 2019; Akinwumi & Yusuf, 2015). The relationship between policy implementation and effectiveness was found to be strong and positive, indicating that schools where policies are more thoroughly implemented tend to achieve better administrative outcomes, including improved decision-making, resource utilization, leadership, and accountability. This finding is consistent with Ajayi and Ekundayo (2018), who reported a significant correlation between effective policy application and administrative performance, as well as Eze and Ezeaku (2020), who emphasized that monitoring, communication, and stakeholder engagement are critical to policy effectiveness.

Further, the Universal Basic Education policy was identified as a significant predictor of administrative practices, with regression analysis showing that higher levels of UBE implementation were associated with improvements in leadership, staff management, and organizational structuring. These results mirror findings by Adepoju (2019) and Akinwumi and Yusuf (2015), demonstrating that well-implemented policies positively influence administrative efficiency and school governance. The challenges faced by administrators, such as inadequate funding, political interference, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and insufficient training, were found to have a significant association with policy implementation. The Chi-square test indicated that schools experiencing higher administrative challenges were less likely to implement UBE policies effectively. This supports earlier studies (Ololube, 2013; Ogunode & Fatima, 2021) which noted that systemic obstacles and operational constraints undermine policy adoption and reduce administrative effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can therefore be concluded that the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria, including the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy, has a significant but uneven impact on school administration. While policies provide a framework for improving administrative practices, decision-making,

leadership, staff management, and resource utilization, their effectiveness is constrained by systemic challenges such as inadequate funding, insufficient training for administrators, political interference, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and limited stakeholder engagement. These challenges create gaps between policy formulation and practical application, resulting in moderate levels of policy implementation and variability in administrative outcomes across schools.

Furthermore, the findings concludes that schools where policies are more thoroughly implemented tend to exhibit better administrative efficiency, structured organizational practices, and higher accountability, demonstrating a positive relationship between policy enactment and institutional effectiveness. In addition, the study highlights that the UBE policy, when effectively applied, can serve as a significant predictor of improved administrative practices, including enhanced collaboration among staff, clearer role definitions, and more organized school operations.

The results also concluded that the challenges faced by administrators are closely associated with lower levels of policy implementation, indicating that addressing these obstacles is essential for achieving the full potential of educational reforms. It can therefore be concluded that while the presence of well-formulated educational policies is necessary, it is not sufficient; the successful translation of policies into meaningful outcomes depends on adequate funding, capacity building, effective monitoring, consistent communication, and active involvement of all stakeholders.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to improve the implementation and effectiveness of educational policies in Nigeria:

1. Adequate and consistent financial support should be provided to schools to enable full implementation of educational policies, including the UBE policy. This funding should cover infrastructure, teaching materials, and administrative resources to strengthen school operations.
2. Regular professional development programs should be instituted to equip school leaders with skills in leadership, policy interpretation, decision-making, monitoring, and resource management. Well-trained administrators are better able to translate policy frameworks into effective school practices.
3. A structured monitoring and evaluation mechanism should be implemented to track the progress of policy implementation, identify gaps, and provide feedback for improvement. This will enhance accountability and ensure policies are effectively enacted across all schools.
4. Measures should be taken to reduce obstacles such as political interference, bureaucratic inefficiencies, resistance from staff, and limited autonomy. Streamlined administrative processes and empowerment of school leaders will facilitate smoother policy adoption and implementation.
5. Policymakers should involve administrators, teachers, parents, and community members in the design, dissemination, and review of educational policies. Active participation ensures policies are contextually relevant, well-understood, and more effectively implemented at the school level.

Contributions to knowledge

The study makes several contributions to knowledge in the field of educational policy implementation and school administration. Firstly, it provides empirical evidence on the current state of policy implementation in Nigeria, highlighting both successes and areas of deficiency. By linking policy enactment to administrative efficiency, decision-making, leadership effectiveness, staff management, and resource utilization, the study deepens understanding of how educational policies, including the UBE framework, influence day-to-day school operations. It also identifies key challenges such as inadequate funding, political interference, insufficient training, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and limited stakeholder engagement that hinder effective policy implementation, providing a nuanced picture of the systemic and operational factors affecting school administration. In addition, the study offers insights into the predictive relationship between the UBE policy and administrative practices, demonstrating that well-implemented policies can significantly enhance institutional efficiency, collaboration, accountability, and organizational structure. This contributes to existing literature by emphasizing the importance of local contextual factors and administrative capacity in bridging the gap between policy formulation and practical execution.

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