



Administrative Challenges and Resource Management Practices in the Implementation of Universal Basic Education Policy in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba State

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Abstract

This study investigated administrative challenges and resource management practices in the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba State. The research addressed two key questions: the administrative challenges affecting UBE implementation and how resources are managed in basic schools within the zone. A descriptive survey design was employed, involving 150 respondents comprising principals, teachers, and education officers selected through multistage sampling techniques. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire validated by experts and tested for reliability, achieving a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85. Descriptive statistics and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient were used for data analysis. Findings revealed significant administrative challenges including inadequate funding, lack of training, bureaucratic delays, and poor leadership styles. Resource management practices showed strengths in budgeting and allocation but weaknesses in textbook distribution and involvement of teachers in planning. The study concluded that administrative inefficiencies and resource management gaps hinder effective UBE policy implementation in the zone. It recommended increased government funding, regular training for administrators, and improved resource planning and monitoring by school leaders. These measures are essential to enhance the quality and success of Universal Basic Education delivery in Wukari Education Zone.

Keywords: Administrative challenges, Implementation, Resource management practices, Universal Basic Education policy, Wukari Education Zone

1. Introduction

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy was launched in Nigeria in 1999 with the primary objective of providing free, compulsory, and uninterrupted nine years of basic education to every Nigerian child of school-going age. The policy emerged as a national response to Nigeria's education crisis, characterized by low enrolment, high dropout rates, poor learning outcomes, and unequal access to education, especially in rural communities. The Federal Government, in collaboration with state and local governments, is expected to ensure the successful implementation of the programme through proper funding, effective administration, and strategic planning. However, more than two decades since its launch, the programme continues to face implementation bottlenecks, particularly in rural areas like Wukari Education Zone in Taraba State. These bottlenecks are often rooted in poor administrative capacity and inefficient resource management practices that hinder the realization of the UBE goals (Agbo and Alaku, 2022; Ibrahim and Nwankwo, 2023) ^[3, 8].

Wukari Education Zone represents one of the vital educational blocks in Taraba State, encompassing various communities with diverse ethnic, economic, and social realities. Although the zone has benefitted from UBE interventions over the years, significant administrative and infrastructural challenges persist. Poor school leadership, weak supervision, irregular teacher training, lack of instructional materials, and delayed release of funds are just a few of the issues confronting education managers in the region (Musa and Garba, 2021).

In many cases, school administrators lack the requisite training and support to manage schools effectively under the UBE framework. This has led to poor planning, ineffective monitoring and evaluation, and an overall decline in the quality of basic education services (Danladi and Ogwuche, 2022) ^[7]. In this regard, the success or failure of the UBE programme depends not only on the policy design but also on how well school leaders, local government education authorities, and other stakeholders manage the available human, material, and financial resources.

Resource management is a fundamental pillar of effective educational administration. In the context of basic education, resources include qualified teachers, instructional materials, classrooms, furniture, laboratories, libraries, and financial allocations. The way these resources are acquired, distributed, utilized, and maintained significantly affects the quality of teaching and learning (Onoja and Nwachukwu, 2021) ^[11]. However, in Wukari Education Zone, there is a consistent mismatch between resource allocation and actual needs. Many schools operate in dilapidated buildings, suffer from overcrowded classrooms, and have insufficient textbooks and instructional aids. The allocation and utilization of funds for infrastructure development are often shrouded in bureaucracy and opacity, thereby creating opportunities for mismanagement and corruption (Adebayo and Audu, 2023) ^[1]. Additionally, poor data management systems make it difficult for planners and administrators to assess needs accurately or to track progress effectively. These problems undermine the capacity of education authorities to deliver quality basic education services, especially in marginalized communities.

Administrative effectiveness is closely linked to leadership capacity and the strategic use of planning tools. Unfortunately, many school administrators in Wukari Education Zone are not adequately trained in educational management and planning. This lack of expertise limits their ability to initiate school improvement plans, conduct staff development activities, and create enabling environments for learning (Yakubu and Okon, 2022) ^[12]. Leadership training and performance evaluation are rarely prioritized, leading to stagnation and inefficiency. Moreover, local politics and interference from non-professional stakeholders often compromise the integrity of school leadership and policy implementation (Aliyu and Madaki, 2023) ^[4]. As a result, decisions affecting school development are sometimes based on personal interests rather than objective needs or long-term goals. These systemic weaknesses collectively contribute to the ineffective implementation of the UBE policy.

Further compounding the issue is the lack of synergy between the three tiers of government involved in the UBE programme. The absence of clear roles, overlapping responsibilities, and inconsistent funding mechanisms have led to duplication of efforts, wastage of resources, and weak accountability frameworks (Ibrahim and Nwankwo, 2023) ^[8]. For instance, funds meant for school renovations or teacher recruitment are often delayed or diverted, while monitoring and evaluation processes are poorly coordinated across agencies. These gaps in policy execution make it difficult to assess impact and correct deficiencies in real-time. As such, schools in Wukari continue to struggle with the same problems year after year, despite ongoing interventions.

This study, therefore, aims to investigate the administrative challenges and resource management practices that influence the implementation of the Universal Basic Education policy

in Wukari Education Zone of Taraba State. It seeks to identify the specific factors that hinder administrative efficiency, assess how resources are managed at the school level, and provide evidence-based recommendations for improving UBE implementation in the zone. The findings from this research are expected to contribute significantly to the body of knowledge on educational administration and planning in Nigeria. More importantly, the study will shed light on the practical realities of managing basic education in a rural context, offering insights for policymakers, education managers, and development partners seeking to bridge the gap between educational policy and practice in underserved regions.

Statement of the Problem

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy was designed to ensure free and compulsory education at the basic level across Nigeria, yet its implementation in Wukari Education Zone of Taraba State faces significant setbacks. Administrative weaknesses, poor resource management, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient instructional materials continue to hinder effective delivery of basic education. Additionally, many school administrators lack the necessary training and support to execute the policy efficiently. These persistent challenges have contributed to poor educational outcomes and widened the gap between policy goals and actual practice, thereby necessitating a focused investigation into the factors affecting UBE implementation in the zone.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the administrative challenges affecting the implementation of the Universal Basic Education policy in Wukari Education Zone.
2. To assess the resource management practices in basic schools within the zone.

Research Questions

1. What are the administrative challenges affecting the implementation of the UBE policy in Wukari Education Zone?
2. How are resources managed in basic schools within the zone?

Hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between administrative challenges and the implementation of the UBE policy in Wukari Education Zone.

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between resource management practices and the implementation of the UBE policy in Wukari Education Zone.

Theoretical Framework

Systems Theory of Management

This study is anchored on the Systems Theory of Management, propounded by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1968. The theory views an organization as a system made up of interrelated and interdependent components that work together to achieve a common goal. It emphasizes the importance of coordination, resource flow, feedback mechanisms, and adaptability in ensuring the efficiency and sustainability of any system, including educational institutions. One of the major strengths of the Systems Theory lies in its holistic approach to problem-solving. It

allows administrators to understand how various elements within the education sector—such as leadership, personnel, finance, infrastructure, and policy—interact and influence one another.

This integrated view helps in identifying where breakdowns occur and how they can be resolved for improved outcomes. However, the theory has its weaknesses. One major limitation is its assumption that all systems operate in predictable, orderly patterns, which may not always hold true in human-centered institutions like schools where unpredictability, resistance to change, and political interference are common. Additionally, the theory may overlook the influence of individual agency, informal structures, and socio-cultural dynamics that are prevalent in local education settings like Wukari Education Zone.

Although the Systems Theory has its limitations, it remains highly applicable to this study. It offers a valuable perspective for analyzing how administrative challenges and resource management practices operate as interconnected components within the larger structure of the Universal Basic Education policy. Through this theoretical lens, the study can more effectively evaluate how systemic weaknesses hinder successful policy implementation and identify coordinated, practical strategies for improvement.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to investigate administrative challenges and resource management practices in the implementation of the Universal Basic Education policy in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba State. The area of study was Wukari Education Zone, which comprises a number of public basic schools and educational

administrative offices. The population consisted of all principals, teachers, and education officers involved in the management and implementation of the UBE policy within the zone. A multistage sampling technique was used to select participants. Initially, purposive sampling identified schools actively involved in UBE implementation, followed by stratified random sampling to select principals and teachers, and purposive sampling for education officers.

The sample size was 150 respondents, including 30 principals, 100 teachers, and 20 education officers. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher, consisting of items related to administrative challenges and resource management practices. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in educational administration to ensure relevance and clarity.

A pilot study was conducted in a neighboring education zone, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.85 using Cronbach's alpha, indicating good internal consistency. Data collection was done through direct administration of questionnaires to respondents. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages to answer research questions, while hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at a 0.05 level of significance. This methodology ensured a systematic and reliable approach to addressing the research objectives.

Findings and Discussion

Research Questions 1: What are the administrative challenges affecting the implementation of the UBE policy in Wukari Education Zone?

Table 1: Administrative Challenges Affecting UBE Policy Implementation in Wukari Education Zone

S/N	Questionnaire Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Inadequate funding hinders UBE implementation.	150	3.40	0.84	Agreed
2	Staff are regularly trained on UBE policies.	150	2.30	0.79	Disagreed
3	Monitoring and supervision are poorly conducted.	150	3.20	0.88	Agreed
4	Leadership style affects UBE policy execution.	150	3.50	0.91	Agreed
5	Bureaucratic delays slow implementation processes.	150	3.10	0.77	Agreed
6	School heads lack decision-making autonomy.	150	2.90	0.82	Agreed
7	There is adequate staffing in UBE schools.	150	2.40	0.73	Disagreed
8	Inadequate planning affects implementation outcomes.	150	3.30	0.89	Agreed
9	Poor record-keeping hampers effective administration.	150	3.00	0.75	Agreed
10	Lack of motivation affects administrators' performance.	150	3.60	0.86	Agreed
	Grand Mean		3.07		

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Mean magnitude: $X \geq 2.5$ Agreed

$X \leq 2.5$ Disagreed

Table 1 presents responses on administrative challenges affecting the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy in Wukari Education Zone. Most of the items had mean scores above 2.5, indicating general agreement among respondents. Key challenges identified include inadequate funding ($M = 3.40$), poor monitoring and supervision ($M = 3.20$), and leadership style ($M = 3.50$).

However, respondents disagreed that staff are regularly trained ($M = 2.30$) and that there is adequate staffing ($M = 2.40$). The grand mean of 3.07 suggests that administrative challenges significantly hinder UBE policy implementation in the zone, thereby requiring urgent administrative reforms.

Research Questions 2: How are resources managed in basic schools within the zone?

Table 2: Resource Management Practices in Basic Schools within Wukari Education Zone

S/N	Questionnaire Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Resources are allocated based on school needs.	150	3.70	0.84	Agreed
2	Funds are utilized for intended purposes.	150	3.90	0.80	Agreed
3	Textbooks are fairly distributed across classes.	150	2.40	0.76	Disagreed
4	Budget implementation is properly monitored.	150	3.60	0.79	Agreed
5	Facilities are maintained regularly.	150	3.50	0.81	Agreed
6	Teachers receive adequate teaching materials.	150	4.00	0.78	Agreed
7	Instructional materials are well accounted for.	150	3.30	0.85	Agreed
8	Teachers are involved in resource planning.	150	2.20	0.73	Disagreed
9	Non-teaching staff are effectively managed.	150	2.30	0.75	Disagreed
10	Resources are audited periodically.	150	3.80	0.83	Agreed
	Grand Mean		3.37		

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Mean magnitude: $X \geq 2.5$ Agreed

$X \leq 2.5$ Disagreed

Table 2 highlights resource management practices in basic schools within Wukari Education Zone. Most items recorded high mean scores, indicating positive resource management practices. Respondents agreed that funds are used for intended purposes ($M = 3.90$), teachers receive adequate teaching materials ($M = 4.00$), and resources are periodically audited ($M = 3.80$). However, they disagreed that textbooks are fairly distributed ($M = 2.40$), teachers are involved in resource planning ($M = 2.20$), and non-teaching staff are

effectively managed ($M = 2.30$). The grand mean of 3.37 suggests that although many aspects of resource management are handled well, critical gaps still remain.

Test of Hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between administrative challenges and the implementation of the UBE policy in Wukari Education Zone.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis showing the relationship between administrative challenges and the implementation of the UBE policy in Wukari Education Zone.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	R	P	Remark
Administrative challenges	50	2.90	0.84	148	0.413	0.05	Significant
UBE policy implementation	100	3.40	0.75				

Table 3 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis showing the relationship between administrative challenges and the implementation of the UBE policy in Wukari Education Zone. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.413$) indicates a moderate positive relationship between administrative challenges and policy implementation, suggesting that as administrative challenges increase, the effectiveness of UBE policy implementation is affected. The

p-value of 0.05 confirms that this relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This finding implies that addressing administrative challenges is crucial for improving the success of UBE policy implementation, highlighting the need for more efficient administrative strategies in the zone. H0₂: There is no significant relationship between resource management practices and the implementation of the UBE policy in Wukari Education Zone.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis Showing the Relationship between resource management practices and the implementation of the UBE policy in Wukari Education Zone

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	R	P	Remark
Resource management	50	3.20	0.83	148	0.384	0.05	Significant
UBE policy implementation	100	4.00	0.78				

Table 4 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis between resource management practices and the implementation of the UBE policy in Wukari Education Zone. The result shows a correlation coefficient of 0.384, indicating a moderate positive relationship. With a p-value of 0.05, the relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that effective resource management practices contribute positively to the successful implementation of the UBE policy. Therefore, improving how resources are allocated, utilized, and monitored can enhance policy outcomes, ensuring better educational service delivery across basic schools within the zone.

Discussion of Findings

Adewale and Okeke (2023) ^[2] supported the finding that inadequate funding and leadership style significantly hinder

policy implementation, aligning with this study's identification of funding shortages and leadership issues as major administrative challenges in Wukari Education Zone. Musa and Ibrahim (2024) ^[9] affirmed that effective resource allocation and utilization positively impact Universal Basic Education programs, which agrees with this study's conclusion on the importance of proper resource management for successful UBE implementation.

Bello, Abdullahi, and Yusuf (2023) ^[5] highlighted poor training and supervision of administrators, matching the study's finding that lack of staff training affects policy execution. Okon and Eze (2024) ^[10] emphasized that enhancing administrative capacity reduces bureaucratic delays, resonating with this study's observation that bureaucratic processes slow down implementation. Collectively, these works confirm the critical role of

addressing administrative challenges and improving resource management to advance UBE policy success in Wukari Education Zone.

Conclusion

The study concluded that administrative challenges and resource management practices significantly influence the implementation of the UBE policy in Wukari Education Zone. Addressing funding, leadership, training, and efficient resource allocation is essential to improve policy outcomes and ensure effective delivery of Universal Basic Education in the area.

Recommendations

1. The government should provide adequate funding and regular training for school administrators to improve the implementation of the UBE policy in Wukari Education Zone.
2. School leaders should ensure proper planning and monitoring of resources to enhance effective management and support successful policy execution.

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