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The Impact of the Universal Basic Education Program in Addressing Rural Secondary School Drop Outs

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Walden University
2016

Abstract

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School Drop Outs

by

Chinwe A. Mordi

LL.M, Birmingham City University, United Kingdom, 2012

LL.B, University of Benin, Nigeria, 2008

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

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November 2016

Abstract

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) was designed to address the social problem of drop outs in secondary schools, but dropout rates in secondary schools are still at a 42% high in Enugu State, Nigeria. This study sought to understand teachers' perceptions of the program, the ways the UBE impacted the dropout problem, and what could be done to the UBE program to make it more effective. This study provided an important contribution to the literature, as it examined an often neglected perspective: the input of teachers in the field, as opposed to those of policy planners at the top. The conceptual framework was Elmore's bottom-up approach to implementation theory, which promotes the use of a backward mapping structure to evaluate a policy/reform implementation and proffers points for future changes. A case study design was employed, using 10 participants and 5 schools across 3 school forms. Interview data were analyzed employing the inductive coding structure to identify themes and patterns. Results indicated that the UBE implementation was only observed in public schools and that no attention was paid to curriculum development. Better planning, implementation, monitoring, and more stakeholder involvement were suggested for higher impacting future reforms. The implication for social change include exposing the factors that surrounded the implementation of the UBE whilst describing the importance of stakeholders in reforms, and how stakeholder involvement could be harnessed to producing better impacting reforms in Nigeria.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my husband, Tochukwu, who has supported and encouraged me in pursuing this doctoral dream. I thank him for constantly motivating me to keep on working at this dream. During this journey, he became my student and my teacher. Thank you for taking care of me. I will always love, cherish, and admire you.

I also dedicate this work to Dr. Sheldon Cooper and his colleagues from the *Big Bang Theory* who made me realize that being a doctor is achievable.

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I would also like to appreciate my parents who supported me throughout my academic pursuits and encouraged me when I felt I was stagnant. Thank you for believing in me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The ministry of education in Enugu State, through the Post Primary Schools

Management Board (PPSMB), estimated that in 2014, 42% of girls in junior secondary

schools in the state dropped out before graduation (PPMSB, 2014). The study reported

that this figure differed in schools and localities across the state. The dropout of girls in

junior secondary schools was not limited to Enugu State alone, but was also observed in

all the states of the federation (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2014). The United

Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2012) report

showed that between 2000 and 2010, 40% of the children in junior secondary schools in

Nigeria dropped out before graduation. This statistic placed Nigeria as one of the

countries with the highest secondary school dropout rates (UNESCO, 2012).

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy program of 1999 was designed to tackle the

problem of dropouts in secondary schools in the country (Federal Ministry of Education

Nigeria, 2000). With this study, I sought to find out what impact the implementation of

the UBE policy program (after over 10 years of its implementation) has had in tackling

dropout rates amongst women in rural secondary schools of Enugu State. The study

looked at the factors that impacted schools' capacities to maintain the average 42%

dropout figure and what could be done to further reduce this figure among schools in

rural communities. This impact was adjudged from the perceptions and experiences of

the frontline implementers or actors (teachers) of this policy.

Background

Different educational policies have been conceived and implemented in Nigeria. The motives for their enactment differ, but it is believed that each new one is an improvement on the former one (Uko-Aviomoh , Okoh, & Omatseye, 2007). The UBE was designed to be an improvement of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) by tendering to the deficiencies of the latter program (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). One of such deficiencies was the drop out problem, which sees children in primary and secondary schools for varying reasons, leave school abruptly and fail to finish their education. Policy makers have drawn up a number of reasons why they felt the UPE program was unable to address the problem of school dropouts, and they sought to incorporate solution strategies in the UBE program that would take care of the problem (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). With this study, I sought to understand how well the deployment of these strategies and the policy in general, has impacted the system's ability to tackle dropout rates in secondary schools. In this study, I did not take the evaluation of the UBE policy from the perspective of the policy makers; but rather, I took it from the view point of some frontline actors – secondary school teachers. I hoped that this approach would give policy makers an idea of how well their strategies have worked in impacting the problem, how well their strategies have been implemented in rural areas of the country, and how local sensitive factors have influenced the level of this policy impact.

The foremost law on education in Nigeria is the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN; 1999). The constitution provides as its educational objectives the following:

Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels. Government shall promote science and technology. Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy; and to this end, Government shall as and when practicable, provide: (a) free, compulsory and universal primary education; (b) free secondary education; (c) free university education; and (d) free adult literacy programme (CFRN Const. Chap. II, § 18).

While education is provided for in the constitution, it is not considered a fundamental human right but a class of rights known as *non-justiciable rights* (CFRN Const. Chap. II, § 6). Non-justiciable rights define a class of rights that cannot be sued upon. Furthermore, legislation is said to be non-justiciable when it cannot be enforced by courts (CFRN Const. Chap. II, § 6). This is paradoxical because all the provisions of a constitution ought to justiciable and enforceable, as the constitution is the foundational law of a country. This non-enforceability creates the question of why provide for a law when it cannot be enforced. The non-justiciability of the provisions of Chapter II of the constitution is provided for in Section 6(6)c which states that:

The judicial power vested in accordance with the foregoing provisions of this section shall not, except as otherwise provide by this constitution, extend to any issue or question as to whether any act or omission by any authority or person as

to whether any law or any judicial decision is in conformity with the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy set out in Chapter 11 of this constitution (CFRN Const. Chap. II, § 6).

This non-justiciable position of the constitution has been judicially recognized in a plethora of cases such as the case of Archbishop Anthony Okogie v. AG Lagos, State 23, where it was decided that:

> While Section 13 of the constitution makes it a duty and responsibility of the judiciary among other organs of government to conform to and apply the provisions of Chapter II, section 6(6)(c) of the same constitution makes it clear that no court has jurisdiction to pronounce any decision as to whether any organ of government has acted or is acting in conformity with the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy. It is clear therefore that Section 13 has not made Chapter II of the constitution justiciable (Archbishop Anthony Okogie v. AG Lagos State, 1981, 23 NCLR 337 at 350).

This emphasis on the no justiciability of the provisions of Chapter II of the Nigerian Constitution goes to show that while the provision of education to all is seen as a basic necessity, it is not seen as a fundamental human right which could be litigated upon to ensure its implementation and effectiveness. The constitution clearly states that the government shall make educational provisions "as and when practicable" (CFRN Const. Chap. II, § 6). This constitutional provision means that the government is not obligated to provide the above rights, where it is "deemed impracticable to do so" (CFRN

Const. Chap. II, § 6). Nevertheless, the inclusion of these rights in the constitution makes them a focal point as a source of policy for the Nigerian government. Governments all over the world have striven to show their commitment to education through enacting policies and policy backed programs.

The inability of the federal government to ensure that the provision of free and compulsory education is a fundamental right, has led the ministry of education, which is the government ministry in charge of education and other related matters in Nigeria, to propose and pass the UBE policy (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). The UBE program was launched by the Nigerian Federal Government in 1999 to ensure unfettered access to 9 years of formal basic education (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). This included 6 years of primary school education and 3 years of secondary school education in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). This education as proposed by policy makers was expected to be free. The UBE program also aimed at reducing the incidence of dropouts from the school system through improved relevance, quality, and efficiency of the school system (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). The program focused on ensuring that the students acquire appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, life skills, ethics, and morals needed for laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). The above policy mandated the federal government to provide free, compulsory, and universal basic education for every child of primary and junior secondary school age.

Looking back, the first instance of universal education experienced in Nigeria, was the Universal Primary Education (UPE) introduced by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, in the western region of Nigeria through the education law of 1955 (Taiwo, 1980). Chief Awolowo insisted that primary education must be free, compulsory, and universal (Taiwo, 1980). This came at a time when the western, eastern, northern, and the federal territory of Lagos had the power to make laws for themselves as a consequence of the adoption of the 1954 constitution of Nigeria (Taiwo, 1980). The program instituted by Chief Awolowo began an education revolution in Nigeria, which saw enrolment rate increase amongst schools in the western region (Taiwo, 1980). With the introduction of the UPE program, it was observed that the number of pupils attending primary schools, increased from 457,000 to 811,000 in 1954 (Taiwo, 1980). An increase of 10,000 primary school teachers was recorded as a result of the intensive recruitment and training measures put in place by the government to ensure that education was free and universal (Taiwo, 1980). The budget of the Western region was also increased from £2.2million to £5.4million to cater for the program (Taiwo, 1980).

This impressive feat achieved by the western region, spurred the eastern region of Nigeria to commence their pursuit of the UPE (Taiwo, 1980). This UPE program commencement was interpreted by Eddy and Akpan (2009) to be a political move by the eastern region to maintain its relevance. The UPE initiated by the eastern region of Nigeria suffered an early death, due to hasty and poor planning (Eddy & Akpan, 2009).

Since the independence of Nigeria from Britain in 1960, several laws, policies, and edicts on education have been enacted depending on the type of government in place. The military government, which lasted from 1983 to 1999, enacted decrees and edicts while the civilian government established laws and policies (Taiwo, 1980). The 1977 national policy on education, enacted by the then military government, was Nigeria's first attempt at establishing an education policy for the whole country (Ejere, 2011). This policy combined the educational policies already existing in the eastern and western region of Nigeria with the Islamic education of the north to establish a policy on education (Taiwo, 1980). The policy had as its aim: The development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and the provision of access to education for all persons (Taiwo, 1980). The policy also emphasized the need for vocational training of individuals by schools, as a means of manpower development, and by extension, national development (Taiwo, 1980). The national policy on education was one of the first attempts in using education as an equalizing tool for all persons, regardless of any real or imagined disability (Ejere, 2011). Since the enactment of the 1977 national policy on education, the federal government has maintained the right and access to education by entrenching same in the constitution (Taiwo, 1980).

A striking point about the UBE program of 1999 is that it was established by the same president, in the person of President Olusegun Obasanjo, when he was elected democratically in 1999, who also established the National Policy on Education in 1977, as the then Military Head of State of Nigeria (Taiwo, 1980). The UBE program was

introduced as a means to reform, re-establish, and advance the UPE, which was started in

1977 but abandoned halfway partly because of change in administration (Taiwo, 1980).

The intention of the UBE was to correct the shortcomings of the UPE and improve on the

foundation laid by the UPE. This improvement was made by changing some of the

features of the UPE (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). For example, the

UBE extended the age an individual should receive compulsory basic formal education to

15 years and included adult education and non formal vocational education both at the

primary and secondary school levels (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). The

UBE is focused on making education universal and applicable to all persons in Nigeria

(Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). This emphasis on the term *universal*,

made away with other existing modes of education, already being promoted and practiced

in the different regions of Nigeria. The universality of the program meant that it was for

everyone regardless of class, race, sex, tribe, and culture. The program was designed to

cover the basic education that any individual should have (Federal Ministry of Education

Nigeria, 2000). A basic education has been described as the level, type, and form of

learning that is needed to build firm roots for literacy and numeracy, inculcate basic life

skills, and consolidate the skills of learning how to learn (Federal Ministry of Education

Nigeria, 2000). In Nigeria, before the establishment of the UBE, the educational system

in place was the 6-3-3-4 system. This system was represented as: 6 years of basic primary

education, 3 years of junior secondary education, 3 years of senior secondary education,

and 4 years of tertiary education. The UBE changed the educational system to a 9-3-4

system which is represented as 9 years of basic education, which includes junior

secondary education; 3 years of senior secondary education; and 4 years of tertiary

education (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). As a result of the

aforementioned change in the educational system, the entrance examination that was

conducted as a prerequisite for junior secondary school education was abolished, and

junior secondary schools were given their autonomy from the senior secondary schools

(PPSMB, 2008). The rationale was that the continuous flow of education from primary to

junior secondary would advance the cause of the policy (PPSMB, 2008).

A number of challenges have been identified since the implementation of the

UBE program. Some of the problems have included absence of a structure to enforce

standards and ethical industrial practices; lack of monitoring to enhance conforming to

these standards (Sulaiman, 2008); lack of public sensitization on the value of education

for children; lack of commitment by policy implementers; the political nature of policy

promulgation and implementation (Ejere, 2011); poor policy resources, weak standards,

and vague objectives (Adeyemi & Ositoye, 2010),; and lack of human development to

promote the program (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen, 2006). Most of these researchers proffered

solutions to these problems without taking into consideration:

- The complexity of the Nigerian social and economic terrain. The Nigerian

    terrain now dictates that we have urban and rural areas (Nigerian Census

    Report, 2006). Urban and rural areas have different economic and social

    strengths, which play a major role in influencing whatever programs that

would be implemented in these areas. No prior research has studied implementation in their local context (rural areas in the case of this study).

- There has been new advancement in the educational industry in Nigeria that had not been made when the UBE was being planned out. Privately owned and run secondary schools outnumber those owned and run by the government, even in rural areas (Okecha, 2008; PPMSB, 2014). This brings a different twist into how policies should be standardized across board.

- The government is not the only stakeholder in the implementation of the UBE program. Although major decisions could come from the top, actualization would be done by the participants or actors on the field. Invariably, these actors have something to contribute in order to promote effective implementation and increased impact.

Therefore, with this study I sought to understand what impact the implementation of the UBE program has had on the schools' capacity and developmental ability, in order for them to address the dropout rates of females in rural secondary schools. Through conducting the study, I hoped to answer the following questions:

1. Has implementation of the policy been adaptable in rural areas as well as across different schools administrations and ownerships?

2. Has the implementation of the program impacted dropout rates?

3. Was there indeed a need for a policy change in the first place?

4. What major factors have affected or influenced the impact of the

   implementation of the UBE program?

5. What in the future, is the place of primary field implementers of public

   policies with respect to policy change promulgation, design, and

   implementation?

Problem Statement

Policy planning and implementation is a part of every democratic process

(Masango, 2008). Naidu (2005) defined policy to be any action made and implemented

by the government to achieve a specific goal. The development of educational reform

policies and strategies, like the UBE in Nigeria, has been regarded as not new, but rather

unsuccessful due to poor planning and implementation (Uko-Aviomoh, Okoh, &

Omatseye, 2007). Ejere (2011) is of the opinion that the frequent rate at which policies

changed in developing countries has contributed to their low level of impact. Failure to

adequately define the issue being addressed by the policy, has being touted as a factor

hindering policy implementation (Chirac, Zsuzsanna, & Szabo, 2014).

The peculiar characteristics of the recipient system of a public policy is key to the

effective implementation of that policy and should be taken into consideration (Phillips

M, Raczynski, Goodell, & Philyaw, 2012). Although research has been done on

evaluating the performance of the UBE from the view point of the government and policy

makers (Ejere, 2011; Omotayo, Ihebereme, & Maduewesi, 2008;Uko-Aviomoh, Okoh, &

Omatseye, 2007), no research has been done from perspective of frontline participants.

Randhir (1990) highlighted the need for a system of constant evaluation and analysis of public policies, which would require continuous feedback from the actors on the field. Therefore, in this study, I focused on finding out ways secondary school teachers in Enugu State believe the implementation of the UBE program has impacted and enabled the school system to tackle the issue of school dropouts among women. This approach has been championed as a possible source of influence on future successful policy creation and expedient implementation (Gropper, Lonis-Shumate, & Gaines, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to address an under researched area of public policy implementation, using the inputs of stakeholders on the field (Randhir, 1990). By exploring what school principals and head teachers consider to have been the impact of the UBE on schools' capacity to affect dropout rates, themes could come up that would enrich the body of knowledge on education reform implementation in rural areas and arrest the dropout rates of women in secondary schools. The results of this study will also provide insights on how educational policies can be developed in the future and implemented to suit the receiving population, especially female students from rural areas. These results will achieve my aims for the study and help address inequalities in the society, whilst improving nation building. As the results would provide an improved structure focused on developing and equipping individuals of the nation, and also triggering other forms of capacity development in the nation,

Research Questions

In any research, the reason for the study is more important than the method of the study; hence, it is necessary that the research question reflects what the researcher wants to know (Stake, 2010). In the qualitative research approach, the research question is the most important aspect of the research because it determines the research to be carried out (Stake, 2010). Simply put, the research question guides the study. For this research, I formulated the following single research question:

With respect to addressing the dropout rate of women in secondary schools, what themes emerge in the reports of head teachers/principals on the impact of the implementation of the UBE policy on schools' organizational capacity and teacher development? To answer this research question, I conducted interviews with the head teachers and principals of secondary schools in a community in Enugu State and analyzed the themes that emanated from the interviews.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was Elmore's (1979) bottom-up approach to implementation theory. I chose this theory because this theoretical approach addresses evaluating policy implementation using the *bottom-up* approach. By bottom up, Elmore meant evaluating policy implementation through experiences on the field, or making policy change and evaluation originate from a lower or local level (Matland, 1995). Elmore's work provides details on how effective policy implementation is a function of the complex local realities. These realities include local actors; their goals;

their functioning environment, strategies, and activities; and their linkup with national and regional policy planners, executers, and financiers (Elmore, 1979). Application of the bottom-up approach offered not just guidance on ways to enhance academic development on effective policy implementation especially in rural areas, but it also provided new insights on how to establish the enabling framework or environment wherein the impact of policy implementation could be maximized.

The bottoms-up approach makes use of obtaining information from target groups: Active actors involved in carrying out the activities of implementation (Elmore, 1979). Bottom-up approach theorists such as, Elmore (1979), Barret and Fudge (1981), and Hjern and Hull (1982), have criticized top-down theorists stating that they only took into consideration the key players in policy formulation such as the central decision makers, thereby overlooking other stakeholders of the policy. The bottom-up approach seeks to identify all the stakeholders or actors who are involved in the implementation of the policy and interview them about their experiences and perceptions (Randhir, 1990). The approach further uses the information gathered to build up a knowledge base about the policy (Randhir, 1990).

In using this approach, I focused on the stakeholders who implement the UBE - head teachers and principals. The aforementioned stakeholders are the most direct actors implementing the UBE. I hoped that this study would provide an opportunity to know and understand related factors, goals, strategies, and activities existing within the actor's implementing environment that generally influence policy implementation. This

knowledge would also provide an understanding of how well the UBE implementation was carried out. The bottom-up approach does not present prescriptive advice, but rather describes what factors have influenced the policy implementation and its impact (Matland, 1995).

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was a qualitative focused research. The rationale for selecting this approach was based on the need to understand the views of head teachers and principals on how the UBE policy has impacted secondary school dropout for young women. Keeping the study focused on the nature of these responses was consistent with Elmore's (1979) bottoms-up approach. The participants interviewed in this study were direct observers of the UBE's impact because they worked with the students from registration to graduation.

Stake (2010) stated that it is the duty of the researcher to explain the study to the participants in order for them to share their experiences which is necessary for a robust research. I collected the data for this study through interviews with the participants, which were audiotaped for proper documentation and analysis. Interpretation and discerning of themes was done using the QSR NVivo software. At the end of the interviews and data review, I expected to make interpretations to increase the understanding of the influence of the UBE on female dropouts in rural secondary schools. The method of validation I used was member checking, which is an important quality control process in qualitative research. Member checking enabled the participants to

review their statements for accuracy, preserved the ethics of the research (Mero-Jaffe, 2011), and enabled them to control what has been interpreted of what they said in the interviews.

Definitions

Backward mapping: The process of understanding a process through backtracking from the end point (Elmore, 1979).

Bottom up: Approaching reform or any policy process from the position from the position of the inferiors (field agents and primary implementers). (Elmore, 1979);

Dropout: A phenomenon were students abruptly leave schools for varying reasons and never get to finish their educational program (UNESCO, 2012).

Head teachers: Teachers with over 17 years teaching experience in secondary schools (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000).

Localized realities: Local factors that might influence the success or failure of a project (Randhir, 1990).

Private/public schools: Private schools are schools privately owned and run while public schools are government owned and run. Both private and public schools are subject to the federal laws on the education sector (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000).

Rural community: According to the National Population Commission in Nigeria, a rural community is defined as any community that has 80% of its population living on an agrarian based economy (National Population Commission Nigeria, 2006).

School administrators: Former teachers with over 17 years teaching experience in secondary school who have grown to positions of management (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000).

Secondary schools: This defines post primary schools but does not include senior secondary schools. These schools could also be termed as junior secondary schools (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000).

Top down: Approaching reform or any policy process from the position of the superiors (coordinators, financers, influencers, and promoters) (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983).

UBE program/UBE policy program: An education reform program that was instituted and implemented in 1999 by the Nigerian government to address some problems in the education sector (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000).

Assumptions

I made a number of assumptions while conducting this study. I assumed that the emergence of privately owned institutions have affected how effectively educational policies are implemented in Nigeria. Another assumption was that the data collection and analyzing procedures employed for this study were bias free or neutral. I also assumed that all participants answered the questions put before them openly and honestly.

Scope and Delimitations

This study was limited to government secondary schools (both mixed and single gendered ones) and privately owned secondary schools in the Agbani community, Enugu

State. The study also involved a new set of secondary schools called the mission schools. These aforementioned schools defined the scope of this study.

Limitations

This study was limited by the difficulty in getting enough qualified (experienced) teachers from the privately owned secondary schools in the community. This was because private schools originated within the last 15years. Finding teachers from this school form that met the inclusion criteria of at least 17years experience, proved to be a challenge.

Significance

I expect this study to, amongst other things, help:

- Expand knowledge on the implementation of the UBE program in rural areas.

- Identify teachers' responses to reform implementation in rural secondary schools, especially with how it impacts dropout rates.

- Identify challenges to implementing educational reforms in rural secondary schools.

- Examine the capacity of rural secondary schools to support educational reform.

- Provide a source of guidance to future policy makers on educational reform.

Implication for Social Change

The results of this study will have several implications for social change. The findings will expose the factors and situations surrounding a successful implementation

of the UBE, thereby creating awareness on aspects of the policy that needs to be focused on. Secondly, with themes that focus on the drop outs of girls from secondary schools in an effort to identify and better understand the causes, the government will be inclined to ensure that such influences are reduced or eliminated, which in turn will translate into producing more female graduates and on a larger scale, enhance national development. Finally, the results from this study can be used by other third world countries that have similar conditions to Nigeria.

Summary

The outcome of this qualitative research will add to general knowledge through the understanding of the factors that have influenced the dropout rates in Enugu State vis-a-vis the UBE education policy. The findings will cause the government, starting from the state level, to provide the necessary support and conditions needed to ensure that the dividends from the implementation of educational policies are maximized. The results of this research will also assist educational administrators and policy makers in modifying the existing policy to better fit the needs of the students, by taking into consideration the input and contribution of the stakeholders at the local level such as the head teachers and principals. A detailed description of literature on reform processes, is presented in chapter 2. Description of the research design followed in chapter 3. Presentation of findings and conclusion followed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Education reform is an example of a policy change value process, and a proper description of the reform process is key to fully understanding how efficiently the implementation was carried out and what implications or ramifications its impact might likely have on the general societal countenance (Roy, 2015). The purpose of this study was to understand teachers' perception on the impact of the UBE in addressing drop outs amongst women in rural secondary schools. In this chapter, I will focus on analyzing literature that described or provided me with a better understanding of educational reform processes.

Recent discourse in the education sector has centered on maximizing the impact of education reforms through a proper understanding of reform strategies and implementations. With this study, I sought to evaluate the UBE program and its impact in addressing secondary school drop outs, by trying to understand the whole reform process. My analysis of this issue used the perspective of teachers who are primary change agents. This literature review will cover three facets of education reform: reform formulation, reform agents, and system reform.

Literature Search Strategy

Information on existing literature surrounding the subject matter of this study was sourced from a number of sources. These involved searching for peer reviewed articles from the Thoreau multi-database search found under the search and find portal of the

Walden University library online database. Keywords used for these searches included

reform strategy, education reforms, implementation theory, policy change, public policy

formulation, public policy implementation, public policy practice, setting policy goals,

systemic reform, the UBE, and education reforms in Nigeria. I also searched and

accessed online and physical libraries for literature on implementation theories and their

historical perspectives, qualitative case study writing and analysis, and the use of

software in qualitative study analysis.

Reform Formulation

Every reform process starts with developing the reform. Reform formulation

describes the process ranging from identifying the need for a reform, reform planning and

development, strategizing and implementation, reform financing, and development of an

enabling legal framework for the reform (Chiozza and Erich, 2011). In this section, I will

analyze literature with respect to these aforementioned aspects and how they all

contribute to the reform process.

Research studies conducted in the field have tried to determine if the difficulty in

identifying what needs to be reformed has had any effect on the impact of the reform

process. Cerna (2013) believed that multiple failure points were found in older policy

regimes within a system, created a situation where choice on subsequent reform points

becomes difficult. In fact, Frolich, Hulsman, Pimontel, Slipersaeter, and Stensaker (2013)

attributed these multiple failure points to the ever changing and increasingly complex

social political systems in existence today. This echoes the beliefs of Fischer (2003), who

held the opinion that the basic knowledge or assumptions of a system, sometimes

outgrows policies and their impacts over that system. Fischer further stated that these

assumptions grows to be more varied and complex, creating a difficulty. However,

Chiozza and Erich (2011) believed that reformists don't actually have a problem with

identifying the need and the point of a reform, but that these reformists are slaves to the

whims and desires of their backers. Mattes, Leeds and Carrol (2015) further qualified this

latter stand, by stating that what reformists termed as difficulty in reform identification is

just inaction due to the selfishness of the reformists. Gupta (2012) believed that to

effectively maximize the impact from a reform process, there is need to identify what

needs to be changed, when it should be changed, who should be involved in the change,

and how the change should be carried out or implemented in order to achieve the desired

results. The UBE was designed to address a social problem and this study would seek to

understand if the way the reform was formulated has had any effect on its impact on the

social problem.

Reforms are backed by policies which can be translated into enabling laws.

Studies have sought to establish if any relationship exists between policy capture and the

impact of reforms (Atkinson, 2012; De Segovia and Hardison, 2009). In this study, policy

capture is defined as the ability to provide a clear, concise, and easily understandable

policy framework. Atkinson (2012) believed that the difficulty in describing reforms

through clear policies, made implementation very difficult. Atkinson stated that this was

due to the failure of reformists to capture the real essence of the reform in practical terms

and outline them through policies. Furthermore, De Segovia and Hardison (2009) believed some reform policies take up very vague and unrealistic approaches. This was typified by the reform developed for Thailand, whose unrealistic policies affected the success of the programme implementation (Panhoon & Wongwanich, 2012). Ejere (2011) believed some public policies are not adaptable at the point of their implementation. Asmolov (2013) described policy as the basis for creating the enabling laws and strategy, governing the process. Asmolov stated that a weak policy framework would result in impacting the whole reform process. It was further found that this non preparedness has been seen in reforms not factoring reform agents' organizational structure or social environmental needs (Asmolov, 2013). This study will focus on understanding how well the very essence of the policy was captured at the point of implementation. This would be to ascertain if any relationship exists between the level of the policy capture and the impact of implementation.

Right after the need for the reform has been identified and the enabling policies promoted, discourse has centered on how to develop the reform to maximize impact. Geortz, Floden, and O'Day (1995) held the opinion that the problem with planning and developing the reform agenda, lay not just with the varied nature of the origin of the social problem being addressed, or the complex and particularly sensitive factors influencing these problems, but also with the fact that generic and harmonized solutions proffered in times past did not take into consideration the demographic and social context from which the problems might or might not have emanated. The above opinion becomes

particularly insightful, when taking the view of Songhua and Wang (2012), who believed planning for the solution must take into consideration the source of that problem. Furthermore, Omotayo, Ihebereme, and Maduewesi (2008) reported that failure to effectively implement and impact reforms has its root cause in poor planning.

Another aspect to this issue, as opined by De Segovia and Hardison (2009), is the failure to plan internal levels of continuous improvement, which would run as the reform process continues. They believed, as the reform implementation process continues, other unforeseen problems may emerge that if not handled promptly, may lessen the impact of the reform This continuous improvement process they believed, should be incorporated into planning. Cerda and Bernier (2013) also stated that maximizing reform financing, communication flow and links, and assigning responsibilities are directly related to how effectively the planning is made. It has also been noted that when undertaking any reform, the system configuration should be taken into consideration during planning (Frolich, Hulsman, Slipersaeter, Stensaker, & Pimontel, 2013). Anderson, Brown, and Lopez-Ferrao (2003) believed that proper planning would help the efficient and maximal flows of information, finance, and resources through the different stratified layers of the system. The process of identifying how the UBE planning was done, the reform process designed, roles and responsibilities assigned and continuous improvement factored in would be another evaluating factor to determine what influenced the impact of the reform.

Strategizing and implementing is an offshoot of planning and development. The next step is choosing what reform implementation strategy would produce the required impact and address the social problem. Strategy would cover reform implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Asmolov (2013) proscribed that reform strategy could be done from the basis of standards. The findings of the study led Asmolov to propose aligning reform components with reference to given industry standards and implementing same. Furthermore, Asher (2000) believed a reform strategy that failed to address anything about the institution or environment might have no substantial impact, and since standards-based reform followed in this direction, it has this weakness as well. Asher further questioned under what conditions a reform not conscious of its implementation environment can be sustained. This study would seek to find out what implementation strategy was employed for the UBE reform program and how the strategy influenced the impact of the program.

With respect to analyzing a reform strategy and focused on promoting reform through having a shared knowledge pool or professional learning communities, Asmolv (2013) stated that this strategy has been observed to fail when the learning process is not deep and structured. Furthermore, Atkinson (2012) believed that institutionalization is also an issue with a reform based on a shared learning pool. Fullan (2006) revealed that the use of incentives, like the standards strategy, also focuses too much on the individual without making same emphasis on the environment. In essence, there is no *best fit* reform

strategy. It is important to relate whatever strategy to be employed, to the particular nature of the system being reformed.

Another part of the strategy development and implementation process is outlining the policy implementation and evaluation process. This process could use either the top down, bottom up, combined, or agency theory approaches. As proposed by Sabatier and Mazmanian (1979), the *top down* approach saw policy makers and instigators as the central players of the system, and policy reforms are driven from a central point. Sabatier and Mazmanian identified a number of variables or conditions, needed for successful implementation: a clear objective, legal structure, supportive interest groups, and committed officials. Local actors are usually not taken into consideration in planning (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1979). Therefore, evaluation of policies in the top down approach is taken from the perspective of the *top shelf* (national regulators, financiers, instigators) of the policy chain (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1979).

Conversely, the bottom-up approach theorists like Elmore (1979) argued that policies should be made at the local level and that evaluating its implementation should take place at this level as well. The goals, activities, and strategies of the local players are used to build a network linked to the actors on the central level (Elmore, 1979). Okecha (2008) believed that policy uncertainty, especially when looking at specialized case study regions, sometimes necessitates exploring this approach. The bottom-up approach has been observed to not present prescriptive advice, but rather described factors that might have hindered the successful implementation of the policy (Masango, 2008). Masango's

(2008) study showed that implementation strategies have to be flexible to cope with local factors. However, a perceived drawback of the bottoms up approach is the absence of a system to ensure accountability of the local policy source if things go wrong (Matland, 1995).

The combined approach combines at micro levels, the above described approaches, drawing both on their strength and their weaknesses. *Agency theory* states that principal or key actors delegate implementation to agents, while they are monitored by the principal (Cerna, 2013). However, Cerna (2013) believed that determining how these agents would be selected and monitored is still something that has not been made clear by theorists. In this study, I will draw from the bottoms up approach in trying to judge the impact of a policy implementation on a social problem in a localized community. Having discussed elements of reform promulgation in this section and how these elements relate with the whole reform process, it is imperative to discuss another important facet of educational reform - reform agents.

Reform Agents

Every reform process is driven or implemented by reform agents. For example, in education reform, these agents could be primary agents like schools, teachers, and the communities, or secondary agents like policy makers, financers, and the government. In this section, I will discuss educational reform change agents and their influence on a successful reform processes. In the section, I will primarily focus on teachers, schools, and leadership.

Studies have sought to understand what influence leadership has on the success of any reform. Numerous studies have identified leadership as critical to an effective reform (Anderson, Brown, & Lopez-Ferrao, 2003; Chiozza & Erich, 2011; Gupta, 2012). Frolich et al. (2013) believed that the leadership promoting education reform and the culture they are committed to, influences and facilitates the success of that reform. Furthermore, Chiozza and Erich (2011) are of the opinion that when leadership is not structured or reforms made without clearly defined roles at the different levels of authority involved in the reform, that this impacts the rate at which this reform will be implemented. However, Masango (2008) observed that part of the problem lies with leaders using educational reform as a political tool. Masango believed that these leaders lacked a proper knowledge on the nature of the problem or the need for the reform. This has been observed to be the case especially in developing countries like Ethiopia and Nigeria (Omotayo, Ihebereme, & Maduewesi, 2008; Tessema, 2007), where successive reform cycles have yielded little positive result because of a non focused and politically-induced leadership style. Bureaucracy and politically-induced administrative bottlenecks have hindered the proper planning, implementation, and evaluation of educational reform (Gupta, 2012). This study will seek to understand the influence of leadership style on the implementation structure of the UBE and its impact on drop outs. Comparison would be made with the current leadership structure of the UBE and past reform leadership structures, in order to identify common traits and tie these traits in with the reform performance.

The role and success of teachers in influencing the impact of education reform has also triggered discourse. Barter (2014) believed teachers, by virtue of direct proximity to students, exert an influence on them. Johnson (2010) held the opinion that teachers are the frontline promoters of any education reform process. Johnson further opined that it is imperative that not only is emphasis placed on the problems (around the student), emphasis should also be placed on the primary source of influence. Developing the source of influence would invariably affect the problem source (Johnson, 2010). Furthermore Tynjala and Gemeda (2015) reported that failure to adequately align the purpose of the reform with the primary influencers' results in developing a caveat in the reform stream. Robbins (2005) believed focus should be on teacher development in line with the reform goals (Mansour, 2013). It is also important that reform influencers are kept in touch with the people promoting the policy in order to update them on current happenings (De Segovia & Hardison, 2009). Teacher development is supposed to be a cardinal focus of the UBE in her quest to be impacting. This study would look into how well teachers were developed for them to be influence points.

Social scientists have sought to understand if the immediate host community and the external environment, had any influence on the impact of the reform process. Blumenfeld, Fishman, Krajcik, Marx, and Soloway (2000) believed that as observed from research, schools' organization systems play an important role in ensuring impacting reform implementation. Johnson (2010) further states that during reform programs, school systems needs to be reformed as well, in order for the schools to develop the

capacity to carry through (implement), and sustain this change. Levin (2008) held the

opinion that ways could be sought, to understand what capacities are needed to foster the

reform, and also what needs to be done to ensure that schools have the capacities to

maintain the reform. Levin (2008) further stated that strategies could be geared towards

the teachers training, administrative structure, curriculum and teaching methods, and

environmental and social interactions. Maebuta and Phan (2011) believed that for any

meaningful reform process to be pursued, the quality of the base or reform organization

must be improved as well. This they believe, will embody the ability or capacity of that

organization to sustain whatever reform is being pursued. They further opined that the

dimensions of these capacities and what would be pursued, have to be clearly outlined

and defined (Maebuta & Phan, 2011). It is therefore very necessary that all reform agents

involved in a particular reform process, are aligned with the reform drive in other to

maximize their capabilities and capacities, thereby enhancing impact. The third but

equally important facet of education reform to be discussed is the system reform.

System Reform

Systemic or organizational reform considers reform over an entire system, its sub

constituents, classes, and interlaying links or influences. This reform involves harnessing

all measures and strategies focused on clearly redefining the expected outcomes from a

reform project, aligning enabling policies and frameworks in support of these outcomes,

improving the enabling capacity of the change agents promoting this reform in order for

them to be able to sustain the reform, restructuring the leadership and governance system

to foster improved outcomes, and promoting a stable, friendly, and compatible

relationship with the environment to support the expected outcomes. This section will

review literature focused on determining how the aforementioned facets (reform

promulgation and reform agents), could be blended or harnessed for maximal reform

impact. The section will focus on issues such as reform administration and accountability,

roles, responsibilities, and learning processes.

Focus on systemic or organizational level reform seems to be on the rise because

social systems with their complexities, produce problems that can only be handled on a

systemic level (Atkinson, 2012). Smith and O'Day (1991) held the opinion that one of the

challenges with implementing systemic reform, is that the fragmented, multi layered and

complex nature of these systems, has made responsibility or policy fragmentation: which

diffuses responsibilities amongst different layers, not effective thereby reducing reform

impact. Furthermore, Adeyemi and Ositioye (2010) believed, that the same passion,

drive, information, and resources with which the reform is proposed doesn't trickle down

to the front liners (or primary change agents). Likewise Kompar (2016) stated that lack of

clear definition and assignment of roles, hampers reform evaluation and improvement. In

addition Frolich et al. (2013) held the opinion that failure to define key responsibilities in

a multi-layered education structure, has accounted for many issues that have arisen, while

implementing system reform. They believed a lack of a clear definition of roles and

responsibilities, lack of proper alignment amongst the different layers of authority, and an

absence of a communication chain (monitoring, evaluation and reporting) has essentially

hampered the success of reform programs. Santos (2012) believed that there would always be friction between the vertical and horizontal levels of authority during reform process implementation. However Santos (2012) was of the view that there is need for cohesion amongst the different levels of authority, especially as the various interests influencing the reform are recognized. The role of each stakeholder in the reform process should therefore be accepted and respected. It becomes very important to ensure that roles, responsibilities, and communication are clearly defined and structures followed. With a coordinating central core and collaboration, Levin (2008) believed there was a high chance of a successful reform. Atkinson (2012) further proposed, a cohesive system strategy which would maximize the resources of the different system levels, maximize communication and resource flow, and produce a good restructure movement. Creating this cohesive system is however the big question, considering the complexity of social problems and the different interlinks and relationships. The UBE was supposed to impact school capacities in different forms, and this impact was supposed to be large enough to sustain the reform. This study will seek to ascertain the level of system impact by the UBE and if this level of impact is large enough to drive the reform process.

Researchers believe since policies back or enable reforms, they should be built around the expected outcomes (Songhua & Wang, 2012). Somekh and Zeichner (2009) were of the opinion that outcomes should be realistic and should align with the local conditions of the recipient organization. They believed policies have over time been developed, without regards to how specific characteristics of the recipients should be

handled. They further stated that enabling policies for reforms have not been enacted with

the view to: establishing an evaluation structure, defining levels of responsibilities, and

spelling out penalties and deterrents for would be defaulters (Somekh & Zeichner, 2009).

This they believed, calls for coordination amongst the different levels of change agencies,

proper alignment between policy, change agents and outcomes and a proper leadership or

governance structure. According to McLean (2004), planning a reform policy is just the

beginning of the reform process. The appropriateness of the plans especially with respect

to resources and organization (change agents) buy-in, is critical to ensuring sustainability.

Another issue is that of reform agent development: in the case of educational

reform, teacher development. Reform initiatives has been observed not to involve the

development of teachers (Mansour, 2013). Mansour (2013) believed reform programs

think that teacher knowledge and capacity, has no influence in driving the reform

process. Robbins (2005) was of the opinion that teachers are a product of the social

cultural context they are in, and in reforming them one has to take into consideration this

environment. Addressing any problem in schools or in the education sector in general,

requires an attended attention to all the factors and influences to the problem. It would

not just be focused on teachers as influencers, but it also should have considered things

that influence teachers as well (Mansour, 2013). Barter (2014) believed in order to bring

concrete curriculum change, or a paradigm shift in cultural behavior of the institution,

teacher development, however difficult, should be given much attention. Hudson and

Ginns (2007) were of the opinion that just generally providing teacher development

project at system level, without administering specific instruments that would further

engage the teachers with the reform, would produce less projected reform outcomes.

Furthermore, it is pertinent to note that individual teacher characteristics and flexibility

affects how new organization culture is imbibed (Yalaki, 2010). However with good

knowledge sharing, education and monitoring, these challenges can be handled (De

Segovia & Hardison, 2009).

Conclusion

The above literature reviewed is hereby summarized to briefly describe a standard

reform process as outlined below: Properly define and outline the context that can

support and promote the expected reform that is being sought. This definition would

describe the relationship between the change institution/agent and the environment, the

institution's culture, local demographics, physical infrastructures and enabling laws. This

will help in understanding what realistic outcomes that could be expected, taking into

consideration the existing conditions around the case problem. A synergized and common

learning pool can be developed to share strategies on improving existing structures on

handling localized challenges; developing a communication framework where the reform

vision is properly and clearly communicated through all the change channels, especially

when running the collaborative learning system; transform the vision into actionable and

measurable plans. These plans should be aligned with the direction of the vision, and it

should maximize the available resources whilst also making the resources align with the

vision; Invest in personnel and system's cultural development. Every form of reform

starts with reforming the change agents. Change agents not just defines professional development, but instituting and maintaining the right kind of culture that will sustain the reform; monitor, evaluate and re-evaluate reform. Implementation comes with its attended issues and challenges. Every aspect of the reform process should be monitored for challenges and evaluated; Information feedback and continuous improvement. Through evaluation and improvement, more improvement goals and action points can be developed and implemented.

The next chapter would focus on the data collection design. The chapter would describe the research tradition, participants involved, data collection method and rationale for the design choice. Method of data analysis will also be described.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction

This study employed a qualitative approach focused on understanding a social

problem through the viewpoints or lenses of a selected group of people in their own

natural setting. I chose this approach to build up the general, complex picture of the

problem, with the view to proffering or suggesting generic solutions. In this chapter, I

will describe the philosophical viewpoints; theoretical frameworks; and data collection

methods, interpretation, analysis, and validation that I employed in this study.

The philosophical viewpoint that this study was based on was the social

constructivist worldview. Creswell (2009) wrote that social constructivists believe that

individuals, in trying to get an understanding of the world they live in, experience and

also make up meanings of their experiences. These meanings can be different and varied,

thereby making a rich and complex understanding of their world (Creswell, 2009). The

various interactions made by these individuals in specific and generic environments

enriches their experience base, and the researcher just has to draw on this through means

like observations and open ended questions in order to gain various personal insights on

the subject matter (Cresswell, 2009). Therefore, I tailored this study along these lines.

The research methodology I chose for this study was the case study design. A case study

is an in-depth and detailed look into a subject, especially in the light of its contextual

connotations (Creswell, 2003). It involves an analysis of social variables, such as

policies, persons, institutions, systems, and the relationships within their context

(Cresswell, 2003). The subject matter or phenomenon that I researched in this study was school drop out amongst females in rural secondary schools. This subject was examined in the context of the impact that the new UBE educational policy has had on dropout rates. The theoretical framework that guided the choice of this case study methodology was Elmore's (1979) bottom up approach to implementation theory which employs a bottom-up way of evaluating how well a policy has impacted the issue it was developed to address. This theory was used in this study by analyzing the views of participants drawn from the local context, within which the policy was implemented (Creswell, 2003)

The UBE was introduced to replace and ameliorate the problems of the UPE. Amongst its many core objectives, the aim of the program was to reduce the age long female drop out problem (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). The purpose of this study then was to gain an understanding into how the implementation of the current educational policy has impacted schools' capacity to handle this problem. With this study, I hoped to gather this information from local actors in the field who might or might not have been directly involved with the policy conceptualization and design. In Chapter 2, I described the education reform chain process and the different stakeholders and their roles and relationships. In this chapter, I will describe the research design, participants, data collection, and the steps in data analysis.

Research Methodology

A case study is an inquiry strategy where a subject matter is researched in-depth (Cresswell, 2009). Key here is the understanding that in exploring case studies, the cases

are studied within the boundaries of their time frames (Cresswell, 2009). This is to enable

a proper understanding of all activities carried out on that case within that time frame

(Creswell, 2009). A case study provides freedom for the researcher to interview

participants in their natural setting (Cresswell, 2009). Using a case study design requires

talking directly to people at home or work places over complex issues, and the

participants are expected to express freely their own views about the subject matter

(Cresswell, 2009). Existing studies abound on evaluating the UBE programme, especially

with respect to how it met its objectives. However, no study has tried to understand how

well the actors in the field feel the implementation of this policy has impacted the subject

matter. In this study, I focused on the impact of the UBE since 2009. This time gap was

taken into consideration in order to ensure that problems generally associated with policy

implementation would have been addressed. Therefore, the study was able to objectively

analyze the impact of the policy implementation. The results of this study furnished a

knowledge base on the way policy makers have gone about the business of policy

making. The results questioned the motive for policy change (if there was need for one);

the stakeholders selected for the policy formulation; and the policy implementation

process, monitoring, and evaluation.

Prior research has sought to address implementation from the level of policy

promulgation, without attention given to whether implementation structures can be

adapted locally. In this study, I looked at how well this policy fared within a rural

community and what the future held for rural communities. Using the case study

methodology, my drive was to understand head teachers impressions on the impact the implementation of the UBE program had in addressing dropout rates among females in rural secondary schools. This methodology was employed because it provided an opportunity to get a detailed understanding of the subject matter using structured observations, interviews, and documentation (Creswell, 2003).

A case study inquiry becomes particularly helpful when the information to be analyzed is to come from a select class of participants (Cresswell, 2003). As was the case with this study, a select group of secondary school teachers, head teachers and vice principals, was interviewed for the purpose of getting information on their personal experiences. This select group was chosen because of their years of experience and roles in the Nigerian education industry. The case study methodology was observed to be the best method of obtaining this information without compromising the validity of the research process (Creswell, 2009).

The review of government based documentation (PPSMB, 2014), showed the existence of the drop out syndrome over time. This same problem has been established to have outlasted previous educational policy dispensations (Ejere, 2011). The UBE was set up to address this problem amongst other things. This study was centered on finding how well the problem has been impacted and this information came from principal actors on the field. The case study methodology also described how well impacted downstream things are when decisions are taken from the top (Elmore, 1979). In this study, I interviewed participants involved in the day-to-day implementation and impact

assessment of the UBE program. The purpose of interviewing them was to use the Elmore's (1979) approach and understand policy implementation from participants in the field.

Participants of the Study

I conducted this study in the rural town of Agbani, in Enugu State, in southeast Nigeria. The Nigerian National Population Commission (National Population Commission, 2006) defined rural towns in Enugu State to be those who have 80% of its population based on agriculture. Agbani fell into this class (National Population Commission, 2006). Educationally, the town is made up of both government owned and run secondary schools, private owned and run secondary schools, and mission schools. All schools fall under the jurisdictional influence of whatever educational policies (as backed by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria) that holds sway in the country (CFRN, 1999). As such, the implementation of the UBE program was carried out in government secondary schools, private secondary schools, and mission schools. The research drew participants from all sets of schools. There were three government schools, three private schools, and one mission school in the Agbani rural community. This study focused on two government schools (representing 67% of the school form), two private schools (representing 67% of the school form) and the only mission school available (representing 100% of the school form). I used random selection from government and private schools to select the participants.

Secondary schools in southeast Nigeria are made up of the principal and vice principals (administrative heads), the head teachers (senior teachers based on their years of experience), and other teachers (with varying but shorter years of experience). The participants for this research were drawn from the head teachers and vice principals. The choice of these participants was made because:

- Their years of experience on the job exposed them to the implementation of the former educational policy in the country and this put them in the right position to compare and evaluate the old policy with the new one.

- Many of the participants have had a stint with administration, either at the departmental level or school level, and were thus qualified to describe the impact of the implementation whilst proffering solutions for the future.

This study was focused on teachers whose experience would be invaluable. The experience span for the participants was at least 17 years (prior to the inception of the UBE in 1999). This experience span was to enable me to interview participants who had an experience of the former education regime and were conveniently placed to describe the changes the current reform had produced. The total number of this class set was 17 persons. This study made use of 59% of this population (10/17). Government school participants covered 24% of the total set (57% of the government school set), private school covered 17% of the total set (60% of the private school set), and mission school covered 17% (75% of the mission school set). Allowance was also given for adverse events. Based on the foregoing, a fairly equal number of participants were chosen to give

the study a diverse population. I used random sampling that covered gender forms to ensure that the accuracy of the process was enhanced.

Five secondary schools participated in this study. These five schools made up 71% of the number of schools in this community. The schools covered both government owned, privately owned secondary schools and mission schools. It also covered single gender secondary (girls' schools) schools as well as mixed gender secondary schools (mixed schools). I used 10 participants were used. Five schools participated in the study. Four participants came from the government schools (two per school), three participants came from the private schools (at least one per school) and three participants came from the mission school (three per school).

Participants gave their impressions on whether the implementation of the UBE had impacted the rate of drop outs amongst women in secondary schools of that rural community. School drop outs had been a perennial problem that successive educational policies have sought to address with varying degree of success (Ejere, 2011). This study looked at how this current policy implementation has so far fared.

Interview participants were randomly selected from the participating schools while the schools were randomly selected in no special order. An informative letter on the study was sent to the principals/school administrators of the secondary schools, upon which a letter of cooperation was obtained. The school administrators provided a list of teachers that met the inclusion criteria, and I contacted these teachers to confirm their willingness to be part of the interview process. Documents and letters sent out to the

relevant heads form part of the appendices of this study. Random sampling was then conducted from interested participants. This type of sampling was chosen to enhance the validity of the data collection process and minimize any form of bias. However, every school form (private, public and mission schools) was represented in the study. Diverse gender and opinions were encouraged and represented. For accuracy of data collection, I built trust with the participants, before and during the interview process to encourage an open discussion, thereby providing an opportunity for diverse opinions. I explained the risks and benefits of the study, privacy, and confidentiality plans of the study, which further built up trust. Questions and concepts were made very clear and misconceptions cleared up. Equity and equality was ensured during the selection process through the use of random selection (selection representing different genders and school forms/diversity of population), and also by selecting an equal number of participants that represented each school form.

After I transcribed the interviews, the transcribed form was given to the participants for them to read and confirm if the document were a proper and accurate transcript of the interview. All interviews were done in the participants' schools (an environment where they were very comfortable). The interviews were all done in single sessions.

Measures

In this study, I sought to understand how the implementation of the UBE program impacted the ability of the schools to tackle drop outs amongst women in rural

Enugu State, Nigeria. In this case study, head teachers and vice principals were identified as local actors in the field in implementing this policy, as they were strategically positioned as the final interface point between the students and those promoting the policies. In the process of interacting with the students, experiences, knowledge, and insights had been formed by these teachers and it is from these experiences that this study sought to draw and get an understanding of the working practicability and impact of the UBE. The broad overreaching knowledge on the impact of this policy was obtained as well as a focus on a specific impact point, secondary school female drop out.

Research Question

The research question was centered on what the experiences of select head teachers and principals had been, in analyzing the impact of the UBE in dealing with female students drop outs in rural secondary schools of Enugu State, southeast Nigeria. The research question this study was centered on was: With respect to addressing drop out of women in secondary schools, what themes emerge in the report of head teachers/principals on the impact of the implementation of the UBE policy on schools' capacity, and teacher development? To answer the above research, a case study instrument consisting of interviews and analysis of document was used.

Procedures

The following steps served as a process guide to recruit and inform participants, collect and analyze data, and validate findings:

1. Sent informative letter detailing the nature of the study to the principals/school administrators of the secondary schools in Agbani community. A letter of cooperation from community partners was obtained.

2. School administrators provided a list of teachers that met the inclusion criteria, and these teachers were contacted by me to confirm their willingness to be part of the interview process.

3. Obtained permission from principal to contact participants. Received list with contacts of teachers that met the inclusion criteria

4. Contacted participants in person with letter of introduction and consent forms, describing the nature of the study and inviting them to actively opt-in or volunteer to be part of the study.

5. Interested participants contacted me by phone, to show and confirm their willingness to opt-in and be part of the study. Participants opting –out were thanked for their consideration.

6. On the interview day, the signed copy of the consent forms was received from the participants.

7. Interview questions was asked to all participants. All interview questions were exhausted within 30–40 minutes. There was no follow up session.

8. Audiotapes were transcribed verbatim.

9.

a) Transcribed data was sent back to participants to confirm accurate representation of the interview process.

b) After analysis and interpretation of data, findings was sent back to the participants to confirm if findings are aligned to the actual realities in their various schools (member checking).

10. On final completion of the study, hard copies of the research findings would be sent to the various participating schools, the State Ministry of Education, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) Abuja. The participants would also be given hard copies of the findings.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a series of interviews. The interviews were done in the natural setting of the participants: the school premises. The interview started by focusing on establishing the participants experience or background and relating this experience to the context of the study under research. Information gathered during the interviews provided insight into the impact, of the UBE implementation. It provided a better understanding of the resulting implications of the policy implementation, especially in the context of dropout rates. The participant's experience and impressions served as a source of concrete details, on how the policy implementation had impacted dropouts in both privately owned and government owned schools. The interviews addressed the question of how locally adaptable policies are, in a federal system like Nigeria.

The interviews were conducted in locations selected by the participants, free from distractions and locations the participants are free and comfortable in. Also the locations' privacy was maximized. Each interview was tape recorded and transcribed. Notes were taken to document nonverbal communication and to provide details about the environment. The transcribed interviews were organized into files. Analysis of the transcribed data began after all the interviews had been conducted and transcribed.

Data Analysis

Data organization and analysis started with transcription of the data, gotten from the interview process. These transcribed data were organized and sorted into sections from where themes were obtained (Creswell, 2009). The NVivo software tool was used to collate the qualitative data obtained from the participants. This was because the software had the capability to go through the transcribed data, and sort them according to sections or streams. This software maximized data identification, collation and sorting to knowledge streams that were interpreted, compared and analyzed with reference to the subject matter.

Identifying themes thrown up by the software gave the researcher an idea of all the issues: whether remotely or none remotely, related to the subject matter. Particularly interesting, was the fact that issues that were not directly designed into the research program (either by none awareness of its existence or by omission), but which had a major influence on the subject matter were identified and consequently co-opted into future research or reference. For the purpose of this research, the drive was to identify

whatever possible themes emanate from analyzing data, obtained from the interviews of head teachers or vice principals on their impressions on how the implementation of the UBE, has impacted the dropout rate amongst female students of secondary schools in rural Enugu State.

The final step in analyzing the data was in connecting and developing the storylines or descriptions of the individual participants. This description according to Creswell (2009) serves as the basis of developing a pattern relevant to the subject matter. For this study, these patterns and impressions formed the basis on which educational policy change and policy implementation could viewed especially in the future.

Validation of Findings

This research enquiry was validated as is common with qualitative studies. It borrowed on the process of validation as proposed by Creswell (2009), which recommended some steps in qualitative research validation. Of the recommended steps, this study chose to use the triangulation method, member checking, clarification of bias and use of peer debriefing (Creswell, 2009). The triangulation method to be employed here would involve consulting an official state-based policy implementation document. This extra source would added justification for the themes that emerged. When the themes emerged and interviews transcribed, they were sent back to the participants for validation and for them to ensure that the information ascribed to them is accurate. Clarification of the researcher's bias is very important to the study and the participants were made to understand the researcher's position regarding the topic. I am a female

working as a lecturer in one of the post university institutions in the state. She lives within the community under review. I observed a high percentage of young women, who are supposed to be in secondary schools, outside school. This raised her pique and interest in finding out why the current state of affairs amongst young women in the community, despite the intervention of the government through the UBE. A peer was also used to ask questions about the qualitative study. This was to ensure that the research *flowed* in the eyes and minds of someone else (other people), other than me.

Ethical Considerations

The participants in this study were consenting adult participants. There was no known personal harm associated with participating in this study. This was also verified while taking permission from authorities of the PPSMB in Enugu State to conduct this research. This was clearly expressed to each participant prior to signing the consent form. Each participant completed a consent form and confidentiality was protected. Files, audiotapes, electronic, paper, and transcripts were stored in a locked storage and then would be destroyed after 4years. Information that could identify individual participants were removed from transcripts prior to data validation. No direct personal identifiable factor was used in the final study. The background and purpose of the study was made expressively clear to the participants to eliminate any form of deceptions (Creswell, 2009). The data collection plans for this study was sent to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and approved by them. All data interpreted was further validated to ensure accuracy.

Summary of Methodology

In this study, I sought to describe the experiences of head teachers and vice principals, on how the implementation of the UBE had impacted the dropout rates of secondary school females, of rural Agbani community in Enugu State, southeast Nigeria. A case study methodology was used to explore this research and series of interviews employed for data collection. Data analysis and interpretation was done using identification of themes, and aggregating same. Different validation approaches was used to sanitize the data and control researcher's bias. To address ethical concerns, consent was obtained from all participants. Chapter 4 will describe the data collected across the school forms, with all the analysis used to aggregate the data and establish themes. Issues of transferability, credibility and validity would be discussed as well in the chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In this study, I focused on an under researched area of public policy implementation in Nigeria, using the inputs of stakeholders in the field. This focus was consistent with Elmore's (1979) bottom up theory. Through the study, I sought to understand the perceptions of teachers on the impact of the UBE program in addressing dropouts amongst women in rural secondary schools. Data for this study were collected through semi structured interviews.

In this chapter, I will present the results of the study alongside analysis of the data. I will then describe the strategies used in collecting and organizing data, present an analysis of interview responses, identify and describe relationships between themes drawn from the interview data, present any discrepant data, describe the evidence of quality, and present the results of the study. The findings of this study will be discussed using some sub questions to answer the main research question, which was: With respect to addressing drop out of women in secondary schools, what themes emerge in the report of head teachers or principals on the impact of the implementation of the UBE policy on schools' organizational and teacher development?

Other sub questions that I addressed during the course of the study included:

1. What do you understand is the function of the UBE programme?

2. Was the UBE implemented in your school?

3. How long ago was this implementation made and in what areas did the implementation focus on?

4. Do you think that the implementation of the UBE has impacted dropouts in your school?

5. How did the implementation of the UBE aid your school's system's ability to handle dropouts? (School system here refers to qualified teachers, teaching aids, well stocked library, sports facilities, etc.)

6. In an education reform process like the UBE, who do you think are stakeholders to the process?

7. To fight the rate of drop outs in schools, what practical steps can be taken by the:

   a) School

   b) Teachers

   c) Government

   d) Parents/guardians

   e) Community

8. Suggest better ways for planning and implementing education policies in the future in rural areas like Agbani.

Participants Demographics

The UBE policy was established in 1999 to handle challenges in the educational sector (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). One of such challenges was the

drop out syndrome, which had been observed in secondary schools across Nigeria

(Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). Agbani is a rural community in Enugu

State and is comprised of seven secondary schools broken into three school forms:

government schools, private schools, and mission schools, all under the influence of the

UBE policy program. There are three government schools, three private schools, and one

mission school in the Agbani community. This study participants were composed of

teachers from two government schools (representing 67% of the school form), teachers

from two private schools (representing 67% of the school form), and teachers from the

only mission school available (representing 100% of the school form) of the study.

Teachers from five separate schools participated in this study. I selected school form

representatives from the government and private schools by random selection, while the

only mission school available represented that school form. The participants were

randomly selected to represent different gender forms in these schools. The total selection

covered all the school forms in an effort to eliminate every form of bias and provide a

comprehensive and in-depth analysis.

This study was focused on teachers with at least 17 years' experience (which

covers the time period before the inception of the UBE in 1999). These experience

criteria enabled me to interview participants who had been involved in secondary school

teaching prior to the inception of the UBE. I hoped these teachers would be conveniently

placed to describe the changes the current reform has produced.

Data Collection

The data collection started after the IRB of Walden University granted me research approval. Walden University's approval number for this study was 07-18-16-0435138. I followed the ethical procedures in the collection of data as established by Walden University's research protocol. An informative letter detailing the nature of the study was sent to the principals/school administrators of the selected secondary schools and delivered at the school in person. I also successfully obtained a letter of cooperation. This took 3 days to complete over the five schools that were part of the study. The schools administrators provided me with a list of teachers who met the inclusion criteria (at least 17 years of teaching experience) in their schools. I obtained permission to contact the teachers. Obtaining the list of teachers and permission to contact them took an additional 2 days. I then contacted the teachers and gave them a week to opt-in and be part of the study. All the teachers contacted confirmed their interest to opt-in and be part of the study within 3 days. Interviews were scheduled and held within a week. All interviews took place in private conference rooms on the various school premises. The interviews lasted an average of 35 minutes per session (maximum time of 40 minutes and minimum time of 30 minutes), and no follow-up interviews were needed. The interview sessions were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. Transcribed data were sent back to the participants for them to review and confirm accurate representation of facts. This review took 2 days. The transcription process resulted into 50 pages of raw interview data.

The study involved 10 participants. The class of teachers used in this study had a total number of 17 persons across all secondary schools in the area. This study made use of 59% of this population (10/17). Government school participants covered 24% of the total set (57% of the government school set), private school participants covered 17% of the total set (60% of the private school set), and mission school participants covered 17% (75% of the mission school set). Allowance was given for adverse events. Based on the foregoing, a fairly equal number of participants were selected to give the study a diverse population. The interviews involving 10 participants and spanning 5 schools took place over the course of 2 weeks in July of 2016.

In these interviews, the participants were asked to share their thoughts freely and clarify questions as they arose. Interviews were recorded with a digital recorder. Every recorded file was coded based on the school and an assigned a number. Notes were taken during the interview to record body language, enthusiasm, and other related information. Interview sessions were transcribed verbatim into a Microsoft Word document. All files were stored in a hard drive for security purposes. Transcriptions, files, and hard drives will be destroyed after 5 years of safekeeping.

The sampling strategy selected for this study was the stratified purposeful sampling strategy. This strategy involved selecting teachers to represent all school forms in existence in the Nigerian education system who had at least 17 years teaching experience. I chose this sampling strategy because I expected that this class of participants would add to a more informed understanding of the issue under study.

Data Analysis

The qualitative tradition employed in this study was the collective case study method. The collective case study method uses multiple case studies to illustrate an issue, thereby providing a platform for an in-depth analysis (Creswell, 1998). This study explored the impact of the UBE in dealing with dropouts in secondary schools, in one or more cases (school forms) within a bounded system (Nigerian education system). This study focused on the issue under review within its context and an inductive language was used to describe the emerging design (Cresswell, 1998). I revised the issues and the context of this study continually as more information was obtained from the field.

The current Nigerian education structure has three forms of secondary schools in rural Agbani community. There is the existence of government secondary schools (government owned, funded, and run secondary schools), private secondary schools (privately owned, funded, and run secondary schools) and very much recently, mission secondary schools (mission owned, funded, and run secondary schools). Every secondary school domiciled in the country is subject to the educational laws and policies of the country (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). Each school form highlighted above, formed the cases for the analysis in this study. Figure 1 shows the scope of this study, describing the multiple case relationships.
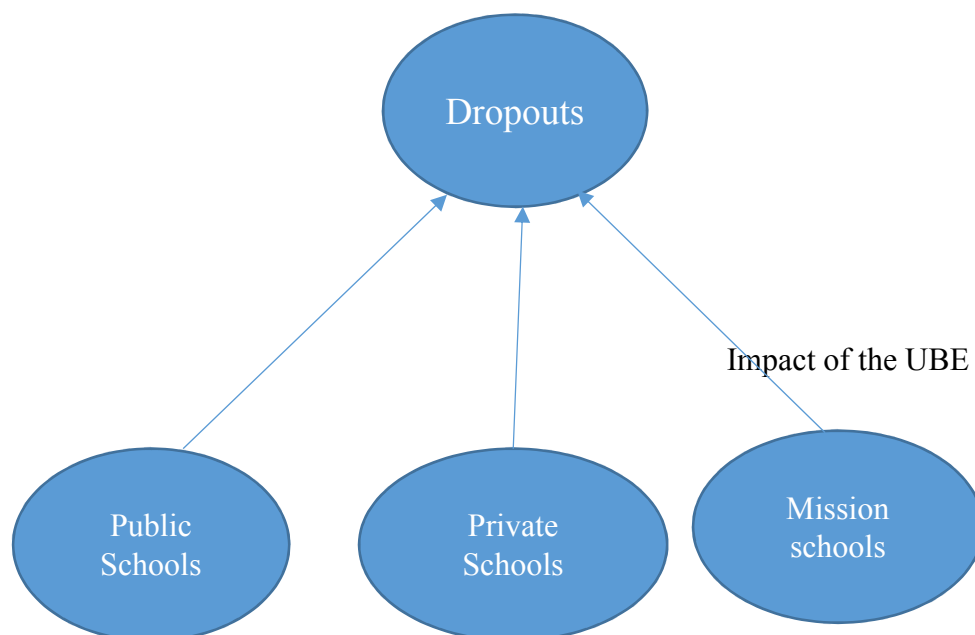
Figure 1. Schematic of the multiple cases/issue relationship.

I conducted analysis by condensing data within each case and looking for common themes that transcended the cases. The purposeful sampling strategy for this study involved interviewing participants from all the cases. I read each interview many times to obtain a thorough and holistic picture. The interviews were coded based on statements emanating from the literature review using NVivo 11.0 program. As new statements emerged that were not thought of before, new codes were added to the coding list. The initial transcribed data produced 74 significant statements regarding the impact of the UBE in tackling drop outs in secondary schools. These significant statements were referenced multiple times over the course of the study. These statements helped to answer six key aspects of the study: UBE definition, UBE implementation, UBE impact, UBE

capacity development, UBE stakeholders, and UBE/future reforms. Basic aspects of the

interview questions are described in Figure 2.
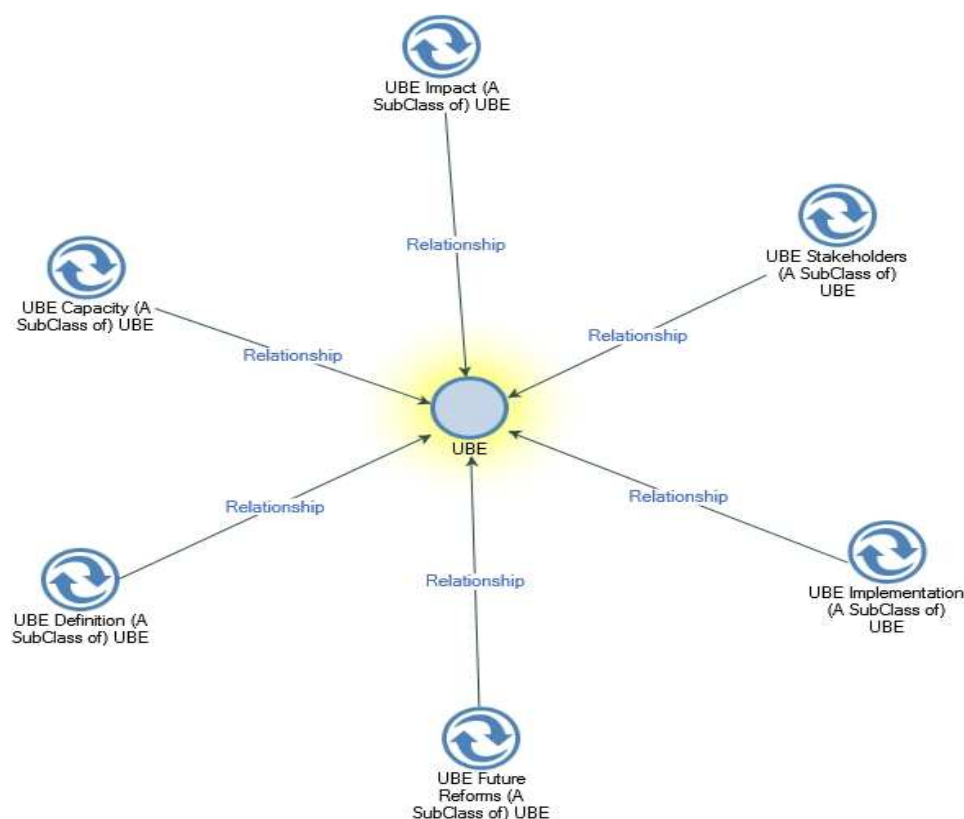
Figure 2. Basic aspects answered by the interview questions.

NVivo 11.0 helped in condensing the coded significant statements into five

themes. The review of interview data provided themes or categories that were first

repeated by participants within individual cases, and these themes were compared in

larger thoughts across cases within the data. Data analysis was made in a spiral contour

rather than a linear process ranging from data management to information representation

(Creswell, 2009). The analysis procedure I adopted in this study was the traditional

approach to analyzing data. This approach involved getting a description from data and relating this description to existing literature. I analyzed the collated data by first analyzing interview transcripts for high frequency words and then how these high frequency words were clustered within the transcripts. The clustering was done within cases and regularized clustering patterns were identified across the cases. The clusters identified were grouped, and codes relating to the clusters grouped as categories. The categories were then compared and related with analytic framework in literature, and data were displayed. However, the first step of this sequence started with transcribing the answers to the interview questions within the context of the research question. Coding of this data commenced afterwards.

Findings

This analysis will flow from a background description, through categorical aggregation, direct interpretation, establishing patterns, naturalistic generalizations, and description of case (Creswell, 2009). The cases was analyzed within the cases and then also across cases. The research question that guided this study was: With respect to addressing drop out of women in secondary schools, what themes emerge in the report of head teachers/Principals on the impact of the implementation of the UBE policy on schools' capacity, and teacher development?

Agbani is an agrarian, rural community in south east Nigeria. By agrarian, it is meant that about 80% of the community's population is agriculturally based. The community is blest with a number of public secondary schools dating back over 40 years

old. Private secondary schools made their entrance into the community with the onset of the 21st century, with a number of teachers moving from the public service to the private service. In the mid-2000s, the state governments across the federation came to a consensus that they would not be able to fund and sustain all the secondary schools in their states, and they opted to transfer secondary schools that were originally of *mission* (Catholic, Methodist, and Anglican) origin, back to their owners. This rebirthed the mission schools into the system. All these school forms were designed to serve the local community.

The UBE is an educational reform policy created in 1999 to improve on the failures of the UPE program, in revamping the educational sector. One of its cardinal focus was to address the issue of dropouts amongst women in secondary schools in the community. Literature reviewed have highlighted a number of themes that should be factored in, when undertaking any impacting reform process. Some of the themes highlighted include planning and strategizing, monitoring and evaluation, implementation, stakeholders' involvement, system organization, and reform agents.

This study would therefore in the light of these aforementioned themes (and any other themes that might arise from the study) seek to understand teachers' and schools heads' perceptions on how the implementation of this policy in their various schools has impacted on the school's capacity to cause and sustain a reduction in dropouts amongst women of this locality.

Case 1: Public School (Responses are from participants within a case group).

Case background: This case focuses on public owned and run secondary schools. Two public schools and four participants (two from each school) participated in the study. Sch1 connoted the first public school while Sch2 connoted the second public school. Prt1 connoted Participant1 while Prt2 connoted Participant 2. Both aforementioned participants were from the first secondary school. Prt3 (representing Participant 3) and Prt4 (representing Participant 4) came from the second public school Sch2. Participants demographics is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Case 1 Participants Demographics and Denotation

School	Denotation	No of Participants	Denotation of Participants
Public School 1	Sch1	1	Prt1
Public School 1	Sch1	1	Prt2
Public School 2	Sch2	1	Prt3
Public School 2	Sch2	1	Prt4
Total Schools: 2		Total Participants: 4	

Sub-question 1: What do you understand is the function of the UBE as it relates to reducing drop outs? Participants shared their understanding or knowledge on what function the UBE was created to meet. They described the focus of the programme on students of school age, strategies through which the programme was to carry out its objectives, and the program's benefits to the nation. Prt1 described the program in her words:

The program was designed to broaden the scope and number of people, which are of school age to have access to school. With regards to drop outs, the UBE was designed to reduce drop outs by providing access to schools through free education, provision of education materials in primary to secondary schools.

Prt2 in describing the focal aim of the UBE program traced its origin, and how the program was supposed to be a foundation for future benefits. He described:

The UBE was designed to meet the key ideals of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). It was supposed to help on job creation and wealth generation. It ensures the acquisition of functional education for laying the foundation for technical, vocational and entrepreneurship in dropouts.

This perception was also put forward by Prt3 who stated that UBE curriculum which includes technical, moral and civic education, was to help children to grow up as good citizens thereby reducing dropouts and building the quality of human resources in the nation. Prt4 concisely summarizes the description of the UBE function in the following words: "It provides for compulsory, free, universal basic education for all children of primary and junior secondary school age in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It also stipulates penalties for parents who fail to comply with its provisions."

The enumerated data above described the knowledge, the various participants have on the UBE. They described the program as structured towards providing free access to qualitative education that would first take away the children from the streets,

and empower them for future pursuits, thereby enhancing nation building. They stated

that the UBE was supposed to impact through the provision of education materials,

creation of free access and management of a curriculum system that would impact the

needed skills profitable for future endeavors.

Sub-question 2: Was the UBE implemented in your school?

Participants identified the presence of implementation in their schools. All

participants acknowledged the existence of the UBE implementation in their various

schools. They stated if the implementation had stopped or if it was still ongoing. Prt4

stated that "Yes the UBE was implemented and is still being implemented in my school."

The participants were unanimous in their thoughts that their various schools all

experienced the UBE implementation. Some participants (Prt2 and Prt4) from both

schools went on to state that, to the best of their knowledge the implementation was still

ongoing. This in essence shows that public schools in Agbani community, all experienced

the implementation of the UBE.

Sub-question 3: How long ago was this implementation made and in what areas

did the implementation focus on?

Participants reviewed how long ago implementation was made and what areas the

implementation focused on. They identified when the implementation started in their

various schools and how the implementation process was undertaken. Prt1 had this to

say:

The implementation has been done at different times starting since 2005. The

school under review is a government owned public school. The UBE was

implemented in this school and part of this implementation is still ongoing. The

implementation was done through the provision of tuition free education,

provision of textbooks and erection of school buildings. In other words, the school

is tuition free. Textbooks were sent from Abuja (the country's capital) for use by

the students. Late last year, a staff of the supervisory agency Universal Basic

Education Commission (UBEC) was on ground to monitor the level of

implementation in the school.

Prt2 who is from the same school as Prt1, in sharing in his own perceptions

identified a drawback:

The implementation started in the mid-2000s with the erection of classroom,

provision of books, free tuition, and provision of chairs for example. However

these implementations have been few and far in between. There has been nothing

regular or steady. For long spells the pre UBE status quo has been maintained. No

major leaps in improvement.

Describing implementation in the second public school Sch2, Prt3 had this to say:

Tuition has been free. Qualified teachers and a good counsellor were posted to my

school which goes a long way in imparting good values and norms in the lives of

our children, thus making them to be good citizens of this great country. This

posting however has happened just once, since the programme was introduced.

Prt4 further qualified the above described situation: "Implementation has been done in trickles over the years since the inception of the programme. We observed this implementation basically in the form of some qualified teachers posting and provision of teaching aids. Nothing else has basically be done." The data presented showed the participants described the level of implementation represented in provision of classroom, free tuition, books, chairs, and rare monitoring for Sch1, teachers posting, free tuition, and teaching aids for Sch2. However participants in both schools complained of inconsistencies and lack of continuity in the implementation process. Only Sch1 participants identified when the implementation commenced.

Sub-question 4: Do you think that the implementation of the UBE has reduced dropouts in your school?

Participants share their impressions on if the UBE implementation has reduced dropouts in the various schools. Prt1 stated:

The implementation of the UBE has reduced dropouts in this school. With the provision of free access to school, capacity for school to accommodate more students; this school has experienced an increase in the number of students. Provision of textbooks, new buildings and information technology facilities has further attracted students and encouraged parents to send their wards to school. Prt2 in her own words further described the impact on dropout rates in Sch1:

Yes I think that the implementation of the UBE has reduced dropouts in schools. So many of our youths after having the basic education have gone ahead to further

engage themselves in vocational skills and are no more roaming about the streets. Many children who would have dropped out because their guardians and parents are indigent, are now in school. This explains why the number of students in the public junior secondary school is on the increase.

For Sch2, Prt3 in her summation gave her perception on the impact:

Yes. The idle mind is the devil's workshop. When someone is idle and of course religion is not a powerful dynamic force in the individual, crime can take over. UBE is designed to provide individuals with basic education enough to enable them lead more productive lives in the society. With this motive, dropouts have reduced in our schools as this implementation has encouraged more students to attend school.

Prt4 is of the same mind as above. She stated that "Yes, it has reduced dropouts in my school. Children in primary and junior secondary school are no longer paying fees and so we have more number of children come to school." Participants in both schools described the impact as positive. This impact they stated was majorly observable in the increased number of students in schools. Other observable points were in the number of students that went on to pursue their vocational careers.

Sub-question 5: How did the implementation of the UBE affect the school's system's ability to handle dropouts? (School system here refers to qualified teachers, teaching aids, well stocked library, sports facilities etc.)

In trying to capture the impact on the UBE on specific school's capacity to handle the dropouts and any resultant issues, Prt1 stated:

The implementation of the UBE focused on enhancing capacity through provision of textbooks for students, erection of school buildings and training of teachers. Books were provided to further aid the learning process of students although the books sent to the school did not meet the need of the school and also did not go round. Buildings were erected to cater for the increased number of students expected with the program implementation and teachers were retrained to enhance effective knowledge delivery.

Prt2 described the impact of the UBE on Sch1 schools capacity in this form:

The implementation of the UBE has affected the school's system ability to handle dropouts in various ways. Only qualified teachers were allowed by the government to teach in the secondary schools. This makes the effective handling of the students possible. Very few teaching aids were supplied and not in all subject areas. The government in order to ensure effective implementation of the UBE scheme should supply free textbooks, exercise books, sports facilities etc. to the schools. Although they were always few and this supply was not made frequently.

Sch2 participant Prt3 shared her opinion on the impact of the UBE on Sch2 schools capacity:

Despite the implementation of the UBE, our school still lacks qualified teachers, if the appropriate teaching aids are not available in the school or if the library is not well equipped (as is the case here), it will affect the school system to handle reduced dropouts, because all these above are the instruments which UBE is going to use to facilitate learning in the schools, thereby reducing the incidence of dropouts in the society. The UBE did very little to improve this schools capacity to deal with dropouts. There was also no form of monitoring or supervision from the external UBEC body all this while - whether it be physical, infrastructural, visits, curriculum and teaching methods supervision etc. with all these, lacking, whatever numerical gains are observed based on the tuition free access would be eroded in no time.

Prt4 clarified the above statement:

The program failed to improve the school system's ability to handle dropouts since the policy makers failed to include regular provision of teaching aids, well stocked libraries, classroom blocks etc. So although more students came to school because of the free tuition facility, the school system can barely handle the increased number. This has necessitated surcharging the students to maintain a semblance of a structure.

The impact on school's capacity varied across both schools, based on the different implementation points and strategies. Sch1 observed improved school capacities in the form of school building provision, training of teachers and provision of textbooks.

Participants from this school however stated that, a major drawback observed was the inadequacy of materials supplied and the infrequency of supplies. Participants from Sch2 believed their school was not impacted to handle fallout from the implementation. They describe irregular provision of teaching aids, non-availability of classroom blocks, lack of qualified teachers and library structures. These participants opined for an increased focus on schools capacity, else the small gains already made might be lost.

Sub-question 6: In an education reform process like the UBE, who do you think are stakeholders to the process?

Participants shared their understanding on who participants to an education reform process were. Prt1 stated that:

> To my own understanding, the stakeholders in reform processes would include the government or promoters of the program, the schools, teachers, parents, the community and students themselves. It is also very important to note that the parents, students and schools are also part of the community.

This was also echoed by Pt 2 though Prt4. Prt3 stated that "I think the students themselves, teachers, school authorities, parents, the government are all stakeholders in the process." All Participants are of the view that anybody contributing in any little way to the process – whether the student, parents, schools, government or communities, is a stakeholder to that process.

Sub-question 7: What practical steps can be taken by the

a. School

b. Teachers

c. Parents/guardians

d. Community

e. Government

To fight dropouts in schools.

In understanding the roles of stakeholders, the participants share their perceptions on the role of stakeholders in reform processes like the UBE. Prt1 started by describing the school function:

> The essential function of any school is to ensure provision of teaching and learning. Good schools they opine would always attract students thereby reducing dropouts. A school that knows its function and teaches well can attract students and reduce dropouts. School management should ensure through good planning and monitoring that their teachers do their job well. Teachers' motivation and encouragement could ensure that they do their jobs better.

Prt2 also added to the contribution of the teachers and schools by stating

> Teachers should organize one or one lessons with students to know their problems and help in solving them. They should make out more time for the students especially the slow learners. Teachers must know that they are curriculum implementers and therefore should carry out their duties industriously so as to make teaching and learning very interesting especially to the children. Schools

should ensure that funds, facilities, books etc. provided by the government for UBE are properly managed and used in order to achieve the desired effects.

Prt3 also added that "Teachers should try and provide teaching aids while teaching because it will help the students to learn very fast and also motivate them to be very serious with their studies." Prt4 further stated that "The teachers should be closer to the pupils, knowing them by name. They should avail themselves of refresher courses to keep themselves in tune with modern teaching techniques."

On the school system, Prt1 believes a school who lives up to its function can handle social problems like the UBE. All participants were of the opinion that a good school management structure, teacher training and encouragement, provision of teaching aids, proper funding would help a program like this meet the desired objectives. On the role of parents in the reform process, Prt1 stated that:

The UBE program encourages parents and guardians to send their wards to school. Proper parents synergy could ensure that information flow amongst parents in the community is enhanced and parents are further encouraged on the merits of sending their children to school.

This was further buttressed by Prt2 who in his words stated that:

Parents should encourage their children at home to study their books. They should also help them to prepare to school on time and visit their children's schools to find out what they are doing. Parents/Guardians should cooperate with the school and government in order to make UBE scheme to work and produce the desired

goals. For example, they should make sure that their children and wards go to school by encouraging them financially, materially and morally.

This above statement also echoed the perceptions of Prt3 who gave her opinion as

Parents should provide their children with their basic necessities in school and also monitor them in and out to know when they start misbehaving. Parents should also visit the school from time to time to know the attitude of their children outside home.

Prt4 tows the same train of thought as others. The participants all agree that parents encouraging their wards, following the education progress and aptitude of their children, providing for them, and synergizing amongst themselves would ensure that the values being transferred in school systems has meaningful impact.

The school and students contribution to the reform process was discussed. Prt2 was of the opinion that students need encouragement. His words were "The students should be encouraged to study harder while in school. When they do that, they will be no need for dropout. Carrying out of practical aspect of some subjects while in school can help to fight dropouts." Prt3 was of the opinion that "Enrolment of children in schools is expected to increase at an alarming rate with UBE, and with such, a corresponding increase in the number of schools. Employment of more teachers will be necessary." Prt4 Further emphasized that:

The school should ensure that the classrooms are ventilated. They should see that classes are not overcrowded so that teacher-pupil ratio can be maintained at 1:35.

The school should position the blackboard such that pupils will be able to clearly see what is written on the board. The school should also provide teaching aids".

Participants believe students' personal involvement is needed to make a success of programs like this. They feel students need to be encouraged in every way. They also believe the school physical structure, classroom management structure and teaching aids are essential in making schools places of high impact.

The contribution of the community and traditional system was described thus. Prt1 believed it starts with understanding who the stakeholders are and their influence on the reform process. In his words:

The community comprises of the school, teachers and the parents. Traditions and culture influences the education of the girl child but due to enlightenment of the traditional structure in this locality, the influence has been almost eliminated. It is also not commonplace to reject education of the girl child in this locality as it is common knowledge around here that education is about the advancement of the individual.

Prt2 described the role of the community in this way:

The traditional rulers and members of their cabinets since they work together with the government can enforce UBE on the children of their communities using the powers given to them. The community should emphasize the need for every child to go to school and learn how to read and write.

Prt3 also gave her impressions by stating that "The community has to setup laws that would govern that particular community. Should the laws be violated, disciplinary measures should be taken in order to inculcate discipline in the lives of the community members." From the above, participants believe the role of the stakeholders starts from understanding who these stakeholders are, and their position of influence. The participants also highlighted the need for synergy among the stakeholders, and how stakeholders could be a source of reform program enforcement and monitoring.

When the participants were asked if the UBE had to potential to limit dropouts, all participants were unanimous in their assertion that the UBE has the capacity to drastically reduce dropouts. Hear in the words of Prt2 who said "The UBE actually has the potential to handle and almost totally reduce dropouts in this rural community with proper and structured planning and implementation."

Sub-question 8: Suggest better ways for planning and implementing education policies in the future in rural areas like Agbani?

Participants gave various ways the future of reform processes could go in the future. Prt1 stated that

> Teachers and Parents should be involved in planning and implementation of policies. There should be better monitoring by UBEC. Brainstorming sessions should be done with stakeholders and the government should be the prime mover. School reform awareness should be increased in the local community and larger world. Books sent should meet needs and quantity should go round.

Prt2 believes for future reforms the following areas should be looked into in the future: syllabus development, classroom management, and assessment of learning. He also believed there should be a teacher's guide for the various subjects of the curriculum to be developed. He further defined the role of the government. In his words:

The government should be able to create awareness in rural areas like Agbani on the planning and implementing of education policies. The rural communities should be involved. This will go a long way in making the parents know the essence or importance of such education policies so as to enable their wards and children access their benefits.

Prt2 stated that teachers, who are the implementers of the curriculum or education policies, should be encouraged and motivated to teach in rural areas like Agbani. This he said was very important because only few teachers are found in the rural areas like Agbani when compared to urban and developed areas of the country.

Prt3 believes the following areas needs to be addressed. She stated that:

By employment of qualified teachers, by sending teachers to seminars and workshops, by providing teaching aids in the schools, By equipping our school libraries with more books, by supporting/providing free education to the students in our various schools, by making sure that each school is provided with a qualified counsellor to help inculcate discipline in the lives of our students.

For future reform plans Prt4 stated:

The policy should be extended to senior secondary school. Government should ensure that only teachers with educational certificates will be employed. Government should include incentives for teachers in rural areas. They should equip teachers with teaching aids. Children in the school should be supplied with writing materials.

Participants are of the consensus that the UBE reform chain should be improved on. This improvement should cut across better planning and implementation, increased involvement of stakeholders, better capacity development of schools and teachers. The high frequency words for this case is thus represented in Table 2.

Table 2

High Frequency Words for Case 1

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
School	6	65	4.86
Children	8	24	1.80
Teachers	8	24	1.80
Students	8	23	1.72
Parents	7	22	1.65
Schools	7	20	1.50
Education	9	18	1.35
Dropouts	8	17	1.27
Implementation	14	16	1.20
Government	10	14	1.05
Teaching	8	14	1.05
Community	9	12	0.90
Provision	9	11	0.82
Ensure	6	10	0.75
Books	5	9	0.67
Areas	5	7	0.52
Number	6	7	0.52
Secondary	9	7	0.52
Access	6	6	0.45
Implemented	11	6	0.45

The case also has a word cluster which is described in figure 3.
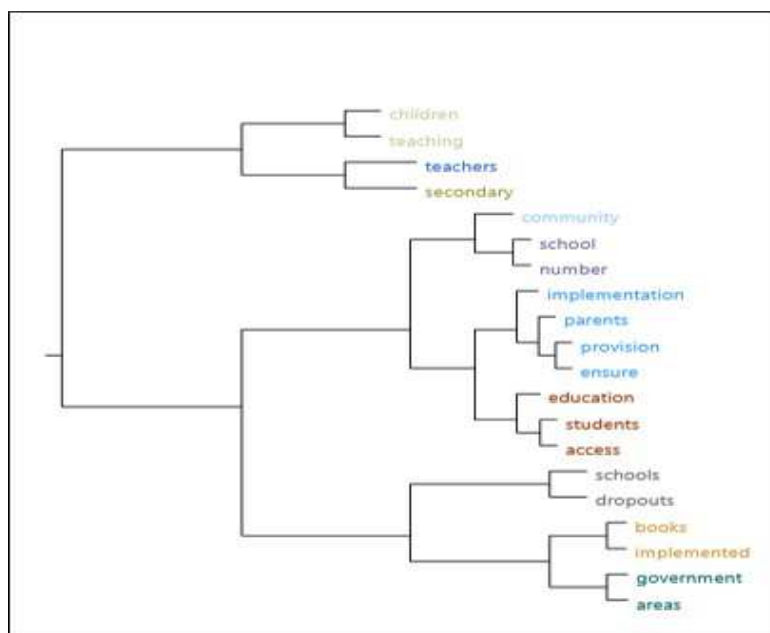
Figure 3. Word cluster for case 1.

Case 2: Private School (Responses are from participants within a case group)

Case background: This case focuses on private owned and run secondary schools. Two private schools and three participants (at least one from each school) participated in the study. Sch3 connoted the first private school while Sch4 connoted the second private school. Prt5 connoted Participant 5 was from the first private school. Prt6 (representing Participant 6) and Prt7 (representing Participant 7) both came from the second private school Sch4. The case 2 demographics and denotation is represented in Table 3.

Table 3

Case 2 Participants Demographics and Denotation

School	Denotation	No of Participants	Denotation of Participants
Private School 1	Sch3	1	Prt5
Private School 2	Sch4	1	Prt6
Private School 2	Sch4	1	Prt7
Total Schools: 2		Total Participants: 3	

Sub-question 1: What do you understand is the function of the UBE as it relates to reducing drop outs?

Participants gave their understanding on the functions of the UBE and how the program relates to dropouts. The participants' defined program as one focused on giving every child access to education. In the words of Prt5 he stated that "The program was established to encourage school attendance by both males and females through measures such as free tuition, provision of textbooks, educational infrastructures such as buildings."

Prt6 took her definition of the UBE from the perspective of the program providing a common structure. In her words she described the program functions to be:

The functions of the UBE as it relates to reducing dropouts is the ability to coordinate the same study system, provide the same material for schools, including the proper training of teachers. They should be able to pay teachers well and as time due to avoid improper training of the students both academically and otherwise.

Prt7 summarized all the views by stating:

The UBE is a program that is to give basic and free education to every child in the country. The program was designed to be free and should equip the child with skills that could help him in the future.

The participants believed the UBE program was one focused on reducing dropouts, through the provision of free access to education for students, enabling the system promote reduce dropouts, and equipping the child with future skills. They were of the opinion that the programme was designed to achieve these above named objectives through a common standard structure.

Sub-question 2 & 3: Was the UBE implemented in your school? How long ago was this implementation made and in what areas the implementation focus on?

Prt5 from Sch3 had this to say concerning implementation in his school:

Implementation here in my school was relative. As a privately funded school, much of the tenets of the UBE (free tuition), textbooks provision, educational infrastructures etc. are not provided by the government hence the associated focus: low dropouts, are different from those of the governments'. In the eyes of private schools, dropouts as defined by the UBE does not exist. Nobody drops out from this school: at least not for economic reasons. This school caters for the elite in the society. Private schools like ours only align with the UBE in terms of curriculum and education (teaching and examination structure). In the real sense of the word, UBE was not implemented in my school.

Prt5 stated that UBE implementation was nonexistent in his Sch3. In trying to understand implementation in Sch4, Prt6 had this to say for the school:

No, the UBE was not implemented in my school especially as we are a private school. Schools like ours only have a claim to using the same centrally approved structure and curriculum as other schools (whether private or public) and this structure dates before the inception of the UBE program.

Prt7 also added that "Curriculum alignment was basically it, although it was not followed through as originally planned. Besides even with the alignment to curriculum, there was no form of follow up or supervision whatsoever."

Participants stated that there was no implementation in their various schools. This they observed was obvious because provision of education of materials and school funding was made from private sources and not from the government. They also stated that access to education was not free in their respective schools. Prt5 particularly said for his school, dropouts don't exist in their mentality. The participants believe the closest link private schools have with the UBE reform process is curriculum. They also believe this common curriculum structure was not followed through as planned.

Sub-question 4: Do you think that the implementation of the UBE has reduced dropouts in your school?

Participants evaluated the impact of dropouts on their respective schools. Prt5 stated that the UBE had no impact in his school. In his own words, he stated "As earlier mentioned, for private schools, dropouts don't exist." Prt6 stated that as there was no

implementation in her school, there was no impact as well. Prt7 gave further explanations to why there was no impact:

Although we don't acknowledge dropouts in private schools, generally the UBE has not really reduced dropouts. Dropouts was not only basically a function of finance (and by finance I mean provision of structures where schools could be accessed on a free platform), but was also supposed to address the ability to tap into the children's aptitude or talent. It was observed under former reforms that children might not be able to cope with senior secondary education. This was supposed to be done through an upgraded curriculum structure which was supposed to be applied in all schools. This was not implemented in my school. We currently are still using the old curriculum.

Participants stated that there was no implementation in their various school which resulted in no impact. A key point is the non acceptance of the dropout syndrome in private schools. However the part of the UBE that would have actively involved the private schools, school curriculum has still not been updated.

Sub-question 5: How did the implementation of the UBE affect the school's system's ability to handle dropouts? (School system here refers to qualified teachers, teaching aids, well stocked library, sports facilities etc.)(To understand the impact on the existing school capacity)

All participants stated that the program had no effect on their various school's capacity. Prt5 described it in his words in this way:

No implementation was observed here and so this school's capacity was not impacted in any way. Regardless of its non-existence in my school, the UBE is supposed to provide books, pen and other things for students. This is to help some students whose parents could not afford to send to school. However this was not done in my school. Facilities like the school library, sport facilities were privately provided without recourse to any programme. The UBE in not being implemented in my school in any form had no impact on the capacity of the school.

Prt7 had this to say about Sch4's capacity:

There was no implementation. I have knowledge that technical equipment were just stacked in some schools (not ours) without manpower. Teachers are still not qualified for the new structure, curriculum is still poor. Certain subjects were introduced but the schools system was too theoretical to impose any impact Education was not taught well enough to tap into talents. I think the school system especially private ones are not equipped to cause any impact. Also since private schools are privately owned, there is a consciousness to make profit as much as possible. This has caused them to go lower but cheaper standards.

For the private schools, the general consensus was that the UBE had no impact on their various school capacities.

Sub-question 6: In an education reform process like the UBE, who do you think are stakeholders to the process?

In describing education reform stakeholders Prt5 described stakeholders on a general form and stakeholders with respect to his school. His words exactly:

Ideally education reform processes would include as stakeholders the government, the school system, parents and probably the community. However with respect to reform in my school and for the singular reason that we have no direct relationship with the immediate community, stakeholders would cover the government, the school and parents. This school has parents who are domiciled beyond the immediate community.

This was concurred buy Prt6 and Prt7 who re-echoed the same sentiments. In the words of Prt6 "I think schools, the government and parents are stakeholders in any educational reform process," Participants believe that stakeholders should involve schools, the government and parents.

Sub-question 7: What practical steps can be taken by the

a) School

b) Teachers

c) Parents/guardians

d) Community

e) Government

To fight dropouts in schools.

Prt6 described the role of some stakeholders. She believed the role of the school was to maintain a standard teaching environment. In her words:

Now as it concerns my school which is a private school, the school should encourage this student by putting necessary equipment in school which will help this students to easily understand what they have been taught. Well qualified teachers should be made to teach this students because when a teacher is not well qualified in her area of teaching the students may be more confused and can easily dropout.

Prt7 believed the role of the school involved promoting standards and excellence in teaching. She stated that:

Schools should stop double promotion. School structure should be properly maintained. Exam malpractice should be stopped. The government needs to plan and spend to implement properly. Facilities have to be provided for a good educational structure. Students should meet entry requirements and not cut corners. Parents should stop pushing children but rather encourage them along the lines of quality and morality. Parents also need to be educated on the value and knowledge of education systems.

Prt7 also gave this advice to teachers. She said teachers needed to train and update themselves because they can't give what they don't possess. Prt6 encouraged parents and the community on their roles in the reform process:

Parents should try their possible best to pay their children school fees and other things needed by the child. Community should be a watch dog for this students

going late to school and at the same time give sanctions to parents or guardians

who sent out their children to sell items during school hour.

For the society Prt7 stated "The society which comprises of all of the stakeholders

should learn to think right." When asked, Prt6 is of the opinion that the UBE has the

capacity to reduce dropouts in schools in Agbani if they are determined and willing. Prt7

believes the UBE program is laudable but implementation has to be improved.

The participants give their take on ways stakeholders could contribute to the

reform process. Maintaining a standard educational structure and teaching methods was

one of the ways schools and parents in synergy could contribute to the reform process.

Sub-question 8: Suggest better ways for planning and implementing education

policies in the future in rural areas like Agbani?

For future reform processes, Prt5 believed that supervision and monitoring is key

to enhancing the efficiency of the process. In his words:

Monitoring is essential for every reform process. So far this school upholds a very

high standard, however no monitoring or evaluation has been done by the

government on the school with respect to how this school is conforming to the

curriculum structure.

Prt6 held the view that the government holds a vital role in ensuring that reform

processes work in the future. She stated that:

The government should ensure that qualified teachers and proper training of our

teachers are employed by private schools (holding certificate is not enough, but

ability to impact the children). These teachers should be paid adequately too. The government should make education free indeed and should be able to create free material to the children in other to arouse their interest towards education. These materials should not be for just public schools but also for private schools as well.

Prt7 believed that that proper planning with the right people in administration is key. In her words she stated:

Right people should be in the right place (planning wise). There should be a political will on the part of the government to make and allow things work very well and sustainably. Maladministration which is a basic problem should be eliminated. Trainings, seminars and conferences for teachers should be provided. Schools should be funded properly. The curriculum needs restructuring. New developments in the education sector – teaching methods for example, should be brought to the grassroots".

Participants shared their views on the way forward, highlighting possible areas where future programs could be improved upon, and private schools made more relevant in the reform process. They believed proper planning, implementation, monitoring, and school system upgrade are key for an effective reform. The highest word frequency count for this case is represented in Table 4.

Table 4

High Frequency Words for Case 2

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
School	6	32	4.85
Schools	7	20	3.03
Government	10	10	1.52
Private	7	10	1.52
Teachers	8	10	1.52
Curriculum	10	9	1.36
Education	9	9	1.36
Parents	7	9	1.36
Students	8	8	1.21
Children	8	7	1.06
Dropouts	8	7	1.06
Structure	9	7	1.06
Programme	9	6	0.91
Community	9	5	0.76
Impact	6	5	0.76
Implementation	14	5	0.76
Implemented	11	4	0.61
Provided	8	4	0.61
Qualified	9	4	0.61
Reform	6	4	0.61

With clustering results are described in Figure 4.
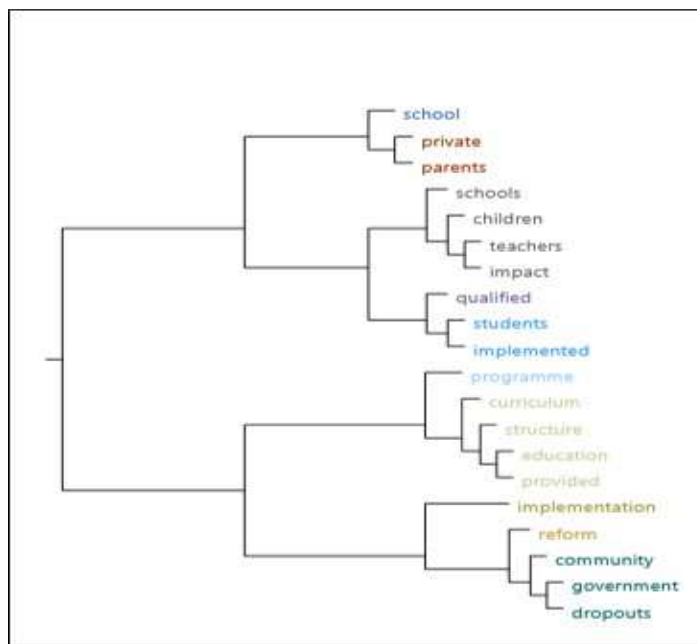
Figure 4. Word cluster for Case 2.

Case 3: Mission School (Responses are from participants within a case group)

Case background: This case focuses on mission owned and run secondary schools. This rural area has only one mission school. Three participants (all from one school) participated in the study. Sch5 connoted the mission school. Participants 8, Participants 9 and Participants 10 would be represented by Prt8, Prt9 and Prt10 consecutively. The case demographics and denotation is represented in Table 5.

Table 5

Case 3 Participants Demographics and Denotation

School	Denotation	No of Participants	Denotation of Participants
Mission School 1	Sch5	1	Prt8
Mission School 1	Sch5	1	Prt9
Mission School 1	Sch5	1	Prt10
Total Schools: 1		Total Participants: 3	

Sub-question 1: What do you understand is the function of the UBE as it relates to reducing drop outs?

Participants from this school shared their impressions on the functions of the UBE. Prt8 described the programme as an avenue to educate and equip children. In his words:

The functions of the UBE is to provide ready access to education for eligible students by providing free education. This the policy planners expect would encourage more student to schools, equip them better for the future and ultimately reduce dropouts.

Prt9 also described the functions of the UBE as a programme set to provide ready and easily affordable access to education for all students by providing free education. Prt10 stated that "The UBE is a programme that is to give access to education to every child in the country. The programme apart from being free and should bolster the child

with skills that could help him in the future." Participants described the UBE as a programme geared towards educating and equipping children through free access to quality education, thereby empowering them for future pursuits.

Sub-question 2 & 3: Was the UBE implemented in your school? How long ago was this implementation made and in what areas the implementation focus on?

Participants described the unique level of implementation in their schools. They described how the peculiar nature of their school influenced the non-implementation process. In the words of Prt8:

> The UBE was not implemented in my school. My school here has a particular circumstance or we were in a special situation. At the onset of the UBE program, this school was a public school and was treated as such. Some couple of years into the programme, the ownership structure of this school was changed. The government handed the school back to the missionaries. This changed the complexion of things. Missionary schools like this one are fee paying schools although they are still expected to follow federal curricular system. In essence there was and still is no implementation in my school.

Prt9 stated that apart from curriculum alignment with respect to exams, there was no implementation in her school. Prt10 succinctly summarized Prt9's opinion. She stated that "There was no implementation in my school especially as this school is a fee paying one." Participants stated that the UBE was not implemented in their school because Sch5 formerly a public school was handed over to the missionaries and is now a fee paying

one. They stated that the school still maintains the same exam structure as other school forms.

Sub-question 4: Do you think that the implementation of the UBE has reduced dropouts in your school?

Participants shared their understanding on the impact of the UBE on dropouts in their school. Prt8 stated that the implementation did not reduce dropouts in his school. In his words:

> It is actually difficult to gauge the impact of the UBE because this school is a fee paying mission secondary school. To my general knowledge, the UBE has not actually reduced the dropout of girls in school. Due to the fees that this school demands that students should pay, it has actually not reduced dropout because some parents cannot afford to pay some of these fees.

Prt9 also said:

> Analyzing impact in my school is very difficult as the handover of the school from the government to the missionaries ended the status of the school as a non-fee paying school. In that respect there was no basic implementation. Also there was no form of implementation even with respect to curriculum development.

Prt10 paints the impact scenario in another light:

> There was mass exodus of students when this school changed ownership from the government to the missions. That could be attributed to the fees that were introduced. Since then however, there has been no observable dropout rates.

Students or wards who come to this school come with the mind-set that they would be paying fees and not receiving any form of subsidy from the government. The implementation of the UBE or lack of implementation thereof has no bearing on dropouts here especially as the syndrome was not observed here in the first place.

Participants from this school form all said a reduction in dropouts was not observed in their school. This the participants said might be as a result of absence of the dropout syndrome in the first place. They said the introduction of a fee paying structure in the school actually caused people to withdraw from school rather than encourage them to remain in school. This negated the cardinal focus of the UBE program.

Sub-question 5: How did the implementation of the UBE affect the school's system's ability to handle dropouts? (School system here refers to qualified teachers, teaching aids, well stocked library, sports facilities etc.)

All the participants stated that there was no impact of the UBE in their school. They also said the capacity of the school has not been improved or impacted in any way. In the words of Prt9 "No UBE impact in my school. No new facilities or teaching aids. Infrastructure are actually getting far worse than before. The School system was not impacted in any way." Participants believed the UBE had no impact on their schools' capacity.

Sub-question 6: In an education reform process like the UBE, who do you think are stakeholders to the process?

Participants described stakeholders to include teachers, schools, parents, the community and the government. They opine that all of them have important roles to play to make the reform a success. Prt10 stated that "I think parents, the government and the school system are pivotal or key stakeholders in any reform process."

Sub-question 7: What practical steps can be taken by the

a. School

b. Teachers

c. Parents/guardians

d. Community

e. Government

To fight dropouts in schools.

Participants proffered suggestions on roles stakeholders could play in the UBE education reform process. Prt8 stated that reforms starts from the students. In his words:

Preventing dropouts starts from enlightening the students themselves. They have to understand their importance to society and what potentials they can achieve. Parents also would come in handy in this regard in working on their children. The school has to be structured to accommodate and encourage students. Teachers have to be trained and equipment provided. The society in general has to uphold and maintain the value of education. Collective effort from all stakeholders would go a long way in reducing dropouts.

Prt8 went to further state that "UBE has the capacity to reduce dropouts in schools in Agbani if structurally implemented. The right focus should be on the right schools. Implementation should be made in schools where it would have a lasting impact and make sense. There is need for proper planning." Prt9 stated that all stakeholders have to put their hands together to fight the dropout malaise. She went on to say that teachers need to be encouraged and their working environment improved on, and capital projects have to be embarked in the school by both private and the public. She believes the UBE has the capacity to reduce dropouts in schools in Agbani if duly implemented. Prt10 describes her opinion in these words: "Collective effort is needed by all stakeholders. The school system and physical structure has to be improved, parents and schools involved in planning and implementation of reforms, state government getting a higher level of involvement." Participants harped on the need for collective efforts by all stakeholders in making a reform process effective.

Sub-question 8: Suggest better ways for planning and implementing education policies in the future in rural areas like Agbani?

Prt8 believes curricula structure should be reformed. In her words:

Curriculum monitoring should be more frequent. The structure for mission schools should be clearly explained especially in the light of public policies. Schools like ours don't know what roles we have to play in the reform process. As a matter of fact, our school form was not in existence when the programme was being planned. A clear understanding of what aspects of the reform process would

apply to the various school forms should be clearer explained. Regular monitoring should also be instituted for continuous improvement. Planning of the reform process should involve all stakeholders especially the teachers and school management.

Prt9 believes proper and structured planning is needed for future reform processes. She also was of the opinion that schools and teacher involvement in the planning and implementation process is needed. She said equipment should be provided to meet needs. She also stated that the structure for mission schools should be clearly defined with roles and responsibilities described. Prt10 re-echoes the opinion of Prt9 on the need for proper planning. In her words:

No reform process can be effectively planned, implemented and monitored from Abuja. The state governments have to be very much actively involved in planning, implementation and monitoring to enhance adaptability and efficient delivery. School funding plans especially for mission schools should be improved as no reform can be done effectively in the absence of money. School structure in mission schools has to be improved. The situation is in very dire straits. Curriculum needs improvement,

Suggestion points were proffered by the participants to improve future reform processes. Improved planning and implementation, higher involvement in planning, and monitoring by the stakeholders were suggested improvement areas made by the participants. The word frequency for this case is represented in Table 6.

Table 6

High Frequency words for Case 3.

Word	Length	Count
School	6	33
Schools	7	16
Implementation	14	12
Government	10	8
Process	7	7
Reform	6	7
Stakeholders	12	7
Students	8	7
Dropouts	8	6
Education	9	6
Planning	8	6
Especially	10	5
Impact	6	5
Mission	7	5
Parents	7	5
Paying	6	5
Structure	9	5
System	6	5
Teachers	8	5
Actually	8	4

Word cluster is as depicted in figure 5.
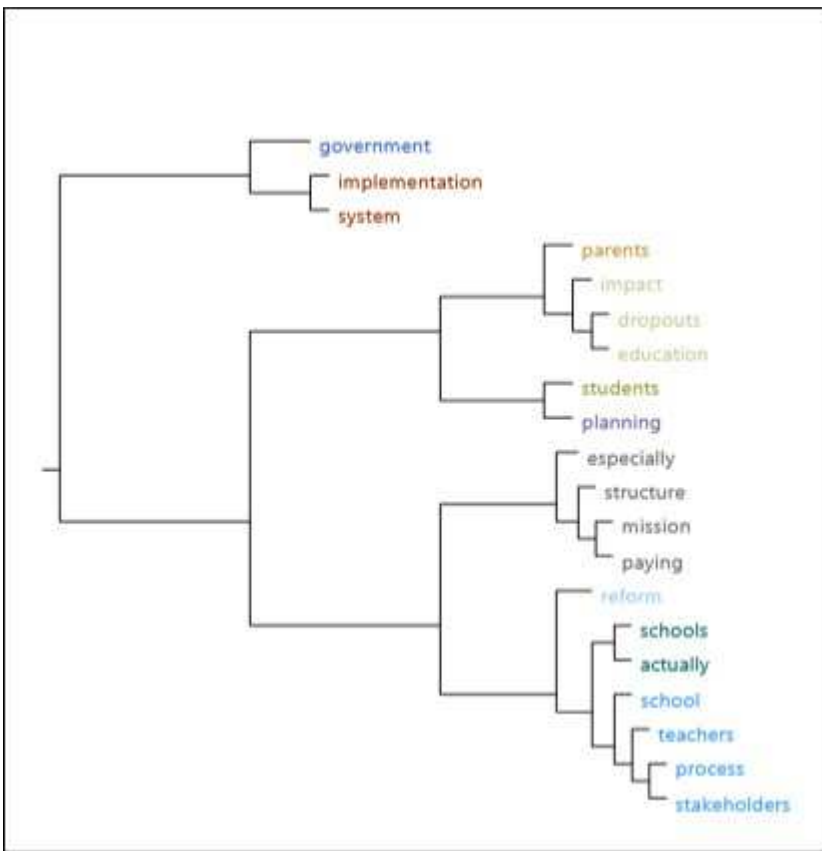
Figure 5. Word cluster for Case 3.

Data Analysis Across Cases

UBE definition from participants across cases was consistent. The program was

described as a platform to provide quality education, and instill skills through free access

to education, a consistent and standard curricula structure of education. The program was

also to enable school systems to reduce and sustain the dropout rates. Implementation

was observed in the public schools. The implementation was observed in building

provision, free access to schools, and provision of education materials. However

implementation: was not consistent across both public schools, was not frequent, and there was no implementation with respect to teaching curriculum. Private schools and mission schools participants did not observe the UBE implementation in anyway, and these participants stated that their respective schools still maintain the old curricular structure. Participants from public schools described the impact of the UBE as positive as more students gained access to school. Private schools and mission participants stated that the UBE had no impact in their schools especially, as there was no implementation. Public schools capacity was impacted as opined by their participants. However, they believe that due to the infrequent nature of implementation, gains made at the onset of the program, might be lost in no time if no action is done to improve the implementation. The school capacities of the private and mission schools according to their participants, was not impacted in any way. Stakeholders' identification was consistent across all school forms. Describing the roles of the stakeholders by participants was made to include: understanding the position of influence exerted by stakeholders, synergy among stakeholders, student and teacher encouragement and improved teaching methods. Participants across cases also believed that with better planning and implementation, the UBE had the potential to impact dropouts. They also believed that with better planning, implementation and monitoring, improved schools capacities and better stakeholder involvement in the reform processes, higher impacting reform processes could be developed in the future.

Emanating Categories with Codes

A list of all of the nodes I developed with their meanings follows:

1. *ASM Absence of School Monitoring* code describes situations involving lack of school monitoring.

2. *ATP Adequate Textbooks Provision* code describes the need for the UBE implementation to involve adequate provision of textbooks. Adequacy should satisfy number and need.

3. *CCM Community Constituent Makeup* code describes what constituents make up the community.

4. *CCS Common Curriculum Structure* code describes the curriculum in use by schools in the country at the time.

5. *CDR Community Dropout Response* code describes ways the community could contribute in handling dropouts in schools in the community.

6. *CMS Classroom Management Structure* code describes ways classrooms can be managed to enhance the teaching process.

7. *CPE Citizen Program Enhancement* code describes one of the objectives of the UBE in enhancing the citizens of Nigeria.

8. *CRP Curriculum Reform Process* code describes occasions where participants believed there was a need for a curriculum reform.

9. *CUS Curriculum Update Strategy* code describes the need for updates on curricula and teaching methods on the part of teachers.

10. *EMP Education Materials Provision* code highlights that the UBE involves the

provision of educational materials. It would also describe that education materials

were provided during implementation.

11. *ESS Extra Student Surcharge* code describes students had to be surcharged

despite the implementation of the UBE program,

12. *FEP Free Education Provision* code describes one of the tenets of the UBE

program. It would also define if free education was provided during

implementation.

13. *FSI Future Societal Impact* code describes future societal benefits of the UBE

program.

14. *GAP Government Awareness Program* code describes the strategy where

government champion awareness programs in host communities.

15. *GSA Good School Ability* code describes abilities, good schools exhibit.

16. *IEM Inadequate Education Materials* code describes inadequate provision of

educational materials during implementation.

17. *IFI Indigent Families Impacted* code describes perceived impact of the UBE

implementation on indigent families.

18. *IIO Infrequent Implementation Observed* code describes when infrequent

implementation was observed. This implementation involves provision of books,

materials, buildings, monitoring etc.

19. *INA Increased Number Access* code describes when increased number of students was observed due to the implementation of the UBE programme.

20. *INO Implementation Not Observed* code describes when no implementation was observed. Implementation covers provision of books, materials, buildings, monitoring etc.

21. *IPI Improved Planning & Implementation* code describes the need for an improvement in the planning and implementation of the UBE program.

22. *IRM Improved Reform Monitoring* code describes the need for an improvement in the monitoring of the UBE program.

23. *ISC Inadequate School Physical Capacity* code describes presence of an inadequate school physical capacity. School physical capacity will cover buildings, desks, chairs, classrooms, sports equipment, libraries etc.

24. *ITA Inadequate Teaching Aids* code describes presence of an inadequate teaching aids.

25. *ITP Inadequate Textbook Provision* code shows that inadequate textbook were provided during implementation. Adequacy defines quantity as well as need.

26. *ITP2 Inadequate Teachers Posted* code shows that inadequate teachers were posted during implementation.

27. *LFI Legal Framework Initiative* code describes legal recourse stakeholders could explore in enforcing the UBE program.

28. *LIF Low Implementation Frequency* code shows that implementation frequency was low and irregular.

29. *MTA Matching Policy with Action* code describes the need for the government to match UBE program plans made with implementation.

30. *MTQ Minimal Teacher Qualification* code describes when provision of teachers made during implementation was on the basis of a minimal standard qualification requirement.

31. *NCI No School Capacity Impact* code shows the UBE program instigation made no impact on the capacity of their schools.

32. *NTA Non-availability of Teaching Aids* code shows absence of teaching aids.

33. *ODR Observed Dropout Reduction* code describes perceived reduction in dropout rates.

34. *OII Observed no Implementation Impact* code shows the UBE program implementation made no impact in their schools.

35. *OIM Observed Implementation Monitoring* code shows that implementation monitoring was observed.

36. *OPI Observed Presence of Implementation* code shows that implementation was observed.

37. *OTI Observed Time of Implementation* code shows the time implementation was observed.

38. *PAF Programs Access Function* code describes the UBE's objective in providing access to education.

39. *PCA Private Curriculum Alignment* code describes that private schools' curriculum aligns with the general curriculum.

40. *PCF Program Curriculum Focus* code describes the UBE curriculum objective.

41. *PCI Practical Curriculum Implementation* code describes the need for practical curriculum implementation in future reforms.

42. *PCR Positive Community Response* code describes an observed positive response by the community to a social problem.

43. *PDI Parents Dropout Intervention* code describes ways parents could contribute to reforms.

44. *PFS Parents Forum Synergy* code describes ways stakeholders could cooperate to enhance reforms processes.

45. *PPE Program Parents Encouragement* code describes UBE impact on parents.

46. *PSA Program Student Attraction* code describes UBE impact on parents.

47. *PTA Provision of Teaching Aids* code describes the need for teaching aids.

48. *PWC Program Wealth Creation* code describes the function of the UBE in wealth creation.

49. *QTP Qualified Teachers Posting* code describes that qualified teachers should be posted to enhance capacity in future reforms.

50. *RAI Reform Awareness Instigation* code describes the reform awareness strategy that could be used in future reforms.

51. *RSI Reform Stakeholders Identification* code describes an identification of stakeholders.

52. *SBP School Building Provision* code shows that school buildings were provided during implementation.

53. *SCD School Capacity Development* code shows that school management capacity were developed during implementation.

54. *SES Skill Equipping Strategy* code describes the function of the UBE in providing skills.

55. *SFD School Form Definition* code describes a school form.

56. *SFD2 School Function Definition* code describes the function of a school.

57. *SMM School Management Monitoring* code describes the need for school management monitoring in future reforms.

58. *SMS School Management Structure* code describes the need for good school management structure in future reforms.

59. SPI Stakeholder Planning Investment code describes the need for stakeholder involvement in planning in future reforms.

60. *SPI2 Student Personal Involvement* code describes the need for student involvement in reforms.

61. *SSD School Structure Description* code describes the need for a proper definition of a school form.

62. *STP School Textbook Provision* code describes the need for textbook provisions during reforms.

63. *TBP Teacher Best Practices* code describes the duties of teachers in enhancing reforms.

64. *TCF Technical Vocational Curriculum Foundation* code describes the UBE as a source of vocational foundation.

65. *TEI Tradition Education Influence* code describes the influence of tradition on reforms.

66. *TES Teacher Employment Strategy* code identifies the need for teacher employment.

67. *TME Teachers Motivation & Encouragement* code shows the need for teacher motivation in future reforms.

68. *TPI Teacher Personal Involvement* code describes ways parents could be involved in reform processes.

69. *TTD Teacher Training and Development* code shows the need for teacher training in future reforms.

70. *TTP Teacher Training Provision* code shows that during implementation teacher training was provided.

71. *UCD UBE Capacity Focus Description* code describes the UBE capacity focus.

72. *UPR UBE Potential to Reduce Drop Outs* code shows perceptions on the UBE's

ability to reduce dropouts.

73. *UPR2 UBE Parents Relationship* code describes the impact of the UBE on

parents.

74. *VJE vocational Job Experience* code shows the benefit of the UBE programme in

providing experience for students.

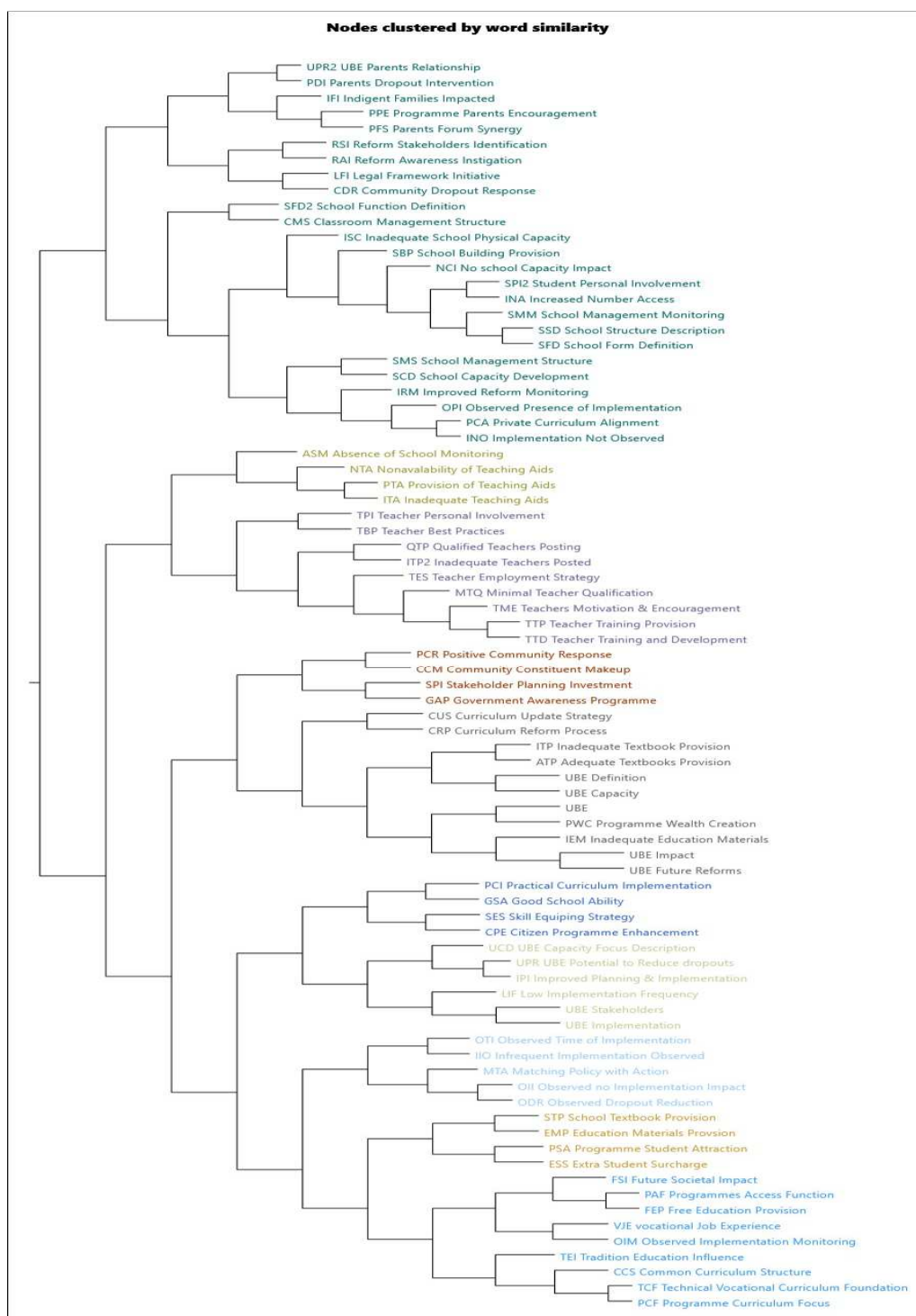A total clustering (across all cases) was obtained and is represented in Figure 6.

Nodes clustered by word similarity

Figure 6. Word clustering across cases.

Table 7

Node Categories with Groupings

Categories	**Nodes**/Themes*	Frequency
Government	CPE, CRP, CUS, EMP, FEP, FSI, GAP, GSA, IEM, IFI, IIO, INA, INO, IPI, IRM, ISC, ITA, ITP, ITP2, LIF, MTA, MTQ, NCI, NTA, ODR, OII, OIM, OPI, OTI, PAF, PCI, PPE, PSA, PTA, PWC, QTP, RAI, SBP, SES, SFD, SFD2, SSD, STP, TCF, TES, TME, TTD, TTP, UCD, UPR, VJE	159
School physical capacity	STP, SBP, ITP, OPI, INA, ATP, IEM, IIO, ISC, NCI	34
School organizational capacity	OIM, SMM, OPI, IRM, ITA, PCI, CRP, PCF, NTA, ASM, PTA IIO, IEM INO, PCA, OII, NCI, CCS, IPI, SMS, CUS, SSD, SCD, ITP2, QTP	75
Reform Agents	TTP, TME, MTQ, ITA, PCI, CRP, CMS, QTP, ITP2, NTA, TES, TTD, TPI, TBP, PTA	39
Stakeholder Involvement/Relationship	RSI, PFS, CCM, TEI, PCR, SPI, IFI, SPI, PDI, CDR, GAP, SPI2, FSI, UPR2, LFI, ESS	43

Note. *nodes have been fully described above

Government

The government played a major role in the implementation of the UBE right from

the planning stage, through implementation in the various schools. This theme is

referenced in 159 comments across the 10 participants. The comments ranged from:

understanding the government objectives in setting up the UBE program which gathered

33 significant comments, an evaluation of the government's implementation process

which garnered 63 significant comments, the impact of the UBE implementation which

gathered 22 comments, and future strategies that could be employed by the government gathered 40 significant comments. This theme is important in evaluating the UBE implementation process and understanding possible strategies to developing higher impacting reform.

School Physical Capacity

The school physical capacity was one of the major ways participants saw or judged the physical implementation of the UBE in their schools. School physical activity covered buildings or classroom blocks, desks and chairs, books, teaching aids, and sports equipment. 34 comments were garnered over all the participants interviewed. 16 statements made by participants were positive comments, on how the implementation of the UBE had helped their schools' physical capacity. 10 comments stated that the implementation of the UBE has had no impact on their school's physical capacity. This particular theme is central to answering the research question, as the program's ability to impact on system capacity would be evaluated.

School Organizational Capacity

Schools' organizational capacity defined the inner working system of the various schools, and how well the implementation impacted the system's capacity to handle dropouts. 75 comments from participants were found in the interview data, in which they discussed monitoring strategies employed during the implementation process, curriculum structure, and teaching methods. One positive comment about the monitoring strategy employed, was made by participants while five negative comments were made about

monitoring. Four comments made by participants talked about monitoring as a vital tool for future reform processes. Nine comments were centered on curriculum structure by participants with one comment being positive and seven comments being negative. Participants made suggestions on the curriculum structure based on the negative comments. Participants also talked about future reform process improving the teaching methods with five negative comments made about teaching aids and six comments analyzing the need for improved teaching methods consideration in the future. The school structure also came up with 17 comments covering the failures of the existing structure and calls for a new system to be developed in some schools. This theme analyzed the impact of the program on the existing school capacity especially as it would help promote and sustain reduced dropouts.

Reform Agents

Reform agents in this case teachers, was a common theme enumerated by participants. Teachers garnered 39 comments. Participants made seven comments on teacher encouragement and motivation. Three negative comments centered on teachers' non availability was generated. Employment of more qualified teachers generated nine comments. Running of refresher courses for teachers for them to provide quality education for students, was echoed in seven comments, while the need for good teaching practices in future reforms, garnered 12 significant comments.

Stakeholder Involvement/Relationship

Participants first identified who the stakeholders were in the UBE reform process. Stakeholders identified included the government, the schools, teachers, parents, the community, and the students themselves. Stakeholders were referenced in 43 comments with identification observed in 10 comments. Various stakeholder relationships were highlighted by the participants and some of these relationships included; the government/community relationship, teacher/students relationship, parents/students relationship, school management/teachers relationship amongst others. All relationships were referenced in 13 comments. The need for stakeholder involvement and role of various stakeholders in future reform processes was also mentioned in the interview data enumerated. This need for stakeholder involvement was represented in 8 comments while the roles were highlighted in 14 comments from participants involving all the stake holders earlier mentioned.

Discrepant Data

This study focused on the impact of the UBE on school's capacity to handle dropouts in secondary schools. It was expected that data would center on the ability or inability of the government's UBE policy to impact capacities of schools and what stakeholders could do to improve future reforms. All of the interview data aligned with themes along those lines. The data also aligned with data emanating from existing literature as described in the review of literature in Chapter 3.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Quality in research defines how transferable the study can be replicated in similar

contexts. In order to address quality and validity issues and minimize bias, strategies

selected and used were done to enhance the quality. They included as stated in Chapter 3

random sampling, triangulation, and member checks, in order to produce a rich and thick

description of the subject matter.

Credibility

Credibility defines that the research findings are an actual representation of reality

and this can be ensured by a number of strategies (Cresswell, 1998). This study ensured

credibility through the strategy triangulation. Triangulation was used by collecting data

from multiple sources (cases or school forms as is used in this study). Member checking

was another strategy used to ensure credibility. The participants were asked to review not

just their interview transcripts, but the plausibility that the research findings were a

representation of what is on ground. Majority of the participants responded with the

opinion that the research findings were very plausible.

Transferability

Transferability seeks to determine if the study findings are applicable or can be

generalized to diverse situations (Cresswell, 1998). The study used a rich, robust

approach in case and participants' selection, a detailed interview process in order to

enhance the transferability of the findings. Maximum variation was used when selecting

cases or school forms and also when selecting participants. Diverse opinions from the

participants was also encouraged to enhance the transferability of the study. Care was

taken to ensure that every detail taken during the data collection and analysis process was

clearly described and included in the study.

Dependability

Dependability in a study defines if the same results would be found each time the

phenomenon is studied (Cresswell, 1998). This study ensured dependability using

triangulation. Random sampling method across multiple case forms (ensuring total

population representation), invitation for diverse opinions were tools used to ensure that

results would be consistent whenever the social problem is studied.

Confirmability

Confirmability describes to what extent the study can be confirmed by others

(Cresswell, 1998). For this study, data collection procedures and analysis were

documented and described. A journal on the researcher's biases and opinions was kept

prior to data collection and compared with the findings, to ensure that the researcher

assumptions are not reflected in the findings.

<div align="center">

Summary

</div>

In this chapter, I presented the results of the study. In making this presentation,

the system setting, participant demographics, and data collection process was described,

and the data analysis process, collation of nodes, development of categories and themes

was stated. Strategies that enhanced and ensured trustworthiness were described. The five

themes that emerged from the study were: government, schools' physical capacity,

schools' organizational capacity, reform agents, and stakeholders'

involvement/relationships. These themes formed the main thrust or findings of this study.

These findings were presented in relation to the interview questions as they aligned with

Elmore's (1979) bottom up theory, in answering the central research question of

understanding teachers' perceptions on the impact of the UBE on schools capacity to

curb dropouts in rural secondary schools.

Chapter 5 will include a description and interpretation of findings from Chapter 4.

The research question, which is based on the conceptual framework and literature review,

was used as a guide and framework for me to interpret the findings. In Chapter 5, I will

also describe the implications for positive social change and recommendation for future

research. The chapter will conclude with the importance of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions of teachers on the impact of the UBE on schools' capacity in addressing dropouts amongst females in rural secondary schools in Nigeria. I made this study in alignment with Elmore's (1979) bottoms up approach. A qualitative tradition using the case study design was employed for this study because this approach provided an opportunity to conduct an in-depth investigation on a social problem in its context. In this study, I analyzed data across multiple cases and answered the research question within each case in order to present a rich description of the impact of the UBE on schools' capacity to handle dropouts. This study addressed an under researched area of public policy implementation using the inputs of stakeholders in the field. I hoped the results of this study would help to enrich the body of knowledge on education reform implementation in rural areas and arrest the rate of women dropping out of secondary schools. The results will also help understand what factors affected the implementation of the UBE and how these factors could be best maximized or minimized for future reforms.

Summary of Findings

I presented the key findings for this study in Chapter 4 in relation to the interview questions answered by the participants. These answers were gathered to create a description to answer my research question. Themes that were re-echoed throughout the interview process were collated and presented as well. The key themes generated

included (a) government, (b) schools' physical capacity, (c) schools' organizational

capacity, (d) reform agents, and (e) stakeholder involvement/relationship.

Interpretation of Findings

I interpreted this study's findings in conjunction with data obtained from the

literature review of Chapter 2. From the review of literature, a number of concepts or

themes emerged with respect to educational reform processes. These concepts included

(a) planning and strategizing, (b) change agents, (c) stakeholders, (d) monitoring and

evaluation, (e) implementation, and (f) system reform. The findings for this study were

interpreted in relation to the above stated themes, while taking into cognizance Elmore's

(1979) bottom up approach. Elmore's approach states that stakeholders in the field are

vital to evaluating and improving reform processes. The themes from the study aligned

with concepts from literature, and this was used to make a description, whilst addressing

the problem statement. The interpretation of data was also completed within each case

and comparisons were made across the cases.

The research focus was centered on understanding the perceptions of teachers on

the impact of the UBE on schools' capacity in addressing dropouts amongst females in

rural secondary schools in Nigeria. In the study, I found that the UBE program was set up

and initiated by the government to be implemented in all primary and secondary schools

in the federation (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). The program was to

address key basic aspects which were to run concurrently in all schools (Federal Ministry

of Education Nigeria, 2000). These aspects included (a) provision of free access to

education and (b) enabling school curriculum so that students would be imbibed with training that would empower them for the future (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000). However, the focus of this study was centered on how the schools' capacity was enabled. Drawing from both the review of literature and emanating themes from the interview data, in this study, I approached and adjudged schools' capacity from five perspectives (a) access to education, (b) schools physical capacity, (c) reform agents, (d) schools' organizational capacity and curriculum development, and (e) stakeholders involvement and relationship.

Access to Education

Findings from participants involved in the study showed that one of the cardinal aims of the UBE program was to impact dropouts by enabling schools to accept students on a tuition-free basis. This free tuition access was implemented in the public schools connected to this study. According to the participants, this was a major factor in the increased number of students observed in the various respective schools.

Schools owned and run by other external parties (like private owners or the missions) did not provide for free tuition access as stipulated by the government mainly because the government was not funding these institutions. The UBE, in its policy guidelines, advocated for free tuition access but nowhere did it state how this would be provided in schools the government was not funding. Although participants from the private and mission schools stated that their school structure did not experience dropouts, they also agree that due to their fee paying nature, the incidence of dropouts was not

expected to arise in the first place as parents and guardians come with the mind-set or preparedness that they would be liable for their ward's fees, until the students graduate.

In terms of access to education for public schools, the school capacities were enabled by the UBE program. This enablement was opposed to the no impact on the school capacities of the private and mission schools. This accounted for the first evaluation indicator (increased students in schools) to be observed in public schools as against private and mission schools.

Schools' Physical Capacity

Participants also observed the impact of the UBE on the schools' physical capacity. It was expected that with the implementation of the program, there would be increased number of students in school, thereby causing the need for more classroom blocks, more desks and chairs, a bigger library, more teaching aids, sports equipment, and books. The program was expected to supply these needed materials to the various schools, thereby improving the schools' physical structure and capacity. Participants from the first public school observed that the program provided them with some classroom blocks, desk and chairs, and books. They said this helped them in handling the increased number of students, although they said the classroom block was still not enough (because of their student-to-teacher ratio), and the books sent were mostly the wrong ones needed by the school. The right ones were not sent for the students, thereby failing to meet the need. The second public school participants stated that no new classroom block was erected. They just had some books sent down to the schools. In this respect, their physical

capacities were not enhanced to deal with the need produced by the implementation of the UBE program. Participants from the private and mission schools stated that the UBE did not impact their physical structure in any way.

Therefore, the UBE implementation only enhanced the physical structures of public schools, which are schools owned by the government. However, the implementation did not cover all the needed physical facets of these schools and also did not impact these public schools equally or on an equal basis, thereby making the experiences and impact on the students varied. The implementation had no impact on nongovernment owned schools.

School Organizational Capacity and Curriculum

Information from the interview data showed that the UBE was not just focused on providing children with access to schools but was to enable the school system to impact them with skills that they would take through life. Some of these skills were expected to include technical, vocational, management, and business skills. Therefore, the UBE was to update the current school curriculum to enable the system to provide this knowledge. The program was also expected to ensure the adherence to this curriculum in all secondary schools through systemic monitoring and supervision. This new updated structure was to observe the classroom structure and teaching methods. All schools were to be part of this curriculum reform process. Participants from all the schools were unanimous on the fact that nothing was done to update the already existing curriculum structure. Improvements in the knowledge being passed down to the children were

subject to what the school form could provide. Participants from the private schools particularly felt that this was one aspect their school forms could have aligned with the UBE program. However, they lamented the lack of supervision by the UBE commission on private schools to ensure that they remain in line. A participant from the public school spoke on the high student-to-teacher ratio being experienced in their school as being very unhealthy and not good for a proper knowledge-impacting process.

The UBE did not enable the school system capacity to impact improved knowledge being passed on to the students. The program did not fare well in this respect across all schools. Curriculum supervision was not conducted at all in any of the participants' school forms.

Reform Agents

The key reform agents for this study were the school teachers. The information I received from participants on reform agents was built on the foundation that in order for reform agents to be able to provide an improved knowledge delivery to students, the quality of the reform agents themselves have to be improved as well. Participants from the public schools complained about the lack of teachers in their schools. They stated that the UBE program was supposed to involve the employment of qualified teachers in their respective schools, to address the increased number of students. This new teacher employment was also supposed to cover all skill acquisition areas. They further said that the program did not attend to these issues. Current public school teacher participants said they were also supposed to be taken through refresher courses, which never happened.

Private school participants believe teacher employment and capacity building was the responsibility of the school authorities (since they were self-funded). However, they also believed the government had a role in ensuring that these teacher upgrades and employment were adhered to in all school forms. Mission schools participants stated that no form of improvement on their abilities, or even teaching conditions, was made during the reform process. Although participants described the importance of the teachers' roles in the reform process, they all said nothing was done to improve the teachers' capacities to deliver knowledge effectively or even supervise school systems that provided this function for their staff.

Stakeholder Relationship

Participants involved in this study also shared their opinions on the roles stakeholders had to play in ensuring that any educational reform process was successful. In their opinion, the UBE program did not describe the roles stakeholders had to play in the reform process. In their estimation, the planning and implementation was one-sided, and this showed in the less than stellar success rates observed. To these participants representing all the school forms, stakeholders were relative to their various school forms but what was key was that they had important roles they had to play in the reform process. Enabling the stakeholder/school relationship was another way to build up the schools' capacity in impacting dropout rates in the schools.

Comparison with Existing Literature

I compared the findings of this study with themes obtained from the review of the literature in Chapter 2. This comparison was made and tabulated in Table 8.

Table 8

Comparison of Themes

Theme from existing literature	Summary of findings	UBE findings
Reform formulation	Proper identification of what needs to be addressed has an impact on the reform process	The need to be addressed was identified but failure to state roles and responsibilities, and how this reform would be handled in specific cases impacted the reform process.
	Reform should be planned with the recipient population in mind and involved.	The UBE was a generic reform process without attention given to specifics. Recipient stakeholders were not consulted. This caused the implementation to be selective and one-sided
Strategizing and Implementation	Implementation that fails to impact the immediate and external environment would have no substantial impact	Although the UBE tried to impact the institution or schools, these implementation was not consistent and was not done thoroughly.
	Implementation strategy for impact involves monitoring, supervision, continuous improvement and institutionalism.	Monitoring and supervision was poor during the implementation of the UBE programme. There was no window given for improvement hence the low impact of the programme.
Reform Agents	Focus should be placed on reform agents as they are front liners in the reform process	Much attention was not given to the teachers under the UBE scheme and so the programme failed in impacting the required knowledge and skill to the students. There was no training, re-training or employment of teachers.
School system Reform	Base units of reform have to be reformed first for	Mission and private schools systems were not reformed at all to sustain a

them to sustain a reform process.

reform process. Public schools systems were not reformed enough to sustain a reform process
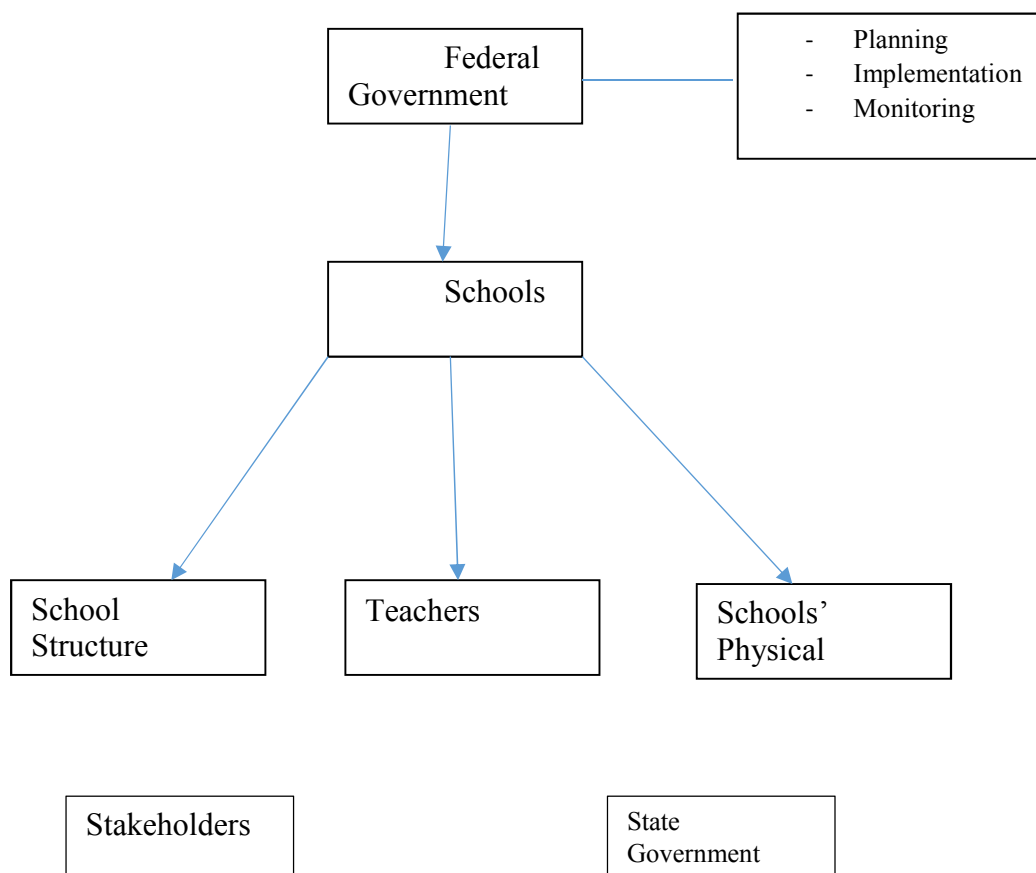

Figure 7. Steady state representation on the implementation of the UBE as observed by participants interviewed.

Tracing a trail in the response of participants showed that the implementation of the UBE, which was supposed to be binding in all secondary schools, was selective due to a lack of proper definition of how implementation was going to take place in these selected schools. The schools where UBE was implemented observed that the

implementation was not consistent and did not cover its objectives. No implementation was observed in non-government owned schools.

The participants from the latter schools say implementation was done from the UBEC headquarters in Abuja. Materials, books, erection of building structures, and monitoring (the few times the schools had one) all came from Abuja. Some of the implementation, however, failed to meet the required needs as they were either inadequate in number, or the materials supplied were totally wrong for the schools they were supplied to. Curriculum upgrades, which were another focal point of the implementation, were not seen in any of the school forms. The UBE program failed to adequately enhance the capacity of the school forms they were implemented in. This was reflected as although dropout rates reduced, the impact or dropout rates could not go down further, due to the school system's ability to sustain further reduction in dropout rates. The current UBE approach also failed to use the invaluable roles that the state governments and stakeholders would have played in the reform process.

Suggested Future UBE Implementation Strategic Model

Participants gave their impressions on how the UBE can be better adapted for maximal impact on dropout rates in secondary school. The process flow for this strategy is depicted in the following Figure 8.
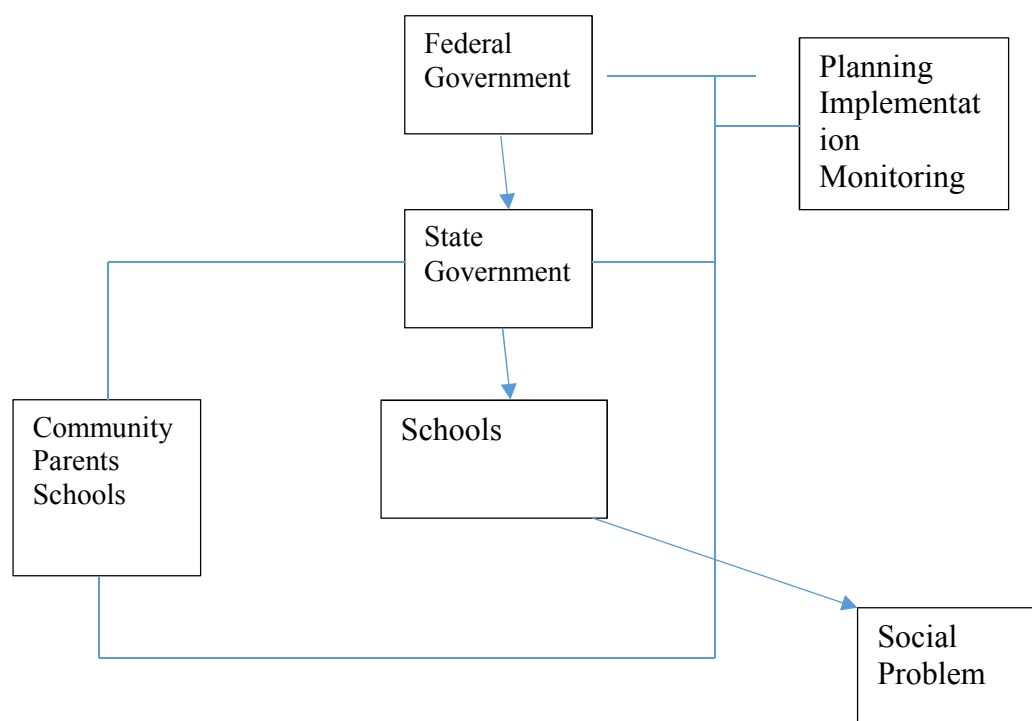
Figure 8. Process flow for the future UBE implementation strategic model.

The participants believe the UBE should approach the reform process using the state government has the reform driver. There would be two layers of planning and implementation. The first layer would be undertaken by the federal government and would describe the general education focus for the country, by that administration. The states would then take this focus, consult with the stakeholders in the respective communities of their states, and then plan on how the reform can be adapted to the various situations and communities in their state. On approval of these plans, implementation is carried out with the stakeholders contributing feedback in the form of monitoring/observation, as well as continuous improvement. The state government would

be in charge of monitoring from the perspective of the government thereby producing a much shorter monitoring chain (as against monitoring by the federal government). Approaches that could be implemented generally across a range of schools, could be highlighted at the state level planning and implemented accordingly.

Limitations to the Study

A limitation of this study was the researcher's bias while handling data collection and interpretation. It is likely that a certain amount of the researcher's bias might have crept in into the study. However, steps such as triangulation, member checking, were taken to ensure that this bias was not allowed to impact the study.

Another limitation was that this study did not use any quantitative data to confirm the dropout rates of the specific schools. The study employed the perceptions of the teachers as accurate. The study however took into cognizance the average dropout rate across the state (as stated by the PPSMB), when ascertaining the severity of the dropout syndrome in the state.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Action

A number of recommendations for action were generated for the study:

1. Planning and implementation should be fragmented with roles, responsibilities, and performance points (or continuous improvement points) clearly defined and understood. This fragmentation would result in:

   a) More adaptable reform programs.

    b) Multiple and shorter monitoring lines.

    c) Shorter communication lines.

    d) Shorter and higher value feedback line.

2. Implementation strategies to specific schools should clearly be described and these strategies should align with the school structure.

3. Stakeholders are key elements of the reform process. They should be actively involved in the reform process.

4. Systems can only impact social problems to their capacities and abilities. Reforms should focus on building system capacities to sustain the reforms.

5. Accountability and constant evaluation/re-evaluation are key to continuous improvement in a reform process.

6. To implement a highly impacting reform program is not just a function of the policy or framework itself but is also a function of the system's ability to promote, sustain, and help improve the policy.

7. Inconsistencies in reform implementation negate accountability.

Recommendations for Further Study

    This study was conducted in Agbani, a rural suburb in Enugu State, Nigeria, and this sort of research could be conducted in other geographical areas. This study recommends that research be done in urban areas to see if the factors enumerated in the rural areas, are any different from those in the urban areas. Another area for further study

could be using incremental theory to understand how fragmentation of policy implementation can be improved.

The UBE program was supposed to be a unifying forum for all the secondary schools in the country. It is recommended that an investigation into understanding how a multifaceted reform approach could be a unifying education strategy in a complex social system. A study that will look into how the government can enforce non-justiciable laws, could be looked into also. The Nigerian secondary school system has recently seen the introduction of the mission school systems in the south and the Islamic school structure for north. A research on developing a reform processes that would include these school forms, and others already existing, can be initiated in order to ensure quality education delivery at secondary level.

Implications for Social Change

The positive social change implications described in Chapter 1 necessitates the need for reform programs in Nigeria to be planned and implemented differently. The growing complexity of the education system makes the case for the use of a systemic and structured approach to education reform programs. The findings of this study makes for positive social change by adding to knowledge base on how the implementation impacted the school systems to handle dropouts. It also highlights factors that influenced the impact of the program and further presents a blueprint or model that could be adapted to future reforms.

The growing list of low impacting reform programs and failed ones have increased pressure on reform promoters and implementers to get it right. Implications for positive social change include understanding the need for stakeholders' involvement in planning and implementation. This involvement, if harnessed properly, could be a critical factor in improving the efficacy of reform processes. This study also highlighted the need for reform plans and processes to be adaptable to different recipient systems. This would reduce reform overhauls, and instead promote continuous improvement and adaptability.

Conclusion

Findings from this study indicate that for a reform process to be of maximum impact: (a) the capacity reforming system must be enabled to promote and sustain this reform; (b) system stakeholders must be involved in planning, implementing, and monitoring of different phases of the reform processes; and (c) reform programs should be designed in such a way that they are easily adaptable and that the programs take into consideration the characteristics of the receiving community. The ever changing complexity of social systems necessitates the need for consistent accountability and continuous improvement to ensure that the system reform and upgrades are consistent, with the needs of the time. The results of this study can promote positive social change by encouraging policy promoters to look towards a different way or strategy in implementing reform programs.

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Appendix A: UBE Dropout Interview Questions

1. What do you understand is the function of the UBE program?

2. Was the UBE implemented in your school?

3. How long ago was this implementation made and in what areas the implementation focus on?

4. Do you think that the implementation of the UBE has impacted dropouts in your school?

5. How did the implementation of the UBE aid your school's system's ability to handle dropouts? (School system here refers to qualified teachers, teaching aids, well stocked library, sports facilities, etc.)

6. In an education reform process like the UBE, who do you think are stakeholders to the process?

7. To fight the rate of drop outs in schools, what practical steps can be taken by the:

   a. School

   b. Teachers

   c. Government

   d. Parents/guardians

   e. Community

8. Suggest better ways for planning and implementing education policies in the future in rural areas like Agbani.

Appendix B: Letter of Invitation

Chinwe A Mordi

23rd July, 2016.

Dear ………..

I am writing to invite you to take part in a research study about Teachers' Perceptions on the Impact of the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme in tackling Drop outs amongst Women in Rural Secondary Schools I am inviting school teachers or administrators who have at least 17 years' experience to be in the study. I obtained your name/contact info via the school administrator

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Chinwe A. Mordi who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

The purpose of this study is to address an under researched area of public policy implementation using the inputs of stakeholders on the field such as teachers and school administrators. By exploring what school teachers and administrators consider to have been the impact of the UBE on schools capacity to affect dropout rates. It is expected that the study would present findings that would enrich the body of knowledge on education reform implementation in rural areas, and arresting women drop out in secondary schools.

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at your school and the Ministry of Education will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study.

It is expected that this study amongst other things would help to; provide a platform on which teachers/principals can add to knowledge on how reform programs should be implemented for maximal impact. Expand knowledge on the implementation of the Universal Basic Education program in rural areas. Identify challenges to educational reforms implementation in rural secondary schools. Examine the capacity of rural secondary schools to support educational reform. Provide source of guidance to future policy makers on educational reform.

This study is a research, and the researcher holds no promise of immediate action to be made on outcomes from the research.

If you are willing to opt in and be a part of this research, you may contact the researcher via text message or phone call on XXXXXX and through e-mail on XXXXXXXX

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Chinwe Mordi

Appendix C: Letter of Cooperation

XXXXXXX Secondary School,
Agbani.

18/06/2016

Dear Chinwe A. Mordi,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled <u>Teachers' Perception on the impact of the UBE in tackling Dropouts amongst women in Rural Secondary Schools</u> within the premises of Model community secondary school Agbani. As part of this study, I authorize you to approach and interview teachers. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our school's responsibilities include: providing a list of participants that meet your inclusion criteria, and who would be contacted by you. We also would be giving you permission, to use our facilities for the interviews. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the school's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Principal
XXXXXXX
XXXXXXX

Appendix E: Confidentiality Agreement

Name of Signer: XXXXXXXXX

During the course of my activity in collecting data for this research: "Teachers' Perception on the impact of the UBE in tackling Dropouts amongst women in Rural Secondary Schools" I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.
6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.
7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature: **Date:**