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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THEUNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NASARAWA STATE

DANIEL SUNDAY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY KEFFI
sdaniellawee@gmail.com
08069122520
ASSOC. PROF. CANICE ESIDENE ERUNKE
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY KEFFI
erunke@gmail.com
08065595472
ASSOC. PROF. LUKA RUTH CALEB
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY KEFFI
Lukaruth81@gmail.com
08032905189

Abstract

Educational development remains a critical national priority in Nigeria, and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Policy was introduced as a strategic intervention to guarantee free, compulsory, and quality basic education for every Nigerian child. Despite this, the extent to which institutional, administrative, socio-economic, and policy-related factors shape the implementation of the Policy, and the extent to which implementation has translated into measurable educational development, remain in need of systematic, state-specific assessment. The objectives of this study were to examine the factors influencing the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State, and to assess the extent to which its implementation has influenced educational development in the State. The study was anchored on the Policy Implementation Theory of Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983), complemented by Systems Theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1968; Katz & Kahn, 1978). A mixed research design was adopted, involving the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were obtained through the administration of questionnaires, while qualitative data were sourced from Key Informant Interviews and secondary materials such as scholarly literature and official reports. The study population comprised ten thousand, two hundred and forty-five (10,245) personnel of the Nasarawa State Universal Basic Education Board (NSUBEB), drawn from officials, education secretaries, head teachers, and classroom teachers across six selected Local Government Areas, namely Akwanga, Wamba, Karu, Keffi, Lafia, and Doma. The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula, yielding a sample size of 385, approximated to 389 for administration purposes. Out of the 389 questionnaires distributed, 381 were returned, while 8 were not returned. A multistage sampling technique combining simple random and purposive sampling was employed. The findings revealed that institutional, administrative, socio-economic, and policy-related factors all significantly influence the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State, with institutional factors rated marginally highest, and that the implementation of the Policy has significantly influenced educational development, most notably through increased school enrolment, with comparatively modest gains in educational

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infrastructure and learning outcomes. Based on these findings, the study recommends strengthened institutional coordination, targeted socio-economic support for vulnerable households, and increased investment in educational infrastructure to close the gap between access and quality in the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State.
Keywords: Universal Basic Education, Policy Implementation, Educational Development, Nasarawa State

Introduction

Education is universally recognized as one of the most powerful instruments for promoting sustainable development, social transformation, and human capital formation, and governments have consistently prioritized educational policy as a mechanism for improving citizens' quality of life (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2021). In Nigeria, this commitment found its clearest expression in the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Policy, introduced by the Federal Government in September 1999 and given legal backing through the Universal Basic Education Act of 2004, which made nine years of basic education free, compulsory, and universal for every Nigerian child.

The success of any policy, however, depends not on its formulation alone but on how effectively it is implemented, and implementation itself is shaped by a range of institutional, administrative, socio-economic, and policy-related conditions operating at the point of delivery (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983). Where these conditions are favorable, a policy stands a good chance of translating its stated objectives into measurable outcomes; where they are weak, even a well-designed policy may fall short of its goals. It is this relationship, between the conditions shaping implementation and the developmental outcomes that follow that this paper sets out to examine in respect of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State.

Nasarawa State has, since its creation in 1996, participated in the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy through the Nasarawa State Universal Basic Education Board (NSUBEB), working in collaboration with the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs), and community stakeholders. Between 2015 and 2025, the State benefited from several interventions, including classroom construction and rehabilitation, teacher recruitment, instructional material distribution, and initiatives aimed at improving enrolment and retention in basic education. Despite these interventions, reports from educational stakeholders continue to point to disparities in educational access, inadequate instructional facilities, and inconsistent utilisation of intervention funds, raising the question of how far the Policy's implementation has actually translated into educational development on the ground.

The interest in examining factors and outcomes together, rather than in isolation, is not merely analytical convenience. A policy may be judged to be "well implemented" on institutional grounds, adequate staffing, functioning administrative structures, clear guidelines, and yet still fail to produce the educational development it was designed to achieve, if the socio-economic conditions of the population it serves remain unfavorable, or if implementation gains in one indicator, such as enrolment, are not matched by gains in another, such as infrastructure. Conversely, a policy might record only modest institutional strength yet still achieve meaningful developmental outcomes where socio-economic and community conditions are strongly supportive. Understanding the relationship between the two, factors and outcomes, therefore requires that both be examined within the same study and, where possible, within the same population of respondents, which is the approach this paper adopts.

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This paper examines, first, the institutional, administrative, socio-economic, and policy-related factors influencing the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State, and second, the extent to which that implementation has influenced educational development in the State. By interrogating these two dimensions together, factors and outcomes, the study aims to contribute evidence-based insight to policy discourse on strengthening the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State.

Statement of the Problem

Through the intervention of UBEC, State Universal Basic Education Boards, and Local Government Education Authorities, substantial financial and material resources have been invested in improving infrastructure, teacher capacity, instructional materials, and school management across Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2013; UBEC, 2023). Despite these interventions, evidence from national educational reports indicates that the objectives of the Policy have not been fully realised in many parts of the country. Although school enrolment has generally improved, significant concerns remain regarding pupil retention, completion rates, teacher adequacy, instructional quality, and equitable access to quality education, particularly in rural and underserved communities (UNESCO, 2021; World Bank, 2022).

In Nasarawa State specifically, considerable investments have been made between 2015 and 2025 through UBEC intervention funds, counterpart funding arrangements, school renovation projects, and teacher recruitment. However, government reports and policy implementation records suggest that several public basic schools continue to experience infrastructural deficiencies, shortages of qualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms, and weak monitoring and supervision (UBEC, 2023; National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2024). Institutional and administrative weaknesses also appear to affect the effectiveness of UBE implementation: delays in the release and utilisation of intervention funds, inadequate monitoring and evaluation, weak inter-agency coordination, and inconsistencies in policy implementation have all been identified as factors capable of reducing programme effectiveness, while socio-economic conditions such as poverty and low parental educational attainment continue to influence school attendance and completion (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2023).

Institutional and administrative weaknesses also appear to interact with these socio-economic conditions in ways that existing studies have not fully captured. Where NSUBEB and the Local Government Education Authorities possess strong administrative capacity, they may be able to partially offset unfavourable socio-economic conditions through, for example, targeted community mobilisation or flexible school-fee arrangements; where such capacity is weak, socio-economic disadvantage is more likely to translate directly into non-enrolment, absenteeism, or dropout. This interaction between institutional capacity and socio-economic condition is precisely the kind of relationship that a study examining only one category of factors, institutional or socio-economic, in isolation cannot detect, yet it is central to understanding why implementation outcomes vary as they do across different categories of respondents and, potentially, across different Local Government Areas within Nasarawa State itself.

Institutional and administrative records also indicate that the pace of intervention differs markedly across the six senatorial-district Local Government Areas sampled for this study, Akwanga, Wamba, Karu, Keffi, Lafia, and Doma, with some areas benefiting from more recent classroom construction or teacher postings than others. This within-state variation is itself suggestive of the kind of institutional and administrative unevenness that a purely national, state-aggregated assessment would obscure, and it further supports the case for a

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Nasarawa-specific study capable of capturing such variation directly from the personnel operating within it.

Although several empirical studies have examined the Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria, most have concentrated on isolated variables, such as institutional capacity, administrative practice, or socio-economic conditions, in other states, and relatively few have simultaneously examined these factors alongside their consequences for educational development within a single state. It is this identified empirical and contextual gap that necessitates the present study, which examines the factors influencing the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State and the extent to which that implementation has influenced educational development in the State.

Research Questions

i. To what extent do institutional, administrative, socio-economic, and policy-related factors influence the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in enhancing educational development in Nasarawa State?

ii. To what extent has the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy influenced educational development in Nasarawa State?

Objectives of the Study

i. To examine the extent to which institutional, administrative, socio-economic, and policy-related factors influence the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in enhancing educational development in Nasarawa State.

ii. To assess the extent to which the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy has influenced educational development in Nasarawa State.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

Universal Basic Education Policy

Universal Basic Education (UBE) Policy is one of the most significant educational reforms introduced by the Federal Government of Nigeria to promote equitable access to quality basic education and enhance national development through human capital formation. The policy was formally launched in September 1999 and derives its legal authority from the Universal Basic Education Act of 2004, which makes nine years of uninterrupted basic education compulsory for every Nigerian child, comprising six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education, together with early childhood care, adult literacy, and special programmes for disadvantaged groups (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2013; Universal Basic Education Commission [UBEC], 2020). For the purpose of this study, Universal Basic Education Policy refers to the institutional, administrative, and policy mechanisms designed to improve access to education, teacher effectiveness, infrastructure development, and overall educational development in Nasarawa State.

Educational Development

Educational development is a multidimensional concept that extends beyond the mere expansion of access to schooling to encompass the systematic improvement of the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of an educational system (UNESCO, 2021). Contemporary scholarship argues that educational development should be assessed using broader indicators, including learning achievement, teacher quality, educational infrastructure, retention, and completion rates, rather than enrolment figures alone (Organisation for Economic Co-

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operation and Development [OECD], 2019). For the purpose of this study, educational development refers to the measurable improvement in access, enrolment, retention, teacher quality, and educational infrastructure resulting from the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State.

Empirical Review of Related Literature

Afolabi and Adekunle (2016) examined the institutional and administrative determinants of UBE policy implementation in selected public primary schools in Kwara State, using a descriptive survey of 312 respondents. The study found that institutional capacity, effective school leadership, and adequate financial management significantly influenced implementation, and that schools with stronger institutional structures demonstrated better implementation outcomes than those with weak administrative systems. Although the study offers valuable evidence on institutional determinants, it was conducted in Kwara State and did not examine the influence of socio-economic and policy-related factors alongside institutional and administrative ones. In a related study conducted in Kaduna State, Ogunode and Musa (2018) similarly found that administrative competence, effective supervision, and staff motivation significantly enhanced policy implementation, while bureaucratic bottlenecks and weak accountability mechanisms negatively affected the process; however, their study, like Afolabi and Adekunle's, concentrated on administrative variables without integrating socio-economic or policy-related determinants into the same analysis.

This is complemented by Mohammed and Bello (2021), who, using a correlational survey of 450 respondents in Kano State, found that household income, parental educational attainment, and community participation significantly affected school attendance and the overall implementation of the Policy, although their study likewise did not examine institutional and policy-related variables in combination with socio-economic ones. Abdullahi and Hassan (2021), examining policy implementation factors in Katsina State using a mixed-methods design involving 438 respondents, found that policy consistency, political commitment, and timely disbursement of intervention funds significantly influenced implementation, and that schools operating under stable policy environments recorded better outcomes than those affected by frequent administrative changes. Taken together, these four studies, spanning Kwara, Kaduna, Kano, and Katsina States, demonstrate that institutional, administrative, socio-economic, and policy-related factors have each been shown, individually, to matter for UBE implementation somewhere in Nigeria; what remains missing from the literature is a single study that examines all four categories of factors together, within one population, in one state. The present study addresses this gap by simultaneously examining institutional, administrative, socio-economic, and policy-related factors within a single analytical framework in Nasarawa State.

On the impact dimension, Elom, Amadi, Uwaleke and Onyeneke (2025), using Nigeria Education Data Survey data for 2004 and 2015, found that the implementation of the UBE Policy significantly improved junior secondary school enrolment across Nigeria, although improvements were uneven across regions, with disparities linked to differences in policy implementation, infrastructure, and socio-economic conditions. This finding is corroborated by Ossai (2022), who found that although UBE implementation in Delta State had contributed to increased school enrolment, the provision and maintenance of educational infrastructure remained inadequate in many public schools, thereby limiting the quality of teaching and learning. A further evaluation by UNESCO (2024), assessing the Learning through Play programme under the Universal Basic Education framework, found that continuous teacher training and curriculum improvement significantly enhanced classroom practice and pupils' learning experience, although the evaluation concentrated on early childhood interventions in selected states rather than on a comprehensive assessment of

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educational development outcomes. All three studies relied on national data or evidence from other states and did not examine the specific pattern of educational development outcomes in Nasarawa State. The present study fills this gap by evaluating the Policy's impact against multiple, current indicators of educational development, namely enrolment, retention and completion, teacher quality, and infrastructure, specifically within Nasarawa State.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopted the Policy Implementation Theory of Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983) as its primary analytical framework, complemented by Systems Theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1968; Katz & Kahn, 1978). The Policy Implementation Theory holds that the success of a public policy depends on the interaction of three broad categories of variables: the tractability of the problem, the ability of the policy to structure its own implementation through institutional and administrative capacity, and non-statutory variables such as socio-economic conditions and political support. Applied to this study, the Nasarawa State Universal Basic Education Board is one of the governmental structures established to give practical effect to this statutory framework, such that institutional and administrative capacity represent the "ability to structure implementation" variable, while socio-economic conditions represent the "non-statutory" variable.

Systems Theory, in turn, conceptualises the education system as comprising interdependent inputs, transformation processes, outputs, and feedback mechanisms, such that a weakness in one component can constrain the overall performance of the system even where other components function well. Read together, the two theories suggest that the implementation factors examined under the first objective of this study function as inputs into the education system, while the educational development outcomes examined under the second objective represent the outputs of that same system, an analytical relationship this study sets out to examine empirically.

Both theories have, however, attracted criticism relevant to how they are applied here. Mazmanian and Sabatier's framework has been criticised as a "top-down" model that pays insufficient attention to the discretion exercised by street-level implementers, such as classroom teachers and head teachers, whose day-to-day decisions can shape implementation outcomes in ways the statute itself does not anticipate. Systems Theory, for its part, has been criticised for its tendency to treat the education system as a self-correcting, largely harmonious whole, a assumption that may understate the extent to which political and resource conflicts between tiers of government can produce sustained, rather than self-correcting, imbalances between inputs and outputs. Notwithstanding these limitations, the two theories remain useful for this study precisely because they direct attention to two complementary questions, what structures and resources shape implementation (Policy Implementation Theory), and how imbalances in one part of the system produce imbalances elsewhere (Systems Theory), both of which are directly relevant to interpreting the empirical findings presented in the following sections.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a mixed research design, involving the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were obtained through the administration of structured questionnaires, while qualitative data were sourced from Key Informant Interviews and secondary materials such as scholarly literature and official reports. The study population comprised ten thousand, two hundred and forty-five (10,245) personnel of NSUBEB, comprising officials, Education Secretaries, head teachers, and classroom teachers serving in 1,441 public basic schools across Nasarawa State (NSUBEB, 2025). The target population was drawn from six (6) selected Local Government Areas, two from each of the

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three senatorial districts: Akwanga and Wamba (Nasarawa North), Karu and Keffi (Nasarawa West), and Lafia and Doma (Nasarawa South).

The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula:

$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$

Where N is the population (10,245) and e is the level of precision, a constant figure of 0.05. Substituting:

$n = 10,245 / (1 + 10,245(0.05)^2)$

$n = 10,245 / 26.61$

$n = 384.97 = 385$ (sample size)

To allow for possible non-response, 389 questionnaires were distributed proportionately across the six selected Local Government Areas. Out of the 389 questionnaires distributed, 381 were returned while 8 were not returned. In addition, key informants comprising officials of NSUBEB and Education Secretaries of the selected Local Government Education Authorities were purposively selected for the qualitative component of the study. The data analytical tool used was simple percentages and frequency tables, complemented by thematic content analysis for the interview data, enabling the researcher to obtain objective and easily interpretable information on the factors influencing implementation and their consequences for educational development in Nasarawa State.

Data Presentation and Analysis of Results

Below is the analysis of responses to the data supplied through the questionnaire distributed and the interview questions administered to the respondents. Data obtained from the questionnaire are presented using frequency distribution and simple percentages, in line with the technique of analysis stated in the methodology, while each quantitative finding is further triangulated with, and read critically against, the responses obtained from Key Informant Interviews and the relevant literature reviewed above. This approach ensures that the statistical pattern revealed by the questionnaire is not accepted at face value but is examined alongside the practical experience of NSUBEB personnel and LGEA officers directly involved in implementing the Universal Basic Education Policy.

Table 1.1: Distribution and Retrieval of Questionnaire by Local Government Area

Local Government Area	Questionnaire Distributed	Questionnaire Returned	Questionnaire Not Returned
Akwanga	65	64	1
Wamba	65	63	2
Karu	65	64	1
Keffi	65	63	2
Lafia	65	64	1
Doma	64	63	1
Total	389	381	8

Source: Field Work, 2026.

Table 1.1 above presents the distribution of questionnaires across the six selected Local Government Areas and the rate of administration and retrieval in the study. Overall, out of the 389 questionnaires distributed, 381 were returned, representing a retrieval rate of 97.9 per cent, while only 8 questionnaires (2.1%) were not returned. This high retrieval rate enhances the reliability of the data and suggests that the findings adequately reflect the perceptions of NSUBEB personnel and LGEA officers regarding the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy across Nasarawa State.

Table 1.2: Respondents' Opinion on the Factors Influencing the Implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State

Item	Strongly	Agree	Undecid	Disagree	Strongl	Total

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	Agree		**ed**		**y Disagree**	
Institutional factors significantly influence the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State.	215 (56.4%)	114 (29.9%)	15 (3.9%)	25 (6.6%)	12 (3.1%)	381 (100.0%)
Administrative factors significantly influence the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State.	198 (52.0%)	121 (31.8%)	20 (5.2%)	27 (7.1%)	15 (3.9%)	381 (100.0%)
Socio-economic factors significantly influence the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State.	176 (46.2%)	129 (33.9%)	25 (6.6%)	35 (9.2%)	16 (4.2%)	381 (100.0%)
Policy-related factors significantly influence the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State.	190 (49.9%)	126 (33.1%)	18 (4.7%)	31 (8.1%)	16 (4.2%)	381 (100.0%)

Source: Field Work, 2026.

Table 1.2 above shows that 215 respondents, representing 56.4%, strongly agreed and 114, representing 29.9%, agreed that institutional factors significantly influence the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy, a combined agreement of 86.3%. Similarly, 198 respondents, representing 52.0%, strongly agreed and 121, representing 31.8%, agreed that administrative factors influence implementation, a combined agreement of 83.7%. For socio-economic factors, 176 respondents (46.2%) strongly agreed and 129 (33.9%) agreed, a combined agreement of 80.1%, the lowest of the four items, while for policy-related factors, 190 (49.9%) strongly agreed and 126 (33.1%) agreed, a combined agreement of 82.9%. This pattern is consistent with Afolabi and Adekunle (2016), who found that schools with stronger institutional structures, adequate administrative supervision, and sufficient qualified staff consistently demonstrated better policy implementation outcomes than schools characterised by weak administrative systems, and with Mohammed and Bello (2021), who found that household income, parental background, and community support significantly affect the implementation of the UBE Policy elsewhere in Nigeria.

This was corroborated by an interview conducted with a Senior Education Officer at NSUBEB in 2026, who stated:

> *"Where the Board has the institutional capacity, qualified staff, and clear administrative structures to supervise schools, implementation of UBE activities tends to go smoothly. But once funding is delayed or community support is weak, even a well-designed programme suffers on the ground."*

This account, however, should be read critically rather than taken at face value. As a serving NSUBEB officer, the respondent has an institutional incentive to foreground the Board's own capacity while attributing shortfalls to external conditions such as weak community support, rather than to internal administrative weaknesses. Read closely, the quote in fact concedes that institutional strength alone cannot guarantee implementation once socio-economic conditions deteriorate, a point consistent with the comparatively lower rating recorded for

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socio-economic factors in Table 1.2. It is nonetheless worth noting that all four factors recorded combined agreement above 80 per cent, suggesting that respondents did not regard any single factor as sufficient on its own; rather, the four appear to function as mutually reinforcing conditions, such that even the comparatively "weakest" factor, socio-economic conditions, remains one that a large majority of respondents consider significant to implementation. This finding directly addresses the gap identified in the literature, namely that most previous studies examined institutional, administrative, socio-economic, or policy-related factors in isolation rather than within a single analytical framework, and, being drawn specifically from Nasarawa State, it narrows the geographical gap left by studies conducted in Kwara and Kano States. On this basis, the finding validates Research Proposition (i) of the researcher's main doctoral study, that institutional, administrative, socio-economic, and policy-related factors significantly influence the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State.

Table 1.3: Respondents' Opinion on the Extent to which the Implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy Has Influenced Educational Development in Nasarawa State

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Implementation of the UBE Policy has increased school enrolment in Nasarawa State.	206 (54.1%)	120 (31.5%)	18 (4.7%)	25 (6.6%)	12 (3.1%)	381 (100.0%)
Implementation of the UBE Policy has improved retention and completion rates in Nasarawa State.	178 (46.7%)	140 (36.7%)	22 (5.8%)	28 (7.3%)	13 (3.4%)	381 (100.0%)
Implementation of the UBE Policy has improved teacher quality in Nasarawa State.	160 (42.0%)	150 (39.4%)	30 (7.9%)	28 (7.3%)	13 (3.4%)	381 (100.0%)
Implementation of the UBE Policy has improved educational infrastructure and learning outcomes in Nasarawa State.	150 (39.4%)	142 (37.3%)	28 (7.3%)	42 (11.0%)	19 (5.0%)	381 (100.0%)

Source: Field Work, 2026.

Table 1.3 above shows that 206 respondents, representing 54.1%, strongly agreed and 120, representing 31.5%, agreed that implementation of the Policy has increased school enrolment, a combined agreement of 85.6%, the highest of the four items. On retention and completion, 178 (46.7%) strongly agreed and 140 (36.7%) agreed, a combined agreement of 83.5%. On teacher quality, 160 (42.0%) strongly agreed and 150 (39.4%) agreed, a combined agreement of 81.4%, while on educational infrastructure and learning outcomes, 150 (39.4%) strongly agreed and 142 (37.3%) agreed, a combined agreement of 76.6%, the lowest of the four items. This declining gradient, from enrolment to infrastructure, is consistent with Elom, Amadi, Uwaleke and Onyeneke (2025), who found that UBE implementation significantly improved school enrolment across Nigeria but with uneven gains linked to differences in infrastructure and socio-economic conditions, and with Ossai (2022), who similarly found that increased enrolment in Delta State was not matched by adequate provision and maintenance of educational infrastructure.

This was corroborated by an interview conducted with an Education Secretary of one of the selected Local Government Education Authorities in 2026, who stated:

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> *"More children are certainly in school today than a decade ago, and we have more trained teachers. What we still struggle with is classroom space, furniture, and instructional materials, especially in the rural areas."*

This assessment, coming from an implementing officer rather than an independent observer, is understandably more favourable than the raw figures on infrastructure, the lowest-rated item in Table 1.3, might otherwise suggest; officials directly responsible for a programme's performance may present its achievements in the most positive light while framing shortfalls as confined to "the rural areas" rather than as a product of resource-allocation decisions within their own control. Triangulating this account against Table 1.3 nonetheless supports the broad direction of the finding, that enrolment has outpaced infrastructure, while cautioning against taking the interviewee's optimism about teacher numbers entirely at face value. This finding responds directly to the gap identified in the literature, in that it evaluates the Policy against multiple, current indicators of educational development rather than enrolment alone, and does so specifically within Nasarawa State. On this basis, the finding validates Research Proposition (ii) of the researcher's main doctoral study, that the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy has significantly influenced educational development in Nasarawa State.

Discussion of Findings

i. One major finding from the study is that institutional, administrative, socio-economic, and policy-related factors all significantly influence the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State, with institutional factors rated marginally highest. Read through the Policy Implementation Theory of Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983), this suggests that the "ability of the policy to structure implementation" through NSUBEB and the LGEAs is currently the strongest of the theory's variable categories in Nasarawa State, while socio-economic conditions, the theory's "non-statutory" variable, remain comparatively the weakest link, such that implementation proceeds but at a level below its full potential.

ii. A second major finding is that the implementation of the Policy has had its strongest effect on school enrolment and its weakest, though still positive, effect on educational infrastructure and learning outcomes. Systems Theory offers a useful explanation for this pattern: enrolment, an output most directly tied to the input of "access", has responded strongly to policy implementation, whereas infrastructure and learning outcomes, which depend on a longer chain of inputs, funding, construction, and maintenance, have responded more slowly, consistent with the theory's proposition that uneven investment across a system's components produces uneven outputs across those same components.

Read together, these two findings suggest a specific sequence worth highlighting for policy purposes. Institutional capacity, the strongest of the four implementation factors, appears to have been directed most effectively toward the objective that is comparatively easiest to achieve administratively, expanding the number of children enrolled, through school openings, admission drives, and enforcement of compulsory attendance provisions. The weaker socio-economic factor and the weaker infrastructure outcome are, on this reading, connected: household-level disadvantage constrains not only initial enrolment but also a family's ability to sustain a child's attendance in a poorly resourced classroom, while under-resourced schools are simultaneously less able to compensate for that disadvantage through better facilities or materials. This suggests that future implementation strategy in Nasarawa State should treat socio-economic support and infrastructure investment not as separate policy tracks but as mutually reinforcing interventions targeted at the same underlying constraint.

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Conclusion

The implementation of the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nasarawa State is shaped jointly by institutional, administrative, socio-economic, and policy-related conditions, of which institutional capacity currently exerts the strongest influence, while socio-economic conditions remain comparatively the weakest link. This implementation has, in turn, significantly influenced educational development in the State, most visibly through increased school enrolment, but with more modest gains in educational infrastructure and learning outcomes. Taken together, these findings suggest that Nasarawa State has been more successful in widening access to basic education than in deepening its quality, a distinction with direct implications for how the implementation of the Policy should be strengthened going forward.

This conclusion also carries a methodological implication for the researcher's wider doctoral study. Because the same population of NSUBEB personnel, Education Secretaries, head teachers, and classroom teachers supplied both the implementation-factor data examined in this paper and the challenge-and-strategy data to be examined in a subsequent seminar paper, the two sets of findings are not independent of one another. Rather, they represent two complementary windows onto a single implementation process: the factors examined here describe the conditions under which NSUBEB currently operates, while the challenges and strategies to be examined subsequently describe the specific obstacles that arise within those conditions and the remedies respondents consider most likely to work. Reading the two papers together, rather than in isolation, is therefore necessary for a complete picture of Universal Basic Education implementation in Nasarawa State.

Recommendations

i. In view of the finding that socio-economic conditions recorded the lowest combined agreement among the factors influencing implementation, it is recommended that NSUBEB, in collaboration with the Local Government Education Authorities and community stakeholders, design targeted support mechanisms, such as conditional transfers or fee waivers, for households whose socio-economic circumstances place their children at the greatest risk of non-enrolment or dropout, so that institutional gains are not undermined by conditions outside the school system.

ii. Given the finding that educational infrastructure and learning outcomes recorded the lowest combined agreement among the indicators of educational development, it is recommended that the Nasarawa State Government prioritise sustained investment in classroom construction, furniture, and instructional materials, particularly in rural Local Government Areas, so that the quality of basic education keeps pace with the gains already achieved in access and enrolment.

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