



AN ASSESSMENT OF PRINCIPAL'S PERSPECTIVES ON THE LEADERSHIP STYLES
IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME
IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

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Abstract

AN ASSESSMENT OF PRINCIPAL'S PERSPECTIVES ON THE LEADERSHIP STYLES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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The research study assessed the principal's perspectives on leadership styles in implementing the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in South-South, Nigeria. A total of five research questions guided the direction of the study. Conducted a literature review to ascertain previous researchers' findings, and several gaps that affected the smooth implementation of the UBE program were identified that further justified the study's need.

The study used an interpretive/constructivist qualitative research approach, phenomenological research design, and semi-structured face-to-face interviews to gather primary data from a purposive sample of 33 public junior secondary school principals in South-South, Nigeria. A qualitative deductive content analysis was used for the data analysis.

The findings based on the live experience of the participants show that the UBE program could have performed better if there had been adequate planning for the principals to implement the curriculum of the UBE program and if adequate funding had been available for the implementation of the UBE program. In addition, periodic leadership and professional development training were done, and sufficient school infrastructure was in place to enhance effective teaching and learning.

The research implications show that the participant's views presented in this study will guide future researchers, educational leaders, administrators, and the education ministry on the impact of the ineffective implementation of the UBE program. The study presented the need for adopting a transformational leadership style for the principals, increasing the funding of the UBE program, and improving the condition of services and motivation of the school principals and schoolteachers to enhance performance. Also recommended were regular leadership and professional development training, effective planning and data management systems, and conducive teaching and learning environment. The current study added to the body of research by extending the need for principals to adopt a transformational leadership style. Mixed-method research was recommended for future studies, and the scope of the study participants should be increased to capture a larger population of school principals, including State Universal Basic Education Board Staff, Schoolteachers, and students. The study was concluded with an overview of the entire study from chapter 1 to chapter 5.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

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Dedication

The doctoral academic journey will not be possible without several individuals' contributions, one way or the other, to the successful completion of the program. I am grateful to God for the gift of life and good health to complete the doctoral program. Thank you to my family, my mother, wife, and children for their support and understanding because I am not available sometimes due to academic pressure when they want me for a family get-together and other celebrations.

The professors who took me on the Ph.D. academic courses, especially Dr. Elena Christophorou and other fantastic professors, helped shape my unmeasurable skills and knowledge developed during the program. I am grateful for the transformational impact you all contributed to the doctoral program and my professional career development. At this point, I express my profound gratitude to all the research participants that took part in the study allowing their experiences to bring the study to life; thank you all. Your experiences and input have added tremendous academic value to my study and professional career. Heaven and Earth will not forgive me if I fail to acknowledge and appreciate my supervisor, Dr. Yusuf Suleiman, for the encouragement and professional mentorship he gave me through the Ph.D. dissertation stages and the preparation for my defense. Allah blesses you richly and grants you all your heart desires.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

All over the world, education is a tool for human capacity development, and it enhances national development globally. In modern-day society, education universally is a vehicle for socio-economic and political development that is already understood, especially in the academic environment and modern civilization. It is a known fact that education has helped in building nations through human capacity development across the globe. Education is the vehicle that helps shape human behavior and develop the capacity to build society. It is worth noting that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2017) confirmed that education is the vehicle that enables children and adults to participate in developing society and helps people from diverse origins around the world to live together. Because of education's role in human development globally, several nations pay critical attention to educating their citizens.

Basic education is an essential and the first level of education the learner receive, and it sets the foundation for other higher level of the educational journey of the learner. It is vital to lay a solid educational foundation because if well established, it will help the learner perform better in future studies. Hence the need to look at what Universal basic education is all about. Maigida (2017) confirmed that the notion of making education universal started in 1948 by the United Nations during the Universal Declaration of Human Rights announcement, giving everyone the right to basic education and should be free and compulsory at the elementary stage.

The Nigerian government realized the need to use education to develop its citizens in readiness for the development of society and the nation at large. It is because of the beneficial

impact of education in most nations of the world, including Nigeria, and from all indications, the government places a high value on the education of the citizens. Ogbonnia (2020) stated that education is a profitable investment any government can give its citizens because it is indeed a human right; excellent basic education will guarantee a better life for the people. Based on the value placed on basic education, the Nigerian government developed a framework to manage the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program implementation. It is a fact that Nigeria attended the education world conference at Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, tagged education for all (EFA), and the high level of illiteracy was a significant concern among the countries represented at the conference (Akinniyi, 2015).

It is a known fact that education plays a vital role in national development across the globe, and countries worldwide made adequate provisions for educating their citizens to position their nations for greatness. The Nigerian government is included in the effort to educate the citizens, which will help develop the nation's socio-economic development. The Universal Primary Education (UPE) program was initially established to help reduce illiteracy in the country, but unfortunately, the program still needs to achieve its objectives. It became necessary for the government to establish the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program to replace the UPE program. Amakiri (2015, as cited in Egbo, 2021) argued that the UBE program was more comprehensive when compared to the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program because UBE took care of women and girl's children that were not considered children from a poor background, refugees, and many more were covered under the UBE program.

The Universal Basic Education program was designed to provide high-quality free, compulsory basic education to all Nigerian children of school age. The UBE program aimed at

providing six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education to reduce the high level of illiteracy in the country. The Nigerian government's desire for quality basic education for its citizens, as well as to meet up with the global trend, several educational policies in the past were established because of the failed educational programs witnessed in Nigeria over the years led to the establishment of the Universal Basic Education program in Nigeria (Egbo, 2021). The Universal Basic Education (UBE) program was established in Nigeria on the 30th of September 1999 by the former president of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (Yamma & Danjuma, 2018). The UBE aimed to help remove the irregularities associated with the implementation of basic education across the country and to ensure the nine years of formal basic education achieved, as well as the reduction of out-of-school children in the country (Egbo, 2021). The UBE program is aimed at providing free and compulsory basic education for all Nigerian children of school age, and the UBE program is designed to provide the first nine years of basic education free and compulsory, which is from primary one to six and from Junior Secondary School (JSS) one to three (Yamma & Danjuma, 2018).

The issue of out-of-school children is an ongoing concern that needs to be addressed in recent times to avoid unpleasant issues in the future. If these children of school age are not back to school will harm society and the nation at large because the needed basic skills to function in society will not be available. The level of out-of-school children in some local government areas in South-South, Nigeria is worrisome because children of school who should be in school are seen selling bread, bottled water, and fruits along the road to support their parents to put food on the table. Regrettably noted was the high rate of out-of-school children because of their poor

financial status hence the need to adopt education for all to help reduce illiteracy (Akinniyi, 2015).

Based on common knowledge, basic education is a fundamental human right because it provides the platform for acquiring basic skills and the foundation for further education, and after graduation, it will lead to human capital development. Meanwhile, Anyabolu (2000, as cited in Akinniyi, 2015) recommended that in the current 21st century, a country like Nigeria requires a basic education program that guarantees every Nigerian child of school age the basic skills and knowledge needed to work or further studies upon graduation. An educated workforce helps build any nation's socioeconomic and political development globally. Grant (2017) pointed out that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targeted for 2030 was the year set aside for boys and girls to acquire free, unbiased, and high-quality basic education. Only a well-established basic education is believed to bring developing countries' enormous populations out of poverty (Grant, 2017).

Akinniyi (2015) further claimed that education is a success factor for any nation to develop its economy and society; hence, the Nigerian government made nine years of provision for basic education in its National policy on education, six years for primary education, and three years for junior secondary education respectively. One of the critical factors for establishing the UBE program was based on the high-level illiteracy rate among the youth and adults identified as poor and who do not add much value to national development (Abutu, 2015, as cited in Egbo, 2021). It is of great concern for the government to declare a state of emergency on the UBE

program in Nigeria to investigate the issues hindering its smooth implementation from providing solutions (Egbo, 2021).

It is critical to note that the role basic education plays in human capital development is a significant factor in economic growth in developing countries; it has led to unjustified school achievement, it is because the low quality of education makes it challenging to improve its system economically (Hanushek et al., 2010, as cited in Grant, 2017). Meanwhile, Oluwole and Fanan (2019) confirmed that education over the years had been a measure for developing nations, and basic education in Nigeria aimed to acquire needed skills for the learner to stimulate national growth and create political awareness.

Adequate funding is essential to successfully implementing any project or program, including the UBE program, because funds will be required to procure adequate school infrastructure and maintenance. Funds will be required to purchase instructional materials, logistics, training, developmental programs, and payment of salaries, and the government is responsible for providing adequate funding for the effective implementation of the UBE program in Nigeria. The funding of the UBE is the responsibility of both the state and local government authorities, but the Federal government supports the UBE program with 2% intervention funds from the consolidated revenue (Akinniyi, 2015). However, the Act established the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) was charged with the responsibility of managing the implementation of the UBE through the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) across each state and local government in Nigeria (Akinniyi, 2015).

Abah and Victor (2021) verified that the UBE program was designed for free and compulsory for all children at the basic education level; however, the program still faced

implementation challenges. The inability of the school principal to effectively implement the UBE program due to inadequate leadership training and professional development program in place and insufficient funding for the implementation of the program is a significant concern among other burning issues. On this note, the study aims to assess principals' perspectives on leadership styles in implementing the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in South-South, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian government established an excellent educational policy to provide high-quality basic education. Unfortunately, education is still at a low-quality level based on the report findings that revealed a lack of political will as a significant problem (Aja et al., 2018). Lamentable for more than 50 years of independence, Nigeria can still not improve its educational system with all the technical and financial support provided by international organizations such as the United Nations Children's Education Funds (UNICEF) and the World Bank (Aja et al., 2018). According to the World Bank report, Nigeria ranked 132 out of 133 countries in implementing basic education, which shows that all is not well in the educational system (Aja et al., 2018). Meanwhile, Aluede (2006, as cited in Maigida, 2017) observed that the present UBE program in Nigeria was created from previous educational programs because it is a branch of past educational programs meant to address past failures. Again, poor school infrastructure includes but is not limited to deplorable school libraries and classrooms; little or, in some cases, no learning aids led to school dropouts because some parents could not pay for the cost of education of their children (Obun et al., 2018).

Adali et al. (2017) claimed that most public-school principals could not implement the UBE program due to inadequate funding and regular educational policy changes. Because of the poor funding of basic education in Nigeria, most primary and secondary schools are in a deplorable state (Oladele, 2018). The fundamental challenges that negatively impacted the implementation of the Universal Basic Education program in Nigeria include funding problems, defective leadership and management approach, ethical challenges, and many others (Akinniyi, 2015). Besides, Onyekwena et al. (n.d) stated that amongst other African countries and emerging economies in funding education, Nigeria ranks the lowest because it spends less than 10% of the government's total expenditure on education, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Funding Challenges, Education Funding in Selected Countries (2012-2014)

S/N	Countries	Global Education Funding Requirement	
		Dakar Framework & Education for All: At least 20% of the National Budget	Dakar Framework: At least 5% of GDP
1	Brazil	15.57	5.91
2	Ghana	29.70	6.93
3	Indonesia	17.84	3.39
4	Kenya	20.56	5.51
5	Nigeria	9.71	0.50
6	South Africa	19.63	6.14

Note. UNESCO Institute of Statistics Database; Nigeria National Budget; and NBS *Reported figures for the year 2010.

The school principal is the manager of educational policies in schools, such as implementing the UBE curriculum in junior secondary schools in Nigeria (Uwakwe, 2020). Meanwhile, Abah and Victor (2021) stated that when the desire for a human to achieve successful basic education is not met creates a negative impact that can cripple society. Oladimeji

and Tunji (2019) lamented the deplorable state of the school infrastructure, poorly motivated teachers, and the high ratio of teachers to pupil/student-led to low performances of the students during examinations in the basic education sector. The researchers confirmed that basic education had not achieved its set objectives because of the ineffectiveness associated with the implementation of the basic education program because the program could not help to reduce the level of illiteracy and enhance development as expected by stakeholders in the basic education environment (Oladimeji & Tunji, 2019). The failure of the UPE led to the UBE program's establishment (Oladimeji & Tunji, 2019).

Abul et al. (2017) revealed that the UBE policy encountered several problems, and if the government wants to manage the situation, then an increase in the budgetary allocation is required based on UNESCO's recommendation of 26% of the Gross Domestic Product allocated to the education sector. In addition, the government at various levels is also required to increase its funding for the UBE program (Abul et al., 2017). Besides, Emeka and Godwin (2015) pointed out that several out-of-school children do not have what it takes to present their demands, especially children on the street and helpless children denied basic education hence the need for the government to establish the UBE program in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the UBE program has witnessed several challenges that hindered its successful implementation, and it is of great concern because the UBE program is a deliberate government effort to reduce illiteracy in the country. It is painful to see children of school age currently hawking, selling all kinds of foodstuff along the street, and doing other kinds of business instead of learning in school. It is the poor implementation of the UBE program and the unfriendly economic situation in the country which is a significant concern that needs to be examined. Previous research study revealed that

inadequate qualified, trained teachers, poor infrastructure, poor management, inadequate supervision, and poor educational policy implementation are some of the significant challenges in the educational system (Athanasius, 2018, as cited in Yamma & Danjuma, 2018). In the UBE program, the government could not implement free education at the basic level as promised, leading to parents' withdrawal of their children from schools (Obun et al., 2018).

Besides, Anibueze and Okwo (2013) stated that the educational system in Nigeria has several challenges in policies and programs, funding, political will as well as planning, and if not managed, it will impact the future of Nigerians negatively because the future will be determined by the quality of education acquired by the citizens. At this point, it is essential to note that Transformational Leadership Theory is the theoretical framework underpinning this study because organizations today utilize transformational leadership to inspire followers to do their best by developing the follower's skills to achieve high intellectual levels (Suliman, 2018). It is essential to note that transformational leadership theory enables the leader to motivate their followers with the view to achieving more than expected by teaching and explaining to the follower's importance of the result and the best way to do it for the overall benefit of the organization (Bass, 1985 as cited in Givens, 2008). This background and the challenging facts mentioned above brought about the need to assess the principal's perspectives on the leadership styles in implementing the Universal Basic Education program in South-South, Nigeria.

The Purpose of the Study, Research Aims, and Objectives

The interpretive qualitative research approach investigated, examined, and assessed the principal's perspectives on leadership styles in implementing the Universal Basic Education program in South-South, Nigeria. The research study used a qualitative interpretive approach

and a semi-structured face-to-face interview to collect primary data from the selected participants. The face-to-face interview was conducted, and primary rich data was collected from 33 school principals in Edo State, Delta State, and Bayelsa State in South-South, Nigeria. In addition, a qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the collected data and ensure the correctness of the data was achieved.

The interview guide questions were derived from the research questions and addressed the research questions and the purpose of this research study. The study aims to assess principals' perspectives on leadership styles in implementing the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in South-South, Nigeria. The research questions helped to collect data to ascertain if adequate planning is carried out for implementing the Curriculum of the Universal Basic Education program and investigate the level of funding available for implementing the UBE program. To determine if adequate and qualified staff are recruited for implementing the UBE program. At the same time, ascertain if facilities are adequately available for the implementation and then determine if staff are regularly retrained to implement the UBE program in South-South, Nigeria successfully. Transformational leaders' influence on an organization's culture cannot be overlooked because the leader helps the followers learn and discover their role and increase their commitment levels in achieving the organization's mission (Tucker & Russell, 2004, as cited in Givens, 2008). The study also studied teachers' recruitment, inspection, and supervision of the UBE program, the state of school infrastructure for adequacy and availability, and other challenges associated with the UBE program. It provided some recommendations for improving the UBE program in the South-South of Nigeria.

The government has a significant role in ensuring the successful implementation of policies that affect education in the country because the policies have several implementation challenges that gave birth to the restructuring of the existing government educational agencies (Bolaji et al., 2016). A study revealed that much investment in education was recorded in Nigeria to help restructure the sector, but more needs to be achieved because of poor performance recorded on the quality of education during its assessment (Lelei, 2019). Furthermore, the problem extended to the inability of the government to provide free education at the basic level as promised (Obun et al., 2018).

The politic in Nigeria also impacts negatively, in some cases, the educational sector because the politicians, especially political leaders in power, appoint educational leaders and are funded by the government in power, therefore, influencing the decisions of the educational leadership to make their bid (Ukpong, 2017). More planning in the educational sector is needed because of the shortage of professional skill-set workforce, and this problem can be linked to poor funding because of poor financial planning (Ogunode, 2018). Inadequate school infrastructure due to planning-related issues is a concern that needs to be addressed because effective educational planning is critical to the success of any developmental goal in the education environment (Ogunode, 2018). Another concern is the need for more reliable data in the educational sector planning and budgeting, a crucial challenge for proper record keeping by the government (Humphreys & Lee, 2015). It is believed that the UBE requires a total overhaul, especially in staff attitude to policy implementation, engagement of qualified teaching staff, training and capacity building of teaching staff, and motivation are essential for the success of the UBE program (Okoro, 2014). The researcher suggested that SUBEB should embark on a

well-organized and efficient administration and equitable distribution of funds and provide support for the inspection team to ensure adequate supervision for the benefit of the UBE program (Okoro, 2014).

It is no longer a topic of argument that for any educational policy or program to succeed, a well-equipped facility, qualified and competent classroom teachers, quality school infrastructure are required, and good service conditions for the UBE program to achieve its desired objectives (Oladele, 2018). It is required to note that because of the poor funding for education, the need for school infrastructure needed to be provided, creating unconducive teaching, and learning environment that negatively impacted the UBE program (Ogbonnia, 2020). The skills needed for effectively implementing ICT in schools are unavailable because most teachers and students need more ICT skills in the present-day school environment (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2009). It is a known fact that the school principal manages the implementation of educational policies regarding the UBE curriculum in junior secondary schools in Nigeria (Uwakwe, 2020). The poor funding of education and the need for school infrastructure to be provided created an unconducive teaching and learning environment that negatively impacted the UBE program (Ogbonnia, 2020). At the end of the analysis, the research findings were based on the primary data collected from all 33 public school principals within the South-South of Nigeria. Recommendations were provided to improve the leadership approach and effective implementation of the UBE program in the South-South of Nigeria and beyond. The study also aimed to close existing research gaps and contribute to theory development.

The study aims to assess the principal's perspectives on the leadership styles in implementing the Universal Basic Education program in South-South, Nigeria. Specifically, the study will

1. To ascertain if adequate planning is carried out for implementing the Curriculum of the Universal Basic Education Programme in South-South, Nigeria.
2. To investigate the level of funding available for implementing Universal Basic Education in South-South, Nigeria.
3. To determine if adequate and qualified staff are recruited for the implementation of the Universal Basic Education program in South-South, Nigeria.
4. To ascertain if there is adequate availability of facilities for the implementation of the Universal Basic Education program in the South-South, Nigeria.
5. To determine if staff are periodically given retraining for the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education program in the South-South, Nigeria.

The Nature and Significance of the Study

The study employed an interpretive qualitative research approach to study the principal's perspectives on leadership styles in implementing the Universal Basic Education program in South-South, Nigeria. A semi-structured face-to-face interview was used to collect primary data from the selected participants within the South-South under study. An interpretive qualitative research approach involves human participation and interactions, enabling the researcher to investigate human activities to provide sustainable solutions to the problem (UNICAF University [UU], 2020). The method also helps researchers collect data in a social setting and analyze and interpret the data (UU, 2020). A qualitative research method is an investigative approach to study that enables the researcher to apply interpersonal skills to investigate during the research study (Alase, 2017). A qualitative research approach provides the platform for researchers to collect data from the selected participants in a natural setting based on their personal experience on the

research topic (Creswell, 2009). An appropriate method for the qualitative study is because the researcher can collect data from the participants through face-to-face interviews, survey questionnaires, or examination of documents (Creswell, 2009). The qualitative interview method allows the researcher to investigate the participants based on their experience, beliefs, and opinions to gain insight into the research's expected findings (Percy et al., 2015, as cited in Abd Gani et al., 2020).

An interview is most appropriate in a qualitative research method, especially when the researcher intends to collect rich data based on the selected participant's opinion on the topic of interest using interview protocol to guide the investigation (DeJonckheere & Lisa, 2019). The selection of an experienced participant is essential in the provision of quality data in any given research phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). In addition, purposive sampling provides the researcher the opportunity to select the participants that meet the requirement of the research purpose (Coyne, 1997).

The study adopted a qualitative data analysis using deductive content analysis to analyze the data collected from the participants during the study. A qualitative data analysis method allows researchers to interpret and analyze the data content generated during the investigation through interviews or observation based on interpretive philosophy (UU, 2020). A research study in the past highlighted the need for Schutz's social phenomenology that focused on a descriptive and interpretive theory of personal life experience, considering the social relationship to make meaning out of the situation (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). A qualitative deductive analysis approach guided by coding enables the connections of themes and uses theory for the analysis

(Pearse, 2019). Meanwhile, a qualitative deductive method is known as a top to down analytical, theoretical outline used in categorizing the description of data (Hamilton & Erin, 2020).

The study is significant to the field of education, especially the principal's leadership style at the basic education level because leadership is a key success factor in the implementation of the UBE program. Again, basic education is the first step of knowledge acquisition for an individual; when not established properly, it will negatively impact the other levels of education. Governments across the globe placed a high value on basic education hence the declaration of Education for All (EFA). It is important to note that the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program was created at the world conference on education for all at Jomitten, Thailand, in 1990 to provide free and accessible education (Anyanwu et al., 2013). Thereafter in 1999, the UBE program was initiated to reduce the level of illiteracy and poverty in the country (Yamma & Danjuma, 2018). Some years later, Yamma & Danjuma (2018) argued that because of the value the government placed on education, the National Assembly passed the Universal Basic Education Bill Act and signed it into law on May 26th, 2004. The UBE program is designed to help reduce the high level of school dropouts in the nation (Da-ue & Obilor, 2019).

Basic education is the most important gift a nation can invest in its citizenry because it is an essential human right that sets the foundation for success or failure on the subsequent levels of the educational system (Ogbonnia, 2020). According to Ogunode (2018), basic education provides the first level of early education for a child nine years of compulsory and free education, six years of elementary education, and three years of junior secondary education. It is the responsibility of the state government to fund and manage secondary education; the local government has the responsibility to manage the primary sector of education in Nigeria

(Ogunode, 2018). One of the vital objectives of the UBE was to help provide free and compulsory basic education with the mandate to reduce the level of school dropouts across the country (Da-ue & Obilor, 2019). It is on record that so much was invested in the UBE program by the government, Non-Government Organizations, and the World Bank with the view to support the goal of the UBE program, but the results are not impressive (Da-ue & Obilor, 2019).

Because of the importance of education, governments across the globe make a deliberate effort to provide high-quality, affordable, and accessible education for their citizen and largely depends on effective planning to avoid the system's failure (Nwambam & Prisca, 2017). The significance of education cannot be ignored because it is the avenue for receiving cultural heritage and a process of human capital development, especially in the areas of knowledge, skills, and moral acquisition in any given society for generations (Nwambam & Prisca, 2017). Meanwhile, Oladele (2018) believes that the only reasonable way to reduce illiteracy in any society is through education which helps to improve the quality of life of the citizens and is the instrument for national development. Besides, it is a known fact that education is the leading way to closing the gap between the rich and the poor hence governments and international organizations are supporting children from poor countries to go to school to better their future (Abul et al., 2017).

Unfortunately, research study revealed that the 10.5 million out-of-school children recorded in Nigeria are the highest in Africa, and other indicators that confirm education for all still need to be achieved (Ogunode et al., 2020). Irrespective of the investment in education in Nigeria, the aim is to improve the educational system to achieve its goals, but the outcome is still unsuccessful (Lelei, 2019). Several parents removed their children from schools because of the

government's inability to implement free basic education, school infrastructure, teaching aids, libraries, classrooms, and others as promised (Obun et al., 2018). The poor state of school infrastructure did not help the situation because of the inadequate classrooms, ill-equipped libraries, and inefficient teaching aids for learning, amongst other challenges that affected the program (Obun et al., 2018).

The importance of this study cannot be ignored because the school principal leadership style in basic education plays an integral role in the foundational development of the educational system and national development all over the world, and Nigeria is not left out. The significance of education cannot be downplayed; hence, the government's responsibility is to provide quality education for its citizens (Nwambam & Prisca, 2017). Nwambam and Prisca (2017) stated that education is a tool for human capital development in any society because it enables individuals to acquire relevant knowledge and skills to function in society. Education helps create a better life for individuals and is a driving force for social transformation and national development (Oladele, 2018). Meanwhile, governments worldwide emphasize the importance of education by providing equal access to education for their citizens (Jummai & Rufus, 2020). Besides, education enables individuals to contribute to the development of society, enhances national integration, and the success of the total educational system based on basic education (Nwanga et al., 2020). Therefore, basic education is a mandatory human right that establishes the foundation for the success or failure of the total educational system because every other level of education is built on it (Ogbonnia, 2020). Basic education is a vital part of education for every child to acquire because it is the first educational step of every child that helps the individual to operate, especially at the basic level of society (Akor et al., 2020).

The significant study provides current insights into implementing the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program and assists in the following areas.

1. The study's outcome provided a template for how school principals can implement the UBE program effectively.
2. The outcome of the research study assisted all levels of government (the local government, state government, and federal government) in improving the implementation of universal basic education in the South-South.
3. The study assisted other stakeholders (teachers, parents, and community leaders) and NGOs in areas where they can assist in improving the development of the UBE program in the South-South.
4. The study is a reference guide for the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and educational leaders for developing the UBE program within the South-South of Nigeria.
5. The study will help to salvage the declining standard of the UBE program.
6. Generally, the outcome of the research study will assist in reducing the percentage of out-of-school pupils and students in the South-South of Nigeria.
7. The study also created room for further research studies.

Research Questions

It is public knowledge that education is a transformational tool for human and societal development in every nation across the globe. It is no longer news to emphasize the importance of basic education and government and foreign organizations' role in providing quality and accessible education to their citizens globally (Jummai & Rufus, 2020). Because of the

importance of basic education, the Nigerian government has invested a lot in improving the standard of education through the UBE program (Lelei, 2019). Unfortunately, the UBE program has witnessed several challenges because of poor funding of the program (Abul et al., 2017). Again, it is a fact that some schools in Nigeria need to be better equipped with good school infrastructure, inadequately trained teachers, serious concerns, poor classrooms, and little or no instructional learning materials for study (Egbo, 2021).

To explore and do an in-depth study of the principal leadership perspectives in the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Program in South-South, Nigeria. Five qualitative research questions were developed to lead the research direction. The research questions formulated helped to understand the situation and challenges surrounding the implementation UBE program in the South-South of Nigeria. The qualitative research questions developed are open-ended and directly aligned with the research problem and purpose statement, as expected in a typical research study of this nature. Abd Gani et al. (2020) reaffirmed that qualitative interviews enable researchers to obtain detailed information that will help underpin the research findings and several views of participants' experiences explored because of different participants with their opinions. Past study shows that the quality of responses from the participant is a function of the quality of the research questions developed (Rosenthal, 2016). Furthermore, the qualitative method enables the researcher to administer an open-ended question by probing the participants to understand the topic better based on their knowledge and experience (Rosenthal, 2016).

Lanka et al. (2022) pointed out that qualitative researcher learns about their natural environment by making sense of the situation or interpreting the phenomena based on the

meaning gotten from the participants. Haven and Leonie (2019) argued that qualitative research attempts to answer questions using language as data, such as in a written form or oral, even in some cases using video, photos, and recording; the data could be gathered by interview, observation, and focused group. Therefore, a qualitative research question enables the researcher to ask intended questions based on the views of the prospective participant on a topic (Lanka et al., 2022). Qualitative questions deal with What, why, and How humans relate and respond to a social process (Lanka et al., 2022). In the case of the quantitative approach, the researcher starts with a hypothesis and cannot start with a plan, but qualitative researchers do not need a hypothesis at the beginning but can start with a broad question (Agee, 2009, cited in Lanka et al., 2022).

Korstjens and Albine (2017) testified that qualitative research addresses the natural contexts where the participants function with the view of delivering in-depth knowledge of the issue. On the other hand, quantitative research generalization is not a principle considered (Korstjens & Albine, 2017). In qualitative research, the questions are broad and open to allow a detailed description of the phenomenon the researcher is exploring (Korstjens & Albine, 2017). Moreover, qualitative research allows researchers to fine-tune and add more research questions as the study progresses, and the flexibility in the design is considered a strength (Korstjens & Albine, 2017). Besides, a qualitative researcher builds a relationship with the participants during the data collection period through the interview, and transparency is highly required not to influence the data collection process (Korstjens & Albine, 2017).

Again, the research questions can change during the research process, indicating a better understanding of the problem (Creswell, 2007, cited in Lanka et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Lanka

et al. (2022), in their contribution, believed that the development of qualitative questions is continuously developing at every stage of the research study. Flick (2018, as cited in Lanka et al., 2022) reported that qualitative inquiries disclosed people's experiences and brought about the thinking process of the events and the social relationship. The researchers emphasized the need for careful thought during the development of qualitative research questions to direct the study and position the researcher to ethically protect all the participants involved (Lanka et al., 2022).

A new research study became essential to add to the body of existing knowledge in the field of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria, especially in the study of principal leadership perspectives in the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Program in the South-South, Nigeria. The research questions helped to find an in-depth understanding of the challenges associated with the principal leadership perspectives in the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Program in South-South, Nigeria. During the investigation, the data collection and analysis provided new data interpretation based on school principals' experience on the topic of interest. Five predominant research questions provided the road map for the study to explore further the challenges facing the implementation of the UBE program. The questions that guided the investigation were:

- RQ1. How can you ascertain if adequate planning is made to implement the Curriculum of the Universal Basic Education Programme?
- RQ2. What is the level of funding available for implementing the Universal Basic Education Program?

- RQ3. What are your views on recruiting qualified and adequate staff for implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme?
- RQ4. Why do you think there are adequate or inadequate facilities to implement the Universal Basic Education Programme?
- RQ5. What are your opinion on staff periodic retraining for the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW: INTRODUCTION

The research study assessed the principal's perspectives on leadership styles in implementing the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in South-South, Nigeria. A literature review plan was developed using the recommended principles of Jesson et al. (2011, as cited in Thomas, 2017). It suggested that researchers should do field mapping through scope review, comprehensive search, data extraction, data synthesis, writing the findings, and discussion (Jesson et al., 2011, as cited in Thomas, 2017). A plan was developed using the

research questions, the aims and objectives of the study, keywords, and the study's goal as a guide. The study collected and analyzed data, and then the findings were discussed and analyzed along with relevant subtopics. Scholarly literature was created using several sources to obtain peer-reviewed literature primarily published within the last five years and a few older ones relevant to this study. The literature was collected from the Google search engine, Unicaf University online library, Science Direct, ResearchGate, Pro-quest, Google Scholar, Scientific Research, and general internet search.

The review examined leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, Servant leadership, hubristic leadership, autocratic leadership, democratic leadership, charismatic leadership, agile leadership, and school leadership. The concept of Universal Basic Education (UBE) was reviewed at the global level and then examined at the Nigerian level because the study focused on the South-South of Nigeria. The organizational structure and political will of the UBE program were analyzed. The implementation level of the UBE program and curriculum was reviewed, and the funding availability of the UBE program was analyzed.

The leadership and professional development-related articles were examined, and the planning, data management, service condition, and staff motivation were reviewed. Inspection and supervision, school infrastructure adequacy, and recruitment for implementing the UBE program were analyzed. Finally, an analysis of implementing the UBE program's teaching and learning effectiveness was reviewed for a better understanding, and after examining several leadership styles, transformational leadership theory was adopted for this study.

Transformational leadership theory is the theoretical framework that underpins this study because it helps to examine the leader, followers, and organizational outcomes by influencing and motivating subordinates positively to achieve organizational goals. The justification for adopting transformational leadership theory is well explained in the theoretical framework section below. The literature review gave insights on the importance of transformational leadership theory and how it is related to the research questions as follows: 1. How can you ascertain if adequate planning is made to implement the Curriculum of the Universal Basic Education Programme? 2. What is the level of funding available for implementing the Universal Basic Education Program? 3. What are your views on recruiting qualified and adequate staff for implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme? 4. Why do you think there are adequate or inadequate facilities to implement the Universal Basic Education Programme? 5. What are your opinion on staff periodic retraining for the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme? At the end of collecting all relevant data, the findings were analyzed and abruptly discussed with a summary at the end of the section.

Theoretical Framework

This section of this paper looked at the meaning of theory as well as explored the theoretical context that supports the several subtopics developed as it relates to the research study and the subtopics aligned with the research purpose, aims and objectives, and research questions. Previous research study has shown that there is no generally accepted definition of theory across disciplines; disagreement exists amongst scholars on the value and practical application of theory

(Thomas, 2017). Notwithstanding the dispute on the meaning of theory, Thomas (2017) described the theory as a critical part of a research study that explores and guides the relationship between phenomena. Many researchers believe that theory aims at predicting an event (Fischer, 2010; Gelso, 2006; Harlow, 2009; Stam, 2007, 2010; Wacker, 1999, as cited in Thomas, 2017). A theory is used for conceptualizing and explaining complex behavior observed in a phenomenon, and it is indeed the foundation of a research study (Thomas, 2017). Furthermore, Lara et al. (2019) assert that theory is an abstract explanation of the connection between concepts that enables a better understanding of our world. A theory could strengthen by data or a research body; with the support of more data, the theory becomes firmer, and a theory could be explanatory, descriptive, emancipatory, and predictive (Lara et al., 2019).

Glaser and Strauss discovered that the theory disagreed with the notion, the qualitative researchers believed that the theory helped researchers to know a lot more about happenings within the US sociology department back then in the 1960s, and the theory encouraged generations of graduate students by legitimizing inductive qualitative research as well as coding as an integral process of qualitative studies (Charmaz & Robert, 2021). Besides, the researcher claimed that quantitative research provides some idea regarding the problem, but the qualitative research approach provides in-depth insights indicating what could be done (Bryant, 2021).

As such, the study aimed to study the complex nature of the public-school principal leader perspectives in implementing the UBE program. Moreover, Grant and Osanloo (2014) advised the need to adopt a theoretical framework in a dissertation because it is the foundation for constructing knowledge. It provides the basis for the literature review process; the research study vision and structure become complicated if the theoretical framework is not well

established; it enables and organizes the dissertation flow from one step to the other (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). Again, Lara et al. (2019) added that a theoretical framework developed logically, and connected concepts reasonably developed or derived from one or more theories by a researcher built around a study. A theoretical framework could be stated as a reflection of the researcher's theoretical work engaged in a study (Lara et al., 2019).

Heale and Helen (2019) argued that theory is a description of concepts of the idea of a phenomenon, and the purpose of the theoretical framework is aimed at connecting the interaction and relationship amongst sets of concepts that give detail to a complex phenomenon. It is a known fact that the theoretical framework is the basis for the developing assessment related to the situation for the measurement of the concepts within the theoretical framework (Heale & Helen, 2019). The research analysis and the results link to the concepts within the theoretical framework; it then provides a guide for the area for discussion as well as a conclusion from the research (Heale & Helen, 2019). It is important to note that the theoretical framework is an outline for the research study; it also helps to inform the research problem identified, the research purpose and significance of the research, and how it fits into existing studies (Heale & Helen, 2019). Meanwhile, it is essential to note that the theoretical framework enables research questions, the review of literature, the research methodology, and analysis (Heale & Helen, 2019).

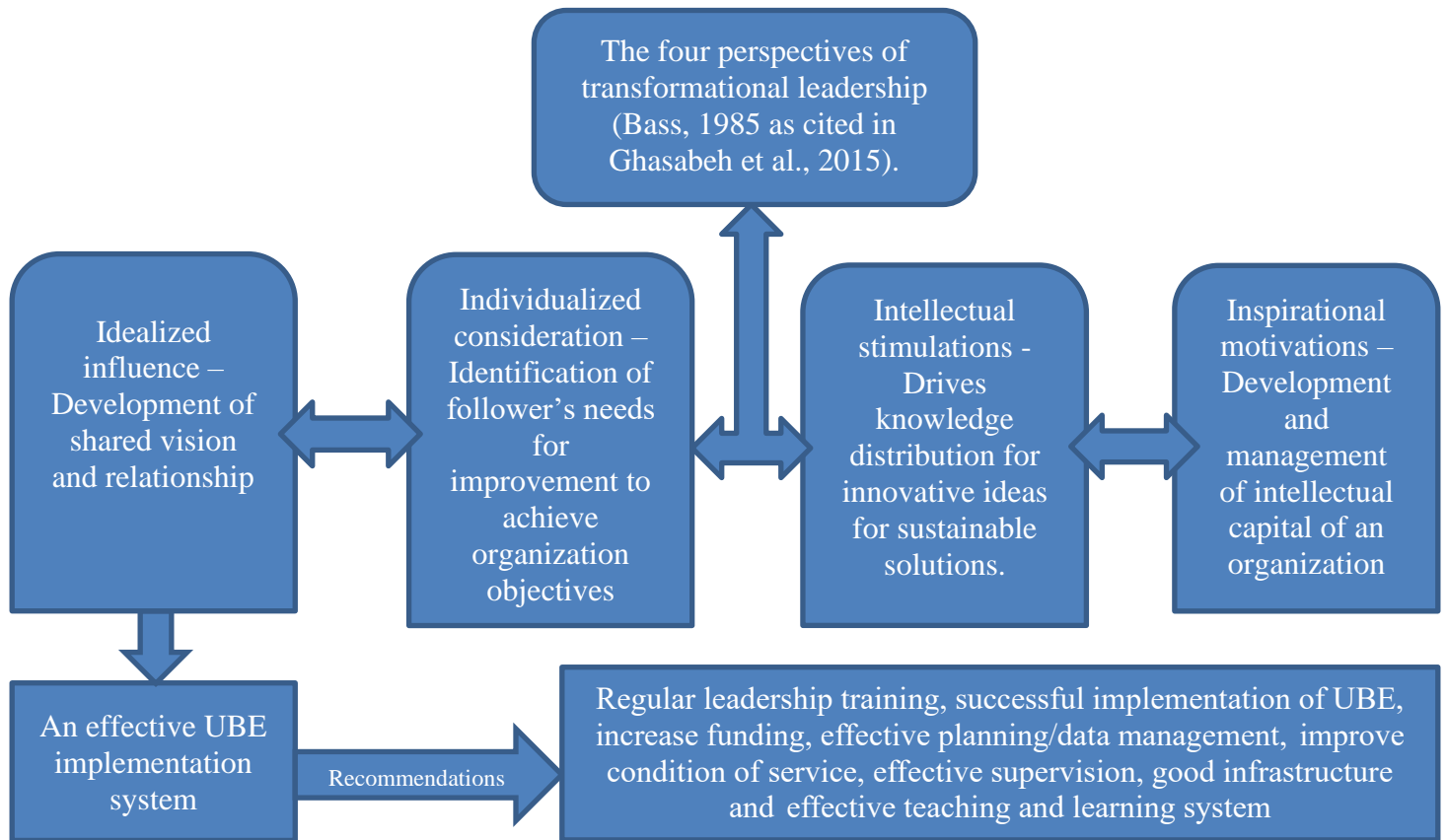
It is indeed a critical aspect required to justify and validate the significance of any research approach, be it qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods (Lederman & Lederman, 2015). It is in line with this research study because it applies a qualitative research approach aimed at understanding the public-school principal leader's perspectives on the implementation of the

UBE program within the South-South of Nigeria. The theoretical framework that guided this research study is Burns's (1978) transformational leadership theory because the theory aims at the satisfaction of basic needs and meeting high expectations by inspiring followers to ensure innovative solutions are provided to improve the workplace environment (Marturano & Gosling, 2008; Patiar & Mia, 2009 as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015). Transformational leadership theory was developed by Burns (1978) during the late 20th century when the analysis of political leaders was performed. Besides, Burns considered transformational leadership as an occurrence of one or more leaders involved with other followers with the view to raise each other to a high level of motivation (Burns, 1978). Givens (2008) postulated that transformational leadership theory caught the attention of researchers across organizational leadership over thirty years ago, and the theory was developed by Burns (1978) and improved by Bass in 1985 and 1998, respectively. The main attribute of transformational leadership theory is the motivational quality of the leader to influence the subordinate to go the extra mile to achieve more than expected (Krishnan, 2005, as cited in Givens, 2008).

Bass (1985, as cited in Givens, 2008) went further to expand Burn's leadership theory claiming that leaders can motivate subordinates to perform more than expected by educating the followers on the importance of the outcome and the best approach to achieve it for the benefit of the organization. It is essential to note that the expanded and refined version of Burn's transformational leadership theory has been widely accepted and in use by several organizations for four decades (Bass, 1985; Bass, Waldman, Avolio, & Bebb, 1987; Tichy & Devanna, 1986 as cited in Givens, 2008).

Figure 1

Theoretical framework, Transformational Leadership Theory



In this study, the workplace environment or organizational setting is the basic education school system in the South-South of Nigeria, the leader is the school principal, and the followers are the schoolteachers. The transformational leadership theory is well positioned in this study's context because the study's central aim and objective were to provide a transformational leadership style as a solution that will help the public-school principals as a leader in the effective implementation of the UBE program in the South-South.

Burns argued that transformational leaders could inspire their followers to undertake more tasks through the connection of the values of the followers to align with the organization's

values (Givens, 2008). Meanwhile, Burns also recognized that transformational leadership enables a cordial relationship between the leader and the followers to motivate one another to high levels, creating outcomes in a value system for both parties (Krishnan, 2002, as cited in Givens, 2008). Again, transformational leadership in the past was associated with followers committed to the organizational outcomes; as such, the leadership style is required in all organizations because it helps to address employee performance in an organization (Barling et al., 1996; Weber & Kelloway, 1996; Jorg & Schyns, 2004; as cited in Givens, 2008).

It is important to note that transformational leadership theory applies charismatic behavior to motivate followers to produce great results (Druskat, 1994; Norris, 2005, as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015). Again, the followers of transformational leaders have great respect, trust, admiration, and appreciation for such leaders; as such, the followers are highly motivated and ready to go the extra mile to achieve exceptional results (Webb 2007, as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015). Notwithstanding, past study has revealed that transformational leadership theory is an ideal form of leadership with superior characteristics to other leadership theories (Burns, 1978, as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015). A transformational leadership theory study conducted and published in the quarterly leadership journal by some researchers in the past revealed that the theory had gained a dominant and widely acceptable leadership paradigm in recent times (Hunt, 1999; Lowe & Gardner, 2000, as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015). Again, published articles in 10 top-tier academic journals such as the Journal of Management, The Leadership Quarterly, Academy of Management Review, and American Psychologist, among others, analyzed 752 cases between 2000 and 2012 by Dinh et al. (2014 as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015) shows that

transformational leadership theory is the most dominant paradigms when compared to behavioral theories, trait theory, and situational theories.

Ghasabeh et al. (2015) pointed out that transformational leadership theory positioned the followers strategically with the right attitude and values to achieve effectiveness and the ability to effect organizational changes. The need for transformational leaders in today's high level of uncertain organizations requires such leaders to help provide the needed innovative changes (Ghasabeh et al. (2015). Meanwhile, no other leadership has no significance amongst leadership theories and today's changing and challenges organizations, but transformational leadership theory reveals outcomes within organizations that help to influence individual worker's interests to support institutional interests by inspiring subordinates to develop innovative and new ideas that affect development and growth in the organization (Zaccaro & Horn, 2003 as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015).

Field/ Industry Description

This section explores relevant theories and conceptual principles underpinning education, management, leadership, and implementing educational policies and programs related to Universal Basic Education in Nigeria. Although, more emphasis is placed on the leadership concept and the importance with emphasis on education globally and Universal Basic Education in Nigeria, especially around public-school principal leadership perspectives in the implementation of the Universal Basic Education program in the South-South of Nigeria.

Globally, education is the doorway to a better life and the economic and social development of any nation. For a country to achieve greatness in all sectors of life, it must consider the education of its citizens a priority. Dewey (1916) argued that education is a necessity

of life because education helps to direct, control, and guide the pathway of humanity within its environment. Abiogu (2014) believes that the philosophy of education is fundamental and relevant to nation-building and that education is a tool for national development. In any organization, including the educational system, to achieve its aims and objectives, active management is strategic (Ugwuoke et al., 2015). As such, the UBE was established to help improve the standard of living of its people (Ugwuoke et al., 2015).

Damkor-Ikpa et al. (2016) believe that all developing countries like Nigeria warrant the support of all stakeholders to ensure that education is provided for all citizens to eradicate illiteracy. Education all over the world helps eradicate ignorance and provides the needed skills for production and leadership, an essential factor for technological advancement (Damkor-Ikpa et al., 2016). Meanwhile, Ogunode et al. (2020) pointed out that Nigeria's vision of education centered on the use of education as a tool for national development as reflected in the National Policy on Education, and the policy made a declaration that states no country can rise above the worth of its education structure. Hence, the Nigerian government depends on education as a catalyst for national development and its transformational agenda (Ogunode et al., 2020). More so, the UBE program requires support to achieve its goal; the program is the foundation for the sustainable development of any nation and when implemented, should be able to provide the anticipated development (Damkor-Ikpa et al., 2016). To achieve UBE goals, the federal, state, local government, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations, amongst others, have a crucial role to play (Ogwuche and Rabah, 2001, as cited in Damkor-Ikpa et al., 2016).

Furthermore, Ogunode (2018) stated that basic education is largely the responsibility of the state and local government; the state manages secondary education, while the local government takes responsibility for elementary education. Moreover, basic education in Nigeria is nine years of compulsory formal education, which consists of six years of elementary education and three years of junior secondary education, and post-basic education is another three years of senior secondary education (Ogunode, 2018). The school principals are the leaders responsible for managing and implementing educational policies such as the UBE program. Also, Ogunsanmi and Obimiluyi (2014) pointed out the historical perspective of the UBE back to the year 1999 was established to provide free and quality education to all children of school age and eradicate literacy across the country. The UBE program is designed to deliver basic education to the grassroots with the mandate to provide free and compulsory basic education to all Nigerian children of school age in any part of the country and to reduce the rate of school dropout in the country (Da-ue & Obilor, 2019). Besides, Da-ue and Obilor (2019) revealed that some researchers, including the World Bank and other NGOs, have put in so much effect. To ensure the implementation of the UBE program is a success.

Nevertheless, for over a decade in Rivers State, located in the South-South of Nigeria, the outcome of the UBE program has not been encouraging (Da-ue & Obilor, 2019). Again, Adirika and Oluwatayo (2013) believe that poor funding, inadequate or no motivation of school leaders, poor planning, school infrastructural decay, and poor service conditions are the significant challenges hindering the UBE implementation. It is a significant concern hence the need to study the public-school principal leader perspectives in implementing the UBE program in the South-South of Nigeria.

The paper aligns with the dissertation literature structure developed and approved relevant theme/subtopics, which underpins the research purpose, aims, and objectives. A comprehensive search approach through the data gathering process, data synthesis, and a discussion of the findings recommended by notable researchers was applied (Jesson et al., 2011, as cited in Thomas, 2017). The data collections are from secondary sources that support the dissertation topic with current knowledge and theoretical construct on leadership styles, the importance of education, the UBE concept, organizational structure, and the political willingness of the UBE program examined. The implementation of the UBE and curriculum implementation explored. The section further analyzes the level of fund availability for implementing the UBE program, leadership and professional development, principals, and staffing adequacy examined. The planning and database management for the implementation of the UBE program were examined, and finally, the challenges associated with school infrastructure, supervision, monitoring, teaching, and learning of the UBE program were analyzed with a summary.

Leadership Styles

At the early stage, Leadership can be traced to Great Man theories assuming that great leaders are born as heroes who influence their communities (Carlyle, 1993, as cited in Ellahi et al., 2021). There is generally no accepted definition of Leadership because it has evolved from several sources (Ellahi et al., 2021). Although Leadership has evolved with the view of trying to understand leadership phenomena, it is still in a state of evolution and needs further investigation (Ellahi et al., 2021). Bass (2008, as cited in Ellahi et al., 2021) confirmed that the idea of Leadership and its evolution notwithstanding Leadership has generally been practiced across the globe.

Besides, Ellahi et al. (2021) reported that leadership could be referred to as an art as well as a skill because art involves the art of motivating individuals to achieve their goals, and as a skill, the individual practical ability to lead and influence others. Turnbull (2011, as cited in Ellahi, 2021) noted that sustainable values are underplayed in leadership models around Western philosophy, and Leadership is more aligned with moral, ethical, and authentic leadership models. Deloitte (2016, as cited in Ellahi et al., 2021) pointed out that Leadership requires reengineering to meet modern needs.

Alvehus (2021) argued that it is difficult to imagine any term in the study of an organization that has the same demand as Leadership, especially in terms of academic interest, the course even in terms of consultancy, and common discussions. Past study has shown that Leadership is one of the most observed and yet least understood concepts globally (Alvehus, 2021). Some researchers concluded that the word leadership constitutes a problem because its current and frequent use makes it challenging to explain the organizational process of Leadership with little or no understanding (Meindl et al., 1985, as cited in Alvehus, 2021). In addition, Gentili (2021) argued that the leadership definition has evolved from the era where one leader at the top of the hierarchical pyramid system single-handedly leads an organization is outdated. The researcher identified the need for continuous innovation because the global relationship and social shift technological innovation amongst others cannot be sustained by only an individual as a such shared responsibility is a solution to the increasing level of task (Gentili, 2021). Again, the researcher emphasized the need to adopt Plural Leadership because it enables the improvement and performance of new venture progress and advancement, and Leadership helps

to influence its subjects in an organization through the creation of progressive discussion and healthy organizational practice (Gentili, 2021).

Some researchers stated that Leadership had been defined in several domains, such as the area of behavior, work relationships, traits, communication habits, and occupation (Ali & Govand, 2021). Leadership can also be defined as the ability to guide, empower, and motivate individuals within an organization to contribute productively to the advancement of the organization (Anwar, 2017, as cited in Ali & Govand, 2021). Besides, Shao (2019, as cited in Ali & Govand, 2021) noted that Leadership could be defined as influencing a process through the leader's attitude, the followers' expectations, and the context where it occurs. Although several leadership scholars defined Leadership as a process of influencing followers to attain its objectives and arranging the shifting process, and the set a course that inspires individuals to overcome challenges and move the organization to a better future (Metz, 2020, as cited in Ali & Govand, 2021). Meanwhile, Ali and Govand (2021) claimed that the roles leaders and managers play in an organization differ; managers maintain and monitor the institution's activities; on the other hand, leaders pursue revamping the activities in the organization.

Leaders are expected to ensure the management of changing environments and innovation in their approach (Birasnav & Bienstock, 2019, as cited in Ali & Govand, 2021). Study has shown that leaders apply several methods to support their followers through motivation and the mission clarification required to achieve the desired goals (Altman & Tushman, 2017, cited in Ali & Govand, 2021). The methods leaders use range from subtle influence to avoid the use of authority, allocation of funds another method, as well as

rearrangement of the workplace and modification of communication, outlines to enable the staff to quickly achieve its corporate objectives (Ali, 2020, as cited in Ali & Govand, 2021).

Al-Nasour and Najm (2020) contributed that Leadership has played a fundamental role in the business world, where a high level of competition is the order of the day and a challenge to development hence the need for leaders that can create value in organizations. It is a known fact that Leadership is not an exceptional ability and leaders are not extraordinary individuals, but the role of Leadership is not a job description (Al-Nasour & Najm, 2020). Even so, it is essential to note that Leadership has a distinctive blend of exceptional ability and followership support to achieve the desired result never achieved in the past (Al-Nasour & Najm, 2020). The researchers also mentioned that Leadership has many definitions, and the most common leadership definition is that it can influence its followers willingly to achieve its objective (Hirigappa, 2009, as cited in Al-Nasour & Najm, 2020). The role of Leadership in an organization must be considered because leaders contribute to organizational achievement by connecting work success to valued incentives and providing the resources required to perform the job (Ali & Govand, 2021). Leaders influence and inspire their followers and provide intellectual stimulation, making the subordinates see old problems in new ways to stir their members to go the extra mile in achieving the set goals (Ali & Govand, 2021).

Similarly, Richter et al. (2019, as cited in Ali & Govand, 2021) indicated that transformational Leadership provokes exceptional performance by prompting a high-level interest in followers. While Akkaya (2020, as cited in Ali & Govand, 2021) reported that transformational leaders provide intellectual and motivational direction that helps personalize followers' thoughts. This study adopted the transformational leadership theory framework among

other leadership models explained below. Nevertheless, ten types of leadership styles and their applications were selected, discussed, and examined in the next section below, and the transformational leadership model was preferred for this study based on the justification given in the theoretical framework section above.

Transformational leadership

As mentioned earlier, transformational leadership theory is the theoretical framework that supports this study. Past research study has shown that transformational leaders help to influence the organizational culture by impacting organizational productivity and motivation; as such, innovation in the organization improves (Niehoff, Enz, & Grover, 1990, as cited in Givens, 2008). Again, transformational leaders help influence an organization's culture to look at the world from different perspectives, and as the changes occur, the leader helps the organization adopt the new environment (Mink, 1992; Smith, 1990, as cited in Givens, 2008). More importantly, past study has shown that the transformational leadership style has been adopted in several organizations, such as the military, religion, industry, technology, and laboratory, and has produced a more effective leadership style over other leadership approaches (Bass et al., 1987; Smith et al., 1984; Avolio & Bass, 1987; Hatter & Bass, 1988; Howell & Higgins, 1990; Waldma et al., 1987; Sashkin, 1987 as cited in Givens, 2008).

Asbar (2020) stated that transformational leadership theory had been criticized for likely weaknesses because it is believed to be elitist and anti-democratic (Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013; Yukl, 1999; Northouse, 2007, as cited in Asbar, 2020). Although, other researchers challenged the criticism and argued that transformational leaders are participative and democratic (Bass & Riggio, 2006, as cited in Asbar, 2020). Besides, past study has shown that

transformational leadership has to do with moral leadership with the view of serving an organization's good without harming the members (Bass, 1997; Bass & Riggio, 2006, as cited in Asbar, 2020). Furthermore, a study revealed that transformational leadership is learned through training that will bring about a transformational behavior that will increase members' commitment and performance on the job (Asbar, 2020).

Meanwhile, the transformational leadership theory and concept is the most widely discussed and applied leadership since its appearance in the education sector of leadership (Koh et al., 2019; Uusi-Kakkuri et al., 2016; Zaman et al., 2020, as cited in Asbar, 2020). Again, Asbar (2020) believes that transformational leadership's selling point is leadership behavior, provision of visions, team building, innovation, and learning. Meanwhile, Widyatmoko et al. (2020) revealed that leadership plays an essential role in the development of any organization, and the progress made is a function of the lead character performed.

Additionally, Service et al. (2017, as cited in Widyatmoko et al., 2020) testified that a leader's character is diverse and transformational with high integrity. Leadership is believed to be essential in all organizations, especially educational institutions because its success or failure largely depends on the leader's character (Widyatmoko et al., 2020). The educational sector established leadership and management system, and the concept of educational leadership and management systems began as a formal field of investigation in the United States of America in the middle of the 20th century (Hallinger & Chen, 2014, as cited in Widyatmoko et al., 2020). Again, the lead character concept inspired and affected several individuals in achieving their goals in the educational context; it also has a process of getting results within its environment (Connolly et al., 2017, as cited in Widyatmoko et al., 2020).

Abu-Rumman (2021) stated that transformational leadership is a process that helps in developing the workers' loyalty and motivation to achieve organizational objectives and develop followers into leaders through positive and effective change processes. In addition, transformational leaders help organizations face challenges by providing approaches that bring about sustainable solutions that help the organization reposition and resolve the challenges (Abu-Rumman, 2021). Research study has shown that transformational leadership help in the creation of new knowledge through collaborative teamwork and is seen as a transformed management process (Abu-Rumman, 2021). Again, Purwanto et al. (2020) believe that transformational leaders help followers build the energy and resources needed to change the organization. It is important to note that Bass (1996, as cited in Purwanto et al., 2020) argued that transformational leaders influence and create a mutual relationship with their followers by working as a team. It is essential to note that the transformational leadership style allows the leader to provide developmental programs for the followers to enable the team to look at old problems with a new approach through inspiration, motivation, and extra effort to achieve their target (Purwanto et al., 2020).

Avolio and Bass (2001, as cited in Manisa & Akif, 2020) pointed out that transformational leadership emphasizes change management authority with the view of transformation and improvement of the organization. Research study has shown that transformational leaders use the organizational vision to work with the personnel goal, and standard the leaders also use internal resources to compensate personnel based on their values (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987, as cited in Manisa & Akif, 2020). According to (Manisa & Akif, 2020), transformational leaders are known for their critical role in changing organizations. Avolio and

Bass (2001, as cited in Manisa & Akif, 2020) noted that transformational leadership has five notable qualities that include 1. The possession of a valued attitude and optimism. 2. transformational leaders have high moral and ethical values, 3. They can inspire and motivate their followers. 4. The ability to encourage their subject to engage in creativity and innovation. 5. The leader ensures individualized consideration of its members and gives special attention to the achievement of the mentor.

Transactional Leadership

The transactional Leadership style is a win-win approach in that when the leaders meet the follower's expectations, the followers satisfy the leader's request, which means a mutual relationship is fundamental (Manisa & Akif, 2020). This type of leadership performance is based on the leader's ability to fulfill their follower's needs, and it has three components (Avolio & Bass, 2001, as cited in Manisa & Akif, 2020). The components are as follows: Contingent Reward: The leader is responsible for what needs to be done and the associated reward or incentives when both parties meet the agreement. The second component is Management by Exception (Active): The leader actively monitors agreement deviation and makes necessary corrections. The third component is Management by Exception (Passive): The leader often waits and then corrects followers' failures when the need arises (Avolio & Bass, 2001, as cited in Manisa & Akif, 2020).

Putra et al. (2021) noted that the transactional leadership approach allows the leader and the followers to exchange relationships by sticking a deal with the view of meeting each other's needs to enable the leader to achieve and sustain performance by satisfying the follower's needs (Asbari et al., 2020; Purwanto, Asbari, et al., 2019, as cited in Putra et al., 2021). Again,

transactional leaders do not allow leaders and followers to bond together in any form of collaboration but produce routine, uncreative, secured organizational settings (Putra et al., 2021).

Purwanto et al. (2020) indicated that the transactional leadership style deals with values in exchange for relevant subordinate responsibility concerning the work done. Bas et al. (1998, cited in Purwanto et al., 2020) emphasized that transactional leaders work with followers to understand the expectation and are ready to provide for their needs if the work aligns with the job requirements. Meanwhile, Bass et al. (1985, as cited in Purwanto et al., 2020) confirmed that transactional leadership comprises two parts the leaders depend on the reward to get the subordinates to do their work well. The second is called exception management, where the leader sustains success based on the follower's performance; when the work is terrible, the leader is involved in the repair process for improvement (Bass et al., 1985, as cited in Purwanto et al., 2020).

Plural Leadership

Plural leadership can be defined as a biographical sociology study of generally known leaders globally with consideration of their shared characteristics, and some of the leaders identified because of their successful leadership include Richard Branson of Virgin Group, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi amongst others (Gentili, 2021). The study revealed that the examination of common traits of leaders in the political and business world and then core leadership skills and social dynamics were identified, and all the leaders selected are experts in guiding their subjects (Gentili, 2021). Leaders are expected to influence their subjects and ignite passion, dedication, and enthusiasm, providing coherent future direction that makes sense of shared purpose (Gentili, 2021).

The study highlighted the need for leaders to open a dynamic working environment, and again, leadership only works formally within a bureaucratic system because it is relational; leaders act informally using their network of personal relationships unofficially (Gentili, 2021). A leader develops an emotional obligation to their followers, and a true leader establishes an invisible bond; for example, Nelson Mandela influenced their followers even in prison because interaction could be direct or indirect (Gentili, 2021). In the case of indirect interaction, a sub-leader is required that constitutes a second-level leader that brings about different levels of leadership, such as team leaders, organizational leaders, and context leaders (Gentili, 2021). In the first case, the bond between the team leader and the followers is direct, while the other two cases are indirect (Gentili, 2021). It is essential to understand that leaders exert power, and their performance is based on inside and outside interactions of the organization; leaders can only function properly with the social network interactions within their operational domain (Gentili, 2021).

The study shows that leadership is critical in directing organizational networks and their power based on a shared exchange, such as developing relationships between the stakeholders in the organization (Gentili, 2021). Furthermore, Gentili (2021) emphasized the need for leaders to support solidarity and participation amongst personal and social skills, and leaders should be able to manage themselves in harmony with others in problem resolution and decision-making. The researcher believes that leaders focus more on bridge-building and pulling down walls, a core leadership skill (Gentili, 2021). Again, leaders do not lead using rules and regulations, instructions, and procedures; the focus is on the individual relationship and connectedness, which is the core difference between leadership and management (Gentili, 2021).

Several researchers have looked at plural leadership in different ways, and some researchers call it distributed leadership, shared leadership, and even collective leadership (Gronn, 2002; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Friedrich et al., 2009, as cited in Flocco et al., 2021). Plural leadership style was described in four dimensions in a seminar conducted, and the researchers claimed that plural leadership is also shared leadership because it is associated with democracy, sharing leadership by team members, and empowerment (Flocco et al., 2021). The second dimension of plural leadership is co-equal leaders of two or more leaders working together to lead other team members (Flocco et al., 2021). The third-dimension deals with distributed leadership that operates like a chained relay process of moving from one set of leaders in a particular hierarchical level to another level within and outside an organizational boundary (Flocco et al., 2021). The fourth dimension of plural leadership is collective leadership through interaction amongst persons that make up leadership instead of individuals (Flocco et al., 2021).

Servant Leadership

Gandolfi et al. (2017) believed on different leadership styles, like transactional, transformational, and democratic leadership, help business organizations. The researchers argued that these leadership styles operate globally in a complex, ambiguous business setting, but more needs to be done on Servant leadership practiced for thousands of years (Gandolfi et al., 2017). Servant leadership was brought to the corporate attention just before the twenty-first century when it drew the attention of research experts and led scholars to do more research (Greenleaf, 1970, as cited in Gandolfi et al., 2017). Meanwhile, Servant leadership's historical perspective and leadership concept were recently revived by Greenleaf (1970, as cited in Gandolfi et al., 2017). The Servant leadership style can be traced to ancient history when

kingdoms saw their leaders as a call to serve their people and nation (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002, as cited in Gandolfi et al., 2017). Besides, Servant leadership has its root in the Christian leadership model that influenced several cultures and civilizations, such as the teaching of Confucius, and it presented itself in the Zhou Dynasty in 111-249 B.C (Winston & Ryan, 2008; Hirschy, Gomez, Patterson, & Winston, 2012, as cited in Gandolfi et al., 2017). Again, the Bedouin-Arab culture also practiced the Servant leadership concept, and leaders anticipated noble selflessness and helped to solve the people's needs above their needs; a good example can be traced to the teachings and leadership style of Jesus Christ in the Jewish culture over two thousand years ago (Gandolfi et al., 2017).

In the twenty-first century, the study of Servant leadership was revived, and succeeding Servant leadership studies again gained attention, with 39 peer-reviewed articles published in reputable management journals from 2004 to 2011 (Spears, 2004; Parris & Peachey, 2013, as cited in Gandolfi et al., 2017). Although, Servant leadership is misunderstood by some people that believe the leadership style conflicts with the great man myth of leadership perception, where little interpersonal skills are required to lead people effectively, while Servant leadership deals with humility and meekness, which is regarded as weakness, and not effective in a complex society of today's world (Yukl, 2012; McFarlane, 2011, as cited in Gandolfi et al., 2017). Meanwhile, Servant leaders are just like every other leader that is proactive and ambitious but with a different focus, and the difference is that the Servant leadership style puts their subordinate needs before personal needs first (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004, as cited in Gandolfi et al., 2017). On the other hand, other leadership styles focus first on the mission and then support the subordinate in achieving the mission objective (Gandolfi et al., 2017).

Gandolfi and Seth (2018) argued that there is no time as more critical period to highlight the need for leadership than ever for several reasons. First is the global leadership crisis in today's world; the second reason is that leadership is increasingly difficult and complex as such throwing up questions and challenges like what the best leadership approach is in these challenging times globally (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016, as cited in Gandolfi & Seth, 2018). According to Gandolfi and Seth (2018), Servant leadership is the most misunderstood leadership concept, regardless of the substantial body of literature available on leadership. The researchers stated that the Servant leadership approach shows strength, discipline, and humility by putting aside their individual needs and focusing on the needs of the people they serve (Gandolfi & Seth, 2018). Furthermore, the Servant leader creates an enabling environment for the followers to grow and thrive and then help in the achievement of the organizational mission, and the leadership approach is considered courageous, accountable in nature, and a difficult task to accomplish amongst other leadership styles (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011, as cited in Gandolfi & Seth, 2018).

Hubristic Leadership

Hubristic leadership is an egocentric type of leadership, and the leaders see themselves as powerful and successful leaders with extreme self-confidence and ambition in the choices of the strategic decision-making process (Akkaya, 2020). Furthermore, this leadership style demonstrates the leaders' puffed-up egos with a positive mindset, unrealistic self-evaluations, overconfidence, and pride (Shipman & Mumford, 2011, as cited in Akkaya, 2020). The research study of Russell (2011 & Sadler-Smith, 2017, as cited in Akkaya, 2020) reported that hubristic leaders are intoxicated with power, and their success, do not care about humanity, and extremely overestimate their performance as superior when compared to others.

This type of leader engages in over-confident and ruthless decisions and resists criticism from others who give some advice, and their attitude could result in abusive behavior toward followers and others (Tracy et al., 2009, as cited in Akkaya, 2020). Also, the leadership style is associated with anti-social personality traits such as aggression, and these leaders have had deadly experiences such as loss of jobs and losing market share of the organization (Li & Tang, 2010, as cited in Akkaya, 2020). In addition, four sources of hubristic leaders identified in past research study include a successful track record of recent organizational performance, media applauds, and superstar status, systematically inflated self-view capability because of inflated ego, and weak attentiveness (Hayward & Hambrick, 1997, as cited in Akkaya, 2020).

Sundermeiera et al. (2020) argued that hubristic leaders are known for their overblown perception of their personality, which impacts their decision-making process and is different from the conventional way of decision-making. This type of leader relies on their uncontrolled intuition as a replacement for analyzing an issue, making them unopposed (Sundermeiera et al., 2020). Past study has shown that hubristic leaders' personality traits are characterized by a high-level pride, self-confidence, overrated self-evaluation, and egotism, and this attribute is seen as a temporary condition that affects the leader, especially when the leader is still in a position of power (Hayward & Hambrick, 1997; Judge et al., 2009; Petit and Bollaert, 2012, as cited in Purwanto et al., 2020).

Autocratic Leadership

Past study shows that several definitions are attributed to the autocratic leadership style, and Peterson (1997, as cited in Akkaya, 2020) stated that it is a leadership style that is based on the responsibility of the leader to make all the decisions in the group. Autocratic leaders are

known for the overpowering speech of their team members when it comes to decision-making, forcefully expressing their leadership command and control without due respect for their follower's opinions or values (Bass, 1990, as cited in Akkaya, 2020). Again, another definition of an autocratic leadership style is defined as a process where only the leader makes decisions on behalf of the organization (Akkaya, 2020).

Dyczkowska and Tomasz (2018) noted that autocratic leaders make critical decisions by themselves, and the leader creates firm regulations with control processes in place and a formal and professional relationship with the followers. Although this leadership style does not encourage a learning mentality that helps inspire proactiveness within the subordinates (Sauer, 2011, as cited in Dyczkowska & Tomasz, 2018). Because of a lack of consultation between the leader and the followers' opportunities could be missed, and potential risks must be adequately evaluated before making critical decisions (Dyczkowska & Tomasz, 2018).

Solihah et al. (2021) claimed that autocratic leaders are self-centered and see leadership as a personal right, and others do not count and cannot interfere; these qualities are negative attributes of autocratic leadership. The study conducted by Hasibuan (2017, as cited in Solihah et al., 2021) revealed that autocratic leaders make decisions alone, and their followers' inputs are irrelevant or needed because absolute authority rests on leadership. The decision-making is the leader's responsibility, while the followers' opinion is not required, and the leader has no feelings and does not care for the team's welfare. The leader focuses only on production (Solihah et al., 2021).

Al Khajeh (2018) noted that in an autocratic leadership style, the leader solely decides on behalf of the subordinates, and the team works under instructions given by the leader without

their opinion or contributions. Autocratic leadership is also known as authoritarian leadership, and the leader needs to be more creative because the decision-making is one-sided and negatively impacts the follower's morale and job satisfaction (Al Khajeh, 2018). The leadership style is seen as more effective within a short period but has restrictions on workplace socialization and communication required for effective performance in the organization (Al Khajeh, 2018).

Democratic Leadership

Bass (1990, as cited in Akkaya, 2020) reported that democratic leadership is a leadership style that deals with the relationship between two or more individuals involved in a production process that aligns with the group member's expectations. In the democratic leadership style, the leader creates a competitive working environment for the group by boosting the morale in the organization, and it is also a participatory leadership approach that allows the leader to make decisions with the support of their followers (Gastill 1994, as cited in Akkaya, 2020). Besides, the leader helps to transform and apply negative energy caused by crisis into a positive use in the organization's interest (Raelin, 2012, as cited in Akkaya, 2020).

Democratic leaders consult with their followers and look for consensus when making decisions; the leader provides guidance and support to the followers to use their talent, rewards their followers for excellent performance, and does not personalize mistakes but resolve issues (Dyczkowska & Tomasz, 2018). Meanwhile, Democratic leaders consult with their subordinates before making vital decisions that enable the followers to commit to getting the work done and

create an atmosphere for creativity because of the trust and power of teamwork (Dyczkowska & Tomasz, 2018).

Al Khajeh (2018) believed that democratic leadership decision-making is decentralized, and all the subordinates are involved in the decision-making process, which enables the leader to motivate the followers to improve their performance because their input in decision-making is valued. Moreover, democratic leadership positively impacts an organization's performance because it allows the team to explore their creativity and be actively involved in the decision-making process (Al Khajeh, 2018). Furthermore, democratic leadership helps to prepare future leaders in an organization to improve organizational performance and efficiency (Choi, 2007, as cited in Al Khajeh, 2018).

Charismatic Leadership

Graboa et al. (2017) reported that in ancient times charisma was accredited to religious leaders or royal personalities divinely gifted with the qualities their followers utilized to attain phenomenal achievement. Charismatic power allowed military generals to lead and defeat nations, and religious leaders influenced their followers to build monumental structures that would take a long time but complete in a short time (Graboa et al., 2017). Meanwhile, modern-day charisma is a personality trait attributed to likeability (Beyer, 1999, as cited in Graboa et al., 2017). Charismatic leadership has an inherent characteristic with a supernatural outlook and extraordinary power that influence its members to follow the leader's viewpoint using their persuasive and motivational ability (Conger et al., 1997; Yukl, 1999; Bass, 1985; Waldman et al., 1990, as cited in Akkaya, 2020).

Fragouli (2018) believes that several researchers have different perspectives on charisma because some see it as a divine gift of divine origin, while some see it as a skill acquired like every other skill. Fragouli (2018) argued that charisma is not an inborn quality and not accessible to ordinary people but a process where the leader develops a mutual relationship with their followers. The leader is perceived as charismatic, just like in the case of Nelson Mandela of South Africa (Vught, 2013, as cited in Fragouli, 2018). On the other hand, past study has revealed that charisma can be developed and abused because some leaders use it to get power and disregard morals and ethics (Fragouli, 2018).

Agile Leadership

As a result of the rapid changes in today's business world, most business leaders are going agile to direct their team and position it to succeed in today's competitive and diverse world (Manisa & Akif, 2020). Besides, organizational agility is defined as the ability of organizational leaders to swiftly react to predictable and unanticipated changes within and outside the business environment (Manisa & Akif, 2020). Organizational agility requires some level of skill for performance because the skills are needed to know if an organization is agile and organizational agility has three components (Sharifi & Zhang, 2001, as cited in Manisa & Akif, 2020). According to the study, the components are first, Agility Driver, which is the business operations; secondly, Agility capability, which means the ability of the business to be agile and lastly, Agility providers, which is the ability of the business leaders or managers to utilize agility capabilities (Sharifi & Zhang 2001, as cited in Manisa & Akif, 2020).

Agile leadership is a postmodern style that enables organizations to respond to external social, environmental, and market threats (Clark, 2007, as cited in Akkaya, 2020). Agility is the skill or capacity to create and respond to environmental and market change to make a profit (Akkaya, 2020). Again, to ensure flexibility and stability in challenging environments by adopting the new system that originated from the software engineering domain (Alsudairy & Vasista, 2014; Dittrich et al., 2005; Mergel et al., 2018, as cited in Akkaya, 2020). The leaders use the agile leadership approach to meet the organization's internal and external requirements (Akkaya, 2020). The agile leader is expected to be dynamic and agile to perform better than others by adopting their personality, especially in the current rapid environmental changes (Akkaya, 2020). Agile leaders are recognized as postmodern leaders based on research emerging from the agility model and classified based on the personal characteristics, capabilities, and skills of a unique management approach (Akkaya, 2020).

The research finding further advised that based on the agile leader's competence, he is classified as an expert leader, an achiever, a co-creator, and a synergist because of the directive sense, innovative, and practical management approach for quick change implementation strategy (Akkaya, 2020). The leaders enable their team members with the correct information, technology, and environmental changes (Akkaya, 2020). Meanwhile, self-training for value creation leads to effective performance and profitability in an ever-competitive business environment (Akkaya, 2020).

School Leadership

For over 50 years, leadership has been a significant subject in renowned business schools across the globe (Zorina et al., 2018, as cited in Berestova et al., 2020). In recent times, the

importance of leadership studies in business school curricula has increased, and there needs to be a uniform approach to defined leadership (Berestova et al., 2020). Moreover, scholars from different business schools apply different theories and methods based on their research interests and problems, as well as use different methods of teaching such as classroom lectures, case studies, coaching, leadership program, self-analysis, team project, and feedback sessions (Murphy & Johnson, 2011, as cited in Berestova et al., 2020). Furthermore, educational leadership has been rooted in educational management studies for a long time (Berestova et al., 2020), and in recent times the educational leadership approach is based on equality and growth (Earley & Weindling, 2004, as cited in Berestova et al., 2020). Again, teacher's leadership is associated with reforms to improve the education sector in terms of teaching and continuous teachers' professional development, although teacher's leadership is not about only professional development; it includes the promotion of an effective growth of the school system (Berestova et al., 2020).

Besides, teachers that develop to become leaders contribute to the development of other teachers by creating leading communities of specialists that improve the teaching practice through regular demands (Smeets & Ponte, 2009, as cited in Berestova et al., 2020). Therefore, teachers' leadership encourages the participation of self-learning that improves professionalism, and the training acquired can be utilized to improve schools and student performance (Berestova et al., 2020). Generally, teacher leadership is a process of influencing other teachers to help improve teaching and learning to improve the quality of education and performance of the student (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, cited in Berestova et al., 2020). Printy (2008, as cited in Berestova et al., 2020) testified that teacher leadership is a leadership approach focused on

influence and interaction instead of power and authority. In recent times school management encouraged school reforms around changing into a distributed leadership model by sharing leadership roles and responsibilities and participating actively in decision-making (Leverett, 2002, as cited in Berestova et al., 2020).

The Concept of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria

There is theoretical proof by previous researchers that argued beyond all reasonable doubt that education is essential in any nation's growth. A Study has shown that education generally improves the quality and progress of people in each society (Salihu & Hazri, 2015). Education also helps to close the existing gap between the rich and the poor in society because governments across the world and international organizations interested in education encourage children from the poor background, as well as developing nations, to go to school to enable them to have better future by providing financial support (Salihu & Hazri, 2015). In the same way, Anyabolu (2000, as cited in Mvendaga, 2014) believes that education helps to prepare people to acquire the right skills necessary to survive in today's world. Nwambam and Prisca (2017) opined that education was regarded as a means of livelihood and life itself. On this note, Okabia et al. (2013, cited in Nwambam & Prisca, 2017) indicated that education is not just a system that transmits cultural heritage but an avenue for developing human capacity successfully in society. The researchers also emphasized the value of education as a process that enables the individual to acquire society's skills, knowledge, and moral values for generations (Nwambam & Prisca, 2017). The significance of education cannot be overlooked because governments worldwide are trying to make quality education accessible to their citizens (Nwambam & Prisca, 2017). In their

contribution, the success of quality education depends on good planning because proper planning averts failure (Nwambam & Prisca, 2017).

Agbowuro and Hayatu (2014) pointed out that a country can only have meaningful socioeconomic and political development with a functioning and quality education because it is essential to development. Oladele (2018) argued that in every modern society across the globe in recent times, the aim is to considerably reduce illiteracy through education because it is one of the parameters used to measure and categorize nations as developing or developed. Nigeria is classified or categorized as a developing nation, and the country must do everything possible to improve its citizen's quality through access to quality education because education is critical to societal development (Oladele, 2018). Furthermore, the researcher believes that education is aimed at creating a better life and the needs and goals of individuals; as such, it is an instrument that transforms society and the nation at large into a better place (Oladele, 2018). Likewise, Jummai and Rufus (2020) emphasized the importance of education and the role government and international bodies across the globe are committed to providing their citizen with equal access to education. Nwanga et al. (2020) believe that education is a tool for the acquisition of knowledge and skills that helps the individual to contribute to the development of society and promotes national integration, and basic education underpins the success of the total educational system.

Transformation is a global trend in the educational system in most countries worldwide because of the critical role education plays in human capital developmental needs; hence priority attention is given to continuous reforms in the educational sector for better efficiency (Universal Basic Education Commission [UBEC], 2013). It is important to note again that an effective and

efficient educational system enhances any nation's socioeconomic, political, and technological growth (UBEC, 2013). As such, the Nigeria National Policy on Education identifies education as a vehicle for excellence and national development (FRN, 2004, as cited in UBEC, 2013). Meanwhile, Schleicher (2018, cited in Lelei, 2019) reported that education is an essential tool for the well-being of an individual and a group, and education is linked to social inclusion and economic growth.

Anyanwu (2011, cited in Lelei, 2019) testified that the British missionaries brought Western education to Nigeria in the 1840s. The purpose of establishing institutions was to enhance healthy relationships between Nigeria and their British masters so that they could gain socioeconomic and religious control (Ololube, 2009, as cited in Lelei, 2019). Nwambam and Prisca (2017) reported that formal education is traced back to when Wesleyan Methodist Mission established the initial primary school in 1842 at Badagry Lagos. Some researchers indicated that the education planned to serve vital staff needs of the colonial government led to schooling for a white-collar type of job mindset, and after Nigeria got its independence in 1960, the restructuring of the educational system was borrowed from the American 6-3-3-4 system of education (Nwambam & Prisca, 2017). In Sub-saharan African countries, education is used for human capital development to achieve a competitive job investment globally (Lelei, 2019). Similarly, the Nigerian government has invested immensely in restructuring initiatives to expand the efficiency and production of citizens, such as Universal Basic Education (Lelei, 2019). The education program was intended to prepare individuals with the initial knowledge, skills, and ability to function in diverse areas to support the country's socioeconomic development (Adeyemi, Oribabor, and Adeyemi, 2012, as cited in Lelei, 2019).

Though several government edits were formulated between 1882 and 1950 to control the quality of education in the country (Mkpa, 2015, as cited in Lelei, 2019) and the first ordinance on education introduced was in 1882, and the first established government was in 1899 (Ekundayo, 2012, as cited in Lelei, 2019). The Nigerian government established new laws between 1955 and 1957 to increase primary school enrollment (Lelei, 2019). Again, Amalu et al. (2016) claimed that in 1950, there was a Human Right Declaration for every child's right to education, which brought about Universal Basic Education globally. In Africa, during the 1961 education conference in Addis Ababa, ministers from African nations targeted 1980 to achieve Universal Basic Education (Bonanni, 1978, as cited in Amalu et al., 2016). The foremost events in the education history of Nigeria were the Ashby Commission in 1959 to detect the country's workforce needs in the next twenty years and the National Curriculum conference in 1969 aimed at reforming the educational system (Asiwaju, 1972; Ekundayo, 2012; Okoroma, 2006, as cited in Lelei, 2019). Furthermore, the National seminar in 1973 attended by several groups and experts drafted the first National policy on education in 1977 named the 6-5-4 educational structure such as six years for primary, five years for secondary, and four years for higher education (Imam, 2012; Okoroma, 2006, as cited in Lelei, 2019). It is important to note that the Nigerian education structure is managed by the Federal, state, and local governments, including the private educational sector (Humphreys & Crawford, 2014, as cited in Lelei, 2019).

Nevertheless, the reform initiatives in Nigeria are focused on issues surrounding assessment, equity, and quality in line with global demand in the 20th century, which includes Education for All, the Jomtien Declaration 1990, the 1992 declaration of Ouagadougou Pan-African on the education for girls and women, the Jomtien declaration on EFA in 1995 (UBEC,

2013). The Millennium Development Goals in 2000 is another initiative that expressed the need to provide a road map for the developmental agenda globally in the 21st century during the World Millennium Summit and many more education declarations to improve the quality of humankind (UBEC, 2013). Dangara (2016) believes that education is taken seriously as an investment required for any nation's academic development and social, economic, and political development, and for schools to achieve their goals and objectives, adequate resources are required. An effective management system is in place, and it will help to reduce wastages or leakages and improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school system (Dangara, 2016). Meanwhile, Faruk et al. (2016) believe that education enables capacity building and societal growth, and it is a platform for the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and behavior required to survive in today's challenging world. It is believed that the quality of the contribution of the citizens is a function of the population percentage with the required level of education that can stimulate the socioeconomic development of any society (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004, as cited in Faruk et al., 2016). Furthermore, Abiogu (2014) thinks that education is the foundation upon which any nation is built, which means education is a vehicle for national development. Agbowuro and Hayatu (2014) argued that basic education is essential for human development.

Damkor-Ikpa et al. (2016) believe that for education to have any meaning, then the learner's experience must be considered and help develop the individual potential so that people live a satisfying life in society. It is important to note that education is the total sum of processes a learner develops their behavior systematically and attitude for the betterment of the individual and the society (Damkor-Ikpa et al., 2016). On this note, past research study encourage everyone to take responsibility for their education because it helps the learner acquire the knowledge and

skills necessary to function and enhance the quality of life and society (Damkor-Ikpa et al., 2016).

Onuoha and Odo (2020) alleged that basic education is a byproduct of Universal Primary Education that started in the western and eastern regions of Nigeria in the 1950s and then spread into the whole country in 1976. The government's commitment to education cannot be overemphasized because the Nigeria government is dedicated to several international treaties and conventions aimed at promoting basic education, such as the OAU Decade of Education in Africa, The Jomtien Declaration of 1990, and the New Delhi Declaration of 1991(Onuoha & Odo, 2020). In the past Nigerian Government made several efforts to provide basic education for the citizens; hence Universal Primary education (UPE) was introduced in 1976 to improve primary education and resolve the imbalance between the Northern and the Southern part of the country (Faruk et al., 2016). The Federal Government provided funding for the UPE program used in training schoolteachers and building school infrastructures such as classrooms library, the sum of over one Billion Naira was budgeted during the inauguration of the UPE program (Faruk et al., 2016). Moreover, Jummai and Rufus (2020) testified that millions of out-of-school children returned to school when the UPE program was established, and huge success was recorded, but after some years, the program experienced several challenges. Some of the problems experienced were inadequate school facilities, overloaded classrooms, and unqualified and inexperienced teachers, among others (Tahir, 2000, as cited in Jummai & Rufus, 2020). Nevertheless, in May 1999, the UPE program was modified into Universal Basic Education, and in September 1999, the program was aligned to conform with Education for All (EFA) and goal no 2 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to help reduce poverty (Faruk et al., 2016).

The UBE aimed to provide nine nonstop years of free and compulsory education for Nigerian children of school age, comprising six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education (UBEC, 2004, as cited in Faruk et al., 2016). Education has helped to advance humanity, so the UBE program in Nigeria is a vehicle designed for human and national development (Mvendaga, 2014).

Anyanwu et al. (2013) think the UBE program originated from the world conference on education for all (EFA) organized in 1990 at Jomitten, Thailand, and response to children aims to provide free, accessible, and affordable education by 2015. Former President Chief Olusegun Obasanjo initiated the UBE program in 1999, and the program aimed to reduce or eliminate illiteracy and poverty in the land and help stimulate development and national integration across the country (Ogunsanmi & Obimiluyi, 2014; Agbowuro & Hayatu, 2014; Yamma & Danjuma, 2018). Besides, Ugwuoke et al. (2015) also stated that the Federal Government established the UBE program in Nigeria to improve the living condition of its citizenry and enhance national development. Agbowuro and Hayatu (2014) believe UBE targeted to offer nine years of basic education. Da-ue and Obilor (2019) also believed that the UBE program was developed to proffer free compulsory basic education to the citizens in Nigeria of the school-age bracket to reduce the level of school dropout children in the country. Mvendaga (2014) postulated that the government established the UBE concept of education to help in human capital development and is seen as a pathway to economic growth.

The UBE program was a national strategic move with the view to attain education for every child and, at the same time, achieve the target of the Millennium Development Goals (Agbowuro & Hayatu, 2014). The Nigerian government took education seriously hence the need

to develop a framework for the UBE program to produce highly knowledgeable and educated citizens that will be useful for economic and national development (Salihu & Hazri, 2015). The work of Obanya (2000, as cited in Mvendaga, 2014) revealed that the UBE program in Nigeria is a strategy for reentry into the global space of the committee of nations based on the effort shown around basic education.

Nwambam and Prisca (2017) asserted that because of the mindset of the American education system in 1973, a national policy on education was formulated to meet the expectations of Nigerians; as such, the policy offered a legal framework to the 6-3-3-4 system of education. The educational system provides six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education; at this level, the learner that wishes to go through vocational studies or apprenticeship system because of low academic performance proceeds and then acquires some skills to survive in society (Nwambam & Prisca, 2017). Meanwhile, the three years of senior secondary are meant for other sets of learners who wish to continue their studies and then move into four years of higher education to develop a high-level workforce for the country (Nwambam & Prisca, 2017). In addition, Akor et al. (2020) stated that education underpins the academic life of all individuals across the globe because it is an essential aspect of education an individual or a child acquires to enable the individual to function at the basic level in society.

The researchers stated that basic education is the beginning of the educational journey of a child, and in Nigeria, basic education is domiciled in the Universal Basic Education and based on the national education policy, basic education is designed for nine years, six years for primary education and three years for junior secondary education (FRN, 2013 as cited in Akor et al., 2020). It is important to note that the UBE program aimed to reform basic education to create

higher access to quality basic education (Akor et al., 2020). Basic education signifies Federal Government Policy on education that all Nigerian children have access to free and compulsory education (Akor et al., 2020). Besides, education is the means of helping the learner to develop and have an insight into the individual and their environment, and education helps to build the learner from a small beginning to a larger end in the future (Akor et al., 2020). Furthermore, Mvendaga (2014) contributed with a note that the UBE program is a federal government policy initiative to make education free, compulsory, and accessible to every Nigerian child, exceptionally when the implementation plans are well executed. Because of the importance of education, the National Assembly passed the UBE bill Act, which was signed into law by the head of Government on May 26th, 2004 (Yamma & Danjuma, 2018).

Damkor-Ikpa et al. (2016) added that the UBE was envisioned and established in Sokoto in northern Nigeria in 1999, aimed at providing foundation education for young children of school age to acquire functional literacy for social change. The researchers believed that if the UBE program is well established and sustained, then all the stakeholders must play their roles to support the program financially and, in all aspects, to enable it to achieve its set goals (Damkor-Ikpa et al., 2016). In addition, Damkor-Ikpa et al. (2016) also emphasized the importance of UBE because the program is not only associated with young children, but adolescents and adults who missed out on formal education at an early stage in life included. UBE refers to three main components, Universal, Basic, and Education. Damkor-Ikpa et al. (2016), Universal signifies everyone's program irrespective of class, religion, age, and cultural background; basic means fundamental and compulsory as such, no meaningful result could be achieved without it. Finally, education is an essential aspect of human development; it is a fundamental human right that

empowers and positions people for success and the most incredible legacy a country can give its citizens (Damkor-Ikpa et al., 2016).

Meanwhile, Nkiruka (2015) stated that the UBE is a product of an educational system designed to fulfill education for all recommended during the educational world conference and the Nigerian government aimed at eradicating illiteracy. Nkiruka (2015) argued that the UBE in Nigeria was a deliberate government policy to deliver basic education within nine years and strengthen the National Policy on Education. Obun et al. (2018) stated that the primary objective of UBE is to develop the citizen's awareness of education, provide free and compulsory basic education, reduce the level of school dropouts, and care for their educational needs as well as skill acquisition, moral values, ethics needed for a solid foundation. One significant attribute of the UBE system is that the new curricula reflect national values and emerging trends (Nkiruka, 2015). Even with the effort, the program has witnessed several changes in the areas of policies (Mvendaga, 2014). Meanwhile, some researchers think that the constant changes in educational policies and programs have led to high uncertainty and confusion (Ayeni, 2000, cited in Mvendaga, 2014).

The several changes in educational policies and the risk attributed to planning challenges affected the implementation program (Mvendaga, 2014). The planning challenges in the educational sector are a dangerous trend that can truncate the country's future and its citizenry because the people of Nigeria are determined by the level of education acquired. Again, Agbowuro and Hayatu (2014) claimed that the UBE program was designed to achieve positive change in the basic education sector by providing functional, quality, and free education, and the vision experienced some setbacks that hindered its success. The delays are associated with high

enrolment with few classroom spaces, poor school infrastructure, ill-equipped laboratories, lack of qualified teachers, funding challenges, and many others that negatively affect the implementation program of the UBE (Agbowuro & Hayatu, 2014).

Besides, Bolaji et al. (2016) stated that 60% of Nigerian school children within the bracket of six to 15 years old are out of school, accounting for more than eight million children. Gyamfi (2015, as cited in Akanbi, 2017) lamented that a state of emergency was declared in the basic education sector because of the lack of improvement in its educational policies. Archer (2014, as cited in Akanbi, 2017) also argued that out of the 57 million young people globally that do not have formal education, over 10 million are in Nigeria, and the number is on the increase. Emeka and Godwin (2015) claimed that past and current Nigerian governments placed the basic education of the citizens as a top priority in the program of things when it comes to educational policies. In the process of providing free and compulsory basic education, the UBE act 2014 legislation was passed into law, and the act allows the federal government to assist the state and local governments in achieving high-quality and uniform basic education in the country (UBE, 2013, as cited in Emeka & Godwin, 2015). Again, deprivation, stigmatization, and violence against children living on the street around the country are on the high side, bringing about the speedy establishment of basic primary education (UNICAF, 2013, as cited in Emeka & Godwin, 2015). It is essential also to note that Agbowuro and Hayatu (2014) revealed that the fund for UBE is domiciled at the state and local authority with an intervention package of 2% of the central government. Bolaji et al. (2016) claimed that despite all the efforts since the program's inception, primarily in increased funding and international interventions, the UBE still needs to catch up.

Moreover, Mvendaga (2014) stated that many states in Nigeria is not ready for the effective implementation of the UBE and have not met the requirement of the Federal Ministry of Education and UBEC, which include planning, provision of qualified teachers as well as qualitative and quantitative infrastructure, and so on. The WB (2008, 2015, as cited in Bolaji et al., 2016) claimed that the appraisal performed in reform in Nigeria shows that the result was unsatisfactory because the lack of improvement in the sector over the years became a significant challenge for the country to achieve the 2015 goal led down in the UBE policy. Meanwhile, the large numbers of young people out of the school system constitute a national waste of human resources with a potential threat to the country's stability associated with an unpredictable political environment (USAID/FNG, 2009, as cited in Bolaji et al., 2016). Also, Bolaji et al. (2016) pointed out that the government's effort to ensure the success of its educational policies in Nigeria was characterized by several challenges which led to the restructuring and strengthening of the relevant government agencies. Anero (2014) believes that schooling is the necessary vehicle for societal development, especially when the child is appropriate education as many such nations across the globe pay attention to the education of children, including Nigeria, but the story in terms of achievement could be more encouraging.

Meanwhile, past study shows that Nigeria has some of the worst education pointers worldwide because the country has about 10.5 million out-of-school children, the highest in Africa, among other indicators, which shows that education for all is not a reality (Ogunode et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, Lelei (2019) stated that the result could have been more satisfactory, notwithstanding the substantial investment in the educational sector with the aim of reformation. Between 1999 to 2009, over 1.13 trillion Naira was spent on education (Dike, 2002, as cited in

Lelei, 2019). Although since the introduction of the UBE program in the country, it has experienced increased access to primary education because the public primary school's enrollment rate increased from 17.9 million in 1999 to 22.9 million in 2006 (World Bank, 2013, as cited in Lelei, 2019). Even with the increase in primary school enrollment recorded, the international assessment shows low performance (Lelei, 2019). Undeniably several researchers have questioned the validity of increased access to education when on the other hand, the quality of education could be better (Lelei, 2019). Besides, Sifuna (2007, as cited in Lelei, 2019) indicated that the student's cognitive achievement mainly determines the quality of education.

Research has shown that most government policies and programs still need to achieve their set objectives in the improvement of basic education, for example, Universal Primary Education (Anero, 2014). On the other hand, Durodolu (2018) also supported this line of argument, stating that education in the country has undergone numerous changes due to the yearning to firmly establish, harmonize and standardize the national policies regarding education. The UBE program aimed at removing the irregularities associated with the delivery of basic education in the country and then strengthening the UBE policy implementation and accessibility to quality basic education across the nation (National Population Commission, 2011, as cited in Bolaji et al., 2016). Meanwhile, Ojo (2015) thinks that education reform is required because education is dynamic; as such, there is a need for re-organization when needed to achieve its set objectives and measure up societal needs. Based on these facts, the researcher believes that universal basic education provides the platform for government support for basic education because basic education provides a solid foundation for other levels of education to succeed or fail if not well established (Ojo, 2015). Furthermore, Ojo's (2015) views show that

since the introduction of UBE in Nigeria, people who cannot read or write have reduced because more people now have access to free basic education.

The Organizational Structure of the UBE Program in Nigeria

Akanbi (2017) gave a historical perspective on how the administrative bodies of education have evolved and how the organizations operated at different levels of Government, ranging from the national level to the regional, state, and local government, and yet have not achieved the desired goal. The researcher argued that the education sector has only succeeded in changing the administrative body names managing basic education, but no meaningful result has been achieved in implementing its objectives (Akanbi, 2017). The UBE organizational structure has three levels, and the act established UBEC at the Federal level in October 2004 to help direct the execution of the UBE program at all levels (Agbowuro & Hayatu, 2014). The UBE Act of 2004 empowers the commission with a directive to help achieve Education for All (EFA) and the (MDGs) as well as provide data for Nigerian children and adult schooling using formative assessment, supervision, monitoring, research, and involvement of relevant stakeholders (UBEC, 2013). Besides, UBEC (2013) noted that the UBE is a Federal Government intervention program designed to cater to high-quality education, especially in the primary and junior secondary cadre.

Moreover, a study conducted by Salihu and Hazri (2015) also pointed out that the UBE Act was enacted and passed into law in 2004 to provide children across the nation with basic education. The agency in control of the execution of UBE at the federal level is the UBEC, while at the state level, SUBEB is responsible, and LGEA is at the local level (UBEC, 2004, as cited in Bolaji et al., 2016). Besides, Akanbi (2017) also revealed that the Universal Basic Education

Act of 2004 makes basic education free and compulsory at the primary and junior secondary levels. The Act established UBEC to ensure the management and coordination of the UBE implementation, with the help of SUBEB in each state of the federation and the LGEAs (Akanbi, 2017).

Emeka and Godwin (2015) stated that the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) is responsible for coordinating the activities of the program through the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) throughout all the states and local governments in the country. The education commission was established on the 7th of October 2004 with the mandate to ensure nine years of basic education; the learner should acquire the required skills and values required for employability to contribute to national development (Emeka & Godwin, 2015). The Universal Basic Education Commission is again responsible for ensuring the actualization of the UBE program's vision and working with all stakeholders to achieve education for all (Emeka & Godwin, 2015). Besides, Sote et al. (2011) believe that the UBEC sprang from the National Policy on Education with a mandate to make Nigerian education a platform for the national integration of the individual into a better citizen as well as provide equal opportunities for every child to attend primary, secondary, and higher education within and outside the educational system. Nevertheless, basic education is given more attention because it is the foundation for further education (Sote et al., 2011).

Meanwhile, Agbowuro and Hayatu (2014) confirmed that the UBEC is saddled with managing and coordinating the SUBEB of each state across the federation, including all the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) in the country. Also, Salihu and Hazri (2015) also indicated that the UBEC is responsible for managing and developing an educational

program to ensure its goals are achieved. Salihu and Hazri (2015) argued that the multiple and overlapping educational authorities playing a similar role in the management of basic education in the country, such as the National Commission for Nomadic Education and others, contributed to the unsuccessful implementation of the UBE program. The researchers believed that the lack of an adequately defined line of authorities and functions regarding the implementation of the UBE program led to confusion on who is responsible for specific initiatives in some cases (Salihu & Hazri, 2015).

Caroline (2012, as cited in Onyebueke, 2015) opined that the UBE management in Nigeria was established by the 2004 Act, which gave a mandate to the 36 states, including the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, to set up SUBEB. The Act also mandated all the state houses of assemblies to pass a law establishing SUBEB, the chairman, and board members to manage basic education at the state level (Caroline, 2012, as cited in Onyebueke, 2015). In addition, the UBEC Act 2004 also established that the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) is responsible for managing basic education within its territory along with SUBEB (Onyebueke, 2015). The Federal Government helps to ensure uniform standards across the nation; as such, UBEC, SUBEB, and LGEA are all responsible for the management of the UBE program in Nigeria (Onyebueke, 2015). Nevertheless, SUBEB and LGEA are accountable for employing workers, managing the state's financial, material, and human resources, and monitoring and evaluating the UBE program to ensure it achieves its set objectives (Onyebueke, 2015). Meanwhile, Sote et al. (2011) believed that the SUBEB is an arm of UBEC at the state level established to help manage inequality and create educational opportunities to improve the quality of education at the basic level of education. Ordui and Love (2019) revealed that the state and

the local Government are responsible for financing basic education, while the Federal Government provides a 2% intervention fund from the consolidated revenue fund to support basic education.

Furthermore, UBEC is empowered by an act and is responsible for coordinating the UBE at the state and LGEA at the local level (Ordui & Love, 2019). The Universal Basic Education Commission manages and coordinates the UBE implementation through the SUBEB of each of the states in Nigeria and its LGEA (Ordui & Love, 2019). UBE Blueprint (2000, as cited in Agbo, 2007) stated that the Government established the State Primary Education Board (SPEB) by Degree 96 of 1993, now known as State Universal Basic Education (SUBEB). It oversees the running and financing the primary education within the states, such as payment of primary school teachers, school maintenance, and teaching materials (UBE Blueprint, 2000, as cited in Agbo, 2007). On the other hand, the LGEAs are responsible for paying teachers' and non-academic staff salaries, submitting monthly returns, annual accounts, annual estimates, and procurement (SUBEB 2005, as cited in Agbo, 2007). Disbursement of materials and school equipment, maintenance of school infrastructure, and encouraging community participation within its area of control are essential (SUBEB 2005 as cited in Agbo, 2007). Meanwhile, Ogunode (2018) stated that the State Universal Basic Education Board oversees the management of basic education at the state level, and at some levels, secondary education is under the State Education Board and the Ministry of Education. Meanwhile, at the local level, The Local Government Education Authority oversees the financing and management of primary education (World Bank report, 2017, as cited in Ogunode, 2018).

Cornelius-Ukpepi and Opuwari (2019) stated that the UBE is an educational program designed to provide six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education to help reduce the high level of illiteracy in the country. One of the goals of the UBE was to provide free, quality basic education for all and to help reduce the dropout of learners from schools across the nation (Cornelius-Ukpepi & Opuwari, 2019). Meanwhile, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) Act was established and provided room for three levels of funding for implementing the UBE program from the Federal, state, and local governments, respectively (Cornelius-Ukpepi & Opuwari, 2019). Again, Ogunode et al. (2020) reported that the educational structure in Nigeria is well defined where the policy on education captures all areas of education; in addition, the National Policy on Education 2004 stipulates that basic education is a free and compulsory six years of primary and three years of junior secondary education. Generally, basic education is structured into nine years, with another three years of senior secondary education and four years of higher education (Ogunode et al., 2020).

The management and administration of the educational system are shared among the Federal, State, and Local government; although the Federal Government is empowered to regulate the educational sector in line with the constitution to formulate policies and ensure quality standards are achieved as well as allow each tier of Government to manage its sector of education (Ogunode et al., 2020). Furthermore, it is essential to note that the Federal Government is responsible for managing higher education, the States are responsible for secondary education, and the Local Government oversees Primary education (Ogunode et al., 2020). In addition to this structure, the Federal Government provides support to the state and local governments through counterpart funding to improve the quality of education across the nation, and the

administration of education is managed through the education ministries and commissions at the federal and state levels (Ogunode et al., 2020).

It is essential to note that several commissions are set up for different sectors within the education system with various responsibilities; for example, the Federal Ministry of Education is responsible for the unity of national policy, and the states operate procedures in line with the national policy on education (Ogunode et al., 2020). At the state level, the ministry of education oversees the development and implementation of the policies of education on primary and secondary education by several agencies, such as the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), and it is responsible for managing basic education (Ogunode et al., 2020).

Spillane et al. (2004, cited in García-Martínez et al., 2018) ascertained that educational leadership is in two dimensions where a relationship is vital for inspiring acceptance of the leadership vision. On the other hand, it is designed to achieve educational objectives, research, educational structures, and stakeholder interest (Lazaridou & Beca, 2015, as cited in García-Martínez et al., 2018). However, in any case, education leadership recognizes three dominant notions: the decision-making aspect, the stakeholders, and the organization's structural system (García-Martínez et al., 2018). Meanwhile, Payne and Nassar (2010, as cited in Egbufor, 2017) show that several barriers are responsible for the lack of progress in the educational sector in many societies in Sub-Saharan Africa, like Nigeria. Challenges such as ineffective school leadership, regular strikes by both teachers and students, political instability, and others are responsible (2010 cited in Egbufor, 2017). About four million Nigerian children do not have access to basic education, and many children in school do not have quality education (UNICEF, 1999, as cited in Bolaji, 2014). However, leaders and governments across the globe pay great

attention to educational policy in the school system with a focus on the development of education (Bolaji, 2014).

Education's role in national development across nations globally cannot be undermined; hence, the need to invest in educational reforms (Onjewu, 2007, as cited in Egbufor, 2017). Furthermore, García-Martínez et al. (2018) argued that leadership in the educational sector is connected to educational management and administration traced back to the English Industrial Revolution, which links leadership to achieving effectiveness in educational institutions. However, in Nigeria, education experts believe that it is the responsibility of the state and local governments to fund basic education with the support of the federal government's 2% consolidated intervention fund (Yamma & Danjuma, 2018). It is important to note that Habiba (2012) noted that SUBEB is responsible for coordinating, directing, and administering the UBE policies in all the states across the federation, and the Executive Chairman leads the board. Besides, Habiba (2012) pointed out that SUBEB was responsible for managing early child education, primary and nomadic schools, and junior secondary schools. At the state level, SUBEB is also responsible for recruiting academic and non-academic staff, promoting, and taking disciplinary actions where necessary, transfer of staff, supervising and inspecting staff, and distributing funds provided by the state and federal government (Habiba, 2012).

The Nigerian government established the UBE Act in 2004 to create SUBEB in all the states in the federation, and in Abuja, the Act empowers the state assemblies to pass laws to establish SUBEB (Caroline, 2012, as cited in Onyebueke, 2015). Meanwhile, SUBEB is seen as a UBEC representative at the state level managing the activities of the UBE (Sote et al., 2011). Furthermore, SUBEB has the responsibility to manage the finance employ staff and supervise

and evaluate the UBE program across the state of jurisdiction to ensure the goals are achieved (Onyebueke, 2015). Also, Abdullahi and Abdulkareem (2017) pointed out that the government funds UBE through funds from crude oil, which is now unstable and can no longer sustain development. The researchers believed that funding plays a vital role in any developmental venture as such a school; hence, school managers need to deploy innovative strategies to fund education in the country to achieve sustainable development (Abdullahi & Abdulkareem, 2017).

Ogunode et al. (2020) pointed out that the ministry of education is responsible for the management of elementary and secondary education in the country; their responsibilities include but are not limited to the selection and employment of teachers, defining the payment of teachers' salaries, promotion, and discipline of teachers where necessary. The ministry also makes provisions and guidelines for the establishment of new schools as well as training and retraining of all academic and non-academic staff (Ogunode et al., 2020). However, some of these responsibilities are carried out through their agencies, such as State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) is responsible for the management of basic education in Nigeria; other the other hand, the teaching service commission manages the senior secondary school level through the states in the country (Ogunode et al., 2020). However, Okoro (2014) believes that to achieve the UBE objectives, an overhauling of the subsector is required, especially a change of personnel attitude giving suitable attention to educational policy and judicious use of funds. The teacher's capacity building should be a significant priority as well as the employment of qualified teachers, encouragement, and motivation of teachers is vital to the success of the UBE program (Okoro, 2014). Meanwhile, Okoro (2014) advised the need for the enforcement of UBE policy through the effective and efficient administration and distribution of funds by SUBEB for the benefit of

the targeted population. The researcher also supported the need for inspection officers to ensure equity in implementing their duties, and then the government should motivate teachers regularly and provide school infrastructures (Okoro, 2014).

The Political Will on the UBE Program in Nigeria

Uchendu (2004, as cited in Ukpong, 2017) described politics as the art of dealing with power, and it is structured, chased, taken, and lost after some time, and it becomes the right of the politicians empowered by the citizens. Ukpong (2017) stated that political leaders appoint most leaders of education, and the funds required to function are provided by the government, which is a concern. Also, a political party in power wants the educational structure to serve its purpose because, in Nigeria, the educational system is directed by politics, for example, the school curriculum, the handing over of missionary schools to the government, and where new schools are located are decided and influenced politically (Ukpong, 2017). Furthermore, Abdullahi and Abdullah (2014) scholarly work revealed that the government plays a vital role in providing quality education and achieving the objectives anywhere in the world, the eight dimensions of good schools considered. The researchers mentioned that the first dimension is adequate to finance, the second is that good governance is essential, and the third is good leadership and management, which is critical (Abdullahi & Abdullah, 2014). The fourth is excellent teaching, and good student results are essential; the fifth dimension has to do with a suitable curriculum for the student, the sixth is a good philosophy for personal development, and seventh is a conducive learning environment, and finally, facilities and resources are critical (David, 2011; Prasad & Tata, 2003 as cited in Abdullahi & Abdullah, 2014).

The Nigerian constitution of 1999 identified the need and relevance of education, and that the government would create a better atmosphere for education development with an emphasis on science and technology to help eradicate illiteracy in the country (Okoroma, 2006, as cited in Abdullahi & Abdullah, 2014). Furthermore, Abdullahi and Abdullah (2014) think that political will is essential for developing and surviving government policies and programs. Meanwhile, Mahler (1986, as cited in Abdullahi & Abdullah, 2014) believes that government commitment to achieving its policies and programs in most developing countries is not encouraging. Again, Gerald (2001, as cited in Abdullahi & Abdullah, 2014) argued that because of the absence of a political will, has now resulted in the anticorruption crusade failure.

The World Bank (2003, as cited in Abdullahi & Abdullah, 2014) shows that government commitment is a function of resource allocation, such as time invested, funding, the attention given to the subject matter, and the human resources deployed. Omotayo (2011) pointed out that because of the government's lack of commitment to education, the education sector is characterized by inadequate funding, which negatively impacts achievement. The record shows that Nigeria invests about 9% of its yearly budget in the educational sector, which is not satisfactory, and it is less than the recommended UNESCO 26% for education; for example, Ghana is 31% while Cote d'Ivoire is 30% annual budget on education (Omotayo, 2011). In the era of Awolowo's leadership, the political will to get things done was a priority, and special budgetary allocation to education was high, contrary to the present-day government (Omotayo, 2011). During the Awolowo period, so much emphasis was given to education, and 35 % of recurrent budget allocation was given to education, and in some cases, the most substantial share of the budget went to primary education (Ajayi, n.d., as cited in Omotayo, 2011).

Notwithstanding, Omotayo (2011) believes that political will is evident in the performance of initiatives participation and the incorporation of the political stakeholders and civil society. Bolaji et al. (2015) stated that in the past decades across the world, political leaders and governments have allotted more interest in policy and while Lennon (2009, as cited in Bolaji et al., 2015) noted that policy is also known as an action plan by the government, business organizations as well as a political party to influence decisions. Bolaji et al. (2015) argued with other researchers that a better understanding of the processes of a good policy is essential for the development of society and even educational policies. Meanwhile, it is meant to bring about a negotiated political order in education, which helps improve education and society (Bolaji et al., 2015). The educational policy is seen as putting together laws and rule which enables governance of the operational system of education, and the conceptual clarity of the educational policies helps the country's commitment to creativity and development the country (Bolaji et al., 2015). Again, past study has shown over and over that no country can rise above its educational system, and a good life for the citizenry is a function of educational commitment because of good educational policies (Bolaji et al., 2015).

Ogunode and Adah (2020) pointed out that the lack of political will in the actual implementation of educational policies in Nigeria is a going concern, and the instability of government in Nigeria is another critical issue that affects the smooth implementation of educational policies in the country. It has been noted that several sound educational policies were suspended due to government changes, which affects the effective implementation of the educational program (Ogunode & Adah, 2020). Furthermore, it has been observed in the past that political instability has negatively affected the implementation of educational policies

because the frequent changes in education ministers and commissioners have kept the system in crisis due to the contradictory educational policies and practices (Odukoya, 2011, as cited in Ogunode & Adah, 2020). Another critical issue that affected the implementation of educational policies is the poor government policy formulation and articulation because of ill-equipped policy designers and lack of exposure to new ways of policy design and formulation (Ogunode, 2020, as cited in Ogunode & Adah, 2020). In addition, Ogunode and Adah (2020) noted that the poor synergy between the policy designers and the policy implementers is a crucial factor responsible for the implementation failure of the educational policies because they do not involve the implementers during the policy design stage.

Meanwhile, Aja et al. (2018) testified that the national policy on education highlighted the guidelines, methods, and evaluation as well as the processes to achieve its educational goal much more time after several educational conferences by experts brought about the National policy on education. The educational policy can be defined as a recommended course of action adopted by the government or its agency related to the issue of education, referred to as a law (Okunamiri, 2010, as cited in Aja et al., 2018). Furthermore, another researcher explained the educational policy as a statement of intent by the government to use education as a tool for achieving its national objectives (Osokoya, 2011, as cited in Aja et al., 2018). It is necessary to note that educational policy met to bring to reality the political order of education to improve the educational system in line with the current changes in society (Bolaji et al., 2015, as cited in Aja et al., 2018). Besides, research study revealed that it is the political atmosphere that helps to develop educational policies; that was the reason why the government established the Universal

Basic Education to enable every child of school age to have access to quality free basic education in Nigeria (Aja et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the researchers contributed that political lobbying is a critical factor in resource control and allocation; hence, the politics of education is complex because of the interest groups in the educational structure that are interested in meeting the government's interest (Aja et al., 2018). Meanwhile, it is a historical fact politics is played across the entire education spectrum, including at the basic education level, because they are managed and controlled by the government agency known as the state universal basic education board (Aja et al., 2018). At the local level, the school system is managed by the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA), which supervises all the schools under the State Universal Basic Education in each state of the country (Omosidi et al., 2017). Again, it is important to know that the state universal basic education board is responsible for the appointment of school managers or administrators at the junior secondary level based on experience and occasionally by a quota system (Aja et al., 2018).

An excellent example of educational policy is the UBE program, and since its establishment, over a decade has witnessed several challenges that hinder the program from achieving its desired objectives (Bolaji, 2014, as cited in Bolaji et al., 2015). Besides, the researchers noted that the poor performance in the educational sector in Nigeria is because of a lack of political will, corruption, and a lack of continuity and sustainability in educational programs (Bolaji et al., 2015). Moreover, Muiyiwa (2015) stated that policies are influenced by the political system from the colonial era until the present-day political system in Nigeria. The study shows that because of the influencers in the political space managing public governance

collaborated to keep the public school system in a declining state because of poor funding and inadequate infrastructural facilities, as such produced half-baked school graduates (Muyiwa, 2015). Again, Aboluwodi (2015) believes that there are numerous problems, such as politicization, inadequate funding, and improper planning, among others, related to the application of the policy, making it difficult to achieve its goal. The poor academic quality in the public system led to the emergence of a private school in Nigeria established by some corrupt politicians and top businessmen; at the same time, approval of some private schools is characterized by corruption because approval is given to some schools that do not meet the minimum standards required for the approval (Muyiwa, 2015). Meanwhile, because the Nigerian government agency responsible for private schools' approval with a disgraceful attitude hence quality education for all is a challenge, and education is no longer a right but a privilege for the selected few in society (Muyiwa, 2015).

The research of Bolaji et al. (2015) shows that the negative attitude of political leaders in Nigeria has brought about unethical behavior and mismanagement of allocated funds for personal gain hence the purpose of funding the UBE program was defeated. The scholars also pointed out that because of the lack of political will, some educational leaders, especially in SUBEB, purposely delay teachers' salaries and sometimes do not allow teachers to work if they refuse to pay homage (Bolaji et al., 2015). Again, in some cases, teachers' files go missing and reappear when homage is paid to their supervisors (Bolaji, 2014, as cited in Bolaji et al., 2015).

The Implementation of the UBE Program in Nigeria

Past study revealed there are two policy implementation approaches, and the first policy implementation historically applied a top-down approach where the policy is designed at the

center and implemented at the bottom or lower level with factors that control the implementation at the center (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975; Matland, 1995 as cited in Farooqi & Tom, 2019). The second policy implementation is the bottom-up approach that started in early 1980 due to the wide criticism of the top-down approach; the bottom-top approach appears preferable because it considers policy implementation from the end user's perspectives, such as teachers (Lipsky, 1980, 2010; Hull & Hjen, 1987 as cited in Farooqi & Tom, 2019). The researchers believed that the role of managers in the effective implementation of policy is not adequately considered in past study; hence the researchers argued that the role of a manager in influencing effective implementation could not be overlooked (Lipsky, 2010 as cited in Farooqi & Tom, 2019).

Amir et al. (2020) argued that the implementation of any policy is a critical phase that must be considered because of the challenges that may affect its effectiveness if not adequately addressed. The researchers further recommended adequate budgetary planning to effectively implement a policy because the budget will detail the financial requirement and other resources required for the implementation effectiveness (Amir et al., 2020). The study also pointed out that education policy implementation involves cost for its successful delivery, and unnecessary cost regarded as extravagance should be avoided because past research study proved that educational institutions engaged in wasteful spending that negatively impact implementation (Harsono, 2007; Makhya, 2012 as cited in Amir et al., 2020)

Alias et al. (2019) believe policies must be well implemented to achieve goals and benefit the targeted population. The researchers looked at implementation performance because it deals with the degree of achievement as it relates to the desired objectives of the organization (Krause,

2005, as cited in Alias et al., 2019). The implementation performance is critical because if unable to implement the policy effectively, it will affect the country, causing political dissatisfaction, financial waste, and an inability to achieve the standard and well-being of the citizens (Alias et al., 2019). Hence, the government needs to ensure that formulated policies are appropriately implemented to achieve its goals, primarily through the school leaders responsible for successfully implementing government policies in their schools (Alias et al., 2019). It is known that if the policy objectives are met, the persons responsible for implementing the policy are influential (Alias et al., 2019). Furthermore, Alias et al. (2019) argued that schools could help students achieve problem-solving skills in an ever-changing world hence the need to transform the structure of educational policy to meet students' needs in the 21st century. Fundamentally, the policy development circle has several phases; the first phase is agenda setting, the second phase is policy formulation, and implementation is regarded as the third phase (Jenkins, 1978, as cited in Alias et al., 2019). Policy implementation is a process of actualizing the policy statement to achieve its goals and objectives (Alias et al., 2019).

Past research study has shown that policy implementation is essential, primarily if well implemented; it empowers and motivates the leader instead of limitations and unnecessary control (Alfen, 1993, as cited in Alias et al., 2019). School leaders are responsible for implementing education policy, and it comes with some challenges because of its complexity concerning political and social connections (May & Jochim, 2013; O'Toole, 1986, as cited in Alias et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the implementation activities involve operational changes in the school system by the school leaders (Alias et al., 2019). It is essential to note that changes are not implemented by an organization but by individuals, and implementation is a process that

requires planning and programming as well as control through policy formulators and implementers (Alias et al., 2019). The goal of any policy implementation is the success achieved in translating its objectives into action again; past study has shown that several policies failed because of implementation failure or lean implementation (Klein & Sorra, 1996, as cited in Alias et al., 2019).

In the past, a study conducted by some researchers revealed that in developing countries like Nigeria, educational policies and programs are well-initiated, but the implementation of the policies is the primary concern because the policies need to meet their intended outcomes (Bolaji et al., 2015). The aim of the educational policies is indeed to help improve the quality of educational service delivery by the government to its citizens, and it could be achieved by setting up effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place as well as efficient performance management systems by the relevant government agencies, but unfortunately, this aspect is still not well implemented (Bolaji et al., 2015). Even so, Bolaji et al. (2015) noted that for policy implementation to have its rightful place, the capability, and effectiveness of the agency of government implementing the policies must be considered. The researcher strongly believes that Nigeria needs a capable executive team to drive the UBE program successfully because of overlapped bureaucratic agencies' functions (Bolaji et al., 2015).

The scholars observed that a weak institutional setup with overlapping functions is responsible for the failures of the government educational policy implementation because to implement any policy, a capable, experienced, and productive team is required in the government agencies with the proper behavior and attitude (Bolaji et al., 2015). Some scholars also believe that the failed policy of the UBE program is responsible for children dropping out of school and

being seen on the street of major cities of Nigeria, which is now on the global stage (Oloko, 1999; Aransola et al., 2009; Oni, 2011, as cited in Bolaji et al., 2015). Meanwhile, the scholars believe that the UBE policy can be achieved but because of the power of control challenges amongst the overlapping functions of government agencies that do not have the willpower associated with unethical behavior is a concern for the success of the UBE program (Bolaji et al., 2015). Besides, Bolaji et al. (2015) affirmed that the UBE program is a well-established educational policy with the proper implementation strategy because of the deficiency in political will.

The research work done by Makinde (2005, as cited in Bolaji et al., 2015) revealed that implementing policies in developing countries, especially Nigeria, is characterized by several challenges ranging from the inability of the government to continue policies, corruption, insufficient material, and the resources that create a considerable gap between the policy implementation plan and the actual policy implementation. Egonmwan (2002, as cited in Ejere, 2011) observed that several developing nations, just like Nigeria's policies and programs, originated from political systems instead of it coming from the citizens. The research study further disclosed that policies and programs need to consider the targeted beneficiaries during the planning stage of the policies; hence, there is no guarantee of the policy implementation sustainability (Egonmwan, 2002, as cited in Ejere, 2011).

Corruption in the educational system performed by these leaders or supervisors has discouraged teachers from performing their duties effectively, creating several challenges that negatively impact the UBE policy (Bolaji et al., 2015). Corruption is a significant hindrance to the implementation of the UBE policy. The challenge must be addressed because it has

penetrated all aspects of the program, formulated policy, and appropriated funds for implementation. Again, corruption has affected the policy from achieving its goal (Bolaji et al., 2015). Several challenges characterize the effectiveness of the UBE implementation in Nigeria, and this subject matter has been studied by several researchers in the past (Christien et al., 2021; Agbor, 2019, as cited in Abdulillahi, 2022). For example, in 1977, the National Policy on Education directed schools to establish libraries critical school infrastructural resources for the successful implementation of the UBE program in Nigeria, but the policy witnessed setbacks because no functional library could be found in most of the public schools in Nigeria (Iorver & Yankyar, 2022). The school libraries are essential services required for effective teaching and learning in schools for the smooth implementation of the UBE program, and the non-availability of libraries that aid teaching and learning hurts the system (Iorver & Yankyar, 2022). The researchers recommended practical planning and implementation of well-establishing school libraries to support the successful implementation of the UBE program (Iorver & Yankyar, 2022).

Iheoma and Martin (2021) emphasized the need for principals to supervise educational settings; as such, they need to be involved in formulating education policies to enhance the smooth implementation of the UBE program. The approach is in line with past research study that shows that in the implementation of policies, the people at the implementation level should be carried along because they could identify bottlenecks that could negatively impact the policy because of their understanding and experience in the field (Bempah, 2012, as cited in Iheoma & Martin, 2021). The researchers believed that this concept enables policymakers and implementors to examine the established process of the public policy outcome (Iheoma &

Martin, 2021). In their contribution, the study revealed that school-based management boards need to support the school policies implementation through adequate supervision of principals and ensure their assigned work is done as we check the teacher's performance in implementing the UBE program (Iheoma & Martin, 2021).

Uwakwe (2020) explained that the school principal is the administrative head of the secondary school and manages the daily activities of the school, and the leadership role of the principal in the implementation of educational policy is critical to the success of the program in the school. The school principal is responsible for actualizing the UBE curriculum for the students to help them achieve the desired goal of UBE (Uwakwe, 2020). It is regrettably to note that after several years of the establishment of the UBE program in Nigeria, indications are showing that the UBE program is failing just like every other past educational program (Ajayi, 2006, as cited in Uwakwe, 2020). Some of the indicators that support this argument are poor infrastructural school facilities and inadequate instructional materials, among others that are required for the smooth running of the UBE program, are inadequate (Lawanson & Gede, 2011, cited in Uwakwe, 2020).

Again, another noticeable indicator is high illiteracy and school dropouts, decayed infrastructure, declining male enrollment, and absence from schools by teachers and students (Aguba, 2009; Igwe, 2007, as cited in Uwakwe, 2020). It is regrettably worth noting that about 10.5 million out-of-school children are identified in Nigeria, making it one of the worst education indicators in Africa, as education for all still needs to be achieved (Ogunode et al., 2020). The importance of school facilities such as classrooms, libraries, blackboards, chairs and tables,

teaching aids, and others cannot be overlooked because they enable the teacher to function effectively and create a friendly environment (Oladele, 2018).

Uwakwe (2020) claimed that the United States Embassy in Nigeria in 2012 argued that the educational system in Nigeria is experiencing a decline in the quality of education because of inadequate funding to meet the growing population of school-age children across the country. Sadly, the situation has worsened to the point where the schools can no longer handle the problem, and study revealed that the problem is traceable to the Nigerian government's poor funding and investment in the educational sector (Uwakwe, 2020). To further support this argument, Yusuf (2010, as cited in Uwakwe, 2020) stated that the Nigerian government had not exceeded 10% of its overall budget expenditure on education, and in most cases, what is made available is even below the budgeted allocation (Bagudo, 2014, as cited in Uwakwe, 2020). The inadequate funding of the educational sector has resulted in poor quality teaching and learning processes because of the lack of essential human and material resources required for implementing the UBE program, as well as frequent strikes that hinder the academic calendar in schools across the country (Yusuf & Alabi, 2013, as cited Uwakwe, 2020). It is understandable that because of the inability of the government to provide the needed facilities for the smooth implementation of the UBE program, the school principals are not able to perform their role effectively in helping to implement the UBE program (Uwakwe, 2020).

Anyakora (2021) also stated that school principals are the head of secondary schools in Nigeria that manages the daily activities of the schools. Some researchers also believe that the school principal is the accounting officer of the school as we play an instructional leader's role in the school (Alpha, 2015, as cited in Anyakora, 2021). School principals are known for

translating education policies into action as such help to promote education by using administrative skills effectively for effective teaching and learning because it is expected that school principals should have administrative competencies (Anyakora, 2021).

The administrative competencies of school principals are essential in the administration of schools because it is the most excellent and effective tool developed by men to achieve continuous progress and development (Anyakora, 2021). It is important to note that no nation can grow beyond the quality of its principals and teachers because they are ultimately responsible for translating educational policies into reality (Anyakora, 2021). Furthermore, education is an instrument for social change, and the foundation for a quality system where the school children are the center of the educational system and the principal is the hub of the education process because the training of the children and the educational system rests upon the principal (Ukeje, 2002, as cited in Anyakora, 2021). It is critical to note that transformational leadership theory helps leaders to build human capacity through the identification and development of core values to unify the organizational purpose to bring about the needed human and economic transformation (Givens, 2008).

Planning of the Curriculum Implementation of the UBE Program

Akor et al. (2020) stated that a curriculum is a tool that shows the intent of the educational plan of a nation to its citizens and is also used to achieve the needed change to improve the learner's behavior for the advancement of society at large. Furthermore, the study revealed that a curriculum is a program of study that helps in the impartation of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes, and a curriculum is also seen as the learner's pathway to achieving the need for change for the betterment of humanity (Akor et al., 2020). In addition, Alade (2005, as cited in Alade,

2011) stated that the educational curriculum is designed to equip a group of learners for a period to achieve the desired behavioral output. Alade (2011) pointed out that curriculum is a critical instrument across all levels of education, and the scholar further described the curriculum as the platform in which educational organizations pursue the translation of society's values into reality.

Besides, Alade (2006, as cited in Alade, 2011) noted that curriculum is the foundation of the developmental process, the heart of education. A study shows that no state can grow beyond its education; as such, no educational system can equally grow above its curriculum (Alade, 2011). Furthermore, Adebayo (2018) noted that national curriculum development in Nigeria is done by some agencies such as UBE and other relevant agencies responsible for developing school curricula and providing funds for school infrastructures, textbooks, and many more. Dolapo (2015) noted that the idea surrounding the UBE curriculum is to enable the learner who goes through the curriculum to have the basic skill of literacy, numeracy, communication, and other relevant foundational skills to function in a lifelong learning process.

The learner must complete the first six years of primary education in the UBE curriculum before moving on to the JSS1 class (FRN, 2008, as cited in Dolapo, 2015). Again, Gbamanja (2002, as cited in Okoro, 2011) confirmed that the curriculum reflects the societal trends and characteristics of its society. Therefore, curriculum execution is essential, and the UBE implementation ensures the provision of safer and prosperity and makes the world a better place (Okoro, 2011). Furthermore, Awofala and Oludola (2013) also gave an account of how the National Council of Education (NCE) approved the nine-year UBE curriculum.

Asaaju (2015) believes that in the last 50 years, the irregularity in the education system in Nigeria has led to confusion because the initial system of 6:5:2:3, popularly known as bookish,

eventually replaced with the 6:3:3:4 system of education to make provision for a vocational subject to allow students who are not academically upright. It was a modification of a good curriculum but with challenges in the implementation and plans to change it into other curricula that still need to achieve their desired objectives, especially in the public schools in Nigeria (Asaaju, 2015). The researcher also observed that poor information gathering and inadequate preparation of teachers, as well as funds to implement the curriculum, were a challenge because the teachers need to be appropriately trained to understand the implementation of the curriculum (Asaaju, 2015). Previous study captured Nigeria's educational system's challenges due to mistimed changes in policies and irregularities in educational policies (Asaaju, 2015).

Some researchers noted that there is a general belief that the school curriculum is obsolete and no longer relevant to the provision and acquisition of transferable skills and, as such new curricula developed for the primary and junior secondary schools are needed (Humphreys & Lee, 2015). Furthermore, the study revealed that many schools do not have documented curricula, teaching aids, and syllabi, have inadequate science teachers and do not have enough science facilities with very little or no Information and Communication Technology capabilities in most schools (Humphreys & Lee, 2015). Although, Dolapo (2015) thinks that the UBE, at its inception, brought about notable changes in classroom management practice, development of curriculum, and supervision in Nigeria, significantly when the basic education was restructured into a nine-year basic education curriculum. The first sets of JSS produced by the basic education curriculum were in 2011, while the first set of primary schools was admitted into JSS in 2014 (Dolapo, 2015).

A curriculum requires a review after a period to incorporate current thinking in the educational space by society, and change is inevitable in Nigeria (Alade, 2011). In the past, learners did seven years in primary school, five years at their secondary level, and four years at a higher institution (Alade, 2011). The education system changed in 1983 to a 6-3-3-4 where primary school is six years, JSS is three years, SSS is another three years, and the higher institution is four years (Alade, 2011). The 6-3-3-4 system was intended to correct the structural imbalances during the colonial era (Alade, 2011), but it observed that the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system was not effective as such, could not achieve its desired result of change and innovation needed to impact the society (Ajibola, 2008 as cited in Alade, 2011). The study shows that implementing the curriculum is a significant challenge that negatively impacts the system despite the continuous review, for example, overloading the curriculum and overcrowded classrooms with an average of 70 pupils (Alade, 2011). It complicates the workload for the teachers, and classroom management and maintenance, especially with inadequate funding challenges (Alade, 2011).

Okoro (2011) believes that the UBE program needs to migrate from a subject-oriented syllabus to a more conceptual/contextual learner-based one because the UBE curriculum needs a stronger foundation. The curriculum is thoroughly planned in an instructional format, such as educational packages, to transform the learners and society to establish a better foundation for future learning (Okoro, 2011). It is also vital for qualified teachers to drive the learning process using educational packages to ensure the objective of the UBE program is achieved (Okoro, 2011). Meanwhile, Anaduaka and Chinyere's (2013) findings show that the UBE curriculum is poorly implemented; teachers are essential in implementing an educational program in any

school because the teacher promotes learning and knowledge acquisition. The reform of the curriculum can only be achieved if well-trained teachers execute the curriculum (Anaduaka & Chinyere, 2013).

Funding Availability for the Implementation of the UBE Program

The first government intervention funding in Nigeria for primary education was in 1882 by the British, which gave room for the education board to classify the schools and then allowed parents to choose religious instructions for the children as well as provided funds for buildings and salaries of teachers (Akanbi, 2012). The government then provided aid to private schools, inspectors of education were appointed simultaneously, grants were given to teachers for training at training colleges, and many others (Akanbi, 2012). The funding of education has been problematic in nature and indescribable right from the pre-colonial period, and this has hindered the development of the educational sector in Nigeria (Anibueze & Okwo, 2013).

The research work of Anibueze and Okwo (2013) shows that Nigeria is amongst the poorest nations in West Africa regarding funding for education and yet claims to be the giant of Africa. Furthermore, in most parts of the world, after the defense, education is the most significant expenditure, unlike the case of Nigeria, where there has been a constant decline in education budgetary allocation in the past decade (Anibueze & Okwo, 2013).

Gado and Hussaini (2017) also testified that the UBE is funded by the three tiers of the government and then categorized into four sectors that include the Federal and State governments finance the training and retraining of teachers in primary and junior secondary schools. Adult education is funded by the three tiers of government, while the federal government is responsible for nomadic education funding (Gado & Hussaini, 2017). The second

category deals with the teacher recruitment and compensation of primary schools financed by the local government and junior secondary schools funded by the state and federal government (Gado & Hussaini, 2017). Meanwhile, adult education is funded by the three tiers of government, and the federal government single-handedly funds nomadic education (Gado & Hussaini, 2017).

Category three deals with the funding of school infrastructures such as the building of classrooms, playgrounds, toilets, and others are the responsibility of the federal government because it contributes 75 percent, and the state government contributes 25 percent for primary schools (Gado & Hussaini, 2017). At the junior secondary school level, the federal government provides 25 percent while the state government provides 75 percent of the funds, then adult education is funded by 25 percent contribution from the federal government, the state 50 percent while the local government contributes 25 percent and finally the federal government is 100 percent responsible for the funding of Nomadic education in Nigeria (Gado & Hussaini, 2017). The fourth category deals with the provision of instructional and learning materials, and the federal government is responsible 100 percent for funding the primary schools (Gado & Hussaini, 2017).

Again, 25 percent of funding comes from the federal government for funding junior secondary schools, while the state government is 50 percent and the local government 25 percent of funding. Nomadic education is funded 80 percent by the federal government and 20 percent by the state government (Gado & Hussaini, 2017). Furthermore, the funding is secured from budgetary provisions, education task funds, international donors, and non-governmental organizations (Gado & Hussaini, 2017). Meanwhile, Steenbergen et al. (2016) research reveals that basic education funding is done from several sources, especially at federal, state, and local

levels, but the state government takes the lead regarding basic education. The state is in control of funding basic education, and the source of funding is statutory, which comes from oil and tax revenue, and the states jointly collect 26.72% of Federation Account Allocation Committee Revenue based on the allocation formula (Steenbergen et al., 2016).

The LGEAs do the salaries and primary school expenses; the fund is received from SUBEB (Steenbergen et al., 2016). Besides, Akanbi (2012) argued that mind-blowing unanticipated issues characterize the political era, yet the individuals are not bordered; for example, politicians can afford to collect loans of 40 billion Naira from the bank to increase personal allowances. The so-called politician does not care about children studying under the trees instead of classrooms and, in some cases, no chalk and duster for use, and it is essential to note that a former state governor in a disadvantaged educational state tried for the embezzlement of 5 billion Naira UBE funds (Akanbi, 2012). Again, Onyebueke (2014) also discussed the issue of inadequate funding for education as a killer that affects the educational sector in achieving its potential goals. Obanya (2009, as cited in Onyebueke, 2014) claimed that the money spent on education is way lower than the allocated budget, and only a little of the money spent goes to school projects.

Meanwhile, Akanbi (2012) stated that the budgetary allocation shows that security and defense allocation is higher than education, and there is a need to educate the leaders to pay attention to an effective education system that can reduce the crime rate in the society instead of wasting so much on security aides. Akanbi (2012) argued with indisputable facts that apart from underfunding of the educational sector, corruption is a fundamental challenge because it projected that about half of the budget for education goes to primary schools. What happens is

that projects awarded for the building of classrooms, for example, should be more accurate to aid kickbacks aimed at government officials and even school officials (Akanbi, 2012). Furthermore, Anibueze and Okwo (2013) believe that both the military and civilian governments are responsible for the underfunding of educational systems because, historically, Nigeria has never met the UNO 26% budget allocation annually for education. It is disappointing to note that UNICEF (2005, as cited in Anibueze & Okwo, 2013) placed Nigeria as the number ten most impoverished and deviant nation concerning the funding of its educational system.

All the same, Okoro (2010) pointed out that the education policy in 1997 was reviewed in 1981 because the education industry required massive funding due to its expensive nature hence the need for all arms of government to support the funding of education to achieve the desired objectives. Steenbergen et al. (2016) stated that the three tiers of government are responsible for funding basic education in Nigeria, but the critical decision of spending is made at the state level. Nakpodia (2011) also supported that the Central, State, and Local governments financed Nigeria's basic educational system. State education is financed through counterpart funding, influenced by the Governor, the state commissioner for budget and planning, the SUBEB chairperson, the Education Commissioner, and the chairman of the local government, play a significant role in the funding allocation (Steenbergen et al., 2016). Nevertheless, Anibueze and Okwo (2013) further explained counterpart funding as the act of two persons or a group, even government institutions agreeing to fund a project of common interest. Previous study has shown that education funding is capital intensive; as such, it may be difficult for an individual to fund it, and education is not free someone must bear the cost (Anibueze & Okwo, 2013).

Besides, Idoko (2008, as cited in Anibueze & Okwo, 2013) argued that without addressing the basic education sector, all the efforts put together by the Federal, State, and Local Governments would come to nothing, and the major challenge is the lack of political will. For example, some state governors from the South-South, such as Edo state 2008, refused to pay their counterpart fund; hence could not access its intervention fund as well as Cross River, Bayelsa, Edo, and Delta States were affected (Anibueze & Okwo, 2013). It is essential to note that Nwankwo (2009, as cited in Anibueze & Okwo, 2013) revealed that UBEC has an N52 billion Naira fund that some states could not access in Nigeria because of their inability to provide their counterpart fund and then not able to retire initial grant as well as the inadequate monitoring of fund utilization. Anibueze and Okwo (2013) argued that it is only possible to have a quality education with appropriate funding to improve the funding of the UBE program in Nigeria.

Okoro (2010) specified that education is an expensive venture with unlimited resources and ever-ending educational development. The limited resources witnessed in most developing countries in Africa make it unfortunate to fund education adequately, just as in the case of Nigeria (Edem, 2006, as cited in Okoro, 2010). Meanwhile, Okoro (2010) believes that to achieve the UBE objectives, it makes sense to make basic education accessible so illiteracy can be illuminated and encourage literacy in Nigeria. Education is the solution required to open the doorway to modernization, but it mostly depends on adequate provisions of funds (Ukeje, 1991, as cited in Anibueze & Okwo, 2013). Furthermore, Yamma and Danjuma (2018) confirmed that the state and local government leaders are responsible for adequately funding basic education in the country, while the federal government contributes 2% of funding from the consolidated

intervention funds. Research study has shown that the three arms of the government fund the UBE program, and some states are unable to contribute to their counterpart fund, making it impossible to access its fund, such hinders the UBE program (Musa & Joshua, 2017).

The work of Adekunle's (2019) research findings also revealed that education is capital intensive, and education funding is done majorly by budgetary allocation yearly but mentioned that the system is characterized by massive corruption and abuse of office. Besides, Okoro (2010) believes that funding is a fundamental factor in the success of an organization, including the education system, because funding the UBE program requires financial resources for both capital and recurrent expenditure. Ejere (2011) thinks that funding of UBE needs to be improved and is a significant concern in the implementation of government policies even though the three arms of government take responsibility for funding basic education. Oladele (2018) revealed an enormous information deficiency between the state and local education expenditures; such exact estimated expenses become tough to ascertain. Anaduaka and Chinyere (2013) noted that about a 5 million dollars plan was set aside for the renovation of UBE school buildings that are already existing and building new ones, but unfortunately, the said amount was not used for the desired purpose because dilapidated structures and ill-equipped school facilities are still present in most schools.

Ogunode et al. (2023) regreted to note that inadequate funding is responsible for the failure of the implementation of the UBE program in Nigeria, notwithstanding the UNESCO recommendation of 26% annual budget allocation to education; unfortunately, Nigeria over the past ten years allocated less than the recommended allocation to the education sector. Ako et al. (2022) also confirmed that across the globe, the ability to provide adequate funds for any

program is a critical issue, as well as funding of the Universal Basic Education program in Nigeria. The researchers noted that many constraints associated with the budget affected the UBE program, that sometimes led to dependence on donations from other organizations (Igbuzor, 2006, as cited in Ako et al., 2022). Again, the researchers observed that the Nigerian government has never achieved the recommended 26% annual budget allocation for education, but the best achieved was 13%, and it has affected the ability of the government to achieve the goals of the UBE program (Labo-Popoola et al., 2009 as cited in Ako et al., 2022).

Ajuzie (2001, as cited in Okoro, 2010) highlighted the necessity to adequately fund the UBE because it is the critical success factor that enables any school to provide infrastructural facilities and equipment and pay teachers and other staff salaries. Again, Ocho (2001, as cited in Anibueze & Okwo, 2013) advised that because education itself is a public good and is not free to achieve, all the stakeholders benefiting from education also share in the cost. The scholars recommended that the three arms of government, corporate organizations, the community, and parents should partake in the cost of providing education for its citizenry. Also, Akanbi (2012) recommended that critical attention be given to primary education by allocating an adequate budget and proper monitoring of the disbursement of funds, and operators should stay away from corruption.

Past study revealed that finance is an activity of public establishment that deals with tax, spending, and borrowing of funds and then provision of expenditure that involves staff, equipment, and institutional maintenance (Charles, 2002, as cited in Osarenren-Osaghae & Irabor, 2018). Besides, education funding encompasses the funding sources and allocation of money for education purposes to purchase required goods and services (Adeyemi, 1998, cited in

Osarenren-Osaghae & Irabor, 2018). In addition, Omoike (2013, as cited in Osarenren-Osaghae & Irabor, 2018) stated that education funding has several sources, such as budget allocation, tuition fees, donors, Parent Teachers Associations, communities, religious organizations, education tax funds, and others. It is unbelievable that despite all the funding sources for education, the quality of the educational system is still low; what is wrong, it is believed that corruption and politics are the reasons for this shortfall (Osarenren-Osaghae & Irabor, 2018).

It is essential to note that public education is an integral aspect of the political system because it is a tool for the implementation of political mandates (Osarenren-Osaghae & Irabor, 2018). In the past years, education was managed by the government through their agencies, policies, and practices with little consideration for people that have expertise in education (Osarenren-Osaghae & Irabor, 2018). Research study has shown that the government engaged non-educational experts with little or no experience in leadership positions to formulate and implement education policies that have negatively affected the educational sector (Osarenren-Osaghae & Irabor, 2018).

Oke et al. (2017) pointed out that formal education, especially basic education is an essential need today because of its benefits to the educational needs of basic and secondary education; the school population has increased in Nigeria because of the free and compulsory basic education established in 1999. The incremental shift in basic education requires an increase in education funding, and therefore the government, through the ministry of education, needs to formulate policies on alternative implementation strategies for funding education to reduce the financial dependence on the government (Oke et al., 2017). Nevertheless, it is so sad that in the Nigerian educational system, the recommended 26% minimum annual budget by the United

Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has yet to be achieved (UNESCO 2002, as cited Oke et al., 2017). It is worth noting that the underfunding of basic education has generated other problems, such as a shortage of material resources and personnel inadequacy (Iwuanyanwu & Anene, 2001, as cited in Oke et al., 2017).

Once more, primary education is seen as very important because it is the foundation of education that the higher level of education is built; even with its relevance, the basic education sector is still poorly funded in Nigeria (Oke et al., 2017). The researchers revealed that basic government schools prepare their budget yearly sent to the ministry of education headquarters by their various directors of education; the poor funding of the sector has again resulted in the decay of school infrastructure as such school administrators claim it is because of the poor funding of schools (Oke et al., 2017). It is on record that because of the poor funding for basic education, the provision of classroom blocks was a problem, even procurement of books and instructional learning material was a challenge, and payment of teacher's salaries a nightmare (Adesina, 2005; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2005 cited in Oke et al., 2017).

Yusuf and Uduak (2020) testified that the funding of education in Nigeria is not enough, and basic education has failed to provide the needed quality result as expected because the public school does not have enough qualified teachers, adequate teaching and learning materials, and conducive classrooms for learning. In addition, the current situation has made the educational system liable, and it is now used as a source of siphoning public resources by politicians and bureaucrats steadily (Yusuf & Uduak, 2020). The inadequate funding of education by the government has led to the qualitative and quantitative collapse of educational goals resulting in poor quality of graduates ill-prepared for higher education and concern to all stakeholders

(Abbass & Babajo, 2003, as cited in Yusuf & Uduak, 2020). Meanwhile, the government is blamed because government's refusal to provide a minimum of 26% of its annual budget allocated to education as recommended by UNESCO (Yusuf & Uduak, 2020).

Bush and Jackson (2003, as cited in Lonyian & Alfred, 2018) believe that the educational leadership role in the school environment in the 21st century has changed both in developing and developed nations, especially the leadership provided by the headteacher determines the success of the schools. Also, school heads have responsibilities to maintain the standard and quality of education, which is primarily based on the leadership quality of the headteacher; as such, there is a need for adequate preparation for the leadership task (Lonyian & Alfred, 2018). Past study also revealed that headteachers are responsible for managing the school business, financial management, recruiting staff, motivating, sanctioning staff, and discipline in the school system (Lonyian & Alfred, 2018). Also, Kotirde et al. (2014) stated an increasing need for school principals to be more accountable in their leadership and administrative functions and the necessary training to support this effort. The school principals also fundraise to support the government effort by establishing a cordial relationship with Non-Governmental Organizations, including the Parent Teachers Association and Old Student Association (Kotirde et al., 2014). The headteacher is responsible for managing the school revenue and the account to ensure effective utilization (Kotirde et al., 2014).

Besides, Adali et al. (2017) argued that school principal needs help in applying for the UBE program due to poor funding, regular policy changes, and government neglect of principal school requests. Furthermore, Oladele (2018) argued that only a few schools are refurbished without building a new school in places with no schools, and most of the contracts are made by

politicians who are not interested in the work done following the specifications. In some cases, local government boards provide insufficient funds to the headteacher to execute projects knowing full well the negative impact of underfunding just because of their selfish interest and corruption; they will not do the right thing (Oladele, 2018). The researcher noted that most public primary and secondary schools are in a deplorable state and not conducive for teaching and learning due to underfunding-related problems; at the same time, teachers do not have writing materials, a well-equipped staff room is not available, and school facilities are not available (Oladele, 2018).

Since the introduction of UBE, enrollment levels have increased, and underfunding is a critical challenge for school principals and headteachers to cope with the inflow of students and pupils (Amirizei & Nwachukwu, 2018). Furthermore, Okeocha (2008, as cited in Amirizei & Nwachukwu, 2018) stated that the government still needs to achieve the 26% minimum yearly budget allocation for education, as recommended by UNESCO. Even the little grants provided by the government come late due to approval delays, which is a significant challenge for the principals (Amirizei & Nwachukwu, 2018). Again, Amirizei and Nwachukwu (2018) also believe that school principals have the responsibility to manage their financial resources, as well as help to increase their resources through income from the workshop, school magazine, and restaurant. Meanwhile, there are cases where principals complain of fund challenges in school, and this could be a result of mismanagement; therefore, it affects the supply of teaching aids, school furniture as well as labor tools in Rivers State (Amirizei & Nwachukwu, 2018). Also, Asodike (2015, as cited in Amirizei & Nwachukwu, 2018) revealed that in some cases, the principals do not have the financial management capabilities, while some levy students illegally

abandon the budget plans and sometimes suspend fund disbursement because of corruption. Amirizei and Nwachukwu (2018) advised the school principal to engage a qualified accountant to help manage the school fund professionally and effectively.

Nakpodia (2011) thinks that the government and relevant stakeholders need to provide the needed funds for schools so that the infrastructures required in schools can be available so that the UBE program can achieve its goal. Nakpodia (2011) revealed that the private sector, such as companies, also contributes to the funding of education, and international organizations like UNESCO, help to fund education. Furthermore, Nakpodia (2011) pointed out that non-governmental organizations also support funding the UBE program, especially the oil and gas companies, community, alumni, and PTA. Previous study has shown that the funding allocation provided by the government is inadequate as such, could not guarantee the success of the UBE program (Enouch & Okpede, 2000, as cited in Nakpodia, 2011). Meanwhile, Nakpodia (2011) believes that the funding challenges currently witnessed in the UBE program were majorly responsible for the failure of the previous UPE educational program in Nigeria. It is because the government did not provide the necessary funding for infrastructure; hence the existing structures were dilapidated, teachers' wages were delayed for months, the classrooms were in bad shape, and no provision for teacher's professional development as well as curriculum development was left behind (Nakpodia, 2011). As such, a conducive teaching and learning environment was utterly missing in schools, and it is essential to note that rural schools engage in fundraising through an endowment fund, commercial farming, support from PTA, sports, and games, as well as local community support to complement government effort (Nakpodia, 2011).

Also, Okoro (2010) argued that funding of early and continuous education for teachers and their families, especially teachers that are underpaid and then expect a successful UBE implementation, only compared to the paradise of fools. The scholar also noted that training of teachers is vital to quality education; as such, preparing teachers ahead for the world's ever-changing and challenging environment is necessary through the provision of subject-specific skills, practical teaching, use of technology, and effective communication approach to parents and community members (Okoro, 2010).

Meanwhile, Anaduaka and Chinyere (2013) pointed out a heart-touching fact about the way teachers are treated in terms of the poor condition of service by the government and even private school owners, which hurts the morale of the teachers and, by extension, affect performance and productivity. Musa and Joshua (2017) extensively argued that even if basic education is free and compulsory without adequate teaching and learning facilities and the welfare of schoolteachers addressed, the problem will continue until the entire educational system is considered. Nkiruka (2015) believes that the training of teachers and qualified teachers is an asset in the school system; as such, the quality and dedication of the teachers are essential for the effective implementation of the UBE program because they help to transfer the needed knowledge to the students and pupils.

Leadership Training/ Professional Development

Teachers' continuous professional development and training positively impacted students' outcomes and achievement (Madani, 2019). The study recommended that teachers engage with professional colleagues and supervisors and regularly access journals to improve their knowledge (UNICEF, 2000, as cited in Madani, 2019). Although Ogunode et al. (2020)

pointed out that the ministry of education is responsible for the management of elementary and secondary education in the country, their responsibilities include but are not limited to the selection and employment of teachers, defining the payment of teachers' salaries, promotion, and discipline of teachers where necessary. The ministry also makes provisions and guidelines for establishing new schools and training and retraining all academic and non-academic staff (Ogunode et al., 2020). Some of these responsibilities are carried out through their agencies, such as State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) is responsible for the management of basic education in Nigeria; other the other hand, the teaching service commission manages the senior secondary school level through the states in the country (Ogunode et al., 2020). Nevertheless, Okoro (2014) believes that to achieve the UBE objectives, an overhauling of the subsector is required, especially a change of personnel attitude giving suitable attention to educational policy and judicious use of funds.

Change is inevitable, especially in the educational sector, because of the dynamic nature of evolving knowledge and technological change hence the need to put in place machinery to manage the anticipated change in the educational system (Kotirde et al., 2014). Hence, the European Commission (2018) believes that teachers and school leaders are critical in the education process of any school; when teachers and school leaders such as headteachers or principals come together and are respected and well-motivated enhances school improvement and beyond. The principal plays a fundamental role in the sustainability of the school because of the leadership role played in the educational setting charge with the responsibilities of managing the teachers to improve the outcome of effective teaching and learning atmosphere for the benefit of the student (Kotirde et al., 2014). Furthermore, Cambridge Assessment International

Education (CAIE, 2017) stated that leadership is critical to the improvement of school performance as well as classroom teaching. It is essential to train and develop leaders through on-the-job and external training and interaction with peers outside the school environment. Applying leadership skills can help develop new leaders, and school leaders, such as school principals, identify potential leadership talent because leadership is all about the liberation of talent (CAIE, 2017).

Day and Pamela (2016) argued that school leaders are subjected to heavy pressure to use their leadership skills to improve schools, especially in this ever-changing, complex world. Ayeni (2010, as cited in Kotirde et al., 2014) brought about the fact that sustaining the quality assurance of secondary education requires a continuous process of utilization of best practices in managing human and material resources and then managing the finance, facility, organizational culture, supervision to achieve the school objectives. The research work done in the past shows that the administration of the school system includes but is not limited to planning, decision-making, administering the curriculum, and teaching activities, assessment, evaluation as well as examination, appraisal of personnel, conflict management, and many others (Okereke, 2008, as cited in Kotirde et al., 2014). The overall responsibility rest on the principal to succeed or fail because the principal oversees goal setting for the school following national policies, and the quality of education provided will enable the student to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the future locally and in the global community (Uyanga, 2008, as cited in Kotirde et al., 2014). The principals are the chief executive officer in the secondary section responsible for motivating the teachers and staff of the school to achieve the desired outcome through effective teaching and learning approaches (Kotirde et al., 2014).

Planning and Data Management for the Implementation of the UBE Program

Planning is looking in advance and putting down future action items that require follow-up and is a preparation process (Udensi, n.d.). The scholar stated that it is an activity carried out systematically to determine when the action was done, how it was done, and the task by whom (Udensi, n.d.). Furthermore, Udensi (n.d.) claimed that in the educational system, the management of SUBEB, the principals, and heads of units are involved in one form of planning or the other. Enyi (1999, as cited in Udensi, n.d.) noted that several suggestions are essential for planning to be practical. The scholar went further to provide three steps that are essential to planning first step is to identify the implementation program and the goal; the second the strategical and transparent approach for achieving the goals and finally, the administrator needs to set up a team of teachers and other key personnel that are committed to the plan and implementation to achieve the goals (Udensi, n.d.). The plan needs to be flexible to create room for changes when the need arises because most educational plans are futuristic for future development based on present findings (Udensi, n.d.). Study in the past also shown that planning is associated with control, and the administrator cannot control or supervise adequately if there are no laydown plans for reference purposes Peretornode (1996, as cited in Udensi, n.d.). Past study revealed that several commendable government programs implemented have failed because they needed to be more feasible (1996, as cited in Udensi, n.d.).

Educational planning must consider a nation's physical, social, economic, and development needs because effective planning is the bedrock of a successful educational system (Ogunode, 2018). Furthermore, Ogunode (2018) believes that in Nigeria, professional's planners conduct planning activities in the ministry of education but need better planning because of the

inadequate supply of staffing is because poor planning. The inadequate infrastructure in government schools is due to a lack of infrastructural planning, and poor funding of the educational sector is also linked to poor financial planning, and the sector is characterized by several challenges due to inadequate planning (Ogunode, 2018). Besides, Ogunode (2018) believes that educational planning is an essential factor for development that helps the educational system to actualize its set goals for the learners and the nation.

Osarenren-Osaghae and Irabor (2018) regrettably stated that the educational system in Nigeria is a going concern for all the stakeholders associated with education. It is because the goal of producing skillful and knowledgeable professional graduates and then basic education for all for national development still needs to be achieved (Osarenren-Osaghae & Irabor, 2018). The researchers further argued that educational policies are well-conceived but not implemented well, and it has placed the nation in a disadvantaged position as such inflicted pain on the school planners, administrators, and stakeholders (Osarenren-Osaghae & Irabor, 2018).

Osarenren-Osaghae and Irabor (2018) argued that educational policies in Nigeria over the years had been well designed but poorly implemented due to poor planning making it a laughingstock and a setback to educational managers and planners that have great ideas on paper. Ogunode (2018) believes that the planning and management of education is a shared responsibility, and the approach used in the planning of basic education has witnessed heavy criticism by researchers over the years. Some scholars in the past believed that government already has the structure to achieve education planning in Nigeria because the Federal Ministry of Education has an established Federal Inspectorate Service with an education planning sector (Edame, 2015, as cited in Ogunode, 2018). The Federal Ministry of Education is responsible for

effectively planning educational services nationwide (Ogunode, 2018). The government is responsible for the maintenance, management, and control of schools, funding support, inspection, and supervision, as well as planning across all levels of the educational sector (Ogunode, 2018). It is regrettable to note that professional planners do planning in the Federal Ministry of Education, but it still needs to be characterized by numerous challenges ranging from inadequate funding and poor school infrastructure due to poor planning of the entire system (Ogunode, 2018).

Okonkwo and Amaka (2013) observed that improper planning has led to frequent changes in policies and educational programs in the country, making it difficult to achieve its desired goals. Omotayo (2011) noticed that data for planning needs to be corrected for the success of the UBE program. For example, the census of the National Population that could provide accurate and reliable data for proper educational planning failed because of politics; hence, most planning is based on projections because statistical data need to be corrected (Omotayo, 2011). Besides, Ajayi and Muyiwa (2011) argued that effective planning, adequate statistics, and funding are required for any educational system to attain a solid basic educational foundation, especially in Nigeria. It is because it will create an enabling platform for the acquisition of classroom blocks, instructional materials, school furniture, library, classroom teachers, and an excellent pupil-teacher classroom ratio needed in an effective teaching and learning atmosphere (Ajayi & Muiyiwa, 2011).

Meanwhile, Nkiruka (2015) observed that improper planning is a significant issue because of the false census and noted that adequate planning and funding are indeed required to sustain human resources and procure facilities. Anaduaka and Chinyere (2013) also revealed that

data provided for planning needs to be completed as such decisions reached based on the data are affected negatively. Because of the planning and funding challenges associated with the program will result in a crisis if urgent corrective measures are not taken (Nkiruka, 2015).

Oladele et al. (2019) noted that one critical indicator for the successful implementation of any educational program is the management of organizational facilities designed for the program. Some indicators for effective planning are school facilities that include the school building, teaching aids, furniture, and equipment, among others, required for the teaching and learning process (Oladele et al., 2019). It is noted that since the implementation of the UBE program in 1999, it has witnessed several challenges, such as a lack of enabling laws to implement some areas of the program not until the UBE bill passed into law in 2004 (Oladele et al., 2019). Moreover, Obun et al. (2018) noted that the implementation strategy of the UBE has not been effective because parents complained about making some form of payment for fees that should be free for basic education, paying for the registration for the Basic Certificate Examination, and others. Again, the study revealed that so many children of schooling age are out-of-school because of poverty and therefore engaged in child labor to survive; it is a fact that the program's implementation has some challenges (Obun et al., 2018).

Ako et al. (2022) claimed that inadequate management strategy in managing the diversity of the population has some challenges even though the government applied a decentralized system for the management of the education sector using the three arms of government. The Federal, State, and local government levels are responsible for managing the educational system, but the local government needs to have the required planning and management capacity; another major problem is improper census planning due to political reasons (Ako et al., 2022). Besides,

several efforts have been made to conduct a national census, but politics have characterized it; hence the unrealistic statistics have affected the implementation and provision of infrastructures (Labo-Popoola et al., 2009, as cited in Ako et al., 2022).

Ekpenyonganwan (2019) believes that when you fail to plan, then failure is inevitable, and it has been observed that government officials make a pronouncement in public on educational program implementation even without adequate planning. Again, the UBE program under the Ministry of Education was associated with inadequate planning and budget provision alongside ineffective financial management and procurement procedures (World Bank, 2008, as cited in Ekpenyonganwan, 2019). The educational system is characterized by corruption and mismanagement of scarce and available resources (Ekpenyonganwan, 2019). Meanwhile, Nwambam and Prisca (2017) revealed that every nation around the world recognizes education as a tool for national development, which is one of the reasons why each government desires to provide high-quality education for its citizens. For the government to achieve this critical target, intensive and effective planning is required because it is the first step against failure in any organization, including education (Nwambam & Prisca, 2017). Education planners must guarantee that the curriculum used in the educational system is in line with creativity and knowledge-based, complies with information and communication technology as well as vocationally based to move the country to a greater height by the national policy on education (FRN, 2013, as cited in Nwambam & Prisca, 2017). Furthermore, if proper planning in the educational sector is done as expected, unemployment will be managed, especially in the era of the socio-economic situation in Nigeria and around the world (Nwambam & Prisca, 2017).

Onakoya et al. (2013) described a database as a modern approach to collecting digital information about people, things, and places, and it is essential for national development because nations are now moving from the real world to digital or virtual world-building digital capabilities to control and monitor threats and national security. Nigeria faces significant challenges associated with corruption, insecurity, terrorism, kidnapping, and unemployment because the people are not adequately identified distinctively, such developing a database to help manage the situation (Onakoya et al., 2013). Meanwhile, Onakoya (2011, as cited in Onakoya et al., 2013) noted that it is essential to establish a well-articulated and organized database that captures all the citizens and immigrants with a unique identification and a virtual national identification. Also, Bhojaraju (2013) stated that every organization should create accurate, reliable, and maintained data records and ensure healthy relationships of the data that will help make an informed decision. The related data is referred to as a database, which is the collection of related files with details indicating a clear interpretation of data content (Bhojaraju, 2013). The researcher also revealed a notable point in the explanation of database management as a software system that gives access to data confined in the database and enables a convenient way of managing the information in the database (Bhojaraju, 2013).

Humphreys and Lee (2015) observed that there are no available and reliable statistical data regarding Education Management Information systems, making planning and budgeting difficult in the education sector. The researchers believe that the poor quality of data collection is worsened by how the number of unapproved private and religious schools is increasing and, as such, needs to be captured in government records (Humphreys & Lee, 2015). Cambridge Education (2006) observed that because of the unreliable data, it had become a challenge to

realistically target indicators as such stakeholders needed more confidence in the data collection. The recent effort shows some level of improvement in the quality of data utilization, although some challenges are observed in schools (Cambridge Education, 2006). Meanwhile, Gersberg et al. (2016) also argued that the education system in Nigeria is associated with imperfect information and data management system, amongst other challenges such as an inadequate monitoring system and overlapped responsibilities across education agencies of government that hinder government policies.

Abul et al. (2017) pointed out that data gathering in the UBE program needs to be improved for effective planning; as such, it is a significant challenge affecting the program implementation because when the data are unreliable, it negatively impacts the plan. Adequate data is required to make decisions that determine the teacher's requirement, enrolment, equipment, and infrastructural needs, and if the data is not correct, the decision made is misleading (Ejere, 2011; Anaduaka & Okafor, 2013, as cited in Abul et al., 2017). Again, Odu (2011) observed that based on the statistical record in Nigeria, the technical education teachers that are supposed to handle the junior secondary school section need to be revised. The technical teachers are to teach the learners who want to follow the vocational pathway of the UBE program, and 109,000 technical teachers are required, but only 8,000 technical teachers are available, and it has impacted the program negatively (Odu, 2011). Furthermore, Odu (2011) supported the view that a human resource development plan is vital in teaching, especially in preparing the teachers before service and during service education. Ejere (2011) argued that because of the challenges associated with the educational policies in Nigeria, planning is tricky due to poor and inadequate data; hence, accurate and reliable data is required for effective

planning and budgeting in the basic education system. A study shows that many states must meet up with their plan of action submitted to UBEC to enable states to benefit from the UBE intervention fund (Ejere, 2011). The scholar revealed that reliable and correct data is a fundamental aspect of planning, and without it, failure in the educational policy and implementation is assured; hence, the need for school managers to keep basic records or data always (Ejere, 2011).

Condition of Service and Motivation of UBE Staff

Bambi (2020) argued that the quality of teachers is constantly declining with a high level of inequalities, and the ratio of pupils to teachers has increased to double or even tripled in some public schools; poor and late payment of schoolteacher salaries is a fundamental problem. Furthermore, study has shown that in the past three decades of government school management, administration, and control, the educational sector has experienced unprecedented failure (Babalola and Adedeji, 2009, cited in Bambi, 2020). The failure recorded is attributed to poorly trained teachers, inadequate skills for teaching, poor technological know-how, and inadequate funding (George, Olayiwola, Adewole & Osabuohien, 2013, as cited in Bombi, 2020).

Wilson (2016) argued that with the commitment of the teachers, it would be easier to implement the UBE program because the teachers are responsible for impacting the needed knowledge. The teacher's role is fundamental in applying for the UBE program because of the teaching role's impact on the learners in educational settings (Wilson, 2016). The use of unqualified teachers in some schools is a critical concern affecting the quality of education offered in the school system (Ige, 2012). Many researchers revealed that it is a known fact that higher institutions where the teachers are trained are characterized by several challenges that

hinder the quality of graduates produced; the challenges range from constant strikes, losing qualified staff, the decay of school facilities, student unrest, cultism, and many others (Ige, 2012).

Oladele (2018) argued that the Local Government Areas are responsible for basic education but need budgetary authority because the Federal Government is charged with this responsibility. Note that because of this complicated arrangement of budgetary responsibility, teachers' salaries are sometimes delayed or not paid for about four or five months leading to strikes and some cases, no funds to run the schools (Oladele, 2018).

Inspection and Supervision of the Implementation of the UBE program

Kotirde and Jailani (2014) stated that supervisors historically played the role of Supervision and inspection to help improve the educational systems and applications that enable teachers to deliver excellent service. Kotirde and Jailani (2014) described Supervision as a process that allows and stimulates growth in the workers to improve the quality of work done. Supervision is a vital aspect that helps the teaching and learning process accomplish its overall educational goals (Kotirde & Jailani, 2014). Meanwhile, Boissiere (2004, as cited in Kotirde & Jailani, 2014) believes that quality services are achieved with high motivation and lead to educational reforms. To be able to deliver quality services in the education sector, the role of Supervision is strategically essential to improve the learning growth of the pupils (Kochhar, 2005, as cited in Kotirde & Jailani, 2014). Furthermore, Supervision includes encouraging teachers' professional development and collecting and reviewing educational objectives, instructional material, teaching methods, and evaluation (Ogakuwu, 2010, as cited in Kotirde & Jailani, 2014). Again, Ani (2007, as cited in Kotirde & Jailani, 2014) confirmed that a school

principal could also be a supervisor. Also, the supervisor in the educational system ensures that the school policy rules and regulations are implemented to achieve the school objectives.

Suleiman (2016) revealed that Supervision underpins monitoring and improving system quality, especially around instruction, tests, examination, attendance, and learners' performance. The scholar claimed that the lack of Supervision in school has resulted in failed policies in the past (Suleiman, 2016). Besides, Obinaju (2001, as cited in Suleiman, 2016) argued that Supervision in educational settings helps in promoting teaching and learning effectively in schools (Suleiman, 2016). Yet, Suleiman (2016) pointed out that when it comes to Supervision regarding the UBE program, the inspection of the entire school system functionality directly or indirectly and the school's inspection is seen as the backbone of quality assurance. Besides, the UBE program framework considers monitoring a procedure for meeting its objectives (UBE, 2004, as cited in Suleiman, 2016). Even so, the scholar wonders if the UBE structure has a capable monitoring team that can efficiently perform quality control functions (Suleiman, 2016). Furthermore, Edho (2010) also noted that Supervision in the UBE schools help to advance the value of education, which involves close monitoring and evaluation of the educational system.

Mkpa (2000, as cited in Oluremi & Babatope, 2013) brought insight into the need for adequate Supervision in schools because the absence of Supervision in school will indeed hinder it from achieving its objectives. The scholars claimed that school supervision is a critical aspect of education and quality service delivery; as such, Supervision is the core for quality education and Supervision in the UBE that helps the teachers to improve their teaching and to learn as well as class management activities amongst others (Oluremi & Babatope, 2013). Again, the scholars pointed out that Supervision helps to examine the continuous school instructional objectives to

ascertain teachers' performance, academic records, standards, and professional development, amongst others (Oluremi & Babatope, 2013). In the meantime, Nwaka (2009) also agrees with other scholars that the UBE program sets up an inspectorate division charged with the responsibility to set standards and advance the value of education with adequate Supervision of school systems regularly. The researcher noted a critical concern about the competencies of the supervisors within the UBE program because of the lack of required training; as such, they need to perform adequate Supervision in schools (Nwaka, 2009).

Amuchie et al. (2015) stated that it is essential to know that if the UBE program must succeed, adequate quality assurance, monitoring, and assessment are required regularly to improve the educational system. Moreover, the school administrator's role is essential in school supervision and ensures a productive educational service delivery (Amuchie et al., 2015). Bolaji et al. (2017) revealed that effective monitoring and Supervision are lacking within the UBE system, as well as the insensitivity of government personnel towards Supervision and lack of funding and logistics challenges, among others, affected the basic educational system. Ukpong (2017) identified some notable factors responsible for the inadequate Supervision and monitoring of the UBE program, including insufficiently qualified supervisors, unsuitable vehicles, accommodation problems, etc. Investigation shows that the government personnel from the education board sit in their offices instead of going to the school facilities to supervise because school administrators will send money to the supervisor without visiting the school, which affects the quality of education (Ukpong, 2017).

Meanwhile, Ololubei and Nanighe (2014) argued that Supervision is a critical aspect of the educational sector, which involves the relationship between the supervisor and the

supervisees regarding planning and decision-making, the open and committed process of the entire system. The research work of Watkins (1997, as cited in Ololubei & Nanighe, 2014) shows that the current framework of Supervision needs to have what it takes for supervisors to manage the relationship within the educational settings that enhances the growth of the supervisees. Even so, most of the supervisors performed supervisory roles simply because the government instructed that the supervisor should go for school inspection even when the supervisors need to know what to look out for, hindering the purpose of the Supervision (Nwaka, 2009).

It is crucial to note that Supervision is not aimed at looking for fault; instead, it is a systematic approach to assisting, guiding, and sharing ideas with the stakeholders associated with teaching and learning (Nwaka, 2009). The UBE program requires instruction supervisors with the necessary skill set to help develop an action plan of growth for the teacher's personal development to sustain the UBE program (Nwaka, 2009). The scholar argued that when a competent person properly Supervision regularly, it will enhance the professional development of the teachers (Nwaka, 2009). On this note, the scholar made some recommendations that will help the school system, which includes the need for the UBE board to engage qualified professional instruction supervisors (Nwaka, 2009). Avoid the method of just appointing any supervisor but should ensure only competent supervisors are appointed (Nwaka, 2009). The UBE board conducts orientation for new supervisors to prepare them for the new appointment, and existing supervisors need to go for regular refresher training programs and constitute a body to regulate the practice of supervisors to enable the effective implementation of Supervision (Nwaka, 2009).

School Infrastructure Adequacy and Availability for the Implementation of UBE Program

Oladele (2018) described school facilities as the tools that help teachers perform their duties and enable active learning, and the facilities include classrooms, blackboard laboratories, libraries, and many others. The classroom table and chairs, teaching aids, films, tapes, and transparent stripes are crucial in creating a better learning atmosphere (Oladele, 2018). Besides, Ejere (2011) believes that if the government wants to achieve UBE program implementation, the learning environment must be considered by providing excellent school infrastructures such as good classrooms, school furniture, computer centers, libraries, laboratories, portable water, toilet, and electricity.

The researchers recommended that schools need run morning and afternoon shifts to help address the infrastructural deficit (Ejere, 2011). Meanwhile, past study has shown that for any educational program to succeed, its facilities must be up to date and qualified teachers because the quality of education directly correlates with the quality of infrastructure on the ground (Oladele, 2018). The scholar argued that if the UBE program must achieve its goal, essential school facilities must always be provided and in good condition, and periodic maintenance must be carried out to promote teaching and learning (Oladele, 2018). Meanwhile, some researchers stated that funds made for the renovation of old school structures as well as the building of new structures were diverted, and a lot of dilapidated school structures without facilities like laboratories and libraries are the primary concern (Ejere, 2011; Anaduaka and Okafor, 2013, as cited in Abul et al., 2017).

Abul et al. (2017) also pointed out that the infrastructure that includes classrooms, learning materials, and others required to implement the UBE policy properly is a shortfall. It is a known fact that it will be challenging to achieve the desired goal without the necessary learning

material, which includes classrooms, chairs and tables, textbooks, computers, and others (Etuk et al., 2012, as cited in Abul et al., 2017). Hence, the researchers recommended providing enough infrastructural facilities in schools to aid the policy and ensure the materials are sent to the schools without diversion (Abul et al., 2017). Furthermore, Oladele (2018) noted that more than school facilities are needed to implement the program while some schools need more facilities where dilapidated buildings not fit for animals are seen in some communities, and government presence is not felt in many schools in Nigeria. Some schools need computers to develop the manipulative skills required, schools with building a lot do not have libraries for reading cultivation, and even schools with libraries need the required textbooks (Oladele, 2018).

Ogunode and Adah (2020) highlighted the need to provide adequate infrastructural facilities for implementing educational policies, such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, staff housing, electricity, and water supplies, among others. The researchers believe that the poor provision of school infrastructural facilities has affected the smooth implementation of educational policies in the country because it is impossible to achieve any meaningful teaching and learning atmosphere under such conditions where the infrastructural facilities are deplorable or inadequate (Ogunode & Adah, 2020). It is important to note that Emeka and Ekechukwu (2016) revealed that the lack of infrastructural facilities in schools is one of the major problems of the UBE program because there are insufficient school libraries and library facilities, inadequate classrooms, lack of instructional materials, poor electricity supply hindering conducive learning environment. Besides, a shortage of classroom furniture was noted, and no electricity in the classrooms for visibility when the windows were closed because of strong winds (Emeka & Ekechukwu, 2016).

Suleman (2014, as cited in Emeka & Ekechukwu, 2016) revealed that many government primary schools in Nigeria need more infrastructure for conducive teaching and learning atmosphere to function effectively. Unfortunately, Suleman (2014, as cited in Emeka & Ekechukwu, 2016) gave an unpleasant situation of the government primary school condition explaining the huge infrastructural deficiency and then mentioned the lack of standard classrooms, inadequate classroom furniture, no recreational facilities, poor staff quarters and toilet amongst others.

Another heart-touching situation mentioned by the scholars shows that the classroom condition without windows as such allows snakes and other harmful animals to have access to the classroom, and in some cases, pupils sit on the floor, and teachers do not have tables and chairs to do their work (Emeka & Ekechukwu, 2016). Another challenging situation is an overpopulation of over 100 pupils in the classroom, causing conflict between pupils and distractions, hindering the learning process because of the insufficient classroom (Emeka & Ekechukwu, 2016). Staff quarters for teachers are an essential requirement lacking in schools and need urgent attention by the relevant bodies of government at all levels (Emeka & Ekechukwu, 2016).

The recruitment of qualified and adequacy of staff for the implementation of the UBE Program

Ige (2012) pointed out that the minimum qualification required to teach in Nigeria is the Nigerian Certificate in Education, and many teachers still need to have the minimum qualification to teach in the country. It is eminent to recruit and train new teachers to enhance the quality of teaching and learning to improve student skills (Adeyemi, 2007, as cited in Salihu & Hazri, 2015). Again, there is an outcry to retrain the current teachers to improve their

competency level to help achieve the UBE goals through workshops, professional training, and regular seminars (Salihu & Hazri, 2015). The Central Bank of Nigeria (2010, as cited in Ige 2012) noted that the cost of managing the educational sector is on a continuous increase in value, regarded as not even enough. The educational sector requires adequate funding and the need for a proper account of how the money is used to achieve its goals (Ogunnu, 2000, as cited in Ige, 2012).

Wilson (2016) stated that the teacher's performance is affected by the quality and number of teachers available in implementing the UBE goal because the teacher's capacity to do the job will inevitably affect the performance. Besides, the teacher's motivation enhances performance because teacher motivation is a driving force that boosts job performance (Wilson, 2016). On the other hand, motivation is not the only way to improve performance, but the nature of the challenges the teacher faces is a factor that determines performance (Adelabu, 2005, as cited in Wilson, 2016).

The teacher's capacity building should be a significant priority as well as the employment of qualified teachers, encouragement, and motivation of teachers is crucial to the success of the UBE program (Okoro, 2014). Meanwhile, Okoro (2014) advised the need to enforce the UBE policy through the effective and efficient administration and distribution of funds by SUBEB to benefit the targeted population. The researcher also supported the need for inspection officers to ensure equity in implementing their duties, and then the government should motivate teachers regularly and provide school infrastructures (Okoro, 2014).

Teaching and Learning Effectiveness for the Implementation of the UBE Program

Bambi (2020) believes that education is the starting point of development across the world that helps solve societal challenges. It is because education helps to transform the quality and quantity of human resources with the right skills and knowledge required for the socioeconomic growth of a nation (Adegbemile, 2011, as cited in Bambi, 2020). Additionally, education helps to train and develop the leaders of tomorrow and underpins the high-level technical capacity required for the sustainable development of a nation (Charas, 2015, as cited in Bambi, 2020).

Hence, the need for the emphasis for countries across the globe to provide basic education of good quality to their citizens eventually led to the introduction of the UBE program in Nigeria (Bambi, 2020). Past research study has shown that the performance of the universal basic education program in Nigeria is associated with several challenges, although with some progress, especially an increase in school enrollment and a reduction in gender disparity in some areas (Bambi, 2020). On the other side, the UBE program has experienced several challenges that hindered its progress, such as declining in the quality of teachers, poor quality learning outcomes and constant inequalities in access, and the chronic shortage of school infrastructures across most public schools in Nigeria security challenges and student to teacher's ratio doubled (Iwu & Iwu, 2013, as cited in Bambi, 2020).

Besides, Wilson (2016) highlighted some challenges that affected teacher's performance in the implementation of the UBE program in Rivers State, Nigeria, and the challenges include reduced motivation, inadequate teachers in the village schools, and too many teachers in the cities doing less work and a few teachers in the rural areas overloaded with work. Other challenges affecting the teachers in the implementation of the UBE program are an inadequate

teaching facility and workshops for technical and vocational courses, and teachers are engaged based on political influence; hence affecting the quality of teachers employed and poor classrooms is a significant challenge (Wilson, 2016).

Obun et al. (2018) stated that the National Policy of Education made provision for the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into the UBE program in Nigeria to help position the learners with the skills required in the era of the technologically driven economy in the 21st century. Mbah (2017) argued that e-learning is essential in the UBE program, especially the teachers need to acquire ICT skills to function effectively in today's world of technology. The researcher lamented that most schoolteachers lack the e-learning skills and knowledge required to impact the students, hence, the need to train the teachers on e-learning to prepare for the challenges ahead (Mbah, 2017). Again, Mbah (2017) explained that the UBE teacher needs to gain the required knowledge and skill to use information and communication technology for teaching and learning that makes teaching and learning enjoyable.

The researchers also argued that if the school in the country are adequately funded, the power supply will be fine because the schools can get alternative power to utilize their ICT facilities (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2009). Another valid point noted in the research revealed that most teachers need to be computer literate because computer education was not included in the training curriculum of teachers in the country at the time of the study (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2009). Many teachers need to become more familiar with the application of Information Communication and, Technology (ICT) for planning purposes; instead, most practitioners are used to the analog planning and teaching approach in the school environment (Ola, 2014). The researcher also revealed that most schools in Nigeria need to be better equipped with the needed

school facilities and instructional materials, and the required classroom for teaching and learning needs to be adequately available (Egbo, 2021). The researchers made several recommendations to improve ICT applications in the education sector because it is believed that in today's technology-driven dispensation, ICT is an essential skill set for survival in the modern workplace (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2009). The recommendations the researchers gave include but are not limited to students acquiring ICT skills as early as possible, incorporating ICT in the educational sector in Nigeria, and then ICT infrastructures and training should be provided at the primary school level; the scholars also recommended computer education at the junior and senior secondary levels amongst others (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2009).

Summary

In conclusion, this section of the research study deals with the literature review and relevant peer-review journals related to the research topic used. It was in line with Jesson et al. (2011, as cited in Thomas, 2017), which recommended the use of field mapping, review of the scope as well as detailed search, extraction and synthesis of data, findings, and finally, discussion. The peer-reviewed articles centered on leadership styles, UBE concept, UBE organizational structure and political willingness on the UBE program, funding availability, professional development among others were retrieved from the UNICAF University Library, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Science Direct, amongst others, and the articles were majorly within the last five years.

The meaning and definition of the theory are explored. The theoretical context supports the objectives in alignment with the subtopics, as well as the research questions explored. The theory is defined as an indispensable part of a research study that guides the connection between

phenomena (Thomas, 2017). A theory is also seen as the basis of research that conceptualizes and explains complex behavior (Thomas, 2017). The theoretical framework is necessary for a dissertation because it helps in the creation of knowledge and the literature review foundation process and helps to establish the vision and structure of the research study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). A theoretical framework establishes justification and validation of the importance of a research method applied (Lederman & Lederman, 2015). As such, the study adopted a qualitative interpretive approach, with a face-to-face semi-structured interview method, and the theoretical framework that guided the study was transformational leadership theory. Past research study has shown that transformational leaders help to influence the organizational culture by impacting organizational productivity and motivation; as such, innovation in the organization improves (Niehoff, Enz, & Grover, 1990, as cited in Givens, 2008).

The field of study is education leadership, management, and policy implementation, with an emphasis on UBE implementation as it relates to the principal's perspectives on the leadership styles in the implementation of the UBE program in South-South Nigeria. Education plays a substantial place in the improvement of humanity and the general growth of a country. Hence, Abiogu (2014) stated that education philosophy is pertinent to building nations and an instrument for development. Furthermore, all industries, including the education industry, require an effective and strategic management system in place to achieve their set goals and objectives (Ugwuoke et al., 2015).

The leadership styles were deeply examined and looked at several definitions of leadership from various researchers were analyzed. The research work of Ellahi et al. (2021) revealed that there is no generally accepted definition of leadership because it has come a long

way and requires further investigation. The scholars believe that leadership is an art or a skill that enables leaders to influence their followers to get the job done (Ellahi et al., 2021). Besides, Gentili (2021) was of the view that the leadership definition progresses and advanced from one stage to another and has moved from the hierarchical pyramid system where a leader at the top leads the organization is now obsolete. Ali and Govand (2021) stated that leaders could inspire and influence their subjects intellectually to get a difficult task done by approaching it in a new way with more effort to achieve its desired outcome. Ten types of leadership styles were discussed, analyzed, and include transformational leadership, transactional leadership, plural leadership, and Servant leadership. Agile leadership, hubristic leadership, autocratic leadership, democratic leadership, Charismatic Leadership, and school leadership and their relevance were explored. For example, plural leadership is defined as leaders with characteristics that can ignite, guide, influence, and establish invisible bound with their subjects (Gentili, 2021).

Transformational leadership could be learned through training that helps build up transformational behavior that increases the follower's involvement and enhance job performance (Asbar, 2020). Besides, transformational leadership's high point is the leadership behavior that is characterized by vision, innovation, team building, and learning (Asbar, 2020). On the other hand, the transactional leadership approach helps to meet the subordinate requirement to achieve the leader's goal making it a win-win mutual relationship model (Manisa & Akif, 2020). Servant leadership approach relies on discipline, strength as well as humility and considers the people's needs over personal needs (Gandolfi & Seth, 2018). Meanwhile, the hubristic leadership style makes the leaders feel powerful, egoistic with confident in making decisions (Akkaya, 2020). Autocratic leadership is a one-way leadership style where the leader

single-handedly makes decisions in the organization (Akkaya, 2020). The democratic leadership style allows the leader to work in harmony with the followers when making decisions by providing guidelines and issues resolved without blaming the individual (Dyczkowska & Tomasz, 2018). Charismatic leadership is associated with the ancient era, where charisma is attributed to religious leaders' gifted qualities to attain supernatural achievement (Graboa et al., 2017). At the same time, the agile leadership style enables the leader to react to unexpected changes in the business world (Manisa & Akif, 2020) quickly. Finally, school leadership is entrenched in educational management studies with the view of growth, development, and equity to improve the educational system (Earley & Weindling, 2004, as cited in Berestova et al., 2020).

The establishment of the UBE program became essential to help improve the standard of the people in Nigeria (Ugwuoke et al., 2015). The UBE implementation has been characterized by several challenges that have impacted the program negatively, especially in Rivers State in the South-South (Da-ue & Obilor, 2019). The concept of UBE and its organizational structure was explored through an in-depth data collection of secondary peer-reviewed articles that agree with the research topic and purpose. There is enough evidence theoretically to showcase the importance of education in nation-building because it helps to develop minds and improve the quality of life of the people at the end of the day (Salihu & Hazri, 2015; Abiogu, 2014; Agbowuro & Hayatu, 2014). Any nation that does not take the education of its people seriously may likely have political and socio-economic problems (Agbowuro & Hayatu, 2014). Besides, several countries in recent times aimed at reducing illiteracy by providing quality education to their people because it is one of the standards used for the categorization of nations as developed or developing nations (Oladele, 2018). Again, UBEC (2013) revealed that education is essential for

transformation across the globe because of its role in human capital development hence the need for conscious effort for educational reforms. The human rights declaration for every child's right to education of 1950 gave birth to UBE universally. Meanwhile, in Nigeria, the UBE program is a tool for human and national development (Mvendaga, 2014). Chief Olusegun Obasanjo initiated the UBE program in Nigeria in 1999, then the president of Nigeria with a mandate to reduce illiteracy and poverty levels and then enhance national integration and development in the country (Ogunsanmi & Obimiluyi, 2014; Agbowuro & Hayatu, 2014; Yamma & Danjuma, 2018). The research work of Agbowuro and Hayatu (2014) shows that the UBE has not achieved its objectives because the program is characterized by several challenges, such as inadequate school facilities, dilapidated classrooms, and funding problems, among others. Bolaji et al. (2016) also noted the challenges associated with the UBE policy execution in Nigeria that brought about restructuring in the sector.

The way the UBE is structured was discussed, and there are three levels of leadership and management structure established to manage the UBE, and the UBE act of 2004 empowers UBEC at the national level to manage all levels of the UBE program (Agbowuro & Hayatu, 2014). At the state level, the program is managed by SUBEB, while at the local level, managed by LGEA (UBEC, 2004, cited in Bolaji et al., 2016). Furthermore, Akanbi (2017) highlighted some notable points that centered around the administrative bodies of education involvement at various levels of government, that is, federal, regional, state, and local levels, without achieving its objective. Akanbi (2017) believes that the only success made is the changes in the administrative organization managing the UBE without achieving much in terms of actualizing the policy. The leadership role played by SUBEB in the implementation of the UBE program

was examined. The UBE act of 2014 allowed the creation of SUBEB in all the states in Nigeria (Caroline, 2012, as cited in Onyebueke, 2015). Habiba (2012) stated that it is the responsibility of SUBEB to coordinate, direct, and administer the UBE policy in all the states with an executive chairman as the head of the board. Achieving the objectives of SUBEB's role in the execution of the UBE program requires an urgent need to overhaul of its structure is required to help change personnel attitudes toward the misappropriation of funds (Okoro, 2014). The teacher's professional development, effective management of funds, periodic inspection, motivation of teachers, and the provision of quality infrastructure are imminent (Okoro, 2014).

How the political will has impacted the educational policies examined and observations shows that political parties in Nigeria structure policies that support their interest since educational leaders are appointed and funded by the government (Ukpong, 2017). The role the government plays in the provision of quality education and support to achieve its objectives cannot be overlooked (Abdullahi & Abdullah, 2014). An example of government policy is UBE but characterized by several challenges making it difficult to achieve the set objectives (Bolaji, 2014, as cited in Bolaji et al., 2015). Besides, the issues of infrastructural deficits in the UBE system were addressed, and Ejere (2011) pointed out the need for government to provide adequate infrastructure in the school, laboratories, well-stock libraries, and electricity, among others, if UBE must achieve its goals. Again, Oladele (2018) also noted that for any educational system to achieve its objectives, excellent educational facilities and qualified teachers are provided. Emeka and Ekechukwu (2016) observed that school infrastructures are in deplorable condition, classrooms without windows allowing snakes and dangerous animals to access the

classroom, no chairs for the pupils to sit and sit on the floor even teachers have no working tables and chairs to write.

The implementation of the UBE program in Nigeria was explored. Past study revealed that implementing any policy is essential and will affect its effectiveness if not well planned (Amir et al., 2020). The school leader plays a critical role in implementing the educational policy because they are responsible for the successful implementation in their various schools (Amir et al., 2020). The leadership roles of school principals in education cannot be overlooked and discussed extensively. It is common knowledge that school leaders play a vital role in the success of any educational institution, especially when there is mutual understanding between the principals and teachers, as well as effective collaboration and motivation of teachers will produce the required outcome (European Commission, 2018). The school principal is the leader in secondary schools in Nigeria and controls the teachers to achieve quality education within a conducive atmosphere for the betterment of the student (Kotirde et al., 2014). Furthermore, the principal is charged with the responsibility to set achievable goals and lead the school to success, and if a failure occurs along the way, the principal is held responsible (Uyanga, 2008, as cited in Kotirde et al., 2014). On the other hand, teachers also play a crucial role in education settings because it is their responsibility to impart the required knowledge to the pupils/students; otherwise, UBE actualization will fail (Wilson, 2016).

Besides, Ige (2012) pointed out a trending concern in the educational system where unqualified teachers are used in some schools, which has created a significant setback to the UBE program. Meanwhile, teachers' salaries are sometimes delayed for several months, which

affects their performance, and, in some cases, goes on strike because of budgetary challenges that affect the smooth operations of the schools (Oladele, 2018). The UBE school teachers in Rivers State face several challenges ranging from poor motivation to very few teachers in the rural areas with a substantial workload, while overpopulated teachers in the city do little or nothing (Wilson, 2016).

Meanwhile, the UBE curriculum was analyzed, and some concerns were noted that the curriculum is outdated (Humphreys & Lee, 2015). As such, a regular review of the curriculum is required to incorporate new thinking in society (Alade, 2011). Well-trained teachers are required to enable the UBE to achieve the implementation of the reformed curriculum (Anaduaka & Chinyere, 2013). The funding of Education in Nigeria explored with some historical perspective of how the first government intervention fund came about in 1882 by the then British government, which provided funds for the payment of teachers' salaries, and school buildings and supported private school later, amongst others (Akanbi, 2012). The federal, state, and local governments are responsible for the funding of the UBE at various levels, but the state government is the champion in the funding of basic education, while the LGEAs are responsible for the payment of primary school teachers (Steenbergen et al., 2016).

Again, Yamma and Danjuma (2018) further explained that the state and local governments are responsible for the funding of basic education, and the federal government pays 2% of consolidated intervention funds. There is an urgent need to address the issues in the primary educational system through adequate budget allocation and effective monitoring of fund distribution and to discourage corruption from the system so that the objective of UBE is achieved (Akanbi, 2012). Funding has impacted the school principal and teachers is examined

because they are critical in upholding the quality and standard of education, as such leadership and management qualities are essential since they are responsible for managing the school business and its finances (Lonyian & Alfred, 2018). Observation revealed that school principals need to be accountable in their administrative roles and acquire the required training to function effectively in that capacity because of managing school revenue and account (Kotirde et al., 2014). Furthermore, Amirizei and Nwachukwu (2018) believe that the underfunding of the UBE program is a problem hindering the school principal from achieving its goal because of the increase in the number of students and pupils. Besides, Amirizei and Nwachukwu (2018) pointed out another challenge that has to do with principals' worries about insufficient funds affecting their ability to provide school infrastructure and the need to employ a qualified accountant to manage the school funds.

The issues related to leadership training and professional development were analyzed because continuous professional training and development enhance student performance (Madani, 2019). The need for the database in the school system is highlighted because there are no reliable statistics in the education management information system, which makes effective planning and budgeting difficult (Humphreys & Lee, 2015). Meanwhile, unreliable data has made it challenging to target realistic indicators, such as stakeholders no longer having assurance in the data collected (Cambridge Education, 2006). The collection of data in the UBE system is not reliable for effective planning (Abul et al., 2017). Poor planning is a significant challenge in the actualization of the UBE objectives because of the frequent changes in the educational policy (Okonkwo & Amaka, 2013).

Another vital area examined was the impact of ICT in the UBE system; several scholars believe that ICT has significantly impacted humanity positively by creating more values in the educational sector (Lowther et al., 2008; Weert & Tatnall, 2005 as cited in Fu, 2013; Adomi & Emperor, 2010). Siddiquah and Zeema (2017) argued that developing countries lack enough computers for educational instruction. Also, Ajayi and Ekundayo (2009) pointed out how the lack of electricity in Nigeria has affected ICT applications as well as the economy. Finally. Supervision and monitoring of the essentials of successful education are analyzed because Kotirde and Jailani (2014) believe that supervisors help in the improvement of teachers and the entire educational system. Moreover, Amuchie et al. (2015) observed that monitoring and assessment are vital in the school system if quality assurance must be achieved. On the other hand, Bolaji et al. (2017) research work revealed that supervision and monitoring in the UBE system are lacking, the government personnel responsible are insensitive towards supervision, and the lack of funding is a significant concern.

The condition of service and the motivation of the UBE staff revealed that the poor condition of teachers, underpayment of teachers' salaries affects the successful implementation of the program (Okoro, 2010). Even if the UBE program is free and compulsory, it may not achieve its purpose if the teacher's poor condition of service is not addressed (Musa & Joshua, 2017). The training of teachers is a critical aspect of the educational system that cannot be overlooked if the program must succeed (Nkiruka, 2015). The inspection and supervision related to implementing the UBE program are explored. The research study shows that education supervisors play a significant role in inspection and supervision because it helps teachers to

perform effectively by stimulating growth and the quality of work done (Kotirde & Jailani, 2014).

The chapter looked at the school infrastructure adequacy for the effective implementation of the UBE program, and past study indicated that if the government must achieve the implementation of the program, adequate school facilities such as classrooms, furniture, libraries, and electricity, among others must be provided (Ejere, 2011). Recruiting qualified and adequate staff for implementing the UBE program was reviewed. The study revealed that the minimum qualification for employment as a teacher is the Nigerian Certificate in Education (Ige (2012). Teachers' need for professional training and development to improve their skill sets was emphasized (Salihu & Hazri, 2015).

The teaching and learning effectiveness of implementing the UBE program was explored by reviewing what other researchers found. Previous researchers believed that education is the backbone of development and helps build our society's future leaders (Bambi, 2020). Although, teachers' performance was affected by the implantation of the UBE program mainly because of low morale and overloaded work activities in village schools (Wilson, 2016). Another concern in implementing the UBE program noted by previous researchers was the lack of e-learning skills by the teachers required in today's modern world for effective teaching and learning hence, the need for teachers' training on ICT (Mbah, 2017).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION

Introduction to the Section

The study adopted an interpretive/constructivist qualitative research approach using a phenomenological research design and semi-structured face-face interview method to collect rich data from 33 public school principals in Nigeria's South-South. Adali et al. (2017) claimed that most public-school principals are unable to implement the UBE program due to inadequate funding and regular change in educational policies. Because of the poor funding of basic education in Nigeria, most primary and secondary schools are in a deplorable state (Oladele, 2018). The fundamental challenges that negatively impacted the implementation of the Universal Basic Education program in Nigeria include funding problems, defective leadership, and management approach, ethical challenges, and many others (Akinniyi, 2015). Besides, Adirika and Oluwatayo (2013) stated that the lack of motivated school leadership, inadequate

infrastructure in the school system as well as poor planning, and inadequate funding, amongst others, affected the UBE program implementation in the country.

Also, Ola (2014) also believes that funding was a big challenge, as well as poor planning, which are among some of the reasons why the UBE program is not achieving its objective. The past study shows that because of the strategic importance of UBE in national development, several implementation evaluations have been conducted in schools across the states of the federation that revealed inadequate school infrastructure, insufficiently trained teachers, poor funding, and an incremental rate of out-of-school children is a growing concern (Aluede, 2006, as cited in Egbo, 2021). Regrettably, the UBE program has not been able to achieve its desired objectives, such as providing the much desired free, quality, and compulsory basic education, because of several challenges associated with the program. Yamma and Danjuma (2018) argued that poor infrastructure, inadequate supervision, and a lack of qualified teachers to implement the UBE program are some of the major factors that hindered the program. Past study shows that when the basic education system fails to achieve its objectives then, it creates a negative impact on the individual and society (Abah & Victor, 2021). The deplorable state of school infrastructure, the low morale of schoolteachers, and the high ratio of teachers to students negatively impacted student performance during examinations (Oladimeji & Tunji, 2019).

The inadequate funding of education has negatively affected school development, especially in infrastructure development, because it impacts negatively on the school environment and therefore affects the quality of teaching and learning in the school system (Ogbonnia, 2020). From all indications and past research studies, effective leadership is necessary for the smooth implementation of any organizational objectives; hence, this study

adopted transformational leadership theory as a theoretical framework. Transformational leaders help influence the culture of an organization to look at the world from different perspectives, and as the changes occur, the leader helps the organization adopt the new environment (Mink, 1992; Smith, 1990, as cited in Givens, 2008). More importantly, past study has shown that the transformational leadership style has been adopted in several organizations, such as the military, religion, industry, technology, and laboratory, and has produced a more effective leadership style over other leadership approaches (Bass et al., 1987; Smith et al., 1984; Avolio & Bass, 1987; Hatter & Bass, 1988; Howell & Higgins, 1990; Waldma et al., 1987; Sashkin, 1987 as cited in Givens, 2008).

The purpose of the study was to investigate the public-school principal's Leadership style in the Implementation of the Universal Basic Education Program in the South-South, Nigeria. The experience of the school principals provided rich data on the challenges of implementing the UBE program in the South-South of the country. Their experiences and responses based on the research questions provided a roadmap and recommendation of the best way to effectively implement the UBE program. The study applied an interpretive/constructivist qualitative research approach using a face-to-face semi-structured interview method to collect rich primary data from the selected participants with relevant experience on the research topic. Moser and Irene (2018) believe that a face-to-face interview is a process of collecting data from the participant on an individual basis on what happened in a particular situation. Besides, study revealed that in most cases qualitative approach begins with an open interview to have a wider view of the situation, and the researchers are advised not to guide or influence the participant's

responses to the questions to reflect the researcher's opinion but should purely reflect the participant views (Moser & Irene, 2018).

Again, most interviews are semi-structured and allow the participants to freely speak based on their experience on a particular topic that may last for a period of 30 to 90 minutes with the support of the interview guide to ensure all the topics are covered by all the participants (Moser & Irene, 2018). The study encourages the need for researchers to use the first few minutes to make the participant feel free to share their experiences, express their feelings and emotions on an event, then ask questions such as what and why then how questions, and to get more details to follow up questions required, and then to prompt or silence for few minutes (Moser & Irene, 2018). Hamilton and Erin (2020) stated that in a qualitative research approach, the interview guide provides the opportunity for the participants to answer the questions based on their working experience.

The data collected was based on the participant's responses to the research questions that provided enough details to the research questions designed for the study. The approach enables researchers to collect valuable and reliable primary data from selected participants, and it provides the enabling environment for the researcher and the participants to do justice to the subject matter. Creswell (2009) believes that researchers using the qualitative research method help the researchers in the collection of data within a natural setting from the participant's experience on the subject matter under study. It is a good approach for this study because it allows the researcher to collect data directly from the participants through a face-to-face discussion by interview, observation, or the examination of documents (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative researchers mainly do not depend on other researchers' developed questionnaires

(Creswell, 2009). Again, the approach is suitable for this study to be it allows the researcher to collect data from the participant based on their experience with the subject matter concerning the current implementation challenges recorded in the UBE program. Based on this research finding, the study seeks to investigate further the public-school principal's perspectives on the leadership styles in the implementation of the UBE program, evaluate the planning activities, look at the UBE curriculum implementation, ascertain the level of funding, professional development and training program, and the assessment of the UBE staffing program as well as infrastructural development issues and others in the South-South of Nigeria. The research provided some recommendations to help in improving the UBE program implementation in the South-South and the country at large.

Research questions were related to the challenges facing the school principal's perspectives on the leadership styles in implementing the UBE program within the South-South of Nigeria. The research questions aligned with the research problem and purpose, seeking an in-depth understanding of the school principals' hands-on experience with the problems facing the Universal Basic Education program. Especially in implementing the UBE program in the various states within the South-South of Nigeria. Further, research studies will be essential to add to the existing knowledge on Universal Basic Education because of the school principal perspectives on the leadership style in implementing the UBE program. The findings of the data collection and analysis process provided a basis to interpret new data from the participant's experiences. The under-listed research questions used for the study:

- RQ1. How can you ascertain if adequate planning is made to implement the Curriculum of the Universal Basic Education Programme?

- RQ2. What is the level of funding available for implementing the Universal Basic Education Program?
- RQ3. What are your views on recruiting qualified and adequate staff for implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme?
- RQ4. Why do you think there are adequate or inadequate facilities to implement the Universal Basic Education Programme?
- RQ5. What are your opinion on staff periodic retraining for the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme?

Chapter three seeks to outline and explain the introduction of the research method and its usefulness to the qualitative study. A detailed explanation of the approach and design of the study adopting an interpretive/constructivist qualitative approach and face-to-face interview method to collect primary data from public-school principals in three states, Edo state, Delta state, and Bayelsa State in the South-South of Nigeria discussed. The five research questions that directed the study were presented as well as the population and samples of the study were critically examined. Furthermore, discussion on the materials and the instrument tools was discussed, and then the study procedures and ethical assurances were acknowledged and addressed to ensure the research was reliable and credible. The data collection processes were ascertained and examined, and the data analysis process was discussed. Finally, a summary of the critical elements of the chapter was provided.

Research Approach and Design

It is recommended that researchers are expected to acknowledge the research paradigm used during their investigation (Makombe, 2017). Meanwhile, a paradigm is regarded as the

researcher's set of beliefs, values, assumptions, and purpose of the research study (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). There are several research paradigms, such as the positivism paradigm, constructivist/interpretivism paradigm, critical paradigm, and subjectivism paradigm, among others. The current study adopted the constructivist/interpretive paradigm because humans are responsible for constructing meanings through sense-making based on their experience by interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Makombe, 2017). The researcher interviewed the selected participants of the study to collect rich and insightful data based on the public-school principal's perspectives on the leadership styles in the implementation of the UBE program in the South-South of Nigeria.

Furthermore, researchers believe that interpretivism/constructivist approaches to research enable the researcher to understand human experience because reality is constructed socially (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Mertens, 2005, as cited in Mackenzie & Sally, 2006). Again, interpretive/constructivist allows the researcher to depend on the participant's views based on their experiences on the topic under study, and constructivists do not start with a theory like the post-positivists but develop a theory or pattern of meaning during the research period (Creswell, 2003 as cited in Mackenzie & Sally, 2006). Another justification for using the interpretive/constructivist paradigm was that it allows the researcher to use qualitative data collection methods and analysis or mixed methods (Mackenzie & Sally, 2006). Based on this fact, the study adopted an interpretive/constructivist qualitative research approach using a phenomenological research design and the use of semi-structured face-face interview methods to collect rich data from the public-school principals within the South-South of Nigeria.

Research Approach

An interpretive/constructivist qualitative research approach was adopted for this current study because it allows the researcher to investigate human activities by interacting with the participants to solve a particular social problem (UU, 2020). The study aims at investigating the public-school principal leader's perspectives on the implementation of the UBE program. According to UU (2020), the qualitative research method enables the researcher to investigate how human interact in a social setting or observation of a problem, and it helps in the collection of data, analyzes the data as well allow for the interpretation of the data. Alase (2017) pointed out that the qualitative research method creates additional exploratory value to the researcher's capability during the investigation of the study. The approach also provides the researcher with the opportunity to utilize interpersonal and subjective skills when conducting the research (Alase, 2017). Also, Nayar and Valerie (2020) pointed out that the qualitative research approach enables the researcher to look in detail at the complex nature of a context within the scope of the study, and it allows the researcher the opportunity to examine experiences, evaluate relationships, and explanatory constructs. A qualitative approach provides the researcher the opportunity to spend a reasonable amount of time with the participants during the research study to collect rich primary data (Kvale, 1996, as cited in Nayar & Valerie, 2020).

Agarry and Eyiemi (2022) argued that the qualitative research approach allows non-numerical collection of data using interviews, focus groups, and case studies; the qualitative approach also allows researchers descriptive use of words and reason application. It has been established that the qualitative research approach enables the researcher to collect data based on the participant's experience and the reasons behind their behavior (Agarry & Eyiemi, 2022). Again, the researchers believed that the qualitative research method helps the researcher analyze

the meaning subjectively of an event through the collection of non-standardized data gathered from observation, interviews, focus groups, and case studies (Agarry & Eyiemi, 2022). For qualitative research to be considered a good quality standard, it must be trustworthy and reflects the researcher's views (Agarry & Eyiemi, 2022).

Cleland (2017, as cited in Asadul & Faraj, 2022) stated that qualitative research is an investigative approach to addressing research questions that deals with 'how' and 'why' as well as enables the researcher a better understanding of the events based on the participant's experiences. Asadul and Faraj (2022) recommended the qualitative research method in a situation where the researcher intends to write in-depth stories of an event with the view of developing new theories, reinforcing existing theories, and the application of existing theories in a new condition. Qualitative research can be used when a researcher identifies a gap or partial theories in a sample or context, especially when a problem area is inadequate (Asadul & Faraj, 2022). Meanwhile, qualitative research allows researchers to better understand the context or environment of the participants to resolve the problem and enables the readers to understand new solutions to the problem (Asadul & Faraj, 2022).

Charmaz and Robert (2021) pointed out that the qualitative research approach has experienced criticism from quantitative researchers in the past, but Glaser and Strauss's (1967) defended the quality of qualitative research that it should not be evaluated based on quantitative tradition but should be evaluated on its standards or tradition. Past study revealed that it is important that researchers need carefully choose the right methodology in line with the philosophical foundations (McEwen & Wills, 2014; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002; Ryan, 2018, as cited in Rieger, 2018). Furthermore, the qualitative approach allows the

researcher to have a better understanding of the meaning of the subject matter, and the collection of its data is done by interviewing or observing a small focus group (UU, 2020). Besides, Daniel (n.d.) believes that the qualitative research approach is a valid way to explore complex phenomena in several disciplines and fields, although with some limitations observed, such as bias. Notwithstanding, the rigor associated with qualitative research upholds the integrity of the study, which in turn gives the research outcome the needed authenticity (Daniel, n.d.). In the qualitative research approach, the researcher is accountable for the research process and outcomes with the provision of quality standard indicators for the verification of the research findings (Daniel, no date). The qualitative method helps the researcher to answer the research questions of 'what,' 'why,' and 'how' to achieve the research questions and objectives (Cooper & Schindler, 2014, as cited in Abd Gani et al., 2020).

Rosenthal (2016) believes that qualitative research can be used by researchers when an in-depth understanding of "why" people behave in a way provides the needed answer to the questions regarding human behavior and actions. Based on these facts stated above indeed informed the decision to choose a qualitative approach since it will allow the researcher the opportunity to investigate the subject matter using interviews for primary data collection during the research period.

Research Design

Several researchers confirmed that the qualitative approach is popularly accepted in research design because it provides rich, in-depth data, is open in nature and has a highly interactive approach, and the reports provide direct quotes from the participants that bring about the study themes based on their experience (Corbetta, 2003; Thomas, 2003; Maxwell, 1998 as cited in

Morrell-Scott, 2018). Furthermore, Morrell-Scott (2018) stated that phenomenological research provides rich and deep data based on the true thoughts and perspectives of the participants when using a qualitative approach. Again, qualitative data enables the researcher to collect a description of a phenomenon in interest of a study through interviews and participant observation (Morrell-Scott, 2018). It is essential to note that qualitative research focuses mainly on subjective information and not predictive information or attempts to control the phenomenon under study (Rebar et al., 2011, as cited in Morrell-Scott, 2018). The phenomenological approach focuses on the participant's lived experiences observed or felt from the different participant's points of view, and the primary objective is to capture as precisely as possible the phenomenon lived by the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003 as cited in Tomaszewski et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, Phenomenologists believe that for researchers to have a better understanding of social reality, the understanding of the participant's experiences of social reality is essential (Gray, 2010, as cited in Morrell-Scott, 2018). Furthermore, phenomenology helps in the discovery and development of understanding of the perception and experience of the persons living in the settings (Rebar et al., 2011, as cited in Morrell-Scott, 2018). Although there are schools of thought in phenomenology, descriptive and interpretive phenomenology, descriptive phenomenology deals with a description of lived experiences such as hearing, feeling, deciding, and evaluating things, among others (Polit & Beck, 2010 as cited in Morrell-Scott, 2018). It is a process of identification of preconceived beliefs placed on check regarding phenomena under study While, whereas the interpretive phenomenology that this current study adopted focuses on

the interpretation and understanding of participants' lived experiences (Polit & Beck, 2010 as cited in Morrell-Scott, 2018).

Creswell (2013, as cited in Thompson, 2018) argued that phenomenological study enables the study participants to provide meaning to their life experiences. This approach allows the public-school principals to explain their leadership perspectives and experience in implementing the UBE program in their various schools in Nigeria's South-South. Hence the need to use a qualitative phenomenological research design for the study. A qualitative phenomenological research design was preferred because it focuses on the participant's experiences with a phenomenon. In this study, the public-school principals are the participants, while the phenomenon is the gaps and challenges affecting the smooth implementation program within the schools in the zone. Moreover, phenomenological studies' primary focus is to analyze text to describe the participant's perspectives to identify any existing differences or similarities (Moustakas (1994 as cited in Thompson, 2018). Again, a phenomenological study examines and explores participants' experiences on a subject matter (Creswell, 2013; Nichols et al., 2010, as cited in Thompson, 2018).

Based on the reasons mentioned above, the study adopted an interpretive/constructivist qualitative research approach using a phenomenological research design and a semi-structured face-face interview method to collect rich data from the public-school principals in the South-South of Nigeria. Rosenthal (2016) revealed that in the qualitative research method, the researcher conducts an open-ended question to the participants with a follow-up probe to understand better the participant's experience, knowledge, and opinion of the topic. Although the data quality received from the participants depend primarily on the effort put into developing the

questions asked during the interview (Rosenthal, 2016). The qualitative research method helped investigate the leadership challenges inherent in implementing the UBE program in the South-South of the country. Study has revealed that in the individual or focus group interview, the interview guide is required, such as the semi-structured interview, which allows the researcher to specify the questions and present them conventionally but may not ask the question in an exact way as in the guide (Hamilton & Erin, 2020).

Haradhan (2018) stated that the primary purpose of qualitative research is to explain and systematically interpret phenomena based on the participant perception of the population under study to generate new concepts and theories. Merriam (1998, as cited in Ugur, 2020) argued that a qualitative research method utilizes participant observation and in-depth interviews that enable the researcher to discover the true meaning and reality of the participant's worldview. The raw data collected from the participants during the qualitative approach, for example, direct quotations, reveal the participant's feelings, views, understanding, and perceptions on the topic of discussion (Patton, 1980, as cited in Ugur, 2020). Using interviews in a qualitative approach allows the researcher to have a first-hand observation and witness what happens in the classroom instead of depending on secondary information from informants (Merriam, 1998, as cited in Ugur, 2020).

Qualitative research is an inductive approach that allows the researcher to explore insightful meanings in a particular situation (Strauss & Corbin, 2008; Levitt et al., 2017, as cited in Haradhan, 2018). The qualitative research approach allows the researcher to use purposive sampling and semi-structured, open-ended interviews for data collection (Dudwick et al., 2006;

Gopaldas, 2016, as cited in Haradhan, 2018). Past study has shown that the qualitative approach is an influential model researcher uses in a natural setting in collecting data with a high level of detail because they participate in the participant's experience during the investigation (Creswell, 2009). A qualitative research study is a social science research approach that deals with the collection of data and works with non-numerical data that try to find and interpret the meaning from the collected data to help understand social life with the aid of a targeted place or population (Punch, 2013, as cited in Haradhan, 2018).

The qualitative method certainly applied a face to the face interview process to unearth the necessary primary data from the selected participants during the research period within the zone. On the other hand, a quantitative research approach would not be appropriate for this study because the approach aimed at testing objective theories by examining the relationships between dependent and independent variables (UU, 2020). This approach would not be appropriate for this study because it aims to seek participants' knowledge and experience regarding the leadership role in implementing the UBE program in the zone rather than to examine the relationships between variables. A qualitative method can investigate the participant's beliefs in detail but not with a quantitative method (Percy et al., 2015, as cited in Abd Gani et al., 2020). Again, Williams and Tami (2019) stated that qualitative research allows the researcher to discover the origin of a phenomenon associated with the people involved and examines the experience if a conceptual understanding of the phenomenon is created. On the other hand, the quantitative research method tries to find statistical significance in the frequency of a phenomenon and then generalize its findings (Williams & Tami, 2019). The qualitative research approach seeks the deep meaning of a phenomenon and why it occurs (Williams & Tami, 2019).

A qualitative research approach seeks a participant's deep understanding of a social problem (UU, 2020). Meanwhile, Hamilton and Erin (2020) pointed out that in any given research study, the design and method are rooted in the research questions. As such, five research questions were designed to underpin the investigation as follows:

- RQ1. How can you ascertain if adequate planning is made to implement the Curriculum of the Universal Basic Education Programme?
- RQ2. What is the level of funding available for implementing the Universal Basic Education Program?
- RQ3. What are your views on recruiting qualified and adequate staff for implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme?
- RQ4. Why do you think there are adequate or inadequate facilities to implement the Universal Basic Education Programme?
- RQ5. What are your opinion on staff periodic retraining for the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme?

The interview questions were derived from the research questions above. The interview guide questions helped to achieve the purpose of the research study. Hamilton and Erin (2020) argued that the interview guide pays more attention to the questions the participants could answer based on their work experience and the role played. All the participants were selected based on years of experience on the job, and their experience on the research topic, as well as their knowledge and their academic qualifications, were considered. The selected participants for the study were briefed on the purpose of the research, and then an informed consent form was issued to all participants for the research study with their signatures and the researcher's signature on it.

A copy of the informed consent form was issued to all the participants with a clear understanding that the participant could pull out of the research at any point in time without any penalty because participation is voluntary. Rich primary data was collected from 33 participants across three different states, Edo State, Delta State, and the Bayelsa States, within the UBE in the South-South of Nigeria. Three participants from the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) declined for personal reasons. Quality primary data was collected from 33 school principals from the country's three states within the South-South. All the data were collected in an agreed and conducive friendly environment using pen and paper to take notes, and the recording of the interview with a tape recorder was declined because the participants were not comfortable with the voice recording method but more comfortable with the note-taking method generally acceptable by the participants.

A qualitative deductive content approach was used to analyze the data collected during the study because past researchers have used it, which helped categorize the data. Some researchers noted that qualitative research has an inductive process of analyzing specific issues in general and a deductive process where data are interpreted and conceptualized based on previous knowledge from the research study (Strauss & Corbin, 2008, as cited in Roman et al., 2017). Again, Bergdahl et al. (2018) argued that the deductive method of qualitative research allows the researcher to know about the theory inappropriate to the phenomenon of concern. The deductive research approach provides the platform for researchers to discover new descriptions supported by empirical data, and it avoids any form of bias associated with the inductive qualitative approach (Bergdahl et al., 2018).

The Population and Sample of the Research Study

Shukla (2020) strongly advised that researchers must determine and clearly define the population before the commencement of the research study because when the population is perfectly defined, it enables the researcher to select a sample representing the larger population. The research sample is a dependable element of any successful and reliable result (Shukla, 2020). The population is defined as the units upon which the research findings are generalized and sometimes referred to as the statement of the problem, and researchers must finalize the research study population before the start of the study for effective planning and implementation without issues (Shukla, 2020). Again, a portion of the population that altogether represent the entire population is called a sample, and the unit selected from the population is expected to represent all types of units found in the population because the data are collected from all the different ideal units of samples and not all unit of population (Shukla, 2020). Again, Casteel and Bridier (2021) stated that the study population consists of individuals, groups, or organizations seeking to understand that the study result is generalized, and the population produces boundaries that establish the scope of the study alongside environmental indication and contextual insights for the readers.

Another critical area researchers need to consider is the targeted population, which is a precise conceptual bounded unit of prospective participants the researcher sees as the representatives of the population of interest for the assessment (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). It is also essential that the researcher captures a true exclusive representative of the population to avoid issues that show the participants do not represent the need of the study (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). It is because a well-defined targeted population defines an exclusive or inclusive criterion for the participants and organizations for the study that must be a total subset of the interested

population (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). Besides, Creswell (2005) pointed out that in the population selection during a research study, one option must be considered the whole school or individuals in small numbers should be selected.

Nayak and Narayan (2019) confirmed that data is an essential aspect of any research study because every research study is based on the quality of data collection. The advent of probability sampling in the 1930s, the survey became famous as an instrument for empirical research, especially in the social sciences and other fields (Nayak & Narayan, 2019). A single survey consists of a population sample, a data collection method, and a tool for the survey that contains some questions that will be converted into data for analysis (Nayak & Narayan, 2019). A successful research study depends on the quality of representation of the targeted population, and the collection method could be paper-based or electronic (Nayak & Narayan, 2019).

Asadul and Faraj (2022) revealed that sampling is a selection process of getting participants for a research study, and participants are questioned or observed, or a survey approach is used to collect information. Meanwhile, the sample is a group where the researcher collects information from a large population, and the research population is an extensive collection of participants set aside for research investigation, and most cases are identified with similar features (Asadul & Faraj, 2022). In qualitative research more significant sample from the population is not required in the sampling plan because the data collected cannot be qualified, but the researcher reaches a saturation point (Asadul & Faraj, 2022). Data saturation was considered before the data collection started by looking at what other researchers have done with similar qualitative studies. Research findings revealed that qualitative interview requires a small sample size, and Creswell recommended between 20 to 30 participants, while Denzin and

Lincoln suggested between 30 to 50 participants (Marshall et al., 2013). At the maximum point, data saturation is reached because the researcher will not receive new information based on the research questions asked (Marshall et al., 2013). This current study adopted 33 participants, and saturation was reached because no new information was received. After all, the participants were saying the same things differently.

Notwithstanding, qualitative researchers need to use an appropriate sampling plan by selecting suitable participants for the study (Asadul & Faraj, 2022). It is vital to note that the generalization of the entire population is not the goal of many qualitative researchers, but the aim is to explore and explain what is going on within a small group of persons (Dawson, 2019, cited in Asadul & Faraj, 2022). Furthermore, qualitative researchers believe that data from a smaller group gives an understanding of the situation of a larger research population under study (Asadul & Faraj, 2022). The most popular sampling approach in a qualitative study is purposive and convenience sampling because it enables the researcher to select qualified participants that will provide the essential data (Fraenkel et al., 2015, cited in Asadul & Faraj, 2022).

Qualitative researchers' most popular data collection methods are interviews, focus group discussions, and observation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Patton, 2015, as cited in Asadul & Faraj, 2022). This study adopted the interview method for data collection hence the need to focus more on the justification for using the interview. Most researchers use the interview method for data collection because it helps to explore the experiences, beliefs, and points of view of the participants on a particular subject, and it provides a deeper understanding of the phenomena (Asadul & Faraj, 2022). Again, the interview is an appropriate method when a researcher deals with a sensitive topic, especially when the participants want to express their opinion verbally

(Asadul & Faraj, 2022). Qualitative research uses three interview methods: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Asadul & Faraj, 2022). More discussions will center around the semi-structured interview data collection method since the study adopted it. A semi-structured interview provides the researcher the opportunity to add some critical questions related to the research topic, and it allows the researcher and the participants to explore the issue under investigation in a diverse and in-depth manner (Schmidt, 2004; Saunders et al., 2009; Evans & Lewis, 2018, as cited in Asadul & Faraj, 2022). In addition, the semi-structured interview method allows the researcher and the participants to work within the domain of the research topic, and it is two-way communication traffic based on the opened-ended type of questions and answers response approach that helps to bring in-depth information on the subject (Asadul & Faraj, 2022). In their contribution, the researchers concluded that the semi-structured interview method is the most widely used method for data collection in qualitative research methods, especially for new researchers, because it enables the researchers to explore, collect rich data and manage the interview process effectively (Asadul & Faraj, 2022).

The research study population centered around the 33 school principals in the South-South of Nigeria. The country is located along the west African coast, and the country was a British colony that gained its independence on October 1st, 1960 (Ikoya, 2006). The three states are among the nine oil-producing states in Nigeria, which are also known as the Niger Delta within the South-South of Nigeria. Besides, the three chairmen of SUBEB in charge of the three states declined due to personal reasons. A total of 33 school principals, 11 principals from 11 junior government secondary schools in Edo state, 11 principals from 11 junior secondary schools from Delta State, and 11 principals from 11 junior secondary schools from Bayelsa state

within the South-South were selected for the study. Study in the past has shown that teaching professionals are best positioned to express their views and experience regarding education (Zembylas, 2005). The study provided an in-depth understanding of the school principal's experience in implementing the universal basic education program in their various states in the zone. The demographics of the selected participants were not a significant factor in the totality of the data collection because the study was based on their experience with the implementation of universal basic education.

Past study shows that examining deep and rich data that makes meaning to the topic requires a great amount of data collection that will create a better understanding based on the core experience of the participants (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). Meanwhile, Shaheen et al. (2021) argued that participant selection depends on the research purpose and the researcher's line of thought in a quantitative research study. On the other hand, when using the quantitative method, randomly selected samples to apply a unique approach and different strategies. With the random sampling techniques in the quantitative method, a statistical representation of a larger population is required (Shaheen et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the qualitative research method has no strict rule on sampling size; it allows the researcher to consider the research purpose, usefulness and credible issues, the time frame, and available resources (Shaheen et al., 2021). The same time and resources can be used in different ways because large samples help researchers study differences in behavior, and small samples for in-depth analysis (Shaheen et al., 2021). It is important to note that in qualitative research, the approach is meaningful, primarily when the selected sample provides rich data and the researcher's analytical capabilities are of good

standing (Shaheen et al., 2021). Another essential aspect deals with selecting and locating a suitable sample for the purpose and objective of the research study (Shaheen et al., 2021).

Sampling is a strategic process of selecting participants, contexts, and situations that can offer quality data on a phenomenon; in qualitative sampling, the sample is done purposefully and not randomly (Moser & Irene, 2018). The most frequently used sampling strategies are purposive sampling, snowball sampling, and criterion sampling, amongst others (Moser & Irene, 2018). Furthermore, Tie et al. (2019) pointed out that researchers use purposive sampling to collect data from selected participants that can answer the research questions presented by the investigator. Moser and Irene (2018) argued that it is essential for researchers to consider a sampling plan because it specifies the sampling method, the size of the population, and the application of the procedure for participant recruitment. It is important to note that the sampling plan defines the number of interviews, observations, focus group discussions, and cases required to guarantee that the quality of data generated contributes to rich data (Moser & Irene, 2018).

On the other hand, when using the quantitative method during the sampling plan, the sampling size is determined in advance. In contrast, qualitative sampling starts with a flexible and broadly defined sampling plan that includes a variety of participants that are sampled purposely to collect rich data (Moser & Irene, 2018). In a qualitative sampling plan, the sample size is small. Depending on the study, the sample size could be altered based on inclusion and exclusion, and the questions arise during data collection and analysis or change of sample site (Moser & Irene, 2018). Again, a qualitative sample is a conceptual description of the requirements and not just through representatives but through a selection process that ensures

the participants and settings are adequate to deliver knowledgeable information anticipated for the study (Moser & Irene, 2018).

The study adopted the nonprobability sampling method recommended for qualitative research (UU, 2020). Furthermore, UU (2020) stated that sampling is a critical aspect of any research study that allows the researcher to select a representative sample. The researcher chooses individuals based on their unique interests, and it is effective for small samples such as the sample for this study (UU, 2020). Past studies have shown that using purposive sampling is popular in qualitative research studies (Merriam, 1998; Wellington, 2000; Yin, 2009). Furthermore, Williams (2003) suggested that an adequate population sample is critical when using a purposive sampling approach. The basis for using purposive sampling is to allow the researcher to focus on specific factors of a given population to achieve the research purpose (Kuper et al., 2008; Sargeant, 2012). The framework that underpins this study is a purposive sample; this is because it aligns with the criteria for the research study because purposive sampling provides room for the assumption that the participants have in-depth knowledge of the purpose and the research questions (Creswell, 2005; Dilek, 2009).

The purposive criteria for the study sample include the participant's interest in the study, must be above 18 years of age, having a minimum qualification of Bachelor of Education, being a professional teacher/practitioner, and having at least five years of working experience in Universal Basic Education (UBE). Stake (1995) believes that the criterion for the sample selection is exploited to support the purpose of the study. Also, another significant reason for the selection of the participants is because of their competency in the subject matter. Moreover,

Patton (2002) argued that purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants from a pre-determined population to collect valuable data that will address the research questions.

The selected participants were visited physically to seek their consent and permission to participate in the study as well as follow-up calls were made to keep in touch with the participants. The demographic data of the participants include the place of work, the position held, sex, age group, working experience, and qualifications. The COVID-19 pandemic affecting the globe impacted this study because the government of affected nations put stay-at-home orders in place, including the Nigerian government. When the situation improved over time because some states in the South-South relaxed the lockdown order. The government allows people to move within a specified period, and as well as maintaining social distancing, wearing a face mask, regular hand washing among others.

As such, a purposive sampling method is an ideal method for this study used to select a total of 33 participants. Although three executive chairmen of SUBEB from Edo, Delta, and Bayelsa at the board leadership level declined, 33 school principals at the school leadership level, 11 from each of the three states in the South-South, participated. The participants provided in-depth data as it relates to the implementation of universal basic education within the zone. Creswell (2007) believes that well-selected participants should be able to provide rich data on a given research phenomenon. Again, Coyne (1997) also supported the view that purposive sampling enables the researcher to select the participants based on the research purpose.

Materials/Instrumentation of research tools

The study adopted one research instrument for the collection of data, and the instrument was a semi-structured face-to-face interview used for collecting data from the school principals

within the area of the study. Seidman (2013, as cited in Roberts, 2020) revealed that historically anthropologists valued a situation where learning from listing and writing down stories of past events using the findings to make sense of what happened. It was recorded that discussions of nature gained popularity as a form of an interview in the 17th century as well as journalistic interviews were regarded as a way of collecting and publishing the historical account of events in the 19th century (Silvester, 1993, as cited in Roberts, 2020). Qualitative interviews were used in social science by anthropologists and sociology in the 20th century with the view of gathering information to increase knowledge in their respective fields of study (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, as cited in Roberts, 2020). Furthermore, a qualitative interview has been widely used in the educational sector and health sciences, while in psychology interview was first used for gathering knowledge of mental processes during therapy (Freud, 1963, as cited in Roberts, 2020). In recent times interviews are now used for gathering knowledge across different disciplines, especially business, sociology, education, psychology, and nursing science (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, as cited in Roberts, 2020). Researchers have also used qualitative interviews for data collection during research studies for many years now (Roberts, 2020).

Meanwhile, in 1967 Glaser and Strauss introduced the use of qualitative interviews in the field of social sciences as a research method, and the scholars were recognized as the investor in the technique in the qualitative research domain, and several books written used qualitative interviews (Roberts, 2020). Past study has shown that qualitative research provides an open-ended and in-depth examination of a particular lifestyle based on the participant's life experience with the provision of great insights (Charmaz, 2008, as cited in Roberts, 2020). Qualitative researchers are naturalists in the scientific community because their worldview on reality

changes and is subjective, believing that knowledge is gotten indirectly through the insight and interpretation of others (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, as cited in Roberts, 2020). Qualitative researchers use an interview to explore complex situations by asking probing questions like how, why, and what types of questions from experienced participants' insights making meanings of the complexities (Schutz, 1967; Seidman, 2013, as cited in Roberts, 2020). It is important to note that developing an initial interview question requires a lot of planning about the question to ask the participants because it is an integral aspect of the research process (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, as cited in Roberts, 2020). A typical qualitative research question based on why an event happened is why the questions need to provoke a corresponding answer from the participant that provides an in-depth response related to the topic of interest (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2013, as cited in Roberts, 2020). The researcher should have a better understanding of the study objectives and select an appropriate methodological approach before the development of interview questions or protocol, and the questions need to be clear and easy to understand for the respondent to respond generously (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012, as cited in Roberts, 2020).

A qualitative research approach is non-numerical data seeking to collect data and interpret the meaning based on the collected data to get a better understanding of social life by studying a targeted population (Punch, 2013, as cited in Mohajan, 2018). The qualitative research approach concentrates its emphasis more on words rather than numbers and observes the world in its natural settings and evaluates meanings that make sense from participants' daily experiences in life (Walia, 2015, as cited in Mohajan, 2018). Qualitative research embraces the following methods case study, logic disclosure analysis, open-ended interview ethnography,

focus group, grounded theory, and others (Cibangu, 2012, as cited in Mohajan, 2018). Qualitative research is a social action that defines the way individuals interpret information to make sense of experiences for a better understanding of a phenomenon (Mohajan, 2018). The qualitative research approach utilizes interviews, observations, journals, diaries, and open-ended questionnaires for the collection of data, analysis, and interpretation (Zohrabi, 2013, cited in Mohajan, 2018). Besides, Azad et al. (2021) argued that an in-depth interview is the most used method of data collection in qualitative research, and the purpose is to collect rich information based on participants' experiences to make sense of their lives with the view of allocating meaning to specific experiences or event. Past study has proven that face-to-face interview such as individual or focus group appears to be the best approach, but, in some cases, due to logistics challenges and health challenges, for example, the COVID-19 pandemic affected in-person interview; hence distance interview by telephone are used for data collection (Azad et al., 2021).

Bearman (2019) believes that qualitative research studies are aimed at understanding human social life experiences, and the commonly used tool to collect data from the participants is an interview process. It is because the use of other person's experiences helps the researcher to conceptualize learning and educational and social phenomena, and an interview is an easy way of data collection but may be complex for a novice (Bearman, 2019). An interview is a communication between two or more persons during a specific instance where someone represents the interviewer and the other as the interviewee and questions are asked by the interviewer, and the interviewee responds to the questions asked (Ruslin et al., 2022). During the interview process, the researcher knows the respondents use the opportunity to have firsthand information about their experiences, their feelings, and a better understanding of their worldview

(Ruslin et al., 2022). Past study revealed that the semi-structured interview method of data collection is used widely in social sciences (Ruslin et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Ruslin et al. (2022) confirmed that a semi-structured interview has advantages over the other interview methods because it enables the researchers to collect in-depth information from the participants, and it is a flexible approach. Furthermore, the semi-structured interview method allows the researcher to ask the participants questions flexibly and track their studies in a controlled way (Ruslin et al., 2022).

Titus (2019) believed that data collection is an integral aspect of conducting research; it is not an easy process to select. Again, some researchers believe that it is difficult to say that one method of data collection is better than the other because there is no best method of data collection (O'Leary, 2004, as cited in Titus, 2019). It is essential to note that the data collection method applied depends on the research objectives and the implications of the method, and it allows the researcher to collect appropriate data for the study (Titus, 2019). The data could be collected from several sources such as the workplace, written documents, surveys, internet sources, or through the interview process, and an interview is a credible and reliable source of data collection by qualitative researchers for ages (Olthmann, 2016, as cited in Titus, 2019). An interview can be defined as a conversation between two persons to collect rich data from the participant by the researcher based on a particular topic for a research study (Kvale, 1996, as cited in Titus, 2019). Furthermore, the interview is an organized approach to speaking and hearing what people say and a method of data collection from the people by using open-ended questions (Titus, 2019).

The semi-structured interview is regarded as an exploratory interview approach that is guided and focused on the research topic with the view to provide the needed general pattern and provide in-depth discovery (Magaldi & Berler, 2020, as cited in Ruslin et al., 2022). Qualitative researchers using the semi-structured interview method for data collection generally develop a framework of themes for exploration that need preparation before the interview (Ruslin et al., 2022). It is important to note that many researchers develop interview guides that help to group the topics and questions the researcher used in asking the participants (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, as cited in Ruslin et al., 2022). Again, the interview guide allows the interviewer to focus on the research topic or questions without restricting the arrangement and still achieve the research objectives (Ruslin et al., 2022).

David and Sutton (2004, as cited in Titus, 2019) claimed that semi-structured interview is non-standardized and regularly used by qualitative researchers and not used to test hypotheses but used to achieve research questions and objectives. In addition, the researcher needs to develop key themes, questions, and a basic checklist that help to probe in-depth information during the interview process as well as work within the limit of the research objectives (Berg, 2007; Hamza, 2014, as cited in Titus, 2019). The direction of the question may change depending on the pathway of the interview base on the respondent's experience on the topic under investigation, researchers also use an interview guide, and more questions come up as follow-up questions (Titus, 2019). Again, additional questions could come up that were not initially captured at the start of the interview, and it includes taking notes, or tape recording as well enables the researcher to probe further into the respondent's views and opinions (Titus, 2019). Moreso, Evans (2018) argued that qualitative semi-structured interview is a dominant method

widely used for a valuable collection of data in the social sciences domain because it helps the researcher to collect in-depth information about participant experience through a guided interview process.

Ahlin (2019) believes that a semi-structured interview is a planned discussion guided by the researcher to obtain new information during the period of discussion, and it provides detailed information from various viewpoints. A semi-structured interview enables the researcher to understand the viewpoints of targeted participants through a discussion of associated research questions vital to the participants working in a specific environment (Ahlin, 2019). Besides, a semi-structured interview starts with established questions familiar to the researcher, and during the discussion, follow-up questions are necessary to enhance the general knowledge by probing into the topic areas revealed by the participant, which enhances a better understanding of the topic under study (Ahlin, 2019). Validity is another essential factor for the use of a semi-structured interview because it provides in-depth details of the participant's views; hence higher validity is accomplished since data is directly from the source of interactive participation (Ahlin, 2019). Meanwhile, Bearman (2019) confirmed that qualitative research aimed at obtaining a deep understanding of the targeted participant's life experience and interview is one favorite method used to collect rich data from professionals during a research study.

The use of the interview process of data collection in the qualitative research approach enables the researcher to collect participants' firsthand experiences with a deeper understanding of the subject matter under study using the participant's words. Creswell (2012) argued that in a qualitative research study, data collection helps the researcher to gather needed answers to the research questions from participants with their permission. Besides, a well-developed interview

protocol (Appendix D) was designed to guide the data collection process. Yin (2009) pointed out that interview protocols are a reliable tool for data collection from the participants if the participants are involved in the study to share their views on the topic. Yin (2009) added that at the beginning of the study, the design must capture the sample population so that the desired responses are achieved at the end of the interview section. The basis of a well-developed interview protocol enables the researcher to examine the participant's point of view on the topic under study (Gonzalez et al., 2008; Knapik, 2006; Wellington, 2000).

Ruslin et al. (2022) supported that the semi-structured interview method is popularly used in social sciences and designed based on a guide focused on the main topic to provide the pattern generally. Most qualitative researchers use the interview to discover the life stories of a set of people by using well-prepared interview guide questions, follow-ups, and probes to explore their views (Ruslin et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the interview guide enables the researcher to stay focused and flexible in interviewing the participants by dialoguing face-to-face, by telephone, on WhatsApp, Twitter, and other social media platforms (Ruslin et al., 2022).

The above was the overwhelming reason why the choice of a qualitative semi-structured face-to-face interview was used for this research study. Before commencing data collection for the research study, I got permission and approval from the UNICAF Research Ethics Committee (Appendix A) to proceed with the investigation. Based on the approval received, all the selected participants for the research study were contacted in person and a few others by telephone to seek their permission to participate in the study. Refer to the Gatekeeper Letter (Appendix B) issued to the participants. The purpose of the study and the data collection process was made known to all the participants, as shown in (Appendix B). All the participants that agreed to

participate in the study were issued an informed consent form (Appendix C), and the confidentiality of the data collected was protected as contained in the informed consent form (Appendix C). The primary data was collected using semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the school principals in Edo state, Delta state, and Bayelsa state of the South-South of Nigeria; see interview protocol in (Appendix D) showing details of the interview questions.

The data gathered from the participants through the interview protocol enabled the interviewer to transcript all the responses, allowing the participants to explore their experiences (Williams, 2003). The data collected from the participants was done through field notetaking, and the transcribed field notes helped in the reporting stage. The venue for the interview section was agreed upon by all the participants that decided to participate in the research study. The interview was not conducted in the office of the various Executive Chairman of SUBEB in the different states in the zone as initially planned due to political reasons given by the participants. The interview for the school principals was done in their office for a period of about one hour. The data collected during the research study was analyzed using a qualitative deductive content analysis approach to make sense of the data. Creswell (2007) stated that researchers analyze and interpret the data during or after the research study and aim to make sense of the information received from the participants.

A semi-structured face-to-face interview was chosen because the study aims, and objectives can be achieved and measured with the instrument. Cresswell (2014, cited in Daud et al., 2018) stated that the validity of a research instrument is the ability of the questionnaire to measure the theory or variable to be measured. Content validity is a process that creates the ability of the instrument to gather data that can achieve the research aims and objectives (Noah,

2002, cited in Daud et al., 2018). Though, Majid (1990, as cited in Daud et al., 2018) pointed out that a research instrument's validity is high when the ability to measure its targeted goal is high. Meanwhile, the instrument's validity is considered specific for measuring a particular group (Daud et al., 2018). The researcher developed the semi-structured interview questions to answer the research questions, and it was submitted to the dissertation supervisor and representative of the School of Doctoral Studies for validation.

The feedback received from the supervisor and School of Doctoral Studies Representative was incorporated into the instrument for clarity and better understanding for the participants when in use and to achieve face and content validity of the instrument. The reliability of an instrument is the consistency of the developed instrument (Creswell, 2010, as cited in Daud et al., 2018). The instrument's reliability was ascertained after the instrument's validity was obtained from the dissertation supervisor and representative of the school of doctoral studies, who are experts regarding content validity. A pilot test was conducted using six participants who were not involved in the research study; the aim was to determine the instrument's reliability. The participants were required to answer the questions on the interview guide with feedback and suggestions given where necessary to improve the quality of the instrument and, all valuable feedback was incorporated into the instrument.

Study Procedures and Ethical Assurances

This section explains the procedure the researcher took before data collection. The study investigated the public-school principal leader perspectives in implementing the UBE program in the South-South of Nigeria. It is unethical to proceed with the collection of data from the targeted population without ethical approval given by the Unicaf University Research Ethics

Committee (UREC). Arifin (2018) highlighted the need for researchers to obtain ethical approval to protect human subjects in any study. Again, Fleming and Karsten (2018) pointed out a known fact that several educational institutions of learning require the researchers to get approval before the commencement of data collection; otherwise, it places the researcher outside the institution's code of conduct.

It is important to note that several journals require researchers to obtain ethical approval before data collection to comply with the committee of publishing ethics guidelines that ensure all published research are ethically conducted (Fleming & Karsten, 2018). In line with these ethical approval requirements, the researcher seeks approval before embarking on data collection from the selected participants. The Unicaf University Research Ethics Application Form for Doctoral Studies was downloaded from the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), and the content was studied to better understand where clarification was required. The Dissertation supervisor provided answers. The ethical application form was duly filled out electronically and submitted to the Virtual Learning Environment for the supervisor's review.

The form was returned with some review comments, and the comments were addressed and resubmitted before a provisional approval was given by UREC (Appendix A). Fleming and Karsten (2018) underpin the importance of ethical approval that involves human subjects obtained before the commencement of the data collection in a research study. The dissertation involves human subjects hence the need to protect the interest of all the participants from any form of harm; hence, confidentiality and all the associated ethical issues in line with standard research practice were considered. Arifin (2018) pointed out the need to always consider the anonymity and confidentiality of research participants during the entire research process.

Furthermore, Arifin (2018) believes that the protection of human subjects during research studies using a proper ethical approach is essential; especially in a qualitative face-to-face study, the process of engaging participants is stressful.

In this study, confidentiality will only apply because the instrument is a face-to-face interview that allows the researcher to know the participants one-on-one. Fleming and Karsten (2018) explained the difference between participant anonymity and confidentiality, commonly used synonymously. In the case of anonymity, the participant's identity is not known to the researcher, but in the case of confidentiality, the participant's identity is known to the researcher, but the data is nameless, and the participant's identity is kept confidential from the public (Fleming & Karsten, 2018). Since the study involved human participation, confidentiality was necessary, and it was achieved. All the research participants were fully briefed on the research aims and objectives and assured of any risk of harm, and their privacy was guaranteed before the informed consent forms were issued to all the selected public-school principals in 33 public schools in Edo state, Delta State and Bayelsa State in the South-South of Nigeria. The content of the informed consent form was duly discussed with the individual school principals before it was signed as proof to participate in the study.

Moreover, Fleming and Karsten (2018) pointed out another fundamental issue that researchers exposing participants to the risk of harm be addressed, confidentiality, anonymity must be held, and their names or self-identifying statement and information be avoided. Confidentiality and anonymity are essential to protecting participants from harm (Fleming & Karsten, 2018). To avoid ethical issues, the researcher considered the fact that participation is voluntary with their consent, and all the participants do have the right to pull out of the study at

any time. Akaranga and Bretta (2016) argued that the researcher is responsible for providing an enabling environment that will not impact the right of the respondent negatively and must adopt appropriate steps during the process of conducting the study. Again, Arifin (2018) suggested that all research participants' consent is essential and voluntary, and the purpose of the study should be explained as well as the data collection process and all questions raised addressed. All participants have been fully briefed on the purpose of the study as well as their privacy is taken into consideration. The primary data were collected from 33 school principals using interview methods across Edo State, Delta State, and Bayelsa State, and 11 school principals were interviewed in each State at different dates and times as agreed and scheduled by both parties. Meanwhile, the data collection process was performed safely and ethically without unnecessary interference, and all the participants made the final input necessary on the transcribed interview for reliability.

After fulfilling the Unicaf University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) requirements, provisional approval was given by the UREC to proceed with the data collection process. The targeted participants were contacted physically at their various locations across the three states within the South-South in Nigeria. Since the study involves human subjects, the issues of protection from harm, privacy, and informed consent were required. A physical meeting was held with the various principals in several locations across the area to explain the aim and objective of the research study. A gatekeeper letter (Appendix B) was issued to all the participants seeking permission to participate in the research study. All the participants that finally agreed to participate in the study were issued an informed consent form (Appendix C) to

fill out and sign off. Keskinbora (2019) stated that ethical consideration varies in different nations, but generally acceptable norms are honesty, transparency, and truthfulness.

The current study considered the ethical issues related to research on humans' study before the research study was conducted. The rights and privileges of all the participants were considered as it relates to the confidentiality of their identity, and the data collected cannot be traceable to all the participants. The participant's protection was fully guaranteed during the meeting with all the participants in various locations of the zone. After the meeting with the participants, the confidence level to participate in the study increased, and the willingness to participate was given by signing the informed consent form provided after the meetings at various locations.

An agreed date, time, and venue were scheduled for the interview by the researcher and the school principals across the zone. Informed consent is an essential tool in a qualitative research study that engages human subjects, just like this study that involves the investigation of school principals in implementing the UBE program in the South-South of Nigeria. Arifin (2018) believes that informed consent should be given to the selected participants freely, and it is the responsibility of the researcher to explain the aim and purpose of the study to competent and qualified participants with the option to decide whether to take part in the study or withdraw. Denzin and Lincoln (2011, as cited in Fleming & Karsten, 2018) argued that informed consent is the cornerstone of ethical research. Informed consent has some essential elements that include informed, and the other is consent. The researcher needs to inform the participants of the aim and purpose of the study expected questions to be asked, and the data usage (Fleming & Karsten, 2018). All participants that took part in the research study signed off the informed consent form

that contains the right of the participants to access the information and withdraw at will at any time necessary, and the participant identity must be confidential, and it was maintained before, during, and after the research study. When confidentiality is guaranteed, it helps to open effective communication between the researcher and the participants involved in the researcher's study, and participants eventually have confidence in the researchers and decide to participate in the study. All the participants in the study were informed that their names were coded so that their responses could not be traceable to the participants, and their information shall be kept secret from persons outside the research study. McMillan and Schumacher (2006, as cited in Ngozwana, 2018) stated that confidentiality and anonymity is a process of keeping the participants and settings unidentifiable in the research report. The participant confidentiality and assurance were included in the informed consent form was filled out and signed off by all the participants. After the data collection, all the information was kept in a secured place in a private office under lock.

The researcher is an education/project management consultant, and the researcher's topic is a new area. The researcher has the view to obtain in-depth knowledge of the challenges affecting the implementation of the UBE program in the zone. No monetary gain was achieved. Rather the study was sponsored by the researcher, and the researcher's interest did not compromise any section of the study at any time. The researcher has no prior relationship with the selected participants for the study to avoid the issue of bias and not to compromise the study objectives. The researcher was unbiased during the interactions with the participants by not influencing their decisions in any way. The interview guide questions were designed to allow the participants to answer the questions without guiding their decision. The analysis of the data

collected was done professionally based on the qualitative deductive content analysis method to achieve the desired results.

Data Collection

The gateway for data collection was opened after receiving ethical approval from UREC (Appendix A). The designed interview questions and the instrument's credibility were ascertained for suitability and credibility by two experts in the field of basic education, educational leadership, and management was contacted; the research supervisor and Unicaf University Doctoral Coordinator to help review the questions, and all the feedback received was incorporated as recommended by experts in the field. Thereafter the interview protocol (Appendix D) was redesigned to capture the expert feedback. Detailed interview questions were used as a guide for the interview process for the school principals. The questions aim at unearthing detailed data collection from all the participants within the specified zone of the South-South of Nigeria. There are different types of interviews, but this study adopted a semi-structured interview to collect detailed and rich data from the selected school principals within the South-South of Nigeria. The qualitative semi-structured interview allows the researcher to capture areas of the research study and allows some flexibility for the participant's perspective during the conversation (Barrett & Alison, 2018).

Besides, McGrath et al. (2019) believe that qualitative interviews allow the investigator to do in-depth data collection from the participant's perceptions based on their experience with each phenomenon. Hofisi et al. (2014) argued that the interview enables researchers to collect data in detail that provide new insights when exploring complex issues. Also, some researchers went further to argue that the qualitative interview process is a powerful tool for the collection

of data in research methods and helps in addressing research questions, and it is more desirable when researchers aim at having an in-depth view of the participant's perception on a topic (McGrath et al., 2019). Furthermore, DeJonckheere and Lisa (2019) believe that interviews are mostly applicable in a qualitative research situation where the researcher intends to collect in-depth information about the participant's view on a research topic using interview protocol as a guide. Before the interview started, a gatekeeper letter (Appendix B) was issued to all the participants for the research project as well as an informed consent form (Appendix C) was issued. The participants agreed to use a quiet and secure place free from distractions for the venue of the interview and note-taking was used for the data collection because most of the participants were not comfortable with the recording process. To uphold anonymity, only one participant was interviewed at a time in agreed and safe locations.

The face-to-face semi-structured interview for the 33 school principals was performed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lone and Aijaz (2020) revealed that coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID -19) was first discovered in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, quickly spread across the globe and was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020. A month after WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic, 2.1 million confirmed cases were reported, and 142,229 deaths were reported across 213 countries (Lone & Aijaz, 2020). In Africa, COVID-19 was first discovered in Egypt on 4 February 2020 and discovered in Nigeria on 27 February 2020 (Lone & Aijaz, 2020). Although schools were shorted down between March 2020 to 2 August 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2020) directed a safe school reopening, especially for students in the existing classes, in early August 2020. The Federal Ministry of Education developed guidelines for the safe reopening of

schools across Nigeria because schools were shorted down due to the COVID-19 pandemic (FME, 2020).

Meanwhile, before commencing the data collection, participants were remaindered of the purpose of the study and were informed that they could withdraw from participating at any time if they were no longer interested in the study. The participants were given time to settle down, and a friendly atmosphere was created to allow each participant to feel comfortable before starting the interview process. McGrath et al. (2019) stated that it is appropriate to establish a good relationship between the researcher and the participant before and during the interview session to obtain quality data from the participants.

After the briefing, all the participants were told the purpose of the study and their consent were given and confirmed the participant's demographics were collected based on their age, gender, position, workplace location, educational qualification, and working experience. The data collection process includes the demographics and the participant's responses based on the interview protocol (Appendix D) and the field notes used in recording their response during the face-to-face semi-structured interview sections with the 33 school principals in the South-South of Nigeria. The main instrument used for the current qualitative research study for the data collection was the qualitative researcher, interview protocol, and qualitative deductive content analysis. Lloyd-Jones (2003) confirmed that qualitative research is a critical instrument in the qualitative design process and deploys reflectiveness skills in data analysis and the ability to decide the direction of the research and the result of the study.

The current study interview protocol comprised ten open-ended questions derived from the major research questions of the study, and the questions were used as a guide to assess the

challenges facing the principal's leadership in the implementation of the UBE program in the South-South of Nigeria. The participants were public school principals from Edo State Delta State and Bayelsa State. A total of 33 school principals and 11 school principals from each state were interviewed with their consent before participation. The one-on-one semi-structured interview was conducted in each of the principal's offices and agreed locations within the school environment in cases where the principal's office was not conducive for the interview due to envisaged distractions. The interview guide questions were used as a guide during the interview with each participant, and the participants were given time to reflect and respond to the questions; note-taking was largely used for the collection of data. The interview lasted about one hour, and four interview sessions were conducted per day.

At the end of each interview session, participants were informed of the need for a post-interview meeting to ensure the accuracy of the transcription was in line with the participant's perspectives, and all the participants were appreciated for participating in the study. The interview process enables the researcher to collect quality primary data from the participants based on their expertise and long years of experience in the subject matter. Barrett and Alison (2018) believe that qualitative research provides rich data that allows the researcher to develop themes and findings through in-depth analysis. Furthermore, the qualitative method of data collection using interviews is popular, and it is a straightforward method of collecting rich data concerning any given phenomenon (Barrett & Alison, 2018). The current study revealed the challenges that hindered the successful implementation of the UBE program by providing rich data and recommended solutions.

Data Analysis

This section explored the data analysis technique adopted for the research study. A qualitative data analysis (QDA) approach using deductive content analysis for analyzing the field data collected from the participants was adopted for this study. UU (2020) stated that qualitative data analysis is a series of methods that use qualitative data collected to generate and interpret the respondent situation that has been investigated. The QDA method is based on interpretative philosophy, and it generates a considerable quantity of words through interviews or observations that are required to be summarized and help to analyze qualitative data context (UU, 2020). Again, Akinyode and Tareef (2018) reported that the qualitative method depends on the research objectives and the type of information required to accomplish the goal.

Mezmir (2020) claimed that qualitative researchers need to provide a consistent structure for large data sets by holding the original meaning from the source it was obtained. A qualitative data analysis transforms raw data by analyzing, evaluating, and coding patterns, themes, and categories to make sense and provide meanings (Mezmir, 2020). Furthermore, Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) believe that Schutz's social phenomenology centered on the descriptive and interpretive theory of societal exploitation of the world of individual life experience and social relationships, then making meaning and judgment out of it. Kleinheksel et al. (2020) stated that the content analysis method for analyzing data is intended to identify and interpret the meaning of recorded communication as well as create a framework to explain the phenomenon. It is essential to note that content analysis is suitable when a large amount of data is not analyzed and helps the researcher to have a better understanding of a specific phenomenon through the provision of structured large textual data using a systematic interpretation process (Kleinheksel et al., 2020).

A qualitative deductive content approach was used to analyze the data collected during the study because it has been used by past researchers, and it helped in the categorization of the data. Some researchers noted that qualitative research has an inductive process of analyzing specific issues in general and a deductive process where data are interpreted and conceptualized based on previous knowledge from the research study (Strauss & Corbin, 2008, as cited in Roman et al., 2017). A previous research study revealed that deductive analysis enables the generation of themes directly from the data using inductive coding (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Meanwhile, Pearse (2019) argued that deductive analysis is driven by coding to connect themes as well as using theory as the basis of the analysis.

Besides, Hamilton and Erin (2020) stated that the qualitative deductive approach is a top to down analytical, theoretical framework used for the categorization of narrative data. The current study applied the qualitative deductive content analysis method, and the data collected comprises narrative data that underpinned the challenges associated with the public-school principal leader in the implementation of the UBE program in the South-South of Nigeria. A semi-structured interview guided by interview protocol was used to collect the narrative data from 33 public school principals, and the scope of the analysis was based on the narrative data collected from the participants. Qualitative deductive content analysis allows the researcher to code and connects themes using theories for the analysis (Pearse, 2019). The researcher identified eight pre-set themes before the analysis and then searched for narrative data that aligned with the identified themes. Qualitative analysis enables researchers to group the volume of information into smaller well-structured precise units (Polit & Beck, 2004). Besides, the primary objective of the researcher is to analyze and interpret the data to make sense (Creswell,

2007). In addition, deductive content analysis enables the researcher to gather themes from the data through a coding system. Meanwhile, the narrative data was analyzed using Bengtsson (2016) approach, which identified four stages of content analysis that involve decontextualization, recontextualization, categorization, and compilation.

A member checking, thick description, and the research methodology deployed for the study strengthened the study, and the result findings minimized bias in the study. The credibility of the analysis from the narrative data collected was essential for the current study; hence during the analysis, reading of the narratives as well as effective notetaking was critical to safeguard the correctness of the data collected from the participants to establish reliability and validity of the study (Yin, 2009). All the participant's confidentiality was upheld before, during, and after data collection of the research study, and the research finding made known through publications.

Summary

In conclusion, chapter three of the study examined the researcher's research paradigm, research approach, and data collection method. The study applied an interpretive/constructivist qualitative research approach using a phenomenological research design and the use of semi-structured face-face interview methods to study the principal leadership perspectives in the implementation of the Univesal Basic Education Program in the South-South, Nigeria. Universal Basic Education (UBE) was established in Nigeria in 1999 to provide free quality and compulsory basic education for children of school age in Nigeria (Yamma & Danjuma, 2018). Unfortunately, the program experienced several challenges and could not achieve its set

objectives because of inadequate schoolteachers, poor school infrastructure, lack of supervision, and other factors (Yamma & Danjuma, 2018).

Furthermore, past study revealed that the UBE program was supported financially by the World Bank and UNICEF, but notwithstanding the support, Nigeria was ranked 132 out of 133 countries in basic education implementation (Aja et al., 2018). It is unfortunate that basic education failed to achieve its goal because of poor school infrastructure, poor funding, and lack of teacher motivation hence the negative impact on society (Abah & Victor, 2021; Oladimeji & Tunji, 2019; Ogbonnia, 2020). It was recorded that the poor funding of education affected the school principals negatively, one of the fundamental reasons why the UBE program implementation failed (Oladele, 2018).

The study attempted to investigate the issues and challenges surrounding implementing the UBE program in the South-South of Nigeria based on the primary data collected from all the school principals in the selected schools in the zone. Furthermore, Moser and Irene (2018) suggested that researchers used in-person interviews to collect data from the participants because of their experience in a specific setting and the researcher to avoid influencing the respondent's views during the interview process. Meanwhile, a semi-structured interview enables the participant the flexibility to answer research questions in their areas of specialization within a time frame of 30 to 90 minutes, using an interview guide to support the interview process as it relates to the topic (Moser & Irene, 2018). Moreover, a qualitative semi-structured interview allows the researcher some time to settle and get the participants in a ready-to-go situation, making them comfortable in sharing their experiences, emotions, and feelings about a situation (Moser & Irene, 2018).

As earlier mentioned, the research paradigm, approach, and design was an interpretive/constructivist qualitative research approach using a phenomenological research design and the use of semi-structured face-face interview methods for collecting primary data from all the selected school principals. The data were collected through a semi-structured face-to-face interview with the participants within the zone. Several studies have shown that the qualitative method of research help in the data collection from the participant's experience in a natural setting (Creswell, 2009; Agarry & Eyiemi, 2022). Again, the qualitative research method is used when the researcher seeks in-depth knowledge and understanding of people's behavior and actions (Rosenthal, 2016). The researcher developed five research questions in line with the research topic, problem, and purpose to gather rich data from the school principals, and the five major research questions guided the research direction.

Moreover, Moser and Irene (2018) suggested that researchers consider a more comprehensive view of the situation and avoid guiding the participants during an interview session but allow the participants to answer the questions based on their experience of the subject matter and a true reflection of the participant's worldview. Again, UU (2020) revealed that qualitative interpretive research allows the researcher to investigate human activities through a conversation to resolve social issues. In their contribution, the researchers believed that the qualitative research method tolerates the collection of non-numerical data during interviews and case studies based on the participant's experience (Agarry & Eyiemi, 2022). Asadul and Faraj (2022) supported the agreement that qualitative research methods enable researchers to write detailed stories of a situation and develop new theories or improve on existing theories to solve problems.

A total of 33 participants were selected for the research study, 33 school principals in Edo State, Delta State, and Bayelsa State within the South-South of Nigeria. Past research study shows that researchers are responsible for defining the research population and sample size before the study begins because the sample is a success factor of any research output (Shukla, 2020). Meanwhile, a nonprobability sampling method was adopted to select the representative sample. UU (2020) recommended using nonprobability sampling for the qualitative research method because sampling is an essential part of a research study that enables the selection of the sample representative. The rationale behind using purposive sampling provides the researcher focus on the exact population that can help achieve the research purpose (Sargeant, 2012).

Furthermore, Patton (2002) revealed that purposive sampling gives the researcher the opportunity to participant selection from an already-known population capable of providing rich data for the research questions. The research instrument used for the study's data collection was a semi-structured face-to-face interview instrument. Qualitative research is a societal way people define and interpret information that makes sense based on their experience (Mohajan, 2018). Meanwhile, the questions emphasized the research goals by asking relevant questions to collect rich information that makes sense (Ikart, 2019). Moser and Irene (2018) confirmed that purposive sampling, snowball, and criterion sampling are commonly used by researchers (Moser & Irene, 2018). The study used non-probability sampling that enabled the researcher to select the sample representatives based on interest because of its efficiency for a small sample size (UU, 2020). The instrument used to collect data from the school principals was done through a semi-structured interview. Ahlin (2019) stated that a semi-structured interview is a tool that enables the researcher to engage in a planned discussion to collect new information from the

participants in a specific setting. The researcher starts with established research and follow-up questions to get in-depth knowledge and a better understanding of the topic of discussion (Ahlin, 2019).

Ethical procedures and considerations were followed, and approval was obtained from the Unicaf University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) before the data collection commenced, and participants' confidentiality was considered. A study shows that researchers need to consider the anonymity and confidentiality of participants in a research study (Arifin, 2018). The researcher followed the procedure and ethical approval process before the data collection process started. The researcher engaged the selected participants for the research upon getting approval by visiting all the participants. Meanwhile, the study was done during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Coronavirus disease was first discovered in Wuhan, China, and the virus spread across the globe in March 2020 World Health Organization declared it a pandemic after 2.1 million cases were reported. COVID-19 found its way into Egypt and Nigeria in February 2020 (Lone & Aijaz, 2020). The study adhered to the COVID-19 safety protocols the government and medical experts put in place. The issue of participant anxiety was addressed through the implementation of ethical rules, such as the use of an informed consent form that captures the rights and the rule of engagement of the participants.

The researcher explained the purpose of the study along with the ethical assurance of all the participants. A gatekeeper letter and informed consent form were issued to all research participants ready to participate in the study. All 33 participants signed off the informed consent form after establishing a good relationship with them. McGrath et al. (2019) recommended that researchers maintain a cordial relationship with the participants to create a friendly atmosphere

to collect rich data. The researcher collected data from the school principals through semi-structured interviews with 33 school principals.

A qualitative deductive content analysis was used for the data analysis. It is necessary to note that qualitative deductive content analysis is code-driven and helps to connect themes and use theory for analysis (Pearse, 2019). Besides, UU (2020) confirmed that qualitative data analysis is a method that utilizes the collected qualitative data to produce and interpret the views of the participants. Furthermore, qualitative analysis converts raw data to make sense through analysis, evaluation, coding, patterns, themes, and categorization (Mezmir, 2020). Again, Hamilton and Erin (2020) argued that qualitative deductive content analysis was used to categorize narrative data from top to bottom. Furthermore, the current study explored the detailed procedure used and if the same procedure applied will enable other researchers to replicate this study, and it helped in achieving instrument reliability (Yin, 2003). In addition, the deductive content analysis method helped the research in coding and the theme connection derived from the theory for practical analysis (Pearse, 2019).

A total of eight pre-set themes before the commencement of the analysis and the process allow the researcher to search for narrative data that fits into the identified pre-set themes. It is important to note that deductive content analysis makes provisions for the researcher to bring other themes from the data by coding, and the analysis was done using four stages: decontextualization, recontextualization, categorization, and compilation (Bengtsson, 2016). Thick description, member check, and the research method used enabled the researcher to manage bias associated with the research study to a reasonable and acceptable level because of the credibility of the narrative data through notetaking as well as checking again with the original

research participant for accuracy added more credibility to the study (Yin, 2009). Chapter 4 will explore the study's detailed report findings and evaluation with a concluding summary at the end.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction to the section

The research study investigated and analyzed the challenges facing the public-school principal's perspectives on the leadership styles in implementing Universal Basic Education in the South-South of Nigeria. The study deployed an interpretive/constructivist qualitative

research approach using a phenomenological research design and a semi-structured face-face interview method to collect primary data from 33 school principals in government-owned schools in Edo State, Delta State and Bayelsa State within the South-South of Nigeria. An interview guide question derived from the research questions was used to collect the data from the participants, and the data collected was analyzed using qualitative deductive content analysis. The study focused on the public-school principal's perspectives on the leadership styles in the implementation of the UBE program in the zone, especially in the areas of leadership styles, the concept of UBE, implementation of curriculum planning, funding adequacy, infrastructural adequacy, instructional material, training, and professional development of personnel within the school system, amongst others examined with the recommendation provided for sustainable solutions to improve the UBE program in the zone and beyond.

Izuka (2022) believes that all over the world and over the years, nations agitating for functional quality education, and after the Jomtien declaration on education, all the governments of member nations embarked on providing basic education for their citizens. Aliyu (2022) noted that the government of Nigeria established the UBE program to provide basic education for the citizens to reduce dropouts from the school systems and provide the basic skills required for life-long learning. The UBE program was a hope for the ordinary person to send their child back to school and the opportunity for the dropouts to go back to school since it was compulsory and free basic education (Aliyu, 2022).

Ibrahim et al. (2022) believe that when a house is built on a solid foundation, it will stand the test of time education is not different because knowledge built on a solid foundation benefits the individual, the immediate locality, the nation, and the world at large. The emphasis on basic

education in our society must be balanced because it comprises three years of early childhood education and nine years of formal education, the foundation the child requires to help a child in a lifetime (Ibrahim et al., 2022). It is a known fact that basic education is the basis of every other level of education because it is the foundation base of the entire educational system; hence it needs adequate attention because no nation can compete favorably with the League of Nations without achieving and sustaining high-quality educational system (Ibrahim et al., 2022).

The researchers also argued that the UBE program was established in Nigeria to help the government manage the challenges facing the basic education sector. Unfortunately, after two decades, the implementation problem still needs to be solved after the resources are spent on the program (Ibrahim et al., 2022). Nevertheless, Izuka (2022) observed that the UBE program has yet to perform as expected to justify the resources deplored for the program because of the inadequacies associated with the program. The researcher noted that the UBE program was designed to improve the quality of the basic educational system but failed to achieve its goal because the issues of leadership, poor funding, inadequate school infrastructure, and lack of laboratories hindered the implementation (Izuka, 2022).

This section of chapter four reported the trustworthiness of the data. The result of the findings was discussed and analyzed; the research findings were evaluated around the five research questions developed for the study alongside the interview guide questions for the school principals. The participant demographics and qualitative deductive content analysis were examined, the evaluation of findings and observations was done, and the chapter ended up with a summary of the chapter.

The trustworthiness of the primary data collected was discussed using established criteria, and the result of the research findings was presented by logically answering the research questions. Participants' demographics were displayed in a tabular format, and a qualitative deductive content analysis was used to identify and report themes derived from the data. Elo et al. (2014) also added that the primary aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative research approach is to provide some degree of support that the findings are legitimate when using qualitative content analysis because categories are generated from the raw data. The data was collected securely, and its credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were examined. Korstjens and Albine (2018) pointed out the need for researchers to consider trustworthiness as a process that a study can be trusted using criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Past research study revealed that trustworthiness helps in the organization of research design and positions the researcher in a credible position regarding the quality of the research findings and the entire research process (Rose & Corey, 2020).

The issues related to the reliability and validity of data are examined, where reliability is a tool researcher uses to ascertain the consistency of the study. In contrast, validity allows the researcher to adopt a relevant procedure to check the research finding's accuracy (Rose & Corey, 2020). Reliability is the justification that a method and analytical procedure used for the study ensures the study is reliable and there is clarity and consistency in connecting the actual study with increased chances that other researchers will apply the same method (Creswell, 2013, cited in Jeff & Corey, 2020). Furthermore, validity is an assurance that the tools used by the researcher impeccably measure the examined phenomena (Slettebo, 2020). The research questions were validated through the assigned Unicaf University supervisor, a coordinator of the Doctoral

Studies, and a member check for the correctness of the data collected from the participants. Member check is a process where the investigator meets the original participants to check for the correctness of the themes and interpretation of the study to validate the work done with the participants to improve data trustworthiness (Stoner et al., 2005, cited in Slettebo, 2020).

Rich data were collected from 33 school principals using a face-to-face semi-structured interview within the selected school in the zone. A qualitative deductive content analysis was used to analyze the data. Pearse (2019) confirmed that deductive content analysis is a coding system that allows the connection of themes and uses theories for analysis. The study also addressed the five major research questions used as the basis for the interview guide questions for school principals. The participant's demographics were explained, and the requirement for the selection was based on their experience with the research topic and academic qualifications, and all the participants were coded to uphold confidentiality. The researcher is responsible for protecting the participants during and after the study (Akaranga & Bretta, 2016). After the data was analyzed, a detailed evaluation of the research findings was discussed and linked to critical issues in the literature review section. During the literature review, gaps identified were the challenges that affected the implementation of the UBE program in the zone. Miles (2017) stated that developing a research agenda and gap is a predominant issue because most studies base their investigation on the problem, scientific questions, or phenomenon.

Almost all the participants in the study showed some level of nervousness because the decay in the sector may generate some problems. After the briefings and explanation of ethical considerations associated with the study, the participants were relaxed and corporative. Again, the study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic era, and COVID-19 safety protocols

were also observed, such as wearing of facemask, social distancing, and regular washing of hands alongside using hand sanitizer. Yadav (2020) reported that the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic created a global health crisis with a negative impact on humanity and everyday lives, it started in Wuhan, China, and the outbreak has infected over 13,039,853 people with over 571,659 deaths in over 200 countries globally. The rapid spread of the disease across the world created health, environmental, economic, and social challenges for humanity (Yadav, 2020). The World Health Organization recommended that people should go about wearing a face mask and maintain social distancing to prevent the further spread of the disease (Yadav, 2020). Persons that violated the safety protocol, a violation alert is sent to the control center for necessary action the measure put in place to ensure compliance (Yadav, 2020).

At the end of the study, all the participants were thanked for their support and cooperation in completing the study. All the school principal's responses to the interview responses were analyzed during the evaluation period of the study. The study also addressed the researcher's observation, especially around anxiety at the initial interview stage, but their confidence and confidentiality were assured after explaining the ethical considerations of the study requirements to the participant. The eight preset themes were earlier identified before the analysis, and data searching to fit identified themes was performed. The themes identified were compared with the results and connected to past literature with a section summary at the end of chapter four.

Trustworthiness of Data

Lemon and Hayes (2020) work revealed that Lincoln and Guba found trustworthiness; besides, the researcher's work enhances the credible assessment of qualitative research. Trustworthiness in qualitative research is an organized accuracy of the research design, the

researcher's credibility, the finding's acceptability, and the research method applicability (Johnson & Parry, 2015a, Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Jeff & Corey, 2020). Trustworthiness is the generality of the quality of the entire research effort (Jeff & Corey, 2020). Trustworthiness is the backbone of the qualitative research method in the academic world that ensures the study's credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000, as cited in Jeff & Corey, 2020). Stahl and James (2020) arguably stated that qualitative research allows researchers to narrate storied data related to the human experience because people can learn from another person's experience. The level of trust in the person telling the story is vital, and several qualitative researchers have shown how trust can be performed and enhanced (Stahl & James, 2020). It is important to note that some qualitative researchers use a narrative method to tell an excellent story others use a thick description that enables the readers to be exposed to detailed text that makes the event description tangible (Stahl & James, 2020). Furthermore, Alfarraj et al. (2020) stated that trustworthiness is the integrity and credibility of the research process and the level of confidence the researcher communicates to the observers to ensure the trust and reliability of the study.

Therefore, the strategy established by the researchers that helped ascertain the trustworthiness of qualitative study includes credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Lemon & Hayes, 2020). Again, Gunawan and Joko (2015) stated that the research reader judges trustworthiness as credible. Previous researchers believe that trustworthiness is an organized rigor of designing a research study that reflects the credibility of the researcher's findings as applied to the methods (Johnson & Parry, 2015a, Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Rose & Corey, 2020). Moreso, Rose, and Corey (2020) concluded that trustworthiness deals with the entire quality of the research process.

Trustworthiness helps solve the reliability and validity of research in a paradigm that aligns with the research (Rose & Corey, 2020).

Trustworthiness is divided into two sections credibility deals with internal validity, while external validity deals with dependability, reliability, confirmability, and transferability (Gunawan & Joko, 2015). Furthermore, Korstjens and Albine (2018) argued that qualitative researchers emphasize trustworthiness, which implies that can the research findings be trusted; the criteria include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The qualitative researchers believe that trustworthiness is a fundamental question that asks if the findings can be trusted, considering well-known criteria such as credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Gunawan & Joko, 2015).

An open approach was adopted to create a friendly relationship with the participants through in-person visitation to all agreed participants. The purpose aimed to achieve a free and relaxed environment to develop trust to provide reliable and valid information. Kapiszewski and Sebastian (2019) argued that openness facilitates the way scholars assess and evaluate qualitative inquiry through engagement and collaboration with each other. A thick description of data was utilized for coding participants and maintaining the participants' confidentiality, and it helped to establish the participant's experiences and actions. Thick description in research is a process that allows the reader to track what the researcher has done by providing a detailed description of the context and the condition of the phenomena under investigation for better understanding (Curtin & Fossey, 2007). A thick description goes beyond recording what a participant does because it enables the presentation of details in terms of content, the person's emotion, and the social relationship among the people (Ponterotto, 2006).

Furthermore, thick description enforces emotions and self-feelings, and it helps to establish the importance of an experience of the people (Ponterotto, 2006). It is important to note that Denzin (1989, as cited in Ponterotto, 2006) claimed that the actions, feelings, voices, and the meaning of the persons, are perceived. Ponterotto (2006) argued that thick description also describes and interprets behavior within the context of a smaller or larger unit, such as a work environment or community. It is essential to note that thick description allows thick interpretation leading to a thick meaning of research findings and giving the readers a sense of credibility. Also, attention was given to personal biases and subjectivity during the study life circle.

Norman and James (2020) pointed out that qualitative research has gained relevance in educational research and provided researchers with a platform for process-based narrative data linked to human experience. The researchers believed that credible data obtained from participants' experiences are based on good stories of an event and the level of trust ascribed to the story because trust-building is critical (Norman & James, 2020). Some researchers argued that some qualitative researchers neglect the issues related to the trustworthiness of their research because it is a critical aspect of the rigor that differentiates scientific research from ordinary research because of the consistency from the research questions to the conclusion of the study. (Amankwaa, 2016, as cited in Eryilmaz, 2022). Besides, Curtin and Fossey (2007) noted that no one solution fits all situations regarding the issue of trustworthiness because of its complexity, and no universally agreed standards are applied. Trustworthiness is associated with qualitative research, evaluation of the quality, and process that help to determine the validity and reliability of qualitative research (Curtin & Fossey, 2007).

The concept of trustworthiness enables researchers to determine the authenticity of the participant's experiences of a phenomenon under study using several strategies (Curtin & Fossey, 2007). The purpose of trustworthiness is to provide rigorous scholarship that enables the research findings to align with the participant's point of view. To convince the reader that data analysis and the research findings can be trusted (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006; Murphy & Yelder, 2010, as cited in Eryilmaz, 2022). Notwithstanding, Eryilmaz (2022) stated that qualitative researchers are advised to use the trustworthiness strategies and related criteria recommended by notable researchers, as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2

Trustworthiness, Criteria and Strategies

S/N	Trustworthiness Criteria	Trustworthiness Strategies
1	Credibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prolonged Engagement • Persistent Observation • Peer Debriefing • Member Checking • Referential Adequacy • Negative Case Analysis • Reflexivity • Triangulation
2	Transferability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thick Description • Thick Descriptive • Data Reflexivity • Purposeful Sampling
3	Dependability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit Trail • External Audit • Stepwise Replication • Reflexivity • Overlap methods
4	Confirmability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulation • Audit Trail

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Audit • Reflexivity
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Note. Guba, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1985, as cited in Eryilmaz, 2022

Five well-designed qualitative research questions were developed to ensure credible research findings. The interview questions were derived from the research questions to help collect data from the well-selected participants. The interview protocol was sent to education experts for review and feedback incorporated. The data collection and analysis design were well-described to enhance the study's credibility. In the current study, the study's credibility was ensured by developing a well-designed interview question validated by the appointed research study supervisor and the Unicaf University doctoral coordinator that underpins the knowledge shared by the school principals from the selection zone in Nigeria. Besides, the member check method is used to verify the study data, themes, and research participants' findings to ensure they reflect their points of view.

Dependability is the firmness of the findings over time (Korstjens & Albine, 2018). The research process adopted during the study is dependable because the qualitative research method adopted for this investigation was a detailed one. If the study is repeated, a similar result will be obtained. Shenton (2004) believes that the dependability of the research processes needs to be reported in a detailed manner to enable the work repeated by future researchers to achieve the same results. Meanwhile, transferability is the degree to which the results are transferred to another context with other participants (Korstjens & Albine, 2018). Confirmability is the degree to which the research findings can be confirmed by another researcher (Korstjens & Albine, 2018). The study can be confirmed under the same setting by other researchers for the confirmability of the report as a true reflection of the respondent's viewpoint. Shenton (2004)

reaffirmed that confirmability issues deal with the qualitative investigator ensuring that the research findings are indeed the result of the participant's experiences and ideas, not the researcher's ideas.

Korstjens and Albine (2018) pointed out that transferability is the degree to which a qualitative research result can be transferred to other settings with other participants facilitating transferability with thick description. Shenton (2004) argued that it is the researcher's responsibility to provide enough contextual information about the site work to allow the reader to make the transfer. The researcher also needs to provide a thick description of the phenomenon under study for better understanding to help the reader compare the instances explained in the research report with the seen situations (Shenton, 2004). The study provided adequate information regarding organizations, the type, and the number of participants involved in the research study the research method applied to aid transferability. Shenton (2004) suggested that the study should provide information about the organizations that took part in the study, the locations, the type and number of participants, the method of data collection, and the time frame the data was collected. Transferability of the current study was established to achieve external validity using thick descriptions to describe the phenomenon in detail to enable readers to independently evaluate the study findings and conclusion. The main objective of this qualitative research study was to provide an appropriate representation and understanding of the study under investigation, and the study cannot be generalized to other populations but transferable to a similar situation.

In conclusion, the application of thick description, member checking, and the research methodology applied helped strengthen the study, and the result derived from the primary data

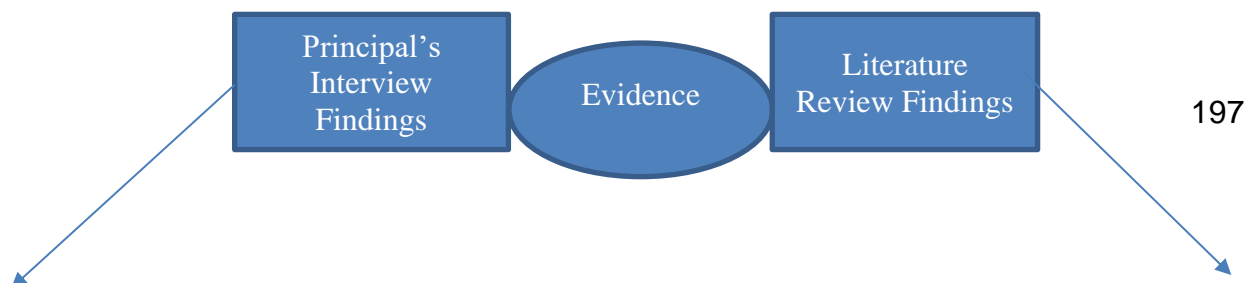
collected from the participants as well helped reduce bias associated with research studies. Golafshani (2003) argued that triangulation enables researchers to test and improve the reliability and validity of a finding in a research study. Bashir et al. (2008) believe that researchers can help to minimize the bias noted in research studies by creating more time in the field of duty and using several data collection methods to validate the findings. Again, at the time of the reading, effective narrative notetaking was ensured for the accuracy of the raw data and the notetaking for the study revealed some level of similarities among some of the school principals regarding the research questions asked. Yin (2009) revealed that the researcher should endeavor to take accurate notes while reading the narrative to ensure the provision of accurate raw data and detailed meaning to establish reliability and accuracy.

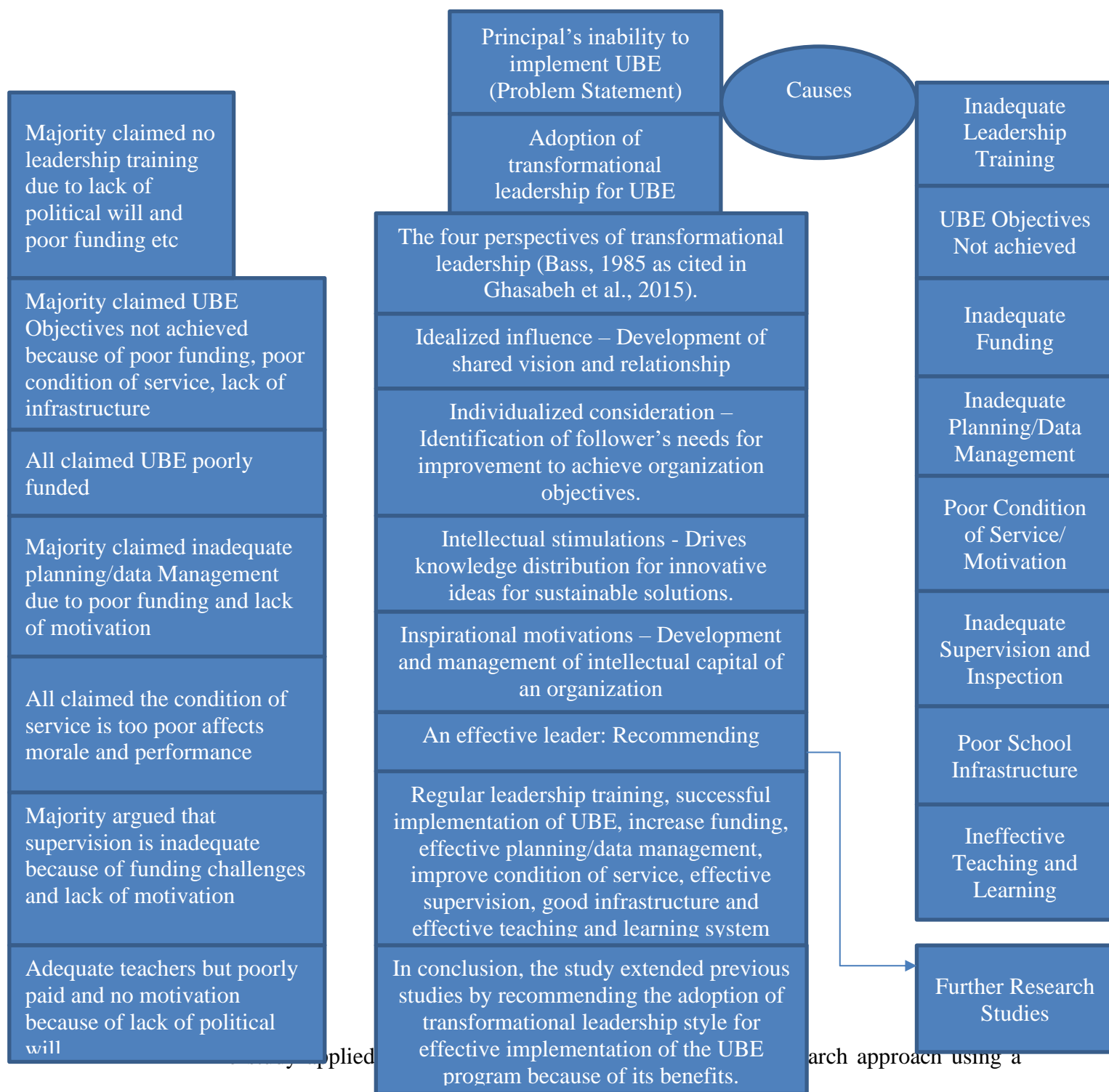
Concept Map

Figure 2 below illustrates the relationship between the problem affecting the public-school principal leadership inability to implement the UBE program based on the literature review findings and the principal leadership perspectives, and the adoption of transformational leadership style will enhance the principal's leadership skills. Recommendations provided by the school principals to help improve the implementation of UBE program in the area. Other relevant ideas, the need for further research studies in the future recommended. Erdoğan (2016) postulated that a concept map is a diagram outlining and connecting concepts comprehensively for better understanding by presenting the main idea and its relationship with the entire picture.

Figure 2

Concept Map, Principal's inability to implement UBE Program





phenomenological research design and the use of semi-structured face-face interview methods

to collect rich data from the public-school principals within the South-South of Nigeria. Rich data were collected from 33 selected public-school principals using face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Moser and Irene (2018) stated that a face-to-face interview is a discussion between the researcher and the participant, and the interview may concentrate on present or past events; qualitative studies begin with an open interview to get a larger picture of the situation. Researchers are encouraged to avoid guiding and influencing the participant's responses to achieve the researcher's point of view but ask questions that will reflect the participant's experience, opinions, and beliefs (Moser & Irene, 2018). The researcher is responsible for encouraging the participants to discuss freely as the interview progresses; subsequently, central, and subordinate questions are discussed, and the interview duration is between 30 to 90 minutes (Moser & Irene, 2018). The first few minutes of the interview are crucial because the participants must be sure and free to share their experiences (Moser & Irene, 2018). At the end of the interview section, a qualitative deductive content analysis was used to analyze the data collected from the 33 public school principals.

Kleinheksel et al. (2020) argued that qualitative content analysis is based on the statement that texts provide valuable information regarding a specific phenomenon. Again, qualitative content analysis is a process that allows the participants and context to be sorted into related groups of categories that helps researchers to identify patterns (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). The method can be used for textual or transcribed content such as responses from interviews, open-ended surveys, and recorded observations and the frequency of times a code appears with the text reveals the understanding of its occurrence (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). The qualitative manifest content analysis aims to exceed simple word count and explore the language into

organized categories representing a shared meaning (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). Previous study has shown that qualitative analysis deals with grouping a large volume of information into smaller ones that could be practicable statements that are precise and well-structured (Polit & Beck, 2004). The data were analyzed using a qualitative deductive content analysis method that helps to make sense of the data collected. The primary goal of the researchers involved in analyzing and interpreting data is to make sense of the information collected from the respondents (Creswell, 2007). Furthermore, Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006) argued that deductive content analysis makes provision for generating themes directly from the data by applying inductive coding. Also, deductive content analysis is coding-driven, connects themes, and uses theory to underpin the basis of the analysis (Pearse, 2019). Again, Hamilton and Erin (2020) believe that the deductive content analysis method brings about a theoretical framework, a top-down analytical approach that categorizes data narrative.

The three executive chairpersons/secretaries of the three states of universal basic education in the South-South called for a decline in the study. The withdrawal was due to political reasons because the appointment was influenced politically. Only one executive chairman/secretary is appointed in each state confidentiality, and anonymity is difficult to achieve in this situation. Past study show that the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents are protected; it is the responsibility of the researcher to protect human subjects during a qualitative research study of this nature (Arifin, 2018). Meanwhile, some principals initially selected who could not participate due to non-availability were replaced with new ones to complete the targeted numbers. A deductive content analysis was performed on the data collected from the interview of 33 school principals during the study in the South-South of

Nigeria. The interview data collected from all the participants were analyzed to develop and identify emerging themes, patterns, and categories that help to achieve the study objectives. Newman (2003) stated that data collected from interviews, when analyzed, enables the researcher to develop and identify emerging themes, patterns, and categories and evaluate all the details to understand the phenomena better. A detailed analysis is discussed in this chapter to show the method of data analysis adopted to unearth the themes and the result of the analysis that provided answers to the research questions that underpin the study.

Research Questions

It is essential to note that researchers need to analyze the raw data from the interview session until the emergence of the theory (Korstjens & Albine, 2018). According to Patton (2002), purposive sampling enables the researchers to select participants from a general population where rich data is collected to help answer the research questions. Furthermore, Creswell (2012) supported the belief that the qualitative research approach helps the researcher collect data that answers the research questions with the respondent's consent. The focus of study was aimed at 33 school principals with experience in Universal Basic Education within the South-South of Nigeria. The research questions that guided the study were as follows:

- RQ1. How can you ascertain if adequate planning is made to implement the Curriculum of the UBE Program?
- RQ2. What is the level of funding available for implementing the Universal Basic Education Program?
- RQ3. What are your views on recruiting qualified and adequate staff for implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme?

- RQ4. Why do you think there are adequate or inadequate facilities to implement the Universal Basic Education Programme?
- RQ5. What are your opinion on staff periodic retraining for the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme?

The study addressed the research questions shown below:

RQ1. “How can you ascertain if adequate planning is made to implement the Curriculum of the UBE program?”

The results from the school principal's interview show wiliness to ensure the implementation of the curriculum but funding was a huge challenge. Poor service conditions, inadequate textbooks, and poor teaching and learning conditions hinder the implementation process; 85% of school principals believe that planning to implement the UBE curriculum is inadequate. It was because of the lack of an enabling environment for the successful planning of the implementation of the curriculum and programs of the UBE program.

RQ2. “What is the level of funding available for implementing the Universal Basic Education Program?”

Generally, all the principals involved in the interview expressed their displeasure over the inadequate funding responsible for the poor school infrastructure noticed. The Universal Basic Education program has impacted the South-South of Nigeria positively, especially at the early stage of implementation. It is because few respondents believe it took some children of school age out of the street. On the other hand, most participants claimed that the implementation of the UBE program has worsened in recent times. Inadequate funding, lack of motivation of the school principals and teachers, inadequate supervision, and many more hindered the program.

RQ3. “What are your views on recruiting qualified and adequate staff for implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme?”

The study shows that recruitment is not an issue, but there are situations where unqualified teachers are employed because of their political affiliations.

RQ4. “Why do you think there are adequate or inadequate facilities to implement the Universal Basic Education Programme?”

Based on the research study conducted shows that most of the principals confirmed that inadequate funding for the program was the major challenge. Issues such as poor school infrastructure, lack of political will, corruption, poor condition of service, and many more characterized the inability of the operators to effectively implement the UBE program.

RQ5. “What is your opinion on staff periodic retraining for the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme?”

Professional development training of teachers in the zone received very little attention based on the study.

Recommendations

All the participants believed that the government needs to investigate the budgetary allocation provided in the educational sector and do an upward review before any meaningful progress can be achieved concerning implementing the UBE program. All the school principals expressed their views on the urgent upward review of their service condition because it will go a long way in improving the UBE program in the zone. Other issues the participants identified during the study request that the government should improve the school infrastructure. The need for regular supervision of the program was pointed out. The motivation of the school principals

and teachers, training and retraining of principals and teachers, amongst others, was recommended.

Participant Demographics

The selection requirement for the study's purposive sample of 33 school principals was based on their academic qualifications, such as a Bachelor of Education and years of working experience in the Universal Basic Education program. The participants were made up of 33 school principals. The participants were selected from Edo, Delta, and Bayelsa States in the South-South of Nigeria. Although the three executive chairmen of SUBEB/secretary in the zone declined because of political reasons, 33 participants partook in the study. During the study, the school principals have given a code (SP 1 to SP 33) to uphold the confidentiality of all the participants. The codes were utilized during the period of data analysis of the findings. Akaranga and Bretta (2016) made it known that it is the researcher's responsibility to protect the respondent's rights from any negative impact during the research study. The participant's demographic data captured their gender, age group, work location, position, academic qualifications, and working experience. Several tables were developed based on the demographic data, as shown below. The tables show a more transparent view and a better understanding of the participants that partook in the study. The demographic information in the various tables below helps to support and validate participants' information, such as qualifications, gender, age, and working experience for the current study (Creswell, 2009).

Table 3 shows that 24 females participated in the study while nine males were involved. The study also revealed that the female participants are more comfortable with the profession and willing to answer all the questions to help improve their service conditions and effective

implementation of the UBE program. On the other hand, the male Principals are holding on to the profession temporarily and planning to move on when a better opportunity comes their way just because of the poor service condition.

Table 3

Participant Demographics, Sample by Gender Category (n=33)

Gender	N	%
Male	9	27 %
Female	24	73 %

The age group category in table 4 presents the age group of participants involved in the study. The table revealed that the principals within the age group of 35 to 49 years old represent the highest number of participants in the study, which stands at about 60% of the population. The second on the list in terms of population size is the age group of 18 to 34 years old, representing 30% of the population that expressed disappointment in the current state of the teaching profession in the zone and the country at large. A small number of nine participants were in the age bracket of 50 to 69, which represents 10 % of the population.

Table 4

Participant Demographics, Sample by Age Group Category (n=33)

Age Group	N	%
18 to 34 years old	10	30 %
35 to 49 years old	20	60 %
50 to 69 years old	3	10 %

Table 5 shows the three workplace locations where the research was conducted on the 33 participants, 11 principals interviewed in Edo State, 11 principals in Delta state, and 11 principals in Bayelsa State in the South-South of Nigeria. The table shows that equal numbers of participants were selected in the three locations to enable equal representation across the zone.

Table 5

Participant Demographics, Sample by Workplace Location Category (n=33)

Workplace Location	N	%
Principals in Edo	11	33.3 %
Principals in Delta	11	33.3%
Principals in Bayelsa	11	33.3%

Table 6 provides the positions of the participants during the study. A total of 33 school principals participated in the study representing 100 % of the population of the study. Their participation was instrumental to the success of the study.

Table 6

Participant Demographics, Sample by Position Category (n=33)

Position	N	%
Principal	33	100%

In table 7, out of the 33 participants involved in the study, 12 have 5 to 9 years of working experience in Universal Basic Education. Represent 36 % of the total population of the study. The second population is 8 participants with 10 to 19 years of experience, presenting 24 % of

the population. The 11 participants had between 20 to 29 years of working experience, representing 33% of the population, and about 6% of the population had 30 years and above working experience. The minimum of five years of working experience for the participants was met. The experience of the participants involved in the study helped provide rich data that made the study a success.

Table 7

Participant Demographics, Sample by Working Experience Category (n=33)

Working Experience	N	%
1-4 years	0	0 %
5-9 years	12	36%
10-19 years	8	24%
20-29 years	11	33%
30+ years	2	6%

Table 8 below showcased the sample of the academic qualifications category of participants who participated in the study. 28 out of the 33 participants have a Bachelor of Education degree, representing 85% of the population. On the other hand, five participants had a master's degree in education, representing 15 percent of the population, while none with a Ph.D. Degree at the time of the study. The minimum academic qualification requirement set aside for the study was met and helped provide quality data for the research study.

Table 8

Participant Demographics, Sample by Qualification Category (n=33)

Qualifications	N	%
Bachelor of Education	28	85 %
Master of Education	5	15 %

PhD in Education	0	0 %
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Qualitative Deductive Content Analysis

The current study adopted a qualitative deductive content analysis method that helped organize and code the data collected from all the participants during the study. Elo et al. (2014) pointed out that qualitative content analysis can be applied using an inductive or deductive method. The methods involve three phases preparation, organization, and reporting (Elo et al., 2014). The research study used a deductive content analysis because the organization phase involves developing a categorization matrix, and the raw data can be reviewed for content and code (Elo et al., 2014). The researchers argued that the categorization matrix is valid if the categories denote the concepts and capture their intention (Schreier, 2012, cited in Elo et al., 2014). In the reporting stage, the results are described along with the content categories that explain the phenomenon (Elo et al., 2014). Again, Bengtsson (2016) stated that researchers could use content analysis in both qualitative and quantitative research methods and deductive and inductive approaches. In qualitative content analysis, the data presentation is in words and themes, enabling the possibility of interpreting the results (Bengtsson, 2016).

Bengtsson (2016) believes that the content analysis process helps reduce the text volume collected during the study and identify and group categories with better understanding. It is essential to note that predetermined knowledge and the researcher's familiarization with the topic are advantageous, provided it does not influence the participant's responses or interfere with the result interpretation (Bengtsson, 2016). The data collected from the participants are responses to the research questions of 33 school principals interviewed using interview protocol as a guide. Moreover, all the participants were allowed to verify and express their feelings regarding the

research questions. To avoid the researcher's opinion during the interview to help reduce bias and guarantee the interview questions are the opinion, words, and thoughts of the participant's responses. Before the analysis started, codes were allocated to all the participants to uphold ethical standards. The school principals were coded as SP 1 to SP 33 was used.

In qualitative content analysis, codes are prevalent, and researchers utilize codes to organize their data because the process allows researchers to categorize and interpret a large quantity of text systematically and rigorously (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). The codes are short and descriptive, assigned a summative feature with over one unit of meaning identified, and to create codes, the researcher needs to dip himself in the data by reading the text several times (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the process enables the researcher to familiarize himself with the data and emerging concepts that exist within the data (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). If the phenomenon describes the existing framework, then codes can be generated using the theoretical framework identified during the literature view (Kleinheksel et al., 2020).

It is essential to note that many researchers commence analysis with available codes based on their research questions and, in some cases, where the researcher has no previous theory (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). At the end of the interview, the analysis started with transcribing all the handwritten diaries. All the transcripts were validated with the participants to review their responses after the interview to ensure correctness. The data went through four stages of analysis following Bengtsson (2016), which identified four stages of qualitative content analysis: decontextualization, recontextualization, categorization, and compilation. The first stage of the analysis was the decontextualization stage familiarization of the data was done by reading

several times the transcribed text from the interviews and questionnaires to make sense and into smaller meaning units, as well as labeled with a code (Bengtsson, 2016).

The study adopted a deductive content analysis method, creating codes before the analysis started. Besides, Bengtsson (2016) supported that when a deductive reasoning design is used by a researcher, creating a coding list is essential before the analysis commences. The second stage deals with recontextualization to ensure all sections of the content are adequately captured after the meaning units are known by reading several times the original text along with the final meaning units to achieve the aim of the study (Bengtsson, 2016). Categorization was the third stage of the analysis, where themes and categories were identified, but the extended meaning units were reduced to achieve the same content. As such, the identified themes and categories are unique because no data was found between the two groups (Krippendorff, 2004; Patton, 2002, as cited in Bengtsson, 2016). The fourth stage was the compilation soon as the categories were well-established, the analysis and the writing process were done, and a summary of the themes and categories to allow readers to have an overview of the result was done (Bengtsson, 2016). In the end, the result of the data analysis presented eight identified themes and categories shown below, which will be discussed along with the research findings in detail in the subsequent section of this chapter.

- Leadership Training/ Professional Development
- Implementation of the UBE program
- Funding
- Planning and Data Management
- Condition of Service and Motivation

- Inspection and Supervision
- School Infrastructure
- Teaching and Learning

Evaluation of Findings

This section of the chapter provided a detailed evaluation of the research findings and the reconnection with the literature and the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework that guided this current study was transformational leadership theory. Past study has confirmed that transformational leaders have the capacity to increase the performance of their followers beyond expectations by building confidence resulting in a high level of inspiration (Bass et al., 1987; Podsakoff et al., 1990; Wang et al., 2011 as cited in Reza, 2019). It is important to note that transformational leaders encourage and support their followers by influencing their morale, motivation, awareness, and intellectual stimulation on the organizational objectives to achieve its vision (Bass et al., 1987; Metwally & El-bishbishy, 2014; Avolio & Bass, 1995; Bass, 1999 as cited in Reza, 2019). Transformational leadership theory is well situated in this study because the major aim and objective of the study are to look at the school principal leader's perspective in the implementation of the UBE program in the zone.

The study applied an interpretive/constructivist qualitative research approach using a phenomenological research design and the use of semi-structured face-face interview methods to collect rich data from the public-school principals within the South-South of Nigeria. Roberts (2020) qualitative research is an exploration of participant lifestyle that brings about the details of their life experiences, and qualitative researchers use an interview process to gather rich data from a complex situation. The researcher needs to have knowledge of the study objectives that

allow the researcher to collect a suitable methodology that helps in developing interview questions or protocol (Roberts, 2020). Furthermore, the qualitative research method provides the researcher the opportunity to collect in-depth narrative stories of participants' situations and help develop or improve existing theories to solve problems (Asadul & Faraj, 2022). Besides, during the interview, the researchers are expected not to guide or influence the participants in answering the questions, but their responses should be their original points of view (Moser & Irene, 2018). Meanwhile, the qualitative research method enables the researcher to study human events through a discussion section to help solve societal problems (UU, 2020). The semi-structured interview is generally designed to focus on the main research topic allowing the researcher to develop patterns in social sciences and uncovers the life stories of the participants with the aid of interview guide questions (Ruslin et al., 2022).

The study adopted a qualitative deductive content analysis approach for analyzing rich data collected from public school principals in the South-South of Nigeria. Qualitative deductive content analysis allows the generation of themes from the data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). deductive content analysis is a process that uses code to link themes and the use of theories as the foundation for the analysis (Pearse, 2019). Meanwhile, qualitative deductive content analysis uses a top to a bottom analytical, theoretical framework for the categorization of data (Hamilton & Erin, 2020). Before the analysis, codes were developed for the interview responses of the principals. A qualitative deductive content analysis was used in organizing and coding data collected from all the participants that agreed to participate in the study, and the method allowed preset of the themes before the analysis.

Frost et al. (2021) reported that qualitative content analysis applies a combination of inductive and deductive approaches for analyzing semantic content mirroring participant responses. Content analysis is a systematic process of codifying a large amount of text derived from interviews or articles and then reducing the content into controllable information that makes a valid judgment of the message received (Weber, 1990, as cited in Paoletti et al., 2021). Again, Nilsson and Emma (2021) support that deductive content analysis is a credible method when researchers want to explore a theory that encompasses the application of conceptual categories when analyzing a new context.

The deductive content analysis process can be summarized as a conclusion from the general to the specifics, and deductive content analysis allows the use of theories and knowledge from past research studies to improve and expound theoretical frameworks (Nilsson & Emma, 2021). Furthermore, deductive content analysis allows the researcher to identify any text that does not align with the existing theory or pre-determined categories and an opportunity to assign a new code that creates room for an inductive approach to analysis (Nilsson & Emma, 2021).

Codes were given to the school principals, and the school principals were coded SP 1 to SP 33 to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. Arifin (2018) argued that researchers need to protect the human subject through the application of suitable ethical principles in any research study is essential. The current study got appropriate approval from the Unicaf University Ethics Committee before the commencement of the data collection from the selected public-school principals in the South-South of Nigeria. All the participants in the research study gave their consent voluntarily to participate in the study. After the researcher briefed the participants on the aims and objectives of the study, all the participants signed off the consent

form as proof of their consent to provide rich data related to the research question during the interview section. All the names and identities of the participants were not revealed to ensure confidentiality.

Meanwhile, during the interview, principals were asked specific questions guided by the interview protocol. The participant responses were analyzed using qualitative deductive content analysis methodology. The method allows the researchers to read and reread the data and focus on how the participants responded to each of the questions and therefore categorize the information into themes that then provide the direction into the data to align with the themes already identified (Azungah & Rulinawaty, 2018). A summative description of the interview and the results from the participant's responses are shown below.

School Principals Interview Responses

Question 1: "What professional development/leadership training have you attended?"

SP 6 stated that "only God will come to the rescue of the UBE program because the level of neglect or disregard for the implementation is unimaginable although received training on school leadership and management." According to SP 9, "the government had good intension for the program to succeed, especially training and retraining of the workforce, but poor funding and corruption has hindered most training plans but privileged to have leadership training last year." Again, SP 22 pointed out that "the training of school principals is selective in nature because only the principals that are highly connected are trained but was lucky to get training on school management this year." Meanwhile, SP 24 claimed that "the leadership training received was helpful in the administration of the schools also improved personally." Furthermore, SP 29 revealed that "I have been fortunate to attend several professional development training

programs in the last five years, and I am indeed lucky and grateful to God." According to SP 32, "the training received was a workshop on leadership and administration in school last two years and no training in recent times."

Based on the interview responses, only 6 of the 33 school principals had professional development or leadership training in the last five years. While 27 of the school principals claimed no training was received due to lack of funding, the government does not have much interest in the educational sector because of an inadequate budget for education in the past years up to the present year. The school principals who did not receive any training on Leadership or other forms of professional development expressed their displeasure over the attitude of the government towards the development of school principals in the zone. During the analysis, the importance of Leadership and personal development were more revealed and a necessary skill to improve the UBE program.

The theoretical framework that underpins this study is transformational leadership theory. The main reason for adopting transformational leadership theory is because it helps lay the foundation for leaders to influence and motivate their subordinates to perform beyond expectation with the intention to provide innovative solutions that will improve the organization beyond expectation (Krishnan, 2005, as cited in Givens, 2008). Meanwhile, several organizations are using the refined version of Burn's transformation leadership theory due to its wide acceptability for over four decades (Bass, 1985; Bass, Waldman, Avolio, & Bebb, 1987; Tichy & Devanna, 1986 as cited in Givens, 2008).

In addition, transformational leadership theory enables leaders to motivate and educate their followers on the organizational objectives and expectations and the best method required

to achieve the goals beyond expectation (Bass, 1985, as cited in Givens, 2008). It has been well established that transformational leadership theory is a perfect form of Leadership with a superior approach when compared to other forms of leadership theories (Burns, 1978, as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015). Unfortunately, the current study conducted revealed that 27 out of the 33 school principals interviewed did not receive any form of Leadership or professional development training because of the government's attitude towards education and inadequate funding of the UBE program.

Question 2: "What are your views on the assessment of the aim and objectives of the Universal Basic Education program?"

In the responses to question 2, SP 1 believes that "the Universal Basic Education program has not achieved its aim and objectives because the program is not given the need attention such as proper planning, adequate funding, and so on." Most principals' responses revealed that the UBE program is yet to achieve its aim and objectives. As in the case of SP 4, "the UBE program is a good initiative, but over the years, the government has not given the right attention to the program. For example, inadequate funding is a major issue". While SP 7 believes that "the program should be well funded with articulated plans and strategic implementation program if the government wants to achieve the aim and objective of the program."

Besides, SP 11 said that "lack of planning and data management, as well as supervision and monitoring of the program implementation, is a major concern." Again, according to SP 15, "the school infrastructures are in a deplorable state due to lack of interest and no funds available for maintenance which is a great issue that must be corrected." SP 17 pointed out that "the aim and objective of the program can never be achieved if funding is underplayed." During the

interview, the response of SP 19 revealed that "planning and data management is a major issue that has hindered the UBE program." On the other hand, SP 21 believes that "the UBE program has brought a lot of out-of-school children back to school, which was one of the primary objectives of the program." Meanwhile, SP 24 is of the opinion that "the UBE program is a total failure as a result of poor school infrastructures, lack of inspection and supervision, poor condition of service, and the low morale of school principals."

Notwithstanding, in the case of SP 26, she claimed that "the UBE has made some achievement in providing free education that helped many children to go back to school." In the end, only two school principals feel that the aim and the objectives of the UBE program have been achieved, while 31 out of 33 school principals are of the opinion that the UBE program is yet to achieve its aim and objectives because of some of the reasons mentioned above. These are major indicators that help in the development of the theme because they demonstrate that many of the school principals believe that the UBE program is yet to achieve its aim and objectives.

The findings from 31 out of 33 school principals in the current study show that the Universal Basic Education program has not met its aims and objectives of providing free compulsory basic education for children of school age in the zone. The claim by the school principals is in line with some of the author's arguments in the literature review sections, such as Ajayi (2006, as cited in Uwakwe, 2020), that also claimed that after many years of establishing the UBE program in Nigeria, the program has failed to achieve its objectives just like every other past educational program. Some of the major challenges that hindered the program are inadequate funding, decayed school infrastructure, little or no instructional material, high level

of illiteracy still recorded, school dropouts, and many others (Lawanson & Gede, 2011; Aguba, 2009; Igwe, 2007, as cited in Uwakwe, 2020).

Question 3: "On a scale of 1 to 10, where ten is the highest, and one is the lowest, how would you rate the performance of the UBE program and why?"

The response to question 3 shows that only two school principals rated the UBE performance high; according to SP 21, "the UBE program can be rated as 6 in terms of its performance because a lot of children left the street and back to school". At the same time, SP 27 pointed out that "the performance of the UBE program is rated seven because it is free and compulsory education, so children of the poor have the opportunity to have basic education." On the other hand, 31 out of 33 school principals rated the performance of the UBE program as low between a range of 3 and 5 because of poor planning of its implementation program, inadequate funding, poor data management, poor condition of service, poor condition of service, decay in school infrastructure, and lack of training and personal development.

Based on the responses from most of the participants, it only shows that the performance of the UBE program is low and needs some improvement in the areas mentioned above to achieve a better outcome. Most of the challenges are some of the gaps identified during the literature review section as such Osarenren-Osaghae, and Irabor (2018) revealed that the government develops good educational policies, but implementation is a major challenge because of poor planning that, in turn, affects the school planners, and administrators from doing their work. Furthermore, the planning and management of the educational system is a key success factor and a shared responsibility. Unfortunately, the planning of basic education has been criticized by many scholars for years (Ogunode, 2018). The professional development of

teachers is essential and can be achieved if competent persons are assigned to regularly supervise the teachers (Nwaka, 2009).

Question 4: "What are your views on the funding of the UBE program?"

During the interview, all 33 participants were asked about their views on the funding of the UBE program 100 % of the school principals claimed that funding was a fundamental issue that must be urgently addressed for the program's survival. Funding is a big issue in the implementation of the UBE. It is essential to note that it is impossible to implement any good program without adequate funding because it will surely not achieve its set goals. The impact of poor funding based on the participant's feedback could be summarized as follows. Because of the insufficient funding in the educational sector, implementing the UBE program became a challenge. The poor school infrastructure was because of a lack of funds to purchase or repair damaged infrastructure in most public schools. Again, the inadequate funding of the school system has affected the morale of school principals and the teacher's ability to perform their duties. Because of poor funding, salaries are delayed, and the service condition for the school principals and teachers is not encouraging. The inadequate funding was the main reason why teaching staff was not compared to other professional counterparts with the same qualifications. Poor funding has hampered the inspection and supervision of the UBE program because the supervisor does not have regular funding logistics to move around schools to perform their duties.

The current findings show that all 33 school principals claimed that funding for the UBE is inadequate. These claims were noted by several researchers during the literature review period; some of the authors, Obun et al. (2018), complained that the funding of the UBE program is

inadequate because, in 2018, the budget allocation was 7.04 percent instead of the recommended 26 percent suggested by UNESCO. Lelei (2019) believes that much investment has been made in the education sector, but no meaningful result has been achieved. At the same time, Obun et al. (2018) revealed that some parents removed their children from schools because of financial demand from some school authorities because the government could not fund the UBE program as promised.

Question 5: "What school infrastructural development program is in place?"

Again, the responses from 29 out of the 33 principals that participated revealed that the school infrastructure is in a high-level deplorable state as such, not conducive for teaching and learning. The response from SP 4 stated that "the government just completed two blocks of classrooms with toilet facilities, although more work needs to be done in the area of the library." According to SP 11, "the school building is in a terrible state, but in recent times the government has been engaged in classroom renovation and provision of chairs and tables for students and teachers.

It will only get better with time". Furthermore, the response of SP 19 claimed that "the government has been responsive to renovating school infrastructures such as the renovation of classroom blocks and building of new ones and provision of blackboards." The response of SP 28 stated that "the school has challenges with decayed school infrastructure for many years only last year the government came to their rescue by building a new set of classroom blocks with new school furniture." Based on the school principal's response, there are no missing words to say that school infrastructure needs urgent attention to simulate quality teaching and learning and help improve the UBE program to achieve its objectives.

29 out of 33 school principals believed that the school infrastructure was deplorable, as identified in the literature review section. Ogbonnia (2020) claimed that the unfriendly school environment is a result of the deplorable school infrastructure that negatively impacts teaching and learning activities, mainly because of poor funding.

Question 6: "Do you have the required support to perform your duty, and if not, why?"

According to SP1, "the necessary support required for performing my duties such as funding and school infrastructure is not provided." Based on the research findings, the lack of funding and school infrastructure with others to support the school principals in performing their duties as expected is a challenge to all 33 principals. Another response from SP 17 stated that "no funding provided to run the school; sometimes we request the students to collect money from their parents to buy as little as writing materials for the teacher." Again, SP 33 claimed that "lack of funding has led to the dilapidation of school infrastructure, making it difficult to perform their duties." Again, when funding and the relevant tools are not provided, performance becomes ineffective with poor results. Poor funding of the educational system in Nigeria is another major challenge that has hindered the implementation of the UBE program, even in senior secondary and higher education (Ogbonnia, 2020).

Question 7: "Are there adequate qualified and trained teachers?"

Based on the responses from the interview of the 33 school principals, trained and qualified teachers are available to a large extent, although with a few cases where unqualified teachers are engaged because of their political affiliations and connections at the top. The response from SP 14 revealed that "we do have enough qualified teaching professionals, but sometimes people with another type of academic qualifications are posted to us from the top."

SP 21 said, "we cannot question the authorities on a few occasions when they post unqualified persons to teach in our school but to be fair, we have enough qualified teachers." It is important to note that qualified teachers are the bedrock for quality education in our institutions of learning, and the study revealed remarkable achievements in this area.

Question 8: "Are there qualified and motivated classroom teachers, and if not, why?"

All the responses from the 33 school principals show that there are qualified teachers but no motivation because of the poor condition of service. The teacher morale is very low. Most school principals emphasize the important role schoolteachers play in the implementation of the UBE program through effective teaching and learning, but the situation is bad even with qualified teachers available to do the job. This is because the poor condition of the school infrastructures, inadequate instructional material, inadequate textbooks, and others makes the implementation process challenging to achieve.

SP 3 believes that "teachers' reward is in Heaven because no immediate plans to improve the condition of service." In the case of SP 15 agreed that "most teaching professionals have lost interest in the teaching profession and now looking for other opportunities because of lack of motivation and poor condition of service." Also, SP 24 stated that "the school system is gradually collapsing because qualified teachers are not compensated well, making them lose interest." According to SP 31, "what can we do when the government is not willing to increase the education budget so that the UBE can be well funded to help in improving the condition of service?" The condition of service for teaching professionals in the government and private sectors is discouraging and affects morale, performance, and productivity (Anaduaka & Chinyere, 2013).

Question 9: "Are there other challenges you think have hindered the UBE program mention as many as possible?"

The study shows several challenges affecting the UBE program, from not actualizing its aims and objectives. Some of the challenges include but are not limited to inadequate funding, a fundamental problem in the education sector in Nigeria for several decades now. Lack of political will to ensure the implementation of the UBE program because the government shows little or no interest in the educational sector. Corruption is another main problem because the little funding provided finds its way into corrupt leaders that divert the funds for personal use. The school principals and teachers lost interest in the job because of the poor condition of service, and the government is not making any plan to improve the condition of service of the teaching staff.

The poor state of the school infrastructure is a critical situation that requires urgent attention and many other issues but to mention a few. When SP 7 was asked during the interview what the challenges were, SP 7 stated that "the major challenge is lack of political will and inadequate funding of the program." Based on the response from SP 15 stated that "the inability of the government to provide the necessary funding that will provide enabling environment for the provision of school infrastructure, logistics for inspection, and supervision and good condition of service for the teaching staff are missing." Suleiman (2016) argued that the lack of effective supervision is also responsible for the failure of educational policies. Supervision helps to ascertain performance, and school improvement, ensure accurate academic records and professional development, and maintain standards.

Question 10: "How do you think the implementation of the UBE program can be improved?"

Most of the research participants believe that if there are political will and the government using the ministry of education down to the state universal basic education board puts in the needed attention to ensure the implementation of the UBE program succeeds, the program will experience a high level of improvement. Secondly, inadequate funding of the program is a critical challenge that the government needs to increase the funding of the education sector urgently and deliberately in line with the 26 % of its annual budget allocated to education as recommended by UNESCO. Effective planning and data management by the planning team is critical to the survival of the program. The monitoring and supervision of the UBE program need to be activated and ensure effective funding to enhance their performance. Building and repair of deplorable school infrastructure are critical. Improving the condition of service of the school principals and teachers will help to improve the UBE program.

SP 29 claimed that "the UBE program is a laudable educational program made to reduce illiteracy in the society, but if the government gives it the right attention with regards to adequate funding, effective planning, and data management, there will surely be an improvement." SP 33 believes "that because of the poor condition of service, lack of motivation amongst others has made teachers look for alternative jobs outside the teaching profession that will help reduce the financial burden, but if these issues are addressed it will go a long way to improve the program." SP 11 argued that "if the funding and condition of service, monitoring, and supervision of the UBE program are improved and well implemented it will help improve the system." Musa and Joshua (2017) argued that even if the UBE program is free and compulsory, without addressing the poor condition of service of teaching professionals, the UBE program will not achieve its objectives.

Summary of the Section

In summary, chapter 4 started with an overview of the research and the purpose of the research study aimed at investigating and analyzing the problems associated with the public-school principal's perspectives on the leadership styles in the implementation of the UBE within the South-South of Nigeria. The study adopted an interpretive/constructivist qualitative research approach using a phenomenological research design and the use of semi-structured face-face interview methods to collect rich data from the public-school principals within the South-South of Nigeria.

The researcher used an interview guide to collect data, and the data were analyzed using qualitative deductive content analysis. The research questions focused on planning, funding, school infrastructure, training, and professional development among others. The study provided some recommendations to help provide a sustainable solution to the challenges affecting the implementation of the UBE program. The UBE program was established in Nigeria to provide free and compulsory basic education to help reduce the level of pupils and students dropping out of school and provide the necessary skills for life-long learning (Aliyu, 2022). A study revealed that when knowledge is built on a solid foundation, the individual and society benefit from the outcome of the knowledge (Ibrahim et al., 2022). The result findings were evaluated alongside the five research questions developed and supported by an interview guide to collect rich primary data from the selected school principals in the South-South of Nigeria. The participant's demographics were presented for clarity by using tables to capture their age group, gender, position at work, academic qualification, working experience, and work locations, further helping to validate the participant's information in the current study (Creswell, 2009).

Chapter 4 looked at the trustworthiness of the research study. Lincoln and Guba funded trustworthiness, which helped to improve its credibility in qualitative research (Lemon & Hayes, 2020). Again, trustworthiness is the foundation upon which the quality of the qualitative research method is positioned (Jeff & Corey, 2020). The trustworthiness of the research study guarantees the collection of rich primary data, discussed, and examined logically using the research questions in line with established criteria for the research findings. Trustworthiness helps to drive the quality of the research process and provides solutions that deal with the reliability and validity of the research study (Rose & Corey, 2020).

The present study ensured that the quality and credibility of the collected data and the research findings based on the five qualitative research questions and interview protocol were verified and certified by education experts. In a qualitative research study, trustworthiness indicates that the findings can be trusted using the following criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Korstjens & Albine, 2018). The current study utilized an open approach to help provide a friendly atmosphere between the researcher and the participants through the in-person engagement of the selected participants for the study to help build a friendly relationship and trust and credible information. A Study has shown that openness enables researchers to gain access to the participant's worldview, which helps in effective collaboration between both parties (Kapiszewski & Sebastian, 2019).

The study adopted a thick description for coding and confidentiality of the research participants. The thick description helps in describing and interpreting behavior with a context leading to the thick meaning of research findings and credibility (Ponterotto, 2006). Meanwhile, the openness method provides a friendly atmosphere through physical visitation to the selected

participants to establish relationships and trust that bring about credible and valid information. Openness helps researchers to assess and evaluate qualitative investigation through effective collaboration of both parties (Kapiszewski & Sebastian, 2019). The study used thick descriptions to code the research participants and to ensure the confidentiality of the participants is intact because the process helps the researcher to gain the participant's experience and actions and describes their emotions and feelings (Ponterotto, 2006).

The reliability and validity of the data were examined in chapter 4 of the study. The reliability and validity of the research data were examined to justify the accuracy and consistency of the research data. Reliability justifies the research method used during the study, and it symbolizes the method used is dependable and that the procedure for analysis is reliable (Rose & Corey, 2020). Reliability confirms the consistency and clarity of the study, therefore increasing the likelihood of additional researchers applying the same method (Creswell, 2013, as cited in Jeff & Corey, 2020). On the other hand, validity is an assurance that the intended tool flawlessly measures the phenomena under investigation (Slettebo, 2020). The researcher used member checking to strengthen the validity of the current study by cross-checking research findings with the participant for correctness. Member check is also seen as participant validation, where the researcher contacts the research participants to validate the research findings, themes, and interpretation (Bloor, 1978; Creswell, 2002; Tracy, 2010, as cited in Slettebo, 2020).

The current study used member checks to validate its research findings by cross-checking the data with the participants. Member check is a systematic way of showcasing the reliability of the process in ensuring the research findings are confirmed by the research participants (McDonald et al., 2019). Researchers must have a clear knowledge of the research objectives

before using member check to ensure it fits with the research design and the process involved in sending the interview transcript to the participants for review and validation (Birt et al., 2016).

The result of the research findings was explained after the collection of rich data from 33 school principals from the South-South of Nigeria. A qualitative semi-structured face-to-face interview was used to collect data from the school principals used for the collection of primary data from the schoolteachers. It is critical to note that the collection of data through interviews and after analysis helps the researcher develop emerging themes and categories and after evaluation provides a better understanding of the phenomena (Newman, 2003). Furthermore, researchers need to analyze the raw interview data to the point when the theory emerges (Korstjens & Albine, 2018). Meanwhile, five research questions guided the research direction, and the interview guide questions were derived from the research questions. The qualitative research method allows the researcher to gather data that helps in answering the research questions with the permission of the participants involved in the study (Creswell, 2012).

Qualitative analysis is a process that allows the grouping of a large volume of information into a smaller, precise, and structured statement (Polit & Beck, 2004). The current study applied a qualitative deductive content analysis for analyzing the data because the method help rests the researcher make sense of the collected data. Qualitative deductive content analysis allows the researcher to retrieve themes from the data directly and application of coding (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Besides, Pearse (2019) stated that deductive content analysis is driven by code and the connection of themes using theories as the foundation of the analysis. A deductive content analysis method has three stages, the preparation stage, the organization stage, and the reporting stage (Elo et al., 2014).

The study addressed all the questions presented to the participants selected for the study based on their experience with Universal Basic Education. The demographic of the research participants was captured in a tabular format showing their gender, age group, academic qualification, working experience, work location, and positions. The researcher is responsible for presenting demographic information in detail to help validate the participant information, for example, the participant's gender, age qualifications, and working experience as it relates to the current study (Creswell, 2009).

The evaluation of the current study was explored in chapter 4, and the current study used the qualitative semi-structured interview to obtain quality data from the school principals. Roberts (2020) reported that it is vital for researchers to understand the aims and objectives of the research study so that an appropriate methodology can be adopted and help develop interview questions. Besides, the semi-structured interview focuses more on the research topic and the development of patterns that unearth the life situation of the participants using interview-guided questions (Ruslin et al., 2022). The present study applied qualitative deductive content analysis to analyze the data collected from the research participants. Qualitative deductive content analysis is a reliable and credible method for exploring a theory that involves the use of conceptual categories for analyzing a new context (Nilsson & Emma, 2021). A qualitative deductive content analysis method was used to analyze the data collected from the participants. The data were analyzed through a four-stage process that involves decontextualization, recontextualization, categorization, and compilation (Bengtsson, 2016).

An in-depth evaluation of the research findings was explained and connected to past literature review-related issues. All the participants were coded to maintain a high level of

confidentiality, and the participant's responses were presented using the interview guide question as a guide for addressing the issues. Pearse (2019) claimed that qualitative deductive content analysis is a code-oriented process that connects and uses themes to reinforce the foundation of the analysis. Hamilton and Erin (2020) reported that deductive content analysis help researchers develop a theoretical framework using a top-down system that categorizes the data (Hamilton & Erin, 2020). The semi-structured interview conducted with the help of the interview guide protocol captured the 33 school principal's responses based on their experiences on the topic of discussion. Before the analysis, all the school principals were given codes to represent the school principals to ensure the confidentiality of the research participants.

The code given to the school principals was SP 1 to SP 33, and during the period of the interview, participants were asked questions based on the interview guide questions derived from the research questions. The responses from the participants were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The contribution of Azungah and Rulinawaty (2018) believe that deductive content analysis provides a platform for researchers to read over and over the data collected and then concentrate on the participant's responses to the questions and then categorize them into themes and align them with already identified themes. A brief description of the interview and the responses highlighted and based on the evaluation findings revealed that most of the challenges hindering the successful implementation of the UBE program exist to date.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION.

Introduction to the section

The study adopted an interpretive/constructivist qualitative research approach using a phenomenological research design and semi-structured face-face interview methods to collect and analyze rich data from public school principals in Nigeria's South-South. The inability of citizens to achieve primary education harms any society (Abah & Victor, 2021). The benefits

associated with education made the Nigerian government establish the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in Nigeria in 1999 by President Olusegun Obasanjo (Yamma & Danjuma, 2018). The UBE program aimed to help provide free quality and compulsory basic education to Nigerian children of school age (Yamma & Danjuma, 2018). Regrettably, the UBE program was characterized by several challenges that did not allow it to achieve its set objectives because of poor planning, insufficient funding, decayed school infrastructures, lack of motivation, teacher's poor condition of service, and many others (Adirika & Oluwatayo, 2013). The terrible state of the basic educational system due to the lack of school infrastructures, low morale of schoolteachers, and poor student performance during examinations is a concern that has affected the smooth implementation of the UBE program in the country (Oladimeji & Tunji, 2019).

Unfortunately, past research study has shown that Nigeria has about 10.5 million out-of-school children positioning the country as one of the worst in Africa, making the dream of education for all far from reality (Ogunode et al., 2020). Notwithstanding the massive investment in education in Nigeria to help improve the educational sector, little was achieved regarding the quality of education (Lelei, 2019). The challenges in the educational sector, especially basic education, can be seen in deplorable school infrastructure, inadequate school libraries, inadequate learning, and teaching aids, and high school dropouts (Obun et al., 2018). Another concern in the educational system in the country is the negative influence of politicians on education because political leaders dictate what happens in their favor since they are responsible for the funding of education (Ukpong, 2017). Inadequate planning is another going concern that

hindered the effective implementation of the UBE due to poor funding and insufficiently skilled professionals (Ogunode, 2018).

Furthermore, Oladimeji and Tunji (2019) complained that the UBE has failed to meet its desired objectives because of the system's ineffectiveness; as such, it could not help eradicating illiteracy and provide the needed development as anticipated. The inadequate funding of the educational sector is a significant showstopper, and the government needs to increase funding of the education sector to improve the quality of education in line with the UNESCO recommendation that nations should set aside 26% of the Gross Domestic Product for education (Abul et al., 2017). Numerous out-of-school children on the street are helpless and do not have access to basic education, which was why the government established the UBE program (Emeka & Godwin, 2015). Many parents withdrew their children from school because of the inability of the government to provide free basic education as promised (Obun et al., 2018). The UBE program is characterized by poor management, inadequate qualified teachers, poor school infrastructure, and a shortage of supervisors (Yamma & Danjuma, 2018).

The government's role cannot be underestimated in policy implementation in any successful educational program because the policies affect the country's education by restructuring existing programs (Bolaji et al., 2016). It is a known fact that basic education is an essential investment any nation can give its citizenry because it is a fundamental human right for a successful foundation for all higher levels of education built upon (Ogbonnia, 2020). Besides, basic education is an early childhood education that exposes the child to the first level of education, comprised of six years of compulsory primary education and a three-year junior secondary education (Ogunode, 2018). The purpose of the study is to collect rich data from the

selected participants to share their experiences on the school leadership and implementation of the UBE program in the zone and to close out the existing gaps identified during the literature review in chapter two of the dissertation. The study also aims to contribute to existing knowledge and theory development and provide recommendations based on the participant's input during the research study.

The study adopted an interpretive/constructivist qualitative research approach using a phenomenological research design and the use of semi-structured face-face interview methods to collect and analyze rich data from 33 public school principals within the South-South of Nigeria. The developed research questions helped to collect primary data that revealed the UBE planning, curriculum, funding, and other issues of the program and provided a recommendation that will help improve the system based on the participant's point of view. Before the data collection process started, all the research participants were coded for confidentiality. The guided questions from the interview protocol were extracted from the study research questions and were used for the collection of data from the rich experience of the school principals. After that, a qualitative deductive content analysis was used for the data analysis.

Ethical consideration was given high attention to avoid ethical challenges associated with research studies of this nature. Approval was received before the study commenced, and all the selected participants were duly informed and issued a gatekeeper letter. After that, a meeting was held with all the participants to explain the purpose of the study. All the participants that accepted to participate in the study signed off the informed consent form and were told it was voluntary participation and they could withdraw at any time. Fleming and Karsten (2018) suggested that it is essential for researchers to obtain approval from the relevant body when conducting a research

study that involves human subjects. All the participants were given a high level of assurance of confidentiality. Arifin (2018) recommended that participants' confidentiality and protection be considered when conducting a research study.

Chapter 5 started with an introduction that briefly looked at the public-school principal leader perspectives in the implantation of UBE in the zone, adopting an interpretive/constructivist qualitative research approach using a phenomenological research design and the use of semi-structured face-face interview method to collect rich data from the public-school principals within the South-South of Nigeria. A brief discussion on the problem statement of the research study explained and revealed some of the challenges that hindered the smooth implementation of the UBE program within the zone. Some of the challenges highlighted were inadequate funding, poor school infrastructure, insufficiently qualified schoolteachers, a high rate of out-of-school children, and many more recorded. The purpose of the study was to collect rich primary data from the research participants based on their personal experiences with the research questions. The study also aimed at closing identified research gaps discovered during the literature review period of the study. The study contributed new knowledge to the existing knowledge and will offer recommendations based on the study's insight to help improve the sector. The research method used for data collection was a semi-structured physical interview, and a qualitative deductive content analysis was used for the data analysis. Ethical issues were considered, and appropriate approval was received before the study started.

The research implications were discussed around the research questions, with a logical conclusion based on the research findings. The section discussed the limitations observed and their implications on the research findings. The research findings are linked to the study problem

and examine the expected results with the literature review findings in chapter 2. In the subsequent sections of chapter 5, the implications of practice are examined concerning the applied degree and the existing body of research on the topic. A detailed discussion of the recommendations for further research and a broad conclusion is explored at the chapter's end. Chapter 5 started with an introduction that briefly examined the study of public-school principal's perspectives on the leadership styles in implementing UBE in the zone using a qualitative research method for data collection. A brief discussion on the problem statement of the research study explained and revealed some of the challenges that hindered the smooth implementation of the UBE program within the zone. Some of the significant challenges highlighted were inadequate funding, poor school infrastructure, insufficiently qualified schoolteachers, a high rate of out-of-school children, and many more were recorded.

The purpose of the study aimed to collect rich primary data from the research participants based on their personal experience with the research questions with the view of closing identified research gaps discovered during the literature review period of the study. The study will contribute new knowledge to the existing knowledge and offer recommendations based on the study's insight to help improve the sector. The research method used for data collection was a semi-structured physical interview, and a qualitative deductive content analysis was used for the data analysis. Ethical issues were considered, and approval was given before the study started. The research implications were discussed around the research questions, with a logical conclusion based on the research findings. The section discussed the assumptions, delimitations, and limitations observed and their implications on the research findings. The research findings are linked to the study problem and the results to the literature review findings in chapter 2. In

the subsequent sections of chapter 5, the implications of practice are examined concerning the applied degree and the existing body of research on the topic. A detailed discussion of the recommendations for further research and a comprehensive conclusion at the end of the chapter was provided.

Implications

The study was characterized by assumptions based on the purpose of the study. The first assumption deals with the school principal's responses to the qualitative interview protocol questions that allow the principals to express their views and life experiences on each question. The qualitative research method using an interview guide allows the participants to respond to questions based on their life experiences (Asadul & Faraj, 2022). The rationale was based on the selected participant's ability to respond to the open-ended research questions used for the study because the ten interview-guided questions enabled the participants to provide in-depth data on the existing problems. The second assumption was impartiality upheld during the interview process, and the rationale was based on seeking undiluted and rich data from the participants based on their work experience as it relates to the questions and to avoid bias in the data collected.

Price and Judy (2004) believe that limitations in any given study could be challenges encountered during the study that can influence the interpretations or the outcome of the result. In contrast, Olayinka (2013) stated that limitations are issues beyond the researcher's control and can influence the study result. This research study is just like every other study with some limitations. The first limitation of the study data collection was performed during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. When the movement of persons is restricted to prevent the further spread of the virus, it was a challenge for the researcher to perform the interview until safety protocols

were put in place by the government, and the lockdown was suspended before the data was collected from the participants. The second limitation shows that the research study cannot be generalized because the study's outcome is limited to just the selected participants within the zone where the study was conducted. The third limitation, three participants who are officials of the state universal basic education board disagreed to participate in the study due to political reasons. The fourth limitation is that using software such as the QSR NVivo 8 program would have assisted in organizing the participants' data. The use of software helps quicken and organize the analysis process.

The current study was restricted to the study of public-school principal's perspectives on the leadership styles in implementing the Universal Basic Education program in the South-South, Nigeria. The selected schools were spread across three states Edo state, Delta state, and Bayelsa state making it a challenge to travel across the various state during the COVID-19 pandemic era limited the number of participants ready to participate in the study. The schoolteacher data were excluded from the study because of the limited number of teachers available to participate at the time of data collection. The excluded participant's views were not included in the study, and their points of view could have impacted the resulting outcome.

The ethical dimension of the study was considered to prevent ethical issues. Hence, all necessary approval was obtained before the study, and participation was made voluntary with the consent of all the participants. Getting ethical approval is essential when it involves human subjects before collecting data from the participants (Fleming & Karsten, 2018). The confidentiality of the participants was a top priority, and participants could discontinue the study at any point in time. A study has shown that the anonymity and confidentiality of participants

should be considered, and their protection during any research study should be maintained (Arifin, 2018). The limitation of the study was discussed and organized around the research questions, as shown below.

The research questions were used to collect qualitative, rich narrative data from 33 school principals in the South-South of Nigeria. The participants were selected based on their experience with the research topic. Hamilton and Erin (2020) stated that the qualitative method of research findings enables experienced participants to independently answer research questions based on their working experience. The under-listed five research questions were used to uncover the research findings.

- RQ1. How can you ascertain if adequate planning is made to implement the curriculum of the UBE program?
- RQ2. What is the level of funding available for implementing the Universal Basic Education Program?
- RQ3. What are your views on recruiting qualified and adequate staff for implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme?
- RQ4. Why do you think there are adequate or inadequate facilities to implement the Universal Basic Education Programme?
- RQ5. What are your opinion on staff periodic retraining for the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme?

A qualitative semi-structured face-to-face interview was conducted to address the above research questions. Thirty-three school principals and their view on the subject matter was collected. The collected data were analyzed using a qualitative deductive content analysis

method. The preset themes were identified before the analysis, and the preset themes were searched within the data collected from the participants during the analysis. The eight preset identified themes were the basis for comparing interviews and results and then linked to existing literature that supported the study's findings. The response to the research questions is discussed below.

Response to the Research Questions

- RQ1. How can you ascertain if adequate planning is made to implement the UBE Curriculum?
- RQ2. What is the level of funding available for implementing the Universal Basic Education Program?
- RQ3. What are your views on recruiting qualified and adequate staff for implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme?
- RQ4. Why do you think there are adequate or inadequate facilities to implement the Universal Basic Education Programme?
- RQ5. What are your opinion on staff periodic retraining for the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme?

The first research question aimed at finding “How can you ascertain if adequate planning is made to implement the UBE Curriculum?” A detailed evaluation and analysis of the data from the school principals show that the level of planning of the UBE curriculum within the South-South is not encouraging. The data revealed that funding, poor school infrastructure, lack of textbooks, and poor teachers' condition of service negatively affected the program curriculum implementation. Many of the school principals believed that the planning for the implementation

of the UBE curriculum and program were poorly managed and implemented. The second research question addressed “What is the level of funding available for implementing the Universal Basic Education Program? The research findings show that the UBE program's funding level is inadequate based on all the school principal's perspectives. The participants all believed that the UBE's poor funding was responsible for the failure of the program's implementation because, without funding, the school infrastructure and others cannot be achieved.

The third research question centered on “What are your views on recruiting qualified and adequate staff for implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme?” On the issue of recruitment, the study shows that there are adequate qualified teachers, with some cases where unqualified teachers are engaged because of their connections at the top. The fourth research question looked at “Why do you think there are adequate or inadequate facilities to implement the Universal Basic Education Programme?” Again, the study shows that the greatest challenge of the program implementation is inadequate funding of the UBE program. The school principals confirmed that the poor funding of the UBE program led to the deplorable state of the school infrastructure seen in most of the government-owned schools. The research finding opened the fact that the UBE program witnessed some remarkable progress at the beginning of its implementation because it took several children out of the street in the South-South of the country. In recent times the study revealed that the UBE program experienced several challenges, such as inadequate funding, decayed school infrastructure, lack of motivation of the school principals and schoolteachers, poor condition of service, and others that affected the smooth implementation of the UBE program within the zone. The fifth research question addressed the

situation that sick to know “What are your opinion on staff periodic retraining for the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme?” Meanwhile, little professional development training for principals/teachers was observed and recorded based on the research findings. Lack of motivation as well as poor worker's condition of service, planning, and supervision challenges, among others. A general call by all the participants requested the government to increase the budgetary allocation of education so that the UBE program can be funded appropriately to avert the total failure of the program.

Generally, all the participants that participated in the study argued that the funding of the UBE program is well funded by increasing the education budget, which will help improve the system. Many participants also recommended that planning, inspection, and supervision would improve if the right motivation were provided to the workforce and improved workers' condition of service. Another area that the participants believed could improve the UBE program is to address the decayed school infrastructure, professional development of educators, and engagement of more qualified teachers and committed supervisors.

Discussion of the Findings with Relationship to the Literature

The section discussed the findings as it relates to the literature and the relationship between the findings and the study's theoretical framework. The discussion of the leadership concepts, UBE program implementation, funding and leadership training, and professional development was examined. Planning and data management, as well as the condition of service, inspection, and supervision analyzed. Then the issues of school infrastructure and teaching and learning have also discussed the relationship between the findings and the Theoretical Framework. The study's theoretical framework comprises Grant and Osanloo (2014), which supported the use of

the theoretical framework as a foundation for a dissertation; it enables knowledge creation and helps provide the research direction. Lederman & Lederman (2015) theoretical framework justifies and validates the worth of a research study method either by mixed methods, quantitative or qualitative methods. The theoretical framework that guided this study was Burns (1978) transformational leadership theory because the theory supports the leader in inspiring the followers to achieve innovative solutions and high-performance capabilities for improving the workplace environment (Marturano & Gosling, 2008; Patiar & Mia, 2009 as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015). Furthermore, the Transformation leadership theory was established in the 20th century during the study of political leaders' performance, and it enables the leader to influence the subordinate to raise their motivation to do more than expected (Burns, 1978). In this case, the study adopted an interpretive/constructivist qualitative research approach using a phenomenological research design and the use of semi-structured face-face interview methods to collect and analyze rich data from the public-school principals within the South-South of Nigeria.

The Case for the Implementation of the UBE Program

During the literature review of this study, Agbowuro and Hayatu (2014) revealed that without an effective and quality education, no nation will achieve any meaningful development. Besides, Oladele (2018) stated that modern society recently aimed at reducing illiteracy by providing quality education to create a better life and transform society into a better place. Mvendaga (2014) argued that most of the challenges associated with the UBE program were improper planning in the educational policy. Furthermore, Agbowuro and Hayatu (2014) pointed out that the UBE program was aimed at providing positive change but was characterized by

inadequate school infrastructure, funding challenges, and a lack of laboratories. Past study shows that about eight million children between the ages of six to 15 years are out of school (Bolaji et al., 2016).

Unfortunately, the current study still identified most of the challenges the past researchers identified that hindered the successful implementation of the UBE program within the South-South of the country. Based on the research findings, the UBE aimed to provide high-quality compulsory and free basic education to help improve the lives of the people in the zone, but regrettably, it is yet to achieve its objectives because of several challenges. The study is in line with the challenges identified in the literature reviewed in chapter 2 of this study. The challenges include but are not limited to inadequate funding, poor school infrastructure, poor planning, poor condition of service, and lack of motivation.

The Case for the Funding of the UBE Program

Funding of the educational sector has been a critical challenge that has hindered the implementation of the UBE program because of inadequate yearly budgetary downward allocation and unequally distributed allocation across the states of the federation (Obun et al., 2018). Inadequate funding is a critical challenge that has affected the educational sector in achieving its objective (Onyebueke, 2014). The findings of Adekunle (2019) show that education funding is capital intensive and is done through budgetary allocation every year, but corruption has hindered the system. Inadequate funding is a critical challenge that has affected the educational sector in achieving its objective (Onyebueke, 2014). The findings of Adekunle (2019) show that education funding is capital intensive and is done through budgetary allocation every year, but corruption has hindered the system.

Inadequate funding is a critical challenge that has affected the educational sector in achieving its objective (Onyebueke, 2014). The findings of Adekunle (2019) show that education funding is capital intensive and is done through budgetary allocation every year, but corruption has hindered the system. Adequate funding is essential for UBE because the program requires financial resources to manage its capital and recurrent expenditure (Okoro, 2010). The inadequate funding of the UBE program is a significant concern, and the government needs to take drastic action to solve this problem in the basic education sector (Ejere, 2011). The current study revealed that funding the UBE program is still a significant challenge that affects the program's implementation. The findings revealed that 100 percent of the study participants claimed that funding is still a major challenge hindering the implementation of the UBE program, which validates claims by previous researchers.

The Case for the Leadership Training and Professional Development

Bolaji (2014) believes that leaders and governments globally aim to pay attention to educational policy development. Akanbi (2017) argued that the administrative body of the basic education sector continues to change its name without any meaningful achievement concerning implementing the UBE program. Kotirde et al. (2014) pointed out that school principals are leaders who play an important role in school management and are responsible for managing teachers and improving student outcomes. Again, leadership is a fundamental role that helps improve school performance, and it is necessary to train and develop leaders through proper training (CAIE, 2017).

Leadership is an essential factor that influences the subjects and encourages intellectual stimulation to analyze old challenges as a means of inspiration to go the extra mile in solving the

problem to achieve its objectives (Ali & Govand, 2021). Teacher leadership deals with reformation and the improvement of education as it relates to teaching and the development of teachers' professional careers and school development in general (Berestova et al., 2020). In addition, teachers' leadership support self-learning, career development, and training to help improve the student academic performance and the quality of the school, and the overall improvement of the system (Berestova et al., 2020). The current study validates the critical role of school leadership, but the findings revealed that leadership training and professional development were not given the needed attention. Only a few of the school principals in the zone were engaged in leadership and professional development training in the last five years that helped to improve their skills. In recent times several organizations have used the transformational leadership model to inspire their follower to go beyond their best by developing their intellectual skills to improve performance to achieve organizational goals and vision (Conger, 2002; Kirkan, 2011 as cited in Sulieman, 2018).

The Case for Planning and Data Management

The literature review findings revealed that every organization needs to develop accurate and reliable data to help make decisions (Bhojaraju, 2013). Past research studies show that there is little or no available and reliable statistical data, as well as a lack of perfect data that could help in budget and planning in the education sector in Nigeria (Humphreys & Lee, 2015; Gersberg et al., 2016). Meanwhile, the data collected in the UBE system is imperfect and not good enough for effective planning (Abul et al., 2017). Effective and reliable data is essential for planning, and school managers must keep proper records (Ejere, 2011). Furthermore, improper planning is responsible for the regular change in the educational policy in Nigeria,

leading to failure to achieve its objectives (Okonkwo & Amaka, 2013). Meanwhile, inadequate planning led to the unsuccessful implementation of the UBE program in Nigeria (Omotayo, 2011). The current study also supported the claim of the past studies that planning and data management in the UBE program is grossly inadequate hence the unsuccessful implementation of the program in the South-South.

The Case for the Condition of Service

Previous study revealed that if teachers are not committed to providing a better educational program, the implementation of the UBE program cannot be achieved because the teachers are responsible for impacting the desired knowledge and skills of the pupils and students in our schools (Wilson, 2016). But Okoro (2014) advised the need to employ qualified teachers in the UBE program, and teachers should be encouraged and motivated to implement the UBE program effectively. The case of encouragement and motivation recommended by previous researchers does not agree with the current study because almost all the participants claimed that the service condition for teachers is poor. Oladele (2018) stated that teachers' salaries are delayed for about five months, which leads to teacher strikes. The claim of delay in teachers' salaries is in contrast with the current study because salary delay was not an issue; teachers are paid when due. Wilson (2016) pointed out that motivation is a fundamental tool for enhancing a teacher's performance. On the contrary, the current study revealed that most teachers and principals have low morale due to a lack of motivation.

Besides, the poor service of the teachers makes it difficult to provide a better life for their families; the condition will impact the implementation of the UBE program (Okoro, 2010). The condition of service for teachers provided by the government, even in private schools, is so poor

as such affects the morale of the teachers and their performance (Anaduaka & Chinyere, 2013). Some researchers argue that the situation will remain unresolved even if basic education is provided for free without addressing the teacher's welfare (Musa & Joshua, 2017). In the current study, 100% of the school principals claimed that morale is low, and the condition of service is too poor.

The Case for the Inspection and Supervision

Suleiman (2016) claimed that supervision improves learners' performance, and inadequate supervision in school has affected the outcome of past educational policies. Again, the supervision of the UBE school provides room for improvement in the value of the educational system through effective monitoring and evaluation (Edho, 2010). Furthermore, studies from the literature review show that if the UBE program must achieve its objective, adequate supervision, monitoring, and quality assurance are required (Amuchie et al., 2015). The current study revealed that effective and efficient inspection and supervision are inadequate, resulting in the zone's poor implementation of the UBE program. The current study regarding the inspection and supervision of the UBE is in line with the past study by Bolaji et al. (2017), which pointed out that monitoring and supervision is a challenge within the UBE, and the government is doing nothing about it. The research work of Ukpong (2017) provided some insights into the challenges associated with supervision, including but not limited to vehicle challenges, inadequate supervision, and accommodation-related issues. In the current study's findings, the school principals believed that supervision and inspection need some improvement to ensure their effectiveness.

The Case for the School Infrastructure

An excellent school infrastructure, such as classrooms, libraries, water, electricity, and toilets, is required, and it is the government's responsibility to provide it if the set goals of the UBE program must be achieved (Ejere, 2011). Furthermore, Oladele (2018) argued that for the educational system to achieve its intended goal, it needs to update its facilities and engage qualified teachers because the quality of school infrastructure influences the quality of education delivered. Work done by past researchers revealed that school infrastructure is in shortfall (Abul et al., 2017). Unfortunately, the current study still revealed that the same challenges in the past studies that are associated with deplorable school infrastructure are still present in recent times. The outcry of all the participants in the current study revealed the need to provide school infrastructure within the zone to avoid a total collapse of the UBE system.

The Case for the Teaching and Learning

It is a known fact that without the teacher's involvement, the implementation of the UBE program will fail because the teachers must impact the desired knowledge onto the learners (Wilson, 2016). A study shows that in some cases, the use of unqualified teachers in schools is a concern affecting the quality of education provided (Ige 2012). The current study supported the claim of the past study that teachers play an essential role in education, and the study reviewed that qualified teachers were not an issue. The present study revealed that trained and qualified teachers are in large quantity, with few unqualified teachers noted because of their connections at the top the teachers were employed in the teaching profession.

Recommendations for Application

This section of the study provided recommendations for application based on the research findings after an extensive investigation of the data collected from 33 school principals was

evaluated and analyzed. The researcher identified eight preset themes before the evaluation analysis. The themes were used as a guide to provide some insights and recommendations and framed in line with the literature review in chapter 2 of this study. The recommendations are based on the participant's experiences with the successful implementation of the UBE program, and they will help resolve the challenges facing the UBE program in the South-South of Nigeria when applied.

Theme 1: The need for a Successful Implementation of the UBE Program

All the school principals believe that the UBE program has not met its desired objectives. Some primary reasons for the failure of the UBE system are inadequate funding, poor school infrastructure, lack of political will, improper planning, and an ineffective database management system. Besides, poor conditions of services for the teaching personnel, lack of motivation, ineffective inspection and supervision, and corruption hindered the UBE program's effective implementation. It is no longer news that no country can function and develop without a functional and high-quality educational system in place (Agbowuro & Hayatu, 2014). Against this backdrop, Oladele (2018) claimed that every country worldwide aims to reduce illiteracy by providing high-quality education for its citizens to create a better life and a great nation. The role government and international organizations play in education cannot be overlooked because of their commitment to equal access to education (Jummai & Rufus, 2020). Today education plays a fundamental role in eradicating or reducing illiteracy levels, and most countries today are doing everything possible to improve the quality of education offered to their citizenry because it is essential to national development (Oladele, 2018).

Musa & Joshua (2017) claimed that the government at the Federal, State, and Local levels are responsible for funding the UBE program, but in most cases, some states do not contribute their share of the fund, and then the program is affected. Again, Adekunle (2019) revealed that the funds provided for the UBE program are characterized by massive corruption, thereby hindering its implementation. Most of the participants expressed the urgent need for the government and all stakeholders to address the issues mentioned above to solve the challenges affecting the successful implementation of the UBE program within the zone. The participants believed that if sufficient funding is allocated to the UBE program with articulated planning and data management system in place with a practical inspection and supervision program, it will help the system. Furthermore, most of the participants also recommended the need for improved service and motivation of teaching practitioners along with good school infrastructure to address the problem associated with the UBE program. Educational reforms are imminent because it is dynamic, and the UBE provides a solid background for higher education, so a re-organization is required to achieve its goals (Ojo, 2015).

Basic education is essential to the development of secondary and higher education and is a tool for knowledge and skill acquisition (Nwanga et al., 2020). Education is seen as a way of livelihood and, most importantly, life itself because it allows individuals to acquire skills, knowledge, and moral values required for generations to function in society (Nwambam & Prisca, 2017). Unfortunately, Bolaji et al. (2016) revealed that in Nigeria, about 60% of children of school age are out of school representing over eight million children. Again, another research study by Da-ue and Obilor (2019) claimed that the primary objective of the UBE was to provide compulsory basic education to reduce the high level of school dropouts in Nigeria.

Notwithstanding, basic education supports the other levels of a child's educational journey needed to function in society at a minimum level (Akor et al., 2020).

Theme 2: Increased Funding

The research finding revealed that funding is the major challenge facing the UBE program, and because of the inadequate funding of the sector, its objectives are not met. Anibueze and Okwo (2013) pointed out in their research study that Nigeria's position is ranked very low in West Africa regarding education funding, and the budgetary allocation has declined in the past years. Some researchers believe funding the UBE program witnessed several challenges from the beginning with all the support of international intervention (Bolaji et al., 2016). The government is responsible for the funding of the public schools in Nigeria; the federal government is responsible for 25 percent of the funding of junior secondary schools, 50 percent of funding comes from the state, and the local government is responsible for the balanced 25 percent funding (Gado & Hussaini, 2017). Education funding is derived from annual budgetary allocations, non-governmental organizations, education task funds, and international organizations (Gado & Hussaini, 2017).

Education funding is a capital-intensive project performed by the government, but the process is characterized by corruption and exploitation (Adekunle, 2019). A study in the past conformed that poor funding of basic education is responsible for the poor school infrastructure, inadequate textbooks, and instructional learning material, and even payment of teacher's monthly salary, a considerable challenge (Adesina 2005; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2005, as cited in Oke et al., 2017). Several challenges characterize the funding of basic education in Nigeria, making it difficult for the UBE program to achieve its objective of providing quality basic

education because of a lack of school infrastructure, inadequate teaching personnel, and others (Yusuf & Uduak, 2020).

All the participants agreed that the need for increased funding is necessary to keep the program alive. If not, it will lead to a total collapse of the system. Irrespective of the massive funding required for education, inadequate funding of the UBE is a challenge because, in 2018, the budget was 7.04 percent instead of the 26 percent target recommended by UNESCO (Obun et al., 2018). The government must increase funding for education and develop policies that can create and generate alternative funding to lessen the government's financial burden (Oke et al., 2017). Besides, Okoro (2010) is of the view that the UBE program should be well-funded so that they need school infrastructure and payment of teachers' salaries can be achieved. Akanbi (2012) recommended the need for an immediate increase of budgetary allocation for primary education with effective management of the funds.

Theme 3: Regular Leadership Training/ Professional Development

Education is essential for knowledge and skill acquisition that helps develop an individual and society (Nwanga et al., 2020). Furthermore, education is the gateway to development that enhances the provision of a sustainable solution for societal improvement because of its ability to transform and provide knowledge and skills required for human resources development (Bambi, 2020). Education is the formal tool for training and developing leaders required for the development of any given nation, making it necessary for nations worldwide to provide high-quality basic education for their citizenry (Bambi, 2020). It is expected that teachers who participate in self-learning help to improve their professional careers, and the training obtained can improve the entire school system (Berestova et al., 2020).

Again, researchers discovered that most school principals could not perform their duties in the implementation of the UBE program because of poor funding for schools and periodic changes in educational policies (Adali et al., 2017). Leadership training is a critical aspect of school improvement and high performance and teaching hence the need for regular on-the-job leadership training and outside collaboration with professional colleagues (CAIE, 2017). Principals in Nigerian secondary schools drive educational policies into reality and ensure the promotion of education by applying administrative know-how because principals are required to have administrative competencies through training and development (Anyakora, 2021).

The school principals recommended that the government, through the UBE management need to make provision for regular training and professional development for both principals and teachers in the zone. Okoro (2014) argued strongly that training and capacity building of teachers and motivation are necessary factors for the successful implementation of the UBE program. The participants believe that training and professional development will provide the needed up-to-date skills required to effectively perform their duties and, by extension, improve the implementation of the UBE program in the zone. It is important to note that the human resources development plan is an essential and integral aspect of professional teaching before and during service (Odu, 2011). Furthermore, Salihu and Hazri (2015) supported the view that regularly retraining existing teachers through professional development programs, workshops, and seminars is essential to improving the UBE system.

Transformational leadership theory has gained wide acceptability within the leadership paradigm as published in reputable academic journals such as leadership quarterly journals (Hunt, 1999; Lowe & Gardner, 2000, as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015). Furthermore,

transformational leadership theory is the most acceptable when compared to other leadership theories, such as trait theory, situational theories, and behavioral theories, based on the published articles that analyzed 752 cases between 2000 and 2012 in ten top-tier academic journals like the Academy of Management Review, Journal of Management, The leadership Quarterly, American Psychologist and many others (Dinh et al., 2014 as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015). It is important to note that the theoretical framework for this study is transformational leadership theory and was adopted for this study because past research study that adopted the theory helped in improving the system as such recommend that the school principals adopt transformational leadership theory it will help to improve the leadership skills in the implementation of the UBE program. In addition, Burns maintained that transformational leaders influence and inspire their followers to perform more than expected by connecting the subordinate values to align with the values of the organization (Givens, 2008).

Furthermore, Bass (1985) discovered four perspectives of transformational leadership that looked at idealized influence, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation. Furthermore, the first perspective is the idealized influence that deals with the development of a shared vision and the improving relationship with the followers in the organization (Avolio, Waldman & Yammarino, 1991; Canty, 2005 as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015). The second perspective is the individualized consideration that helps to identify the individual needs for the empowerment of the followers for the improvement of the learning atmosphere to achieve the organizational objectives (Avolio, Waldman & Yammarino, 1991; Canty, 2005; Osong, 2006 as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015).

The third perspective is intellectual stimulation that drives knowledge distribution in the organization to produce innovative ideas and sustainable solutions (Canty, 2005, as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015). The fourth perspective is inspirational motivation, which focuses on inspiring the human capacity to achieve high expectations (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Canty, 2005, as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015). Furthermore, the four perspectives of transformational leadership theory signify active leaders operating in a knowledge-based economy focused on the development and management of intellectual capital in an organization (Ghasabeh et al., 2015).

In today's present-day organization, transformational leadership help to inspire their followers to perform beyond their best, as well as help to develop the follower's skills with the aim of advancing their intellectual levels (Sulieman, 2018). Besides, transformational leaders look beyond inducements for performance but develop the worker's intellectual capability to help achieve the organizational mission (Conger, 2002, as cited in Sulieman, 2018). Again, transformational leadership enables the leader to change the organization's present state through the identification of persons that follow the organization's problem by inspiration to achieve a higher level of the organization's goals and vision (Kirkman, 2011, as cited in Sulieman, 2018).

Theme 4: Effective and Efficient Planning and Data Management

The Nigerian government takes education as an important factor for the development of society and ensures basic education is made available to the citizens, and it recognizes that effective planning is essential for the success of quality education (Nwambam & Prisca, 2017). Effective planning is vital in the education sector because the social-economic development of the country needs consideration, but poor planning is a critical concern due to inadequate trained professional planners and poor funding (Ogunode, 2018). It is on record that the Nigerian

government provide good educational policies, but the implementation of the policies is a great concern because of poor planning resulting in poor outcome and a setback to education planners and school administrators (Osarenren-Osaghae & Irabor, 2018). The UBE program failed to achieve its objectives because of poor planning because of the faulty census that is based on massive irregularities influenced by politics by increasing the census figures, making it difficult to account for the actual population of school-age citizens (Ogbonnia, 2020). A reliable and credible data collection in the UBE program witnessed challenges making the data inadequate for proper planning as such, negatively impacted the program (Abul et al., 2017).

Most of the study participants revealed that the planning and data management within the UBE system is not reliable. Research study has shown that education stakeholders observed that untrustworthy data is a concern; hence, stakeholders lost confidence in the collection of data process (Cambridge Education, 2006). The study shows that the overwhelming population of the research participants believes that if the story surrounding the poor planning and data management system must change, then the need to involve qualified teachers in planning the school curriculum. The participants also recommended that adequate attention should be given to holistic planning and data management of the UBE program to stimulate the improvement of the system. It is essential for all organizations, including educational establishments, to develop reliable, correct, and keep data records to ensure good relationships to enable informed decisions. Again, A successful implementation of any educational program is based on the management of the organizational facilities set aside for the program and effective planning of the facilities designed for the school, such as classrooms, furniture, teaching, and learning aids, and so on (Oladele et al., 2019). Effective planning is essential, and it is the first step taken for the

successful implementation of any educational program to avoid failure (Nwambam & Prisca, 2017).

Theme 5: Improvement of Condition of Service and Motivation

Research findings revealed that public school teachers experienced a delay in their salaries that is grossly inadequate, which negatively affects the outcome of teaching and learning (Bambi, 2020). The schoolteachers play a fundamental role in the implementation of the UBE program; unfortunately, the teachers have not committed; hence the need for knowledge required by the student is negatively affected (Wilson, 2016). Furthermore, budgetary challenges affected the payment of teachers' salaries for some months making the schoolteachers go on strike, and its actions affected the entire school system (Oladele, 2018). The motivation of schoolteachers is an essential factor for excellent performance and productivity (Wilson, 2016). Furthermore, Yusuf and Uduak (2020) confirmed that basic education in Nigeria is failing because of poor funding to engage qualified teachers and the provision of conducive teaching and learning environment.

It was generally agreed that the government needs to improve the condition of service of the teaching professionals because it will help to increase their morale and enable the teachers to provide a better life for their families. The study shows that if the condition of service is improved, it will also improve teaching and learning and, as such, produce well-educated students. The principals believed that if the condition of service and motivation of teachers is considered and improved, it will go a long way in improving the UBE program. Okoro (2014) stated that motivation is a key factor in teachers' performance. Furthermore, Musa and Joshua

(2017) advised that the welfare of schoolteachers be addressed because it will help to improve the educational system.

Theme 6: An Effective and Efficient Inspection and Supervision Program

It is believed that the role of supervision in education is strategic in the delivery of quality services for the improvement of teaching and learning, the overall growth and benefit of the student and the school in general because it deals with teachers' encouragement, review of instructional materials, educational objectives, and evaluation (Ogaku, 2010, as cited in Kotirde & Jailani, 2014). Meanwhile, the role of the supervisor is to ensure total compliance with the school policy, rules, and regulations with the aim of achieving its objectives, and the lack of effective supervision has led to failed educational policies in the past (Suleiman, 2016). Besides, Suleiman (2016) argued that the UBE framework for monitoring is a procedure designed to achieve its objectives but does not have the required personnel to do effective quality control of the system.

The generality of the research participants believed that inspection and supervision is a key success factor for achieving the UBE objectives. The participants also revealed that if adequate funding is provided to support inspection and supervision logistics and the engagement of qualified supervisors, it will improve the successful implementation of the UBE program in the zone. Ukpong (2017) recommended the need for the employment of qualified supervisors provide effective logistics and accommodation for inspection personnel to address the challenges facing the UBE program. Suleiman (2016) stated that supervision is the pillar of quality performance in the educational system. Edho (2010) believes that supervision has made much improvement in the UBE values, especially around monitoring and evaluation of the program.

In their contribution, Oluremi and Babatope (2013) supported the view that supervision enhances the quality of education through the support of effective teaching and learning and class management, ascertaining teachers' performance, professional development, and the standard of education. Nwaka (2009) strongly advised that only competent supervisors are engaged and conduct periodic training and establish a regulating body to control the practice, and education administrators should avoid the act of just appointing anybody as a supervisor to do the job.

Theme 7: Provision of Up-to-date School Infrastructure

The importance of school infrastructure in the educational setting is decent because it enables the schoolteacher to actively engage the students in learning activities, especially with the provision of conducive classrooms, well-stock libraries, and laboratories (Oladele, 2018). It is the responsibility of the government to provide adequate school infrastructure for the UBE program, especially in the public schools, if the government wants the program to succeed, and such facilities include but are not limited to conducive classrooms with adequate furniture, electricity, libraries, toilet, and potable water (Ejere, 2011).

Most of the school principals expressed their disappointment over the zone's poor school infrastructure, making teaching and learning challenging to achieve. Emeka and Ekechukwu (2016) stated that poor school infrastructure is one major problem responsible for the failure of the UBE system. All the school principals recommended the need for government to help improve the state of the school infrastructure in the zone. All the participants think that if the right school infrastructures are provided, it will help to improve the UBE system. Ejere (2011) argued that government needs to provide good school infrastructure to aid meaningful teaching

and learning. The research work done by Oladele (2018) shows that up-to-date school infrastructures enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

Adequate school infrastructure needed for the effective implementation of the UBE program lamented that the school infrastructure is not enough (Abul et al., 2017). Past research study revealed that the funding for education is inadequate, making it challenging to provide the needed school infrastructure, impacting the country's quality of education services negatively (Ogbonnia, 2020). Meanwhile, Oladele (2018) emphasized the need for up-to-date school facilities and qualified teachers for any educational program to successfully achieve its objectives.

Theme 8: An Effective and Efficient Teaching and Learning System

The study revealed that the issues must be addressed to achieve effective and efficient teaching and learning system. The government needs to increase funding for the UBE program and improve the condition of service and motivation of the teaching staff. Besides, building new school infrastructures and rehabilitating existing school infrastructure, training teachers, updating the curriculum, and providing adequate learning aids are recommended. Several researchers believe that the UBE curriculum is not current and needs to be updated in line with the current reality (Asaaju, 2015; Humphreys & Lee, 2015; Okoro, 2011).

The role teachers play in imparting knowledge to the learners in the educational system cannot be downplayed (Wilson, 2016). Salihu and Hazri (2015) recommended retraining teachers to help improve their skill level through workshops and seminars regularly will then help in the improvement of the UBE program. Finally, Ige (2012) re-emphasizes the need for appropriate funding and accountability of the UBE system to help improve and achieve its goals.

The researcher, therefore, recommended the urgent need for the government and all the stakeholders to consider the views of the participants and address the issues by implementing the recommendations highlighted in this section of the study. It will help to prevent the further collapse of the UBE program in the zone and beyond.

The current study findings are significant to Nigeria's basic and secondary education system, especially the Universal Basic Education program that is to be effectively implemented by the UBE program. The findings revealed the current challenges facing the UBE system in the zone based on the school principal interviewed. Besides, the findings emphasized the benefit associated with the appropriate leadership skills, adequate funding for the educational system, and the need to provide up-to-date school infrastructures for effective teaching and learning that will positively impact the learning outcome. The practical implementation planning and data management system, improved condition of service, and motivation of teachers, and principals, amongst others, will help improve the UBE system. The school principals' experiences collected and presented in this study will help guide upcoming researchers interested in this topic. It will also help education leaders and administrators, and even the ministry of education, to better reposition itself for effective change and strategic implementation of its policies and programs.

Recommendations for Future Research

The research findings show that the same challenges observed in the literature review in chapter 2 are still present in the current study. The current study examined, assessed, and addressed the challenges associated with the public-school principal leader in implementing the Universal Basic Education Program in the South-South, Nigeria. The current study addressed

the challenges that include but are not limited to leadership challenges, inadequate funding, infrastructural problems, and lack of motivation of principals and teachers. Based on the evaluation findings, most of the challenges that affected the successful implementation of the UBE program are still present, and the urgent need to address these issues is of great importance. The under-listed recommendations were provided using the preset themes identified as a guide, and it is based on the research findings.

Preset Themes Identified

Eight preset themes were identified in advance before the analysis, and the data were searched for the already identified themes. The themes were implementing the UBE program, funding, and leadership training/ professional development. Others are planning and data management, condition of service and motivation, inspection and supervision, and school infrastructure, teaching, and learning. The preset identified themes were used for comparison with the interview results and linked to previous research literature, and recommendations were provided based on the research findings.

Recommendations on the Implementation of the UBE Program

The interview responses from 31 out of 33 principals representing 94% of the school principals in the zone, argued that the UBE program has failed to achieve its aim and objectives because of several reasons ranging from inadequate funding, lack of political will, lack of motivation, and poor condition of service. Bolaji et al. (2016) stated that the UBE program had several implementation challenges, such as poor planning, leadership, and policy-related issues. The UBE program is a free and compulsory basic education initiative developed by the

government but has experienced a major setback in its implementation (Yamma & Danjuma, 2018). Meanwhile, the overwhelming population of the research participants confirmed and recommended that if the required political will and sufficient funding for the UBE program, along with proper planning and supervision, then leadership training of the school principals will help improve the program. Below is some literature from the literature review section that supports the research recommendations.

Political order puts laws and rules in the educational system that enables societal development that brings to action the creativity and development of a nation (Bolaji et al., 2015). Again, the Nigerian political system developed the educational policy that established the UBE program (Aja et al., 2018). It is the responsibility of the government to develop educational policies that will improve the quality of educational services and set up an effective monitoring and evaluation agency to ensure the successful implementation of its policies (Bolaji et al., 2015). No educational system can survive without adequate funding, especially in the implementation of the UBE program (Anibueze & Okwo, 2013). Education is capital-intensive and requires a large amount of funding through yearly budgetary allocation (Adekunle, 2019). The basic educational need is an essential requirement for today's world, especially in Nigeria, where an increase in basic education is on the high side, and it also requires an increase in funding for education (Oke et al., 2017).

Planning is a critical success factor for the development of the education sector that enhances student achievement and the development of the nation (Ogunode, 2018). Furthermore, adequate planning of the education system helps reduce unemployment within Nigeria and the world at large (Nwambam & Prisca, 2017). Leadership training is an essential aspect for the

improvement of school principals' skills and the liberation of capacity needed for the development of the school system (CAIE, 2017). Again, in the present, where the working system is everchanging and complex in nature, leadership training help to improve leadership skills (Day and Pamela, 2016). School principals play critical roles in the educational system because they are involved in educational policy formulation and smooth implementation, especially in the UBE program (Iheoma & Martin, 2021). An effective supervision program for school principals is needed to help implement educational policies and UBE programs delivered by the schoolteachers and their performances evaluated (Iheoma & Martin, 2021).

Recommendations on Funding

Funding issue was the second theme identified, and the interview responses from all the school principals within the zone reveal that 100% expressed their displeasure over the way the UBE program was underfunded. Oke et al. (2017) stated that basic education is a critical foundation required for further educational development and the well-being of the individual in any society; based on this fact, adequate funding is essential for the provision of school infrastructure and adequate staffing. The researchers noted that because of the inadequate funding for the UBE program, the situation has deteriorated into deplorable school infrastructure, inadequate instructional materials, delays in teachers' salaries, and a lack of creativity (Oke et al., 2017). In addition, Adekunle (2019) pointed out that the UBE requires sufficient funding for it to succeed through the provision of financial and budgetary allocation by the government yearly; unfortunately, the amount allocated for education is not enough to achieve its objectives. The problem is beyond poor budgetary allocation, but it is interesting to note that even some

state governments failed to contribute their counterpart funds and could not access their funds from the government agency responsible for the disbursement of funds (Adekunle, 2019).

Another critical issue is corruption, nepotism, and abuse of office because the little funds received are not used for their purpose but utilized for selfish purposes (Adekunle, 2019). It is sad to note that funding education in Nigeria has been a problem from the pre-colonial period to the present day, and Nigeria is rated among the poorest in funding education in Africa. In fact, in 2005 United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) ranked Nigeria as the 10th worst nation in funding education (Adekunle, 2019). Ogunode et al. (2023) pointed out that funding basic education is an essential resource required to effectively manage any school system because adequate funding improves the quality and standard of education. Regrettably, the annual budgetary allocation has not met the minimum 26% benchmark as recommended by UNESCO.

Past studies indicated that inadequate funding is a major challenge that has affected the educational sector from achieving its objectives (Onyebueke, 2014; Akanbi, 2012; Anibueze & Okwo, 2013). In addition, Musa, and Joshua (2017) confirmed that the government is not contributing to their counterpart fund as required; hence the action has impacted the implementation of the UBE program negatively. Adekunle (2019) believes that funds made for the education sector are diverted by corrupt leaders; hence the implementation of the UBE program experienced a huge setback. Most of the responses from the school principals show that it is practically impossible to implement the UBE program without adequate funding and then recommended that the government address the issue of funding before the total collapse of the program.

Recommendations on Leadership Training/ Professional Development

Leadership training and professional development theme were identified, and again the situation was not any different because the responses from the school principals revealed that 27 out of 33 school principals representing 82 %, were not engaged in any training or professional development in the past five years. The remaining 18% of school principals received some form of leadership training and professional development within the last five years. Education or training is a basic tool for the development of people in any given society (Agbowuro & Hayatu, 2014; Okoro, 2014). A previous research study revealed that professional development is a formal practice in professionals engaged through workshops, conferences, seminars, training courses at a higher institution of learning, or informal learning through debates, independent reading, or peer group learning (Mizell, 2010 cited in Nasreen & George, 2018). Again, some researchers believe that for effective teaching and learning to take place, the school principals have an essential role to play because of their responsibility to ensure the quality of teaching and learning curriculum and the capacity development of the school system guaranteed because of the principal's influence over the teachers (Ma & Marion, 2019; Marks & Printy, 2003, as cited in Bada et al., 2020). Meanwhile, Osiesi (2020) argued that professional development programs for teachers are required to develop their competency, skills, and knowledge for effective teaching and learning activities. Ogunode et al. (2023) believe that the inadequate number of professional teachers in the basic education sector is responsible for the poor quality of education; adequate funding will improve and attract professional teachers to the sector, then transmission of quality knowledge to the learners. The behavior of the teachers could be influenced by motivation because it enhances organizational productivity (Ogunode et al., 2023).

Teachers play a critical role in implementing the UBE program attention should be given to the teachers to help improve the UBE program (Ogunode et al., 2023). In addition, Olohundare (2020) recommended that government should provide regular professional development programs for teaching staff through workshops, seminars, and conferences to help develop their knowledge in their areas of specialization to improve student academic performance.

The result shows that most school principals have not received leadership and professional development training within the last five years based on the current research findings. Meanwhile, this study has extended previous studies by exploring the need for school principals to adopt a transformational leadership style in implementing the UBE program in junior secondary schools because of its benefits in improving its implementation. Overall, all the participants agreed that training and retraining are fundamental to human development and the success of the UBE program.

Recommendations on Planning and Data Management

Planning and data development was the fourth theme identified by several of the school principals expressing a high level of dissatisfaction over the poor state of planning and data management in the UBE system. Jacob (2020) noted that one of the major problems facing early childhood education is poor planning of the generality of the educational system in Nigeria because it was poorly planned from the beginning making the implementation plan difficult to achieve. The researcher revealed that the Nigerian educational system lacks effective and efficient planning because most public primary schools do not have a national curriculum and instructional materials (Ishola, 2016, as cited in Jacob, 2020).

Adekunle (2019) stated that the UBE program in Nigeria is characterized by lobbying and inflating the numbers of enrollment deliberately to attract more funds from the government agency responsible for funding the UBE program, making planning difficult because of the irregularities. Okoro (2014) argued that effective management and provision of high-quality infrastructure with adequate funding are needed in the school system to achieve its goals. Nkiruka (2015) noted that poor planning, false census, and inadequate funding are factors that hindered the successful implementation of the UBE program. Anaduaka and Chinyere (2013) confirmed that incomplete data for planning affect the outcome of any program. Many schoolteachers believe that inadequate or poor planning led to the unsuccessful outcome of the UBE program as such more attention is required to address the situation.

Recommendations on the Condition of Service and Motivation

In Theme five, conditions of service and motivation were another critical area where many participants were dissatisfied. The responses from the participants show that over 90% believed that the condition of service for teachers is poor and teachers' motivation is shallow and argued that schoolteachers do not receive any form of motivation that will help to encourage or improve their services. Oladele (2018) confirmed that the poor service condition for teachers negatively affects their performance and the overall operation of the school. Wilson (2016) revealed that teachers are poorly motivated and given overloaded tasks in rural areas. Okoro (2014) stated that motivation is essential for a teacher's performance. The call for excellent condition of service and teacher motivation has been a long battle for ages. All the participants unanimously agreed that a better condition of service, along with the right motivation, would improve the implementation of the UBE program within and outside the zone. European

Commission (2018) believes that if the relationship between the school leaders such as principals and teachers is mutual, good collaboration with motivation, the teacher's performance will improve.

Abubakar et al. (2021) explained that teachers' motivation is essential in developing any educational program because when the teacher is motivated, performance is guaranteed. A teacher's salary is an essential factor determining the learner's performance (Ezechi & Ogbu, 2017, as cited in Abubakar et al., 2021). When a teacher's service condition is of good quality, it helps to meet the teacher's basic needs and then focuses on effectively performing their duties of imparting quality knowledge (Abubakar et al., 2021). The study conducted by Ezechi (2016 as cited in Abubakar et al., 2021) revealed that teachers are not motivated in Nigeria because the teachers are subjected to the poor condition of service, delayed payment of salaries, and no prospect of attending professional development programs to enhance their skills needed for effective teaching and learning. Osiesi (2020) mentioned that other challenges affected the teacher's performance, such as poor teaching and learning conditions, among others, and recommended the need for teachers to have administrative and pedagogical skills.

Recommendations on Inspection and Supervision

The six themes identified were inspection and supervision, and some of the school principals agreed that inspection and supervision were satisfactory, while others were not satisfied with the inspection and supervision activities because of corruption and poor funding. Adequate supervision in the UBE program is a serious concern because of inadequate funding, as such supervision personnel is insensitive to performing their roles (Bolaji et al., 2017). Another concern with the supervision of the program is to do with inadequately qualified

supervisors, logistics, and accommodation challenges (Ukpong, 2017). Besides, Egbo (2021) regrettably noted that the UBE program is characterized by poor supervision and monitoring, impacting the program's implementation because most of the supervisor's compromise in performing their duties by collecting money and demanding lunch instead of quality supervision. Suleiman (2016) confirmed that supervision is the bedrock for quality control in the educational system, especially around performance. In conclusion, most schoolteachers agree that inspection and supervision are integral aspects of quality education that should be given attention.

Recommendations on School Infrastructure

The seventh theme centered on school infrastructure, and from the response of the school principals, 29 out of 33 school principals representing 89%, believed that the school infrastructure is in a deplorable state in the zone. Ogunniran et al. (2019) claimed that facility management is one of the critical factors for measuring a successful implementation of an educational program. It is because the school facility is essential for planning, acquiring, and delivering educational activities, such as classrooms, furniture, equipment, and teaching aids required for successful teaching and learning (Ogunniran et al., 2019). Furthermore, Aliyu (2022) argued that providing school infrastructures such as classrooms, workshops, laboratories, and recreation centers enhance teaching and learning in the educational system. Unfortunately, most of the school infrastructure is in terrible condition that requires urgent attention (Aliyu, 2022). Meanwhile, Bolaji et al. (2019) revealed that school infrastructure is essential for effective teaching and learning in schools, but their study shows that in urban cities, school infrastructure is somewhat available but crossly inadequate in rural schools.

Some experts also argued that school infrastructure, such as classrooms and materials for learning, is necessary to effectively implement the UBE program (Abul et al., 2017). Furthermore, Emeka and Ekechukwu (2016) acknowledged that inadequate school infrastructure, such as classrooms without electricity and, sometimes, when the windows are closed because of rainfall and winds, visibility becomes a problem. The infrastructural facility is essential for the success of any educational system because it has a direct relationship with the quality of education provided (Oladele, 2018). Besides, Oladele (2018) strongly recommended that if the UBE must achieve its set objectives, then school infrastructure should be considered a top priority alongside periodic maintenance.

Recommendations on Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning are the eighth themes identified, and most of the school principals in the zone believe that the teaching and learning are not adequate because of poor infrastructure, inadequate learning aids, lack of regular teachers training, obsolete curriculum, poor teachers' condition of service, and poor funding of the program. Asaju (2015) stated that inadequate funding of the UBE curriculum, poor information gathering, and teachers not being well prepared also affected the implementation of the UBE program. Humphreys and Lee (2015) argued that the current UBE curriculum is outdated and can no longer support the present skill acquisition required in the present-day challenges. Okoro (2011) stated that the UBE curriculum needs to be reviewed because it is more of a subject-oriented syllabus instead of a conceptual learner-centered as well trained and motivated teachers.

Besides, the current study results add to the body of research and help balance the findings from past research studies. A further research study is recommended to explore the

challenges identified by incorporating the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) chairmen, secretary, and schoolteachers in the zone and even the country at large. This is because no comparable studies were observed during the literature review; as such, the researcher recommends that further studies explore the experience and perspectives of the SUBEB staff and schoolteachers.

Recommendations for the future qualitative research study should focus on including the state universal basic education board chairmen, classroom teachers, and students. It will help to discover more information about the challenges and solutions to the implementation of the UBE program in the zone. Again, using a qualitative study same population allow future researchers to discover how the SUBEB staff, principals, and teachers' experience and perspectives have changed with time. The prospective participants would have gained more experience on the subject matter because sometime later, the changes in the experience of the future participants will identify new areas of interest that will require solutions. In future studies, a quantitative study is recommended to assess the challenges facing the UBE programs because it will qualify the data in a numerical form enabling statistical tests on the collected data. A mixed-method research study adopting a focus group to analyze the challenges around the implementation of the UBE program is recommended. It is essential to conduct further studies to increase the population of the principals and extend the scope to capture the State Universal Basic Education Board, School teachers, parents, and students' perspectives in assessing the level of implementation of the UBE program in South-South Nigeria.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this qualitative research study aims to examine the public-school principal's perspectives on the leadership styles in implementing the UBE program in the South-South of Nigeria. Education is the cornerstone for human capital development that drives national development across the globe. Oladimeji and Tunji (2019) stated that primary education is the foundation of education required to build other higher levels of education, and it is a social process of human capacity building in modern society globally. Furthermore, Ogbonnia (2020) added that education is a gainful venture government should be embarked on because it is a fundamental human right that guarantees a better life for its citizens. Oluwole and Fanan (2019) supported the view that education is one of the yardsticks used for the evaluation of the development of a nation and the desire of the Nigerian government to use education to develop the learner to kindle national growth.

Because of the strong desire for quality basic education for the citizens of Nigeria and alignment with the global standards of educational policies, the government established the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria (Egbo, 2021). The UBE was established by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, a former president of Nigeria, in 1999 to correct the past failed educational policies and to improve the quality of basic education in the country (Abah & Victor, 2021). The aims and objectives of the UBE were to amend the misdeeds associated with the basic education experienced in the country and then provide nine years of free compulsory basic education for its citizens to reduce out-of-school children in Nigeria (Egbo, 2021).

Previous studies revealed that the UBE program was characterized by numerous challenges that hindered the smooth implementation of the program. The challenges include inadequate school infrastructure, poor conditions of service, insufficient funding for the program,

and many others (Yamma & Danjuma, 2018; Adirika & Oluwatayo, 2013). Egbo (2021) revealed that the Universal Basic Education (UBE) has failed to achieve its objectives irrespective of the financial support from the Nigerian government and non-governmental organizations, amongst others. In addition, the study conducted by Oluwole and Fanan (2019) shows that the UBE program experienced several challenges that negatively impacted the implementation, and most of the problems were attributed to poor planning and inadequate funding, among others. Egbo (2021) believed that the Nigerian government should declare a state of emergency on the UBE program to investigate the root causes of the problem and provide a sustainable solution.

Meanwhile, five research questions guided the study, and the questions were as follows: RQ1. How can you ascertain if adequate planning is made to implement the Curriculum of the UBE Program? RQ2. What is the level of funding available for implementing the Universal Basic Education Program? RQ3. What are your views on recruiting qualified and adequate staff for implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme? RQ4. Why do you think there are adequate or inadequate facilities to implement the Universal Basic Education Programme? RQ5. What are your opinion on staff periodic retraining for the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme? In a qualitative research study, the research design method is deeply rooted in the research questions (Hamilton & Erin, 2020). The interview guide developed was instrumental to the successful collection of primary data from the 33 school principals from South-South, Nigeria that helped in achieving the purpose of the research study. An interview guide is an essential tool that guides and enables researchers to ask relevant questions and receive answers from the participants based on their experiences (Hamilton & Erin, 2020). To address the research questions, 33 school principals with live experience in

Universal Basic Education were selected from Edo State, Delta State, and Bayelsa State in the South-South of Nigeria. The primary rich data collected from the school principals through face-to-face semi-structured interviews revealed the current situation of the leadership challenges as it relates to the implementation of the UBE program in South-South Nigeria.

The result of this study revealed several issues that required urgent attention, and the first issue was the inadequate leadership and professional development training for the school principals impacted their ability to perform their duties as expected. A total of 33 school principals were interviewed; only six school principals had some form of leadership and professional development training at the time of the investigation. Leadership and professional development training are essential skills for school principals to help improve the UBE program. Study has shown that teachers' leadership and professional development help in the improvement of the educational system, and teachers that acquire leadership skills can train others to improve student performance (Berestova et al., 2020).

The second issue this study revealed is that the aims and objectives of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program are yet to achieve their desired goal because of poor planning, poor funding, inadequate school infrastructure, ineffective inspection, and supervision, and many other hindered the successful implementation of the program. It is unfortunate to note that most school infrastructure is in a deplorable state, teachers' morale is down, and low student performance during examinations; as such, the UBE program is yet to achieve its aim and objectives (Oladimeji & Tunji, 2019). Only two school principals out of 33 school principals believed that the UBE achieved its aims and objectives, while 31 school principals thought otherwise.

The third major issue that was discovered was inadequate funding of the UBE because the present study revealed that all 33 school principals argued that inadequate funding is a fundamental issue that has affected the totality of the UBE program implementation. Inadequate funding is a change because of poor budget allocation; for example, in 2018, the budget for education was 7.04% instead of the recommended minimum of 26% proposed by UNESCO (Obun et al., 2018). In addition, funding of the educational system in Nigeria is grossly inadequate and affects the quality of education because of the inadequate fund to provide school infrastructure, learning materials, and conducive classroom blocks for effective teaching and learning (Yusuf & Uduak, 2020).

The fourth item was a high level of school infrastructural decay that makes teaching and learning difficult because 29 school principals confirmed that the school infrastructure is in a poor state and not good enough for learning. It became clear that there was an urgent need to build back better school infrastructure to enhance the quality of learning. The UBE program requires adequate school infrastructure, such as classrooms, a library, and learning materials for effective implementation, but unfortunately, the needed infrastructure is unavailable (Abul et al., 2017). Besides, Oladele (2018) claimed that school facilities are short-lived because the available ones are in a horrible state and not conducive to learning. Ogbonnia (2020) believes that poor education funding is the reason for Nigeria's deplorable state of school infrastructure. The fifth issue this study showcased was adequate qualified and trained teachers that are not motivated because the poor service condition hindered the teacher's morale and then affected the quality of teaching and learning. It is a known fact that without teachers and no educational institution, there is no further argument.

The sixth issues discovered in this current study are lack of political will, poor planning, inadequate inspection, and a supervision system to ensure the effective implementation of the UBE program requires urgent attention. The inadequate planning and budgeting of available resources have hindered the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria (Ekpenyonganwan, 2019). Although, Bolaji et al. (2017) pointed out that the lack of funding also affected the effective monitoring and supervision of the UBE program. Ogunode and Adah (2020) argued that politicians' unwillingness to implement educational policies and government instability are critical challenges that affect the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. Furthermore, the frequent changes in education ministers and commissioners due to the unstable government affected Nigeria's smooth implementation of education policies (Ogunode & Adah, 2020).

In chapter 1, the research topic was introduced to properly position the research study by providing the historical perspective and importance of education. Oladimeji and Tunji (2019) believe that education is an essential venture that brings positive change in individual behavior by learning and helping in achieving a personal goal in society. The importance of education was generally narrowed down to Universal Basic Education in the South-South of Nigeria. The challenges facing the school principal leadership style in the implementation of Universal Basic Education are explained in the study. Some of the challenges that negatively impacted the implementation of the UBE were poor planning, inadequate funding, lack of teacher motivation, poor leadership and professional development training, deplorable infrastructural system, and so on. Oladimeji and Tunji (2019) regretted the poor state of school infrastructure; the lack of teacher motivation led to poor student performances during examinations; because of this

problem, UBE has failed to achieve its mandate of providing free quality and compulsory basic education. The statement of the problem, the purpose, aim, and objectives of the study were critically examined to solve the problems associated with implementing the UBE program. The five research questions were presented in this chapter that helped to provide the direction, nature, and significance of the study discussed.

Chapter 2 started with the introduction of the section, the theoretical framework, and looked at the meaning of theory and how theory is developed, and transformational leadership theory was adopted for this study. The study adopted Burns (1978) transformational leadership theory because the theory support followers' basic satisfaction and the leader inspires their followers to make sure they are innovative as well as achieve high expectations to improve the workplace (Marturano & Gosling, 2008; Patiar & Mia, 2009 as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015). Transformation leadership theory was indeed developed in the 20th century during the analysis of political leaders' performance, and it is a leadership style that involves the leader influencing the follower to increase motivation for higher performance (Burns, 1978).

Again, Chapter 2 of the study presented an in-depth review of the literature regarding the history and the concept associated with the UBE and then scholarly literature retrieved from credible sources such as Scientific Research, Science Direct, Pro-quest, Unicaf University online library, and Google Scholar. The retrieved literature was centered on the research topic and theoretical framework that underpin the UBE concept. The field and industry descriptions were explored, and the study presented theoretical principles that underpin the field of education, leadership, management, and administration with an emphasis on Universal Basic Education in the South-South of Nigeria. Leadership and different types of leadership styles were analyzed.

The concept of universal basic education, organizational structure, and political will in Nigeria was examined. The implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program was discussed in detail, and the role played by the school principals in implementing the UBE program was not left out. The implementation plan of the UBE curriculum was analyzed, and the funding availability and adequacy for the implementation of the UBE and its impact were examined. Leadership and professional development were explored, and planning and data management, along with the condition and motivation of staff, was examined. The inspection, supervision, and monitoring of the UBE program are explained. The infrastructural challenges, recruitment of qualified teachers, and teaching and learning effectiveness in the implementation of the UBE program were explored. Education is poorly funded in Nigeria, which is the fundamental reason the UBE cannot achieve its goal (Ogbonnia, 2020). The UBE program has failed to achieve its objectives because of poor school infrastructure not conducive to learning, and most schools do not have access to a computer; no library in most schools, and inadequate textbooks are critical issues in most schools (Oladele, 2018).

Chapter 3 outlined the research method and data collection process the study adopted. The study explored the interpretive/constructivist qualitative research approach using a phenomenological research design and the use of a semi-structured face-face interview method to collect rich data from the public-school principals within the South-South of Nigeria.

The research approach and design were examined, and a qualitative face-to-face semi-structured interview was used for the collection of primary rich data from 33 school principals from Edo State, Delta State, and Bayelsa State in the South-South of Nigeria. The method used helps researchers in collecting data from participants with experience in a particular topic. Past

research shows that researchers that adopt a qualitative approach in data collection allow participants to express their views and perception based on their experience on the topic (Creswell, 2009). Meanwhile, the qualitative research method enables researchers to examine human activities through effective communication between the researcher and the participants to solve social problems (UU, 2020).

The chapter also discussed the research design, population, samples, instrument used, and the procedure for ethical consideration, as well as the data collection and data analysis processes examined. Furthermore, the qualitative research method provides researchers with the platform to handle complex problems within the scope of their study and the opportunity to evaluate participants' life experiences, and it allows the researcher to spend reasonable time with the participants (Nayar & Valerie, 2020). The researcher developed five research questions that directed the path of the study, and the interview guide questions were derived from the research questions that underpinned the quality of data collected from the participants. Past study has revealed that the research method and design are entranced in the research questions (Hamilton & Erin, 2020). In addition, it is essential to note that the interview guide focused on the questions the participants can answer based on life experience with the subject matter (Hamilton & Erin, 2020).

The population and sample of the research study were discussed, and 33 school principals from the South-South of Nigeria participated in the study 11 principals from Edo State, 11 principals from Delta State, and 11 principals from Bayelsa State were involved in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a semi-structured interview supported by an interview guide. A semi-structured interview is a prearranged question by the researcher aimed

at collecting rich data from the participant through meaningful discussion that allows the researcher to obtain a better understanding of the participant's worldview (Ahlin, 2019). Besides, Bearman (2019) argued that interview enables researchers to gather rich data from participants based on their experience, which provides a deep understanding of the topic of discussion.

The study procedure started with getting approval from the Unicaf University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) before data collection, and ethical assurances were considered and addressed to ensure the study was credible and reliable. Educational institutions require researchers to obtain approval before conducting any research involving human participation for protection (Fleming & Karsten, 2018). All the research participants were adequately briefed on the research purpose, and the content of the consent form was explained, issued to all the participants, filled out, and signed off. The participants were informed that the participation was voluntary and that any participant not comfortable could withdraw at any time during the research study. Chapter 3 examined the qualitative deductive content analysis used for analyzing the data. Qualitative deductive content analysis is determined through coding to link themes by using theory to underpin the analysis (Pearse, 2019). In the end, a summary of chapter 3 was provided.

Chapter 4 examined the research reports and the trustworthiness of the study. Trustworthiness confirms that a study can be trusted by subjecting it to criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Korstjens & Albine, 2018). Trustworthiness ensures the quality of the research study processes and findings are guaranteed (Rose & Corey, 2020). Some researchers used the narrative method to tell an excellent story or thick description to deliver detailed content to describe an event making it tangible (Stahl &

James, 2020). The study adopted a member checking to validate the data collected and the research finding by presenting the data and findings to the participant for validation and correctness. Member check, sometimes called participant validation, is a process of participants crosschecking the research finding with the researcher for correctness (Slettebo, 2020).

The result of the findings was presented logically using the research questions as a guide to answer the research questions. The participants' demographics were presented in a table form for easy understanding, and the data collected from the participants were analyzed using the qualitative deductive content analysis method. Bengtsson (2016) pointed out that qualitative content analysis helps the present researcher data in words and themes to quickly interpret results, and it also helps reduce text and identify categories for better understanding. The qualitative deductive content analysis is the process of reading and rereading the collected data focusing on the participant response partner to each question before categorizing the information into themes and then aligning to the existing predetermined themes (Azungah & Rulinawaty, 2018). The study results revealed several areas that need urgent attention, such as increasing the funding of the UBE program, continuous professional development training, effective planning, and data management. The study also uncovers the need to motivate teachers and improve their condition of service, regular supervision, and provision of good school infrastructure to aid effective teaching and learning to improve the implementation of the UBE program. Okoro (2014) believes that up-to-date school infrastructure, proper funding, and an effective management system must reposition the UBE program to achieve its goals.

The study's eight identified preset dominant themes were also used for comparison with the research results and then linked to the past literature. The study is indeed significant to the

educational field, particularly to the Universal Basic Education sector, and the study findings validate past research and add to the current body of knowledge concerning the UBE program. The data collected are significant to the practice in education because they will help provide best practices in implementing the UBE program. Ojo (2015) argued that educational reforms are necessary because of their dynamic nature, and the UBE is an educational vehicle for providing a solid foundation for higher education that needs restructuring to achieve its mandate.

Finally, chapter 5 introduced the investigation of the current study and explained again the problem statement that underpinned the challenges associated with the UBE program. The research study's purpose, aims, and objectives were reinstated, and how the study contributed new knowledge to the existing knowledge was discussed. The data collection method was a qualitative physical semi-structured interview, and a qualitative deductive content analysis was used to analyze the data. The research approval process and ethical considerations were highlighted in the introduction section. In chapter 5, the discussion on the implications was highlighted along with the research questions with a logical conclusion built on the research findings and noted the research limitations. For example, the current study is not aimed at generalizing its findings because it is limited to the participants in South-South of Nigeria where the study occurred. Besides, the research findings were linked to the research problems, and the results were examined along with the literature review findings presented in chapter 2 of this study.

The recommendations for application were revealed during the research findings, and it was framed along with some relevant literature from chapter 2. The eight preset themes identified were used as a guide to provide the needed recommendations. The recommendations provided

solutions to the challenges facing the successful implementation of the UBE program in the South-South of Nigeria. The recommendations provided were on the successful implementation of the UBE program, which involves the need to increase the funding allocated to the program. The importance of regular leadership and professional development training and proper planning and data management system are discussed. Recommendations to improve the condition of service of principals and the motivation of teaching personnel alongside the need for a properly well-funded inspection and supervision program. The need for modern school infrastructure and effective and well-coordinated teaching and learning environment were all recommended for successfully implementing the UBE program.

The educational sector is dynamic; as such, change is inevitable; knowledge and technology are evolving, and managing the changes in the educational system is essential (Kotirde et al., 2014). Furthermore, the European Commission (2018) recommended that school leaders, principals, and teachers play significant roles, primarily when they work together in unity and motivated helps to improve performance and the achievement of school objectives. Again, the school principal is responsible for the school system's leadership with the view to improving teaching and learning (Kotirde et al., 2014). Meanwhile, study in the past has shown that leadership is an essential aspect of improving school performance and enhancing effective teaching and learning outcomes (CAIE, 2017).

Based on the current research findings, 27 out of 33 public school principals had not received any form of leadership or professional development training in the last five years the interview was conducted. The current study has extended similar and existing studies by discovering the necessity for public school principals to adopt a transformational leadership

model in implementing the UBE program because of its leadership benefits. The four perspectives of transformational leadership of Bass (1985 as cited in Ghasabeh et al., 2015) are as follows: The first perspective is the Idealized Influence, which deals with the aspect of the development of shared vision and improving the relationship between the leader and the followers to achieve the desired objectives. The second perspective is Individualized Consideration, which Identifies the follower's needs for improvement to achieve organizational objectives; the third perspective is Intellectual Stimulation which drives knowledge distribution for innovative ideas for sustainable solutions; and finally, the fourth perspective is Inspirational Motivations, which helps to develop and manage the intellectual capital of an organization.

The application of leadership skills enhances leaders such as the school principal potential leadership talent because of its liberation tendency (CAIE, 2017). The school principal is the administrative head of the secondary school system and is responsible for managing its day-to-day activities, implementing educational policies, and actualizing the UBE curriculum and objectives (Uwakwe, 2020). Finally, the school principals recommended that the government conduct regular leadership training to ensure the successful implementation of UBE. Increase funding, effective planning and data management systems put in place, improve the condition of service of principals and teachers, adequate supervision, provide good school infrastructure, and effective teaching and learning system should be provided to help improve the implementation of the UBE program in the South-South of Nigeria.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A



UREC's Decision

Name of Participant: Festus D. Mrakpor

Research Project Title: An Assessment of Principal's Perspectives on the Leadership Styles in
the Implementation of The Universal Basic Education Programme in
South-South, Nigeria

Date: 11.01.2019

Comments

	Approval without revision or comments	
√	Approval with comment for minor revision	
	Not approved with guidance	

	comments for moderate revision and resubmission	<p>1. When Likert scale is used, abbreviations should not be used as heading, but the actual words should be used. E.g. very satisfied instead of vs</p> <p>2. It is suggested that the student included information about data analysis process in order to examine whether sample size is appropriate.</p> <p>3. Student needs to be consistent in the number of participants. He mentions 36 participants in the risk assessment form and 46 in REAF form.</p> <p>4. The student is advised to remove the high-risk comment (last point) in the Risk assessment form, as this research project is not at high risk.</p> <p>5. REAF point 24, student should remove the address of supervisor.</p> <p>6. REAF point 12 the student is advised to comply with our data protection document.</p> <p>7. The student should delete “chief inspector of education”, mentioned in the Inform consent form in the information section.</p> <p>The student can proceed with his research project as it is approved by UREC with comments for minor revision.</p>
	Not approved with guidance comments for major revision and resubmission	



Appendix A

UREC's Decision

Student's Name: Festus Mrakpor

Student ID #: R1610D1887787

Supervisor's Name: Dr. Yusuf Suleiman

Program of Study: UUN: PhD Doctor of Philosophy – Education

Offer ID /Group ID: O17035G16366

Dissertation Stage: 3

Research Project Title: : An Assessment of Principal's Perspectives on the Leadership Styles in the Implementation of The Universal Basic Education Programme in South-South, Nigeria

Comments: No comments

Decision: A. Approved without revision or comments

Date: 20-Aug-2020

Appendix B



Address:

Date:

Subject: A Request to Participate in a Research

Dear Sir,

I am a doctoral student at Unicaf University Malawi. As part of my degree, I am carrying out a study on the Assessment of Principal's Perspectives on the Leadership Styles in the Implementation of The Universal Basic Education Programme in South-South, Nigeria.

I am writing to enquire whether you would be interested in participating, permission in this research. Subject to approval by Unicaf Research Ethics Committee (UREC) this study will

be using qualitative semi-structured face to face interview method to collect primary data during the research study.

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to investigate, examine and analyze the Principal's Perspectives on the Leadership Styles in the Implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme in South-South, Nigeria under the supervision of Dr. Yusuf Suleiman.

It will be appreciated if you could grant access to personal data after participants have consented. The interview section is anticipated to last for a period of one hour for each participant daily for an agreed period during this study. Thank you in advance for your time and for your consideration of this project. Kindly please let me know if you require any further information or need any further clarifications.

Yours Sincerely,

Student Name: Festus D. Mrakpor

Student Email: mrakpordf@yahoo.com

Student Address and Telephone: UNICAF University Malawi/ 08035067509

Supervisor's Title and Name: Dr. Yusuf Suleiman

Supervisor's Position: Supervisor

Supervisor's Email: y.suleiman@unicaf.org

Appendix C



Informed Consent Form Part 1: Debriefing of Participants

Student Name: Festus D. Mrakpor

Student Email: mrakpordf@yahoo.com

Student ID No: R1610D1887787

Supervisor's Name: Dr. Yusuf Suleiman

University Campus: UNICAF University Malawi

Program of Study: PhD in Education

Research Project Title: An Assessment of Principal's Perspectives on the Leadership Styles in the Implementation of The Universal Basic Education Programme in South-South, Nigeria
Date:

Provide a short description (purpose, aim and significance) of the research project, and explain why and how you have chosen this person to participate in this research (maximum 150 words)

The purpose of the study is to do an assessment of Principal's Perspectives on the Leadership Styles in the Implementation of The Universal Basic Education Programme in South-South, Nigeria. The UBE program is an educational policy aimed at providing free, compulsory and quality basic education. The program experienced several setbacks. Some of the major reasons for the setback are poor funding, inadequate supervision, poor implementation of the UBE program and unqualified teachers. Furthermore, poor condition of service for the teachers and principal, poor planning, school infrastructural decay amongst others also contributed to hindering the UBE program. Some research questions developed to help in achieving the research purpose.

The above-named Student is committed in ensuring participant's voluntarily participation in the research project and guaranteeing there are no potential risks and/or harms to the participants.

Participants have the right to withdraw at any stage (prior or post the completion) of the research without any consequences and without providing any explanation. In these cases, data collected will be deleted.

All data and information collected will be coded and will not be accessible to anyone outside this research. Data described and included in dissemination activities will only refer to coded information ensuring beyond the bounds of possibility participant identification.

I Festus D. Mrakpor, **ensure that all information stated above is true and that all conditions have been met.**

Student's Signature:

Appendix D



Interview Protocol

**An Assessment of Principal's Perspectives on the Leadership Styles in the
Implementation of The Universal Basic Education Programme
in South-South, Nigeria**

Date: -----

Demographic Information

1. Age:
2. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
3. The Institution's Name-----
4. No of Years in the Organization -----
5. No of Years the Organization being in Operation-----
6. The participant Position-----
7. Academic Qualifications-----

Guiding Questions

Interview Protocol-The School Principals

1. What type of professional development/leadership training have you attended?
2. What are your views on the assessment of the aim and objectives of the Universal Basic Education program?
3. On the scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is the highest and 1 is the lowest how will you rate the performance of the UBE program and why?
4. What are your views on the funding of the UBE program?
5. What school infrastructural development program is in place?
6. Do you have the required support to perform your duty and if not why?
7. Are there adequate qualified and trained teachers?
8. Are there qualified and motivated classroom teachers and if not why?
9. Are there other challenges you think has hindered the UBE program mention as many as possible?
10. How do you think the implementation of the UBE program can be improved?