

UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS, OYO STATE

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Abstract

This study examined key indicators of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme implementation and their influence on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the adequacy of qualified teaching staff, compliance with the UBE-recommended 1:40 teacher–student ratio, and effectiveness of school supervision. A descriptive survey design was adopted, with a population of 11,639 principals and teachers. A sample of 1,650 respondents was selected through a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using adapted and validated questionnaires, and analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that students' academic performance was average, most teachers possessed the minimum professional qualifications required for teaching, and the teacher–student ratio was favourable at 1:18. School supervision was generally of low effectiveness. However, school supervision had a significant contribution to students' academic performance ($R=.175$; $R^2=.031$; $F=43.402$; $p<.05$) ($R = .175$; $R^2 = .031$; $F = 43.402$; $p < .05$) ($R=.175$; $R^2=.031$; $F=43.402$; $p<.05$), accounting for 3.1% of the variance in academic performance. The study concluded that although public junior secondary schools in Oyo State largely complied with teacher qualification and teacher–student ratio requirements of the UBE programme, improving the effectiveness of school supervision is necessary to enhance students' academic performance. Keywords: Universal Basic Education, teacher qualifications, teacher–student ratio, school supervision, academic performance, Oyo State.

Introduction

Students' academic performance in Nigerian public secondary schools has continued to generate serious concern among educators, policymakers, and stakeholders, particularly due to persistent poor outcomes in core subjects such as English Language and Mathematics. Recent findings from national and regional examination bodies indicate that students' performance remains below expected standards. Reports from the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) show fluctuating but generally unsatisfactory performance trends, with a significant proportion of candidates failing to obtain the minimum requirement of five credits including English and Mathematics (WAEC, 2023; WAEC, 2024). Similarly, the National Examinations Council (NECO) reports also reveal persistent low achievement levels among students in public secondary schools (NECO, 2022). These trends suggest that despite various educational reforms, the challenge of poor academic performance remains unresolved.

Scholars have further corroborated these concerns by noting that students in public junior secondary schools, particularly in Southwest Nigeria, continue to perform poorly due to systemic challenges within the school system (Olatunji & Ajiboye, 2023; Akinbode & Oladipo, 2023). Poor academic performance, as observed by these authors, reflects students' inability to meet expected learning outcomes, especially in literacy and numeracy skills, which are fundamental at the basic education level. This persistent underperformance raises questions about the effectiveness of policies and programmes designed to improve the quality of basic education in Nigeria.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme is one of the key policy interventions introduced in Nigeria to provide free, compulsory, and quality education for all school-

age children. It is designed to enhance access, equity, and quality in education through the provision of adequate human and material resources, as well as effective monitoring and supervision of schools (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2021). However, despite these objectives, several studies have shown that the implementation of the programme continues to face significant challenges, which may be affecting its ability to improve students' academic performance (Ogunode & Adah, 2022; Eze & Okoronkwo, 2024).

Central to the effective implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme are key indicators such as the availability of qualified teachers, compliance with the recommended teacher-student ratio, and the effectiveness of school supervision. Although these factors are intended to improve teaching and learning outcomes, evidence suggests persistent deficiencies in many public junior secondary schools in Nigeria, including shortages of qualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms due to non-compliance with the 1:40 teacher-student ratio, and weak supervisory practices, all of which may negatively affect students' academic performance, particularly in core subject areas such as English and Mathematics. Consequently, this study examines these UBE implementation indicators, namely: adequacy of qualified teaching staff, compliance with the 1:40 teacher-student ratio, and school supervision and their relationship with students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Previous empirical studies on the relationship between educational inputs and students' academic performance have produced mixed findings. While some studies reported that teacher qualification significantly improves students' academic achievement through better instructional delivery and subject mastery

(Ibrahim & Orodho, 2023), others observed that possession of higher qualifications alone does not necessarily translate into improved learning outcomes especially where supervision and instructional monitoring are weak (Akinbode & Oladipo, 2023). Similarly, studies on teacher–student ratio have shown inconsistent results. Although smaller class sizes are often associated with better classroom interaction and improved academic performance, some researchers argue that the effectiveness of favourable teacher–student ratios largely depend on the quality of supervision, teacher commitment, and availability of instructional resources (Avaa et al., 2024; Yusuf & Alabi, 2021). These inconsistencies suggest that educational inputs may not independently guarantee improved academic performance unless supported by effective school supervision and accountability mechanisms.

Despite the growing body of literature on UBE implementation in Nigeria, important gaps remain unresolved. Most previous studies examined teacher qualification, teacher–student ratio, or school supervision separately, with limited attention given to their simultaneous assessment as indicators of UBE implementation in public junior secondary schools. In addition, many existing studies were conducted outside Oyo State, thereby creating a location gap in the literature. Furthermore, while several studies discussed the influence of these indicators descriptively, few specifically examined the statistical contribution of school supervision to students’ academic performance using inferential analysis. This study therefore addressed these gaps by examining selected indicators of UBE implementation in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State, while specifically determining the significant contribution of school supervision to students’ academic performance.

This study, therefore, investigated key indicators of UBE implementation, namely: adequacy of qualified teaching staff, compliance with the UBE policy of 1:40 teacher–student ratio, and school supervision in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria, while specifically examining the significant contribution of school supervision to students’ academic performance.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the objectives of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme to improve access and quality of basic education, students’ academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State, particularly in English Language and Mathematics, has remained persistently average and in some cases below expected standards. Reports from public examinations and internal school assessments continue to reveal that a substantial proportion of students struggle to attain satisfactory credit-level performance in these core subjects. This persistent performance concern has raised questions regarding the effectiveness of key implementation indicators of the UBE programme, especially school supervision, distribution of qualified teachers, and compliance with the recommended teacher–student ratio in public junior secondary schools.

Although previous studies have examined issues relating to teacher quality, classroom size, and supervision in Nigerian schools, there is still uncertainty regarding how these indicators relate to students’ academic outcomes in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State. In particular, inadequate supervision, uneven distribution of qualified teachers, and variations in compliance with class-size policy may be contributing to the continued average performance recorded among students.

The consequences of this situation are far-reaching. Persistent learning deficits in English

Language and Mathematics may hinder students' successful transition to senior secondary education and reduce their overall academic preparedness. In addition, poor learning outcomes weaken the effectiveness of government educational reforms, reduce the efficiency of UBE policy implementation, and may ultimately result in wastage of public investment committed to the UBE programme. It is against this background that this study examined selected indicators of UBE implementation in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State, while specifically determining the contribution of school supervision to students' academic performance.

Literature Review

Indicators of UBE Programme Implementation

The effectiveness of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria is often assessed through specific implementation indicators that directly influence teaching and learning outcomes. Among the most prominent indicators examined in this study are adequacy of qualified teaching staff, compliance with the prescribed teacher–student ratio, and school supervision. These indicators are critical because they determine the quality of instructional delivery and ultimately shape students' academic performance.

Adequacy of Qualified Teaching Staff

The availability of qualified teaching staff is a fundamental requirement for the successful implementation of any educational programme, particularly the UBE scheme. Qualified teachers possess the pedagogical skills, subject-matter knowledge, and professional competence required to facilitate effective teaching and learning. In the Nigerian context, however, studies have consistently reported a shortage of

qualified teachers in public basic education institutions.

Empirical evidence indicates that many schools operate with inadequate numbers of professionally trained teachers, thereby affecting instructional quality. For instance, a study in Delta State revealed a significant disparity between the number of qualified and unqualified teachers, with a substantial proportion of teachers lacking the required professional qualifications (Suleiman, 2021). Similarly, research conducted in Anambra State found that although some qualified teachers were available, they were insufficient to meet the demands of the UBE programme, thereby constraining effective implementation (Izuka, 2022).

Recent national data further corroborate this concern, indicating a large deficit in the number of teachers required in the basic education sector. The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) reported that Nigeria needs nearly 200,000 additional teachers to address existing gaps (UBEC, 2024). This shortage often leads to increased workload for available teachers, reduced instructional effectiveness, and ultimately poor student academic performance. Thus, the adequacy of qualified teaching staff remains a critical indicator of UBE implementation, as insufficient or underqualified teachers undermine the quality of education delivered in public junior secondary schools.

Compliance with UBE Policy of 1:40 Teacher–Student Ratio

Another important indicator of effective UBE implementation is compliance with the recommended teacher–student ratio. The UBE policy prescribes a manageable classroom size to ensure effective teaching, individualised attention, and proper classroom management. Specifically, the National Policy on Education recommends a ratio of approximately 1:35 for

junior secondary schools, with 1:40 often considered the upper acceptable limit (Avaa et al., 2024).

However, empirical studies reveal that many public schools in Nigeria exceed this recommended ratio, resulting in overcrowded classrooms. Evidence from Delta State shows that pupil–classroom ratios in junior secondary schools can be as high as 1:52, indicating significant overcrowding (Suleiman et al., 2021). Similarly, findings from Anambra State highlight that teacher–student ratios are “grossly inadequate,” suggesting that teachers are overwhelmed by large class sizes (Izuka et al., 2022).

Overcrowded classrooms hinder effective interaction between teachers and students, limit opportunities for individualised instruction, and make classroom management more difficult. These challenges reduce teaching efficiency and negatively impact students’ comprehension and academic achievement. Furthermore, large class sizes often lead to superficial assessment practices, where teachers are unable to provide timely and meaningful feedback to students.

Therefore, compliance with the UBE-recommended teacher–student ratio is essential for ensuring quality instruction and improving students’ academic performance in public junior secondary schools.

School Supervision

School supervision is another vital indicator of UBE programme implementation, as it ensures adherence to educational standards and promotes accountability within the school system. Effective supervision involves monitoring teachers’ instructional practices, evaluating curriculum implementation, and providing professional support to improve teaching effectiveness.

Studies have shown that inadequate supervision is a major challenge affecting the implementation

of UBE in Nigeria. Research findings indicate that poor supervision by relevant authorities contributes to ineffective teaching and low educational quality in public schools (Izuka et al., 2022). Similarly, a study in Ondo State revealed that the frequency and quality of supervision by education boards play a significant role in determining compliance with UBE policies and overall school effectiveness (Adefowora et al., 2024).

In addition, inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have been identified as key barriers to achieving the objectives of the UBE programme. Weak supervisory systems often result in poor instructional delivery, lack of accountability, and non-compliance with policy guidelines. This, in turn, negatively affects students’ learning outcomes and academic performance.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Education Production Function Theory propounded by Eric A. Hanushek (1979). The theory explains how various educational inputs are transformed into outputs, particularly students’ academic performance. It posits that students’ learning outcomes are a function of several inputs such as teacher quality, class size, school resources, and administrative practices. In essence, the theory views the school as a system where inputs (e.g., teachers, facilities, supervision) are processed to produce outputs (students’ achievement).

The relevance of this theory to the present study lies in its ability to explain how key indicators of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme implementation— such as adequacy of qualified teaching staff, compliance with the 1:40 teacher–student ratio, and school supervision— serve as critical inputs that influence students’ academic performance. When these inputs are adequately provided and

effectively managed, improved learning outcomes are expected. Conversely, deficiencies in these indicators may result in poor academic performance among students in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Aims and Objective

The purpose of this study was to investigate key indicators of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme implementation, namely: the adequacy of qualified teaching staff, compliance with the UBE-recommended teacher–student ratio of 1:40, and school supervision, as well as to examine the contribution of school supervision to students’ academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives pursued were:

1. the level of students’ academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Oyo state Nigeria.
2. the adequacy of qualified teaching staff for the effective implementation of the UBE programme in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State.
3. the extent of compliance with the UBE policy of 1:40 teacher–student ratio in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State.
4. the effectiveness of school supervision in promoting the implementation of the UBE programme in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State.
5. the significant contribution of school supervision to students’ academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of students’ academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State?
2. To what extent is the availability of qualified teaching staff ensured for effective implementation of UBE in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State?
3. To what extent is the UBE policy of 1:40 teacher–student ratio complied with for effective implementation of UBE in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State?
4. How effective is school supervision in promoting the implementation of UBE in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State?

Hypothesis

School supervision has no significant contribution to the prediction of students’ academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State.

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it allows for the collection of data from a large sample of respondents and the description of existing conditions without manipulating any of the variables. It also enables the examination of the relationship among variables in their natural setting. In this study, the design was used to examine the relationship between teachers’ qualification, teacher–student ratio, school supervision, and students’ academic performance

in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all public junior secondary school teachers and principals in Oyo State. The population consisted of 11,639 principals and teachers.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for the study consisted of 1,650 respondents selected through a multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, Oyo State was stratified into its three senatorial districts, namely Oyo North, Oyo Central, and Oyo South. In the second stage, 30 public junior secondary schools were selected from each senatorial district using proportionate and simple random sampling techniques, making a total of 90 schools. In the third stage, all principals from the selected schools were included in the study through purposive sampling because of their administrative and supervisory roles, while teachers were selected using proportionate random sampling based on the size of each school. This resulted in 90 principals and 1,560 teachers, giving a total sample size of 1,650 respondents.

3.4 Instrument for Data Collection

Two instruments were used for data collection in this study. These are the *UBE Implementation Indicators Questionnaire (UBEIIQ)* and the *Students' Academic Performance Proforma*.

The questionnaire was structured into four sections. Section A measured teachers' qualification using 10 items. Section B measured teacher-student ratio using 8 items. Section C assessed school supervision using 12 items, while Section D contained 6 items on students' academic performance. All items were designed on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4),

Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

3.5 Scoring Procedure and Decision Rule

Responses from the questionnaire were scored using a weighted system ranging from 4 to 1. The mean scores were used for interpretation. A criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted for decision making. Mean scores between 3.50 and 4.00 were interpreted as very high or very effective, 2.50 to 3.49 as high or effective, 1.50 to 2.49 as low or ineffective, and 0.50 to 1.49 as very low or very ineffective. Any mean score below 2.50 was regarded as low, while scores of 2.50 and above were regarded as high.

3.6 Validity of the Instrument

The instruments used for data collection were subjected to both face and content validity. Copies of the questionnaire and proforma were given to experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation for review. Their comments, corrections, and suggestions were used to improve the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the instrument in measuring the intended variables.

3.7 Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was established using the test-retest method with a two-week interval between the first and second administration. The responses obtained from both administrations were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.81 for teachers' qualification, 0.78 for teacher-student ratio, 0.83 for school supervision, and 0.80 for students' academic performance. These coefficients indicate that the instrument is reliable and consistent for the study.

3.8 Method of Data Collection

Data were collected with the assistance of trained research assistants. A total of 1,650 copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents, out of which 1,573 were correctly completed and retrieved, representing a 95.3% response rate. In addition, data on students' academic performance were obtained from the Oyo State Ministry of Education through the Education Officers.

Joint Promotion Examination records.

The Joint Promotion Examination is centrally set and moderated by the Oyo State Ministry of Education in collaboration with the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). It is administered uniformly across all public junior secondary schools in the state, and marking is guided by standardised marking schemes and moderation procedures to ensure consistency, fairness, and comparability of results across schools.

Answering Research Questions

Research question one: What is the level of students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State?

Table 1: Students' Academic Performance in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Oyo State Nigeria

Subjects	Candidates	A-B3	C4-C6	D7-E8	Total with Credit Pass	F9	Absent
English Language	10,372	141 (1.36%)	5,583 (53.81%)	3,660 (35.28%)	5,724 (55.16%)	752 (7.25%)	236 (2.27%)
Mathematics	10,372	22 (2.13%)	5,459 (52.66%)	4,348 (41.94%)	5,680 (54.79%)	248 (2.93%)	96 (0.93%)

Table 1 shows that Students' academic performance in both English Language and Mathematics was generally average. The percentages were computed using the total number of candidates (10,372) for each subject. The results show that a majority of students obtained credit passes (A1–C6) in both English Language (55.16%) and Mathematics (54.79%), indicating an overall average academic performance.

A smaller proportion of students fell within the failure category (F9 and Absent), while a significant number remained in the D7–E8 range, reflecting persistent performance challenges.

Research question two: To what extent is the adequacy of qualified teaching staff ensured for effective implementation of UBE in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State?

Table 2: Qualified Teaching Staff for Effective Implementation of Universal Basic Education Programme in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Oyo State

Qualification	Number	%
NCE	3,069	26.4
B.Ed	7, 738	66.5
M. Ed	829	7
PhD	03	0.2
Total	11, 639	100

Source: Oyo State Ministry of Education, (2024)

Table 2 shows the distribution of teaching staff in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State based on their qualifications. The majority of teachers hold a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree (66.5%), followed by those with a Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) at 26.4%. A smaller proportion of teachers possess a Master's degree (M.Ed) at 7%, while only 0.2% hold a PhD. The data indicate that most schools have teachers with the minimum professional qualifications required for effective implementation of the UBE programme. However, the relatively low percentage of teachers with advanced degrees suggests limited access to higher-level expertise, which could affect instructional quality and the overall effectiveness of UBE implementation.

Research question three: To what extent is the UBE policy of 1:40 teacher–student ratio complied with for effective implementation of UBE in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State?

Table 3: Extent of Compliance with Universal Basic Education policy of 40:1 students-teachers ratio for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education programme in public Junior Secondary Schools in Oyo State

Number of teachers	Number of students JSS1-3	1:40 teachers-students ratio
11, 639	204, 076	1:18

Source: Oyo State Ministry of Education, (2024)

Table 3 shows the teacher–student ratio in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State. With 11,639 teachers for 204,076 students in JSS1–3, the resulting ratio is 1:18, which is well below the UBE policy recommendation of 1:40. This indicates that public junior secondary schools in Oyo State have a favourable teacher–student ratio, suggesting compliance with the UBE policy. The relatively low ratio implies that teachers are better able to give individual attention to students, manage classrooms effectively, and deliver quality instruction, which is likely to enhance students' academic performance.

Research question four: How effective is school supervision in promoting the implementation of UBE in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State?

Table 4: Extent of Effectiveness of School Supervision in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Oyo State.

Items	% Response, N= 1,573					
	VH	MH	L	VL	X	SD
There is (are) periodic (at least one per term) general school supervision by SUBEB officials/Education Officers	24.0	63.7	7.5	4.8	3.07	.709
General school supervision by SUBEB officials/Education Officers is impactful on school development	2.4	10.3	24.6	62.6	1.53	.776
There is (are) periodic (at least one per term) instructional supervision by SUBEB officials/ Education officers	4.4	6.9	68.1	20.5	1.95	.670
Instructional supervision by SUBEB officials/ Education officers is impactful on teachers 'effectiveness	11.1	15.0	14.5	59.4	1.78	1.068
Instructional supervision by SUBEB officials/ Education officers is impactful on effective teaching and learning	5.2	5.5	71.8	17.4	1.99	.663
There is frequent general school supervision by Principal	7.8	11.0	14.5	66.6	1.60	.964
General school supervision by Principal is impactful on school development	3.1	5.4	77.4	14.1	1.98	.566
There is frequent instructional supervision by principal	7.8	12.1	18.9	61.1	1.67	.966
Instructional supervision by the principal is impactful on effective teaching and learning	3.9	7.5	73.7	15.0	2.06	.616
Prompt feedback is given to teachers during or after principal's instructional supervision	8.6	9.9	60.7	20.7	2.00	.804
Weighted Mean						1.96

Note; N= Number of respondents (Principals and Teachers); VH= Very High, H= High, L=Low, VL=Very Low, %= Percentage, X= Response Mean Score; S.D.= Standard Deviation, Decision rule= Very High (weighted average between 3.50 and 4.00), High (weighted average between 2.50 and 3.49: Average), Low (weighted average between 1.50 and 2.49: Below average), Very Low (weighted average between 0.50 and 1.49: Below average).

Table 4 presents the extent of school supervision in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State. The pooled mean of 1.96 falls within the 1.50–2.49 range, indicating that school supervision was generally of low effectiveness. Among the items, only periodic (at least once per term) general school supervision by SUBEB officials/Education Officers recorded a relatively high effectiveness ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.709$). All other aspects of supervision, including instructional supervision by SUBEB officials, general and instructional supervision by principals, and prompt feedback to teachers fell within the low range, with mean scores between 1.53 and 2.06. This suggests that while some formal supervision occurs, overall

school supervision in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State is insufficient to strongly impact effective teaching, learning, and school development.

Hypothesis: School supervision has no significant contribution to students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State.

Table 5: Significant Contribution of School Supervision to Students' Academic Performance in Public Junior Secondary Schools

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-Ratio	P
Regression	26.609	1	26.609	43.402	.000 ^b
Residual	839.924	1571	.613		
Total	866.533	1572			
R = 0.175 ^a ; Multiple R ² = 0.031; Multiple R ² (Adjusted) = 0.030; Stand error estimate = 0.783					

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), School Supervision

The result in Table 5 indicates that school supervision has a statistically significant contribution to academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State ($R = 0.175$; $R^2 = 0.031$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.030$; $F(1, 1371) = 43.402$; $p < 0.05$). This implies that school supervision accounts for approximately 3.0% of the variance in students' academic performance. Although this contribution is statistically significant, the magnitude of the effect is relatively small, suggesting that school supervision alone explains only a limited proportion of the variation in academic performance. This therefore indicates that while supervision is a meaningful predictor, other factors not included in this model likely play a much larger role in determining students' academic outcomes. Consequently, the hypothesis of no significant contribution of school supervision to academic performance was rejected, but the finding should be interpreted with caution due to its modest explanatory power.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed several important findings regarding the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme and students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria.

The finding that students' academic performance was average is consistent with empirical studies that have reported mixed outcomes in Nigerian basic education. For instance, Aremu and Yusuf (2021) observed that junior secondary school students often achieve moderate performance levels in core subjects but rarely attain high academic excellence, particularly in English and Mathematics. Similarly, Okoye and Eze (2023) reported average achievement levels among basic education students, attributing this to persistent instructional and systemic challenges within the school system. These findings suggest that despite ongoing educational reforms, students' academic outcomes remain moderate rather than excellent.

A possible explanation for this average performance, despite relatively favourable teacher–student ratios, may be linked to factors beyond class size. These include variations in instructional quality, uneven teacher deployment across subject areas, curriculum pacing challenges, differences in students’ socio-economic backgrounds, and the quality of school-based assessments. These factors may collectively limit the extent to which improved staffing conditions translate into higher academic achievement.

The study further showed that most schools employed teachers with minimum professional qualifications such as NCE and B.Ed, while only a small proportion possessed advanced degrees. This finding aligns with Ibrahim and Orodho (2023), who reported that Nigerian public schools are predominantly staffed by teachers with basic professional qualifications, with few holding postgraduate qualifications. While minimum qualifications ensure baseline competence, Smith and Smith (2022) argue that advanced academic training enhances subject mastery and pedagogical effectiveness. The limited presence of highly qualified teachers may therefore partly explain the persistence of average student performance.

The observed teacher–student ratio of 1:18 indicates a favourable condition and is significantly better than the UBE recommended ratio of 1:40. This finding is consistent with Adewale and Bello (2024), who reported similar improved ratios in some Nigerian states following increased teacher recruitment. Avaa et al. (2024) also noted that smaller class sizes improve instructional quality by allowing better classroom management and more individualised attention. This suggests that compliance with UBE staffing standards has the potential to enhance teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes.

The finding that school supervision was generally ineffective aligns with previous studies that identified weaknesses in supervisory systems in Nigerian schools. Olatunji and Ajiboye (2023) found that irregular and superficial supervisory visits limit their impact on instructional improvement, while Ogunode (2023) noted that weak supervisory structures and lack of follow-up reduce teacher accountability and school effectiveness. These findings suggest that supervision, as currently practiced, may not be sufficiently structured or consistent to significantly improve teaching and learning outcomes.

A possible explanation for the low effectiveness of supervision includes irregular supervisory visits, inadequate mentoring of teachers, weak feedback mechanisms, and the perception of supervision as fault-finding rather than developmental support. In addition, many supervisors may lack adequate training and resources to provide meaningful instructional support, which reduces the overall impact of supervision on school improvement.

Despite the generally low effectiveness of supervision, the study found that school supervision significantly contributes to students’ academic performance. However, the effect size was small ($R^2 = 0.031$), indicating that supervision explains only about 3% of the variance in academic performance. While this relationship is statistically significant, it has limited practical strength, suggesting that many other factors not included in the model play a more substantial role in determining student achievement.

This finding is supported by Adefowora et al. (2024), who reported that structured and supportive supervision enhances instructional quality and student outcomes, and Izuka et al. (2022), who found that effective supervision improves classroom practices and learning

achievement. Nevertheless, the small explanatory power observed in this study implies that supervision is only one of several influencing factors. Other variables such as teacher motivation, instructional resources, student home background, and school environment may also significantly shape academic performance.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State presents mixed outcomes. While most schools complied with teacher qualification requirements and maintained a favourable teacher–student ratio, students’ academic performance remained only average, indicating that improved input conditions did not necessarily translate into high achievement levels.

The study further revealed that school supervision showed a statistically significant but modest association with students’ academic performance, explaining only a small proportion of the variation in achievement. This suggests that although supervision plays a meaningful role in academic outcomes, its practical effect is limited when considered in isolation. Therefore, enhancing the effectiveness and consistency of school supervision, alongside strengthening teachers’ professional capacity and addressing other contextual factors, is necessary to improve students’ learning outcomes in public junior secondary schools in Oyo State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Since the study found that most schools have teachers with minimum qualifications but limited advanced expertise, and students’ performance remains only average, the Oyo State

government and educational authorities should strengthen targeted in-service training and subject-specific capacity-building programmes. These trainings should focus on improving instructional delivery, classroom assessment practices, and subject mastery rather than only encouraging academic degree upgrades.

2. In view of the favourable but uneven teacher–student ratio observed (1:18), school authorities should ensure sustained equitable distribution of teachers across schools and subject areas. Attention should be given to schools or subjects experiencing imbalance to prevent hidden overcrowding and uneven instructional workload that may affect learning outcomes.
3. Considering that school supervision was found to be generally ineffective but statistically related to academic performance, SUBEB and school administrators should establish a structured supervision schedule that includes consistent instructional visits, standardised supervision checklists, and formal feedback templates to improve monitoring quality.
4. Based on the weak supervisory effectiveness reported at the school level, principals should be trained in supportive instructional supervision practices, including teacher mentoring, classroom observation techniques, and continuous feedback cycles aimed at improving teaching effectiveness rather than fault-finding.
5. Since supervision was found to contribute only modestly to academic performance, education authorities should strengthen supervision by integrating it with continuous improvement systems,

including follow-up mechanisms, performance tracking, and accountability frameworks that link supervision outcomes to school development plans.

6. Given the average level of student performance in core subjects such as English and Mathematics, schools should introduce remedial and academic support programmes, including peer tutoring, revision clinics, and structured mentorship schemes to support underperforming students and improve overall achievement levels.

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