

Economic Hardship, Academic Staff Job Performance and Students Academic Performance in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

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Abstract:

This paper examined the impact of economic hardship on academic staff job performance and students' academic work performance in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Secondary data were used in the study. The secondary data were collected from online and print publications. The paper concluded that economic hardship in Nigeria has affected academic staff job performance and students' academic performance in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Based on this findings, the paper recommends that government should increase the salaries of academic staff, provide subsidized transportation system to aid movement of lecturers from homes to campuses. Government should increase the funding of students loan programme to cover more students, government should provide social safety net for students and subsidized bicycles for students to aid their movement to campuses.

Keywords: Economic hardship, Academic staff job performance, Students academic performance.

1.0 Introduction

Tertiary institutions are established to help the communities, societies and states find solution to the socio-economic and political problems facing them. Tertiary institutions are designed and programme to be problem solver in any country (Ogunode, & Onakoya. 2024). Tertiary education is the third tiers of education that is designed for the production of skilled and professionals for the socio-economic and technology advancement. Tertiary institutions are micro section of the larger society. Tertiary institutions is an organized fraction of the whole society curved out for teaching programme, research and provision of community service. Tertiary institution can also be seen as a

subset of the general society that is made of collection of different people, different culture, different life style and different value (Ogunode & Odo 2023).

Tertiary education is an advanced educational system meant for human capital development through teaching, research and provision of community service (Ogunode, Iyabode, & Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2022). Tertiary education is defined by National policy on Education (2013) as the education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-University Centres such as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI).

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria is made up of stakeholder like students and academic staff and non-academic staff. The students are the learner in the tertiary institutions while the academic staff are the implementer of the curriculum. Other functions of the academic staff includes; presentation of lectures, students supervision, script making, carrying out researches and community services. The students and academic staff in the Nigerian tertiary institutions appear to be affected by the recent economic hardship facing Nigeria as a country.

Tertiary education is among the public and private institutions appear to have been affected with economic hardship in Nigeria. Nigeria grapples with economic hardship, coupled with record high inflation (which reached 40.9 percent for food, and 34.2 percent for all items in June 2024) and subsidy removal on fuel. This is a record increase in food prices amid record high transportation costs. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the price of beans in October 2024 was 282 percent above the same period in 2023. Similarly, the price of local rice rise by 153 percent compared to October last year. These economic shocks resulted the continuous devaluation of the local currency (Naira) against the United States Dollar (USD), external economic factors, and last year's policy changes on discontinuation of the fuel subsidy (United Nations World Food Programme 2024).

The economic hardship appear to have affected stakeholder of the tertiary institutions more. The academic staff and students of tertiary institutions across Nigeria. Lecturers in Nigerian universities are facing financial strain, struggling to cover essential expenses such as food, school fees, and the inflated cost of fuel required for transporting to school. The students are also facing financial challenges due to the high inflation and economic hardship. The rise in petroleum prices has affected all aspects of life, not just transportation for school. The reading materials, school fees and transportation fares are all in the high side. It is import to examine the impact of economic hardship on academic staff job performance and students' academic work performance in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of economic hardship on academic staff job performance and students' academic work performance in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study is;

1. to assess the impact of economic hardship on academic staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Nigeria; and
2. to ascertain the impact of economic hardship on students' academic work performance in tertiary institutions in Nigeria

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Economic Hardship

Economic hardship refers to the perception of a deficit of resources compared to others. Those who suffer from economic hardship are competitively disadvantaged, with resultant consequences for survival and reproduction. The perception of economic hardship may motivate individuals to adopt different behavioral strategies including both increased conflict behaviors and increased cooperation (Refaie & Mishra, 2019). Economic hardship means an onerous and excessive financial burden that destroys reasonable and beneficial use of property and that would amount to the taking of property without just compensation, or failure to achieve a reasonable economic return in the case of income-producing properties (Lawinsider, 2022). Economic hardship and economic activities decrease substantially, and the decline affects wide portions of the economy and it has some permanence (Sabitu, 2023).

“Economic hardship in this paper is an economic situation whereby there are difficulties faced by individuals, institutions and organizations due to income loss, unemployment, job instability, and economic insecurity. Economic hardship can also be seen as an economic condition that is characterized by inflation, high unemployment, high debt rate, low income and reduced standard of living of the people. Economic hardship is a condition of economic meltdown where citizens of a country cannot afford their basic needs due to inflation and a high rate of unemployment that is caused by bad leadership, corruption and unstable economic policies” (Ogunode, Afolabi, & Adi 2024). “Economic hardship can be seen as economic challenge people, firms and institutions faced because of high inflation, income instability, unemployment and economic insecurity. Economic hardship also known as financial burden, financial distress, financial hardship, financial stress, and financial toxicity is an economic era whereby high inflation, high unemployment rate and high exchange against international currencies affects the economic and the people and institutions negatively. The example of economic hardship include; instability economic policies. Inflation, high national debt, high exchange rates against dollars, unstable financial loss incurred by the families and loss of job (Ogunode, Solomon, & Idonigie, 2024)”.

2.2 Academic staff job performance

Academic staff job performance is the total performance of teaching, researching and community services responsibilities an academic staff has carried out and still carrying out in the institutions where he or she work at a particular time. Academic staff job performance is the general record of tasks carried out by an academic staff to be compare to the assigned responsibilities and functions given to them. Academic staff job performance can also be seen as the measuring of a specific and general tasks given to faculty in an institutions and they are expected to carry them out within a specific timeline (Ogunode,& Ibrahim, 2023).. Ogunode, ThankGod and Olatunde-Aiyedun (2022) stated that the academic staff job performance constitutes all activities and functions it is expected of an academic to execute within a specific time. It has to do with the abilities of the academic to fulfill his/her duties in the institutions. Academic staff job performance means an assigned responsibilities and functions given to an academic staff to actualize the aims and objectives of the institutions and the decree execution or accomplishment.

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2.3 Students’ academic performance

Abdul (2002) considered academic performance as the students’ level of attainment in the grade point average of courses offered in their yearly examination. In other words, it is the outcome of

students' assessment through comprehensive, systematic, diagnostic, progressive, formative, summative and cumulative evaluation of what they had gone through in a school setting. It is the main focus in the overall educational performance. For Ogunsaju (2004), student academic performance has been a major determinant of schools' effectiveness. Ricarda, Anja and Anne (2017) note that academic performance represents achievement outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, and university. Bello (2006) perceived academic performance to mean all things a learner achieves or acquires during and after undergoing some academic activities.

Ogunode & Josiah, (2023) defined academic performance of students as the total learning outcome of the students in the educational institutions which includes the knowledge, social and communication skills and ideas acquired and retained through their course of study. Academic performance refers to all organized educational program and knowledge a learner or student achieves or acquires in the school environment as a result of academic activities. Academic performance is the total knowledge, skills and behavior a student or learner acquires or gains from an organized test or examinations in educational institutions.

3.0 Method

The paper employed the use of secondary data. The secondary data were collected from online and print publications. Content analysis was adopted to streamline the literature to the term of references.

4.0 Discussion

4.1 Impact of Economic Hardship on Academic Staff Job Performance in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria; and

Economic hardship in Nigeria is affecting academic staff (Ogunode, Olofinkua, & Sunmonu, 2024; Okeke, 2024). Academic staff in Nigerian now spend more in transportation to delivery lectures in their respective institutions which is taken a lot of their monthly salaries (Nwankwo, 2018). The more money lecturers spend on transportation has direct impact on their cost of living. This has a direct effect on the incomes of fixed salary earners, as their salaries remain constant while the cost of goods and services increases. This means that their real income is decreasing, making it difficult for them to make ends meet. The increasing cost of living has a particularly detrimental effect on the education of their children. The cost of educational materials, tuition fees and other associated costs are all increasing, meaning that fixed salary earners are struggling to afford the cost of education for their children (Ahmed, & Tochukwu, 2024).

Many academic staff in Nigeria cannot carry out their function of lecturing, researching and provision of community services in their respective institutions due to economic hardship, inflation and removal of subsidy from the fuel (Giami, 2023; Ogunode, & Chukwuemeka, 2023; Ukozor, Ayeni, & Andeshi, 2024). Academic staff spends a lot of their salaries on transportation to deliver lectures. Due to inflation, the cost of carrying out research have gone high and publication fees for both local and international journals have increase due to

Inflation according to Ogunode, Olofinkua, & Sunmonu, (2024) can affect the volume of research publications in Nigeria tertiary institutions. Many academic staff, non-academic staff and post-graduate students may have reduced their level of publication because of the impact of inflation on their salaries. They concluded that inflation has affected the effective implementation of research programmes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Specifically, the paper identified increment in research resources, reduction in the volume of academic paper publications and likely drop in international ranking as the major impacts of inflation on the research programmes of Nigerian

tertiary institutions. Project Clue (2023) noted that due to the removal of subsidies, which led to inflation in Nigeria, some academics may lose interest in research because they do not have enough funds to take care of their daily needs, let alone enough funds to buy fuel to write research in this period of spiral inflation. Inflation in Nigeria has negative impact on implementation of curriculum in tertiary institutions.

4.2 Impact of Economic Hardship on Students' Academic Work Performance in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Economic hardship in Nigeria has negative implication on tertiary institutions academic performance (Ogunode, Afolabi & Adi 2024). The high cost of transportation as a result of subsidy removal has affected students movement to campuses. Bamidele (2023) noted that the increase in the price of fuel has worsened the state of students who have to depend daily on transportation to school. It makes life more difficult as most of them depend on their parents for monetary aid, while the parents themselves are grappling with the situation of source for their livelihood daily. The economic hardship in Nigeria according to (Afolabi, 2024; Giami, 2023; Okonkwo 2023) is spelling doom on class attendance at tertiary institutions across the nation. Abdullahi (2019) on the impact of students' socio-economic background on academic performance in universities. It could be explained that university undergraduates have limited resources and educational provisions as a result of economic hardship. Most tertiary institutions now avoid classes as a result of the high cost of transportation to campuses.

Many students cannot afford to buy academic resources to support their studies due to high prices that is caused by inflation that is linked to subsidy removal from the fuel. Okonkwo, (2023) and Omoniyi, (2023) concluded that the prices of various instrument materials have gone up due to the removal of subsidies in Nigeria. Subsidy removal affected by the petrol price hike is the prices of commodities in the market moving up high. It has been noted that inflation has direct and indirect consequences on the performance of students in school (Ukozor, Ayeni, & Andeshi, 2024).

Psychological problem as a result of non-payment of school fees, sickness as a result of trekking to campuses and low lectures attendance as a result of high cost of transportation fares can all be linked to poor academic performance on students. Economic hardship, inflation and subsidy removal in Nigeria has cause Psychological problem on students (Onyekachi, 2024). Ugbede-Ojo (2024) and Okpunukpang. Ogunode, & Suleiman, (2024) observed that the physical exertion from trekking long distances also affects students' health. Exposure to adverse weather conditions such as heat, rain, or dust often leads to illnesses such as malaria, respiratory infections, or heat exhaustion. When students frequently fall ill, they tend to miss school, leading to poor attendance, which directly impacts their academic performance. In high institutions, absenteeism due to illness is a widespread issue, more so in areas with limited access to healthcare. When students fall ill, they often lack timely medical attention, which extends their absence from school. This recurring absenteeism leads to missed lessons, making it difficult for students to keep up with their academic responsibilities.

4.3 Findings

The study revealed that economic hardship in Nigeria has affected academic staff job performance and students' academic performance in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

4.4 Discussion of Finding

The study established that economic hardship in Nigeria has affected academic staff job performance and students' academic performance in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This finding is in line with the discovery of Ogunode, & Ukozor, (2023); Wahab, (2024); Akuh, (2024); Maduka, (2024) that concluded that inflation, economic hardship and subsidy removal on fuel have

affected lecturers' job performance and students' academic performance in the higher institutions in Nigeria.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper assessed the impact of economic hardship on academic staff job performance and students' academic work performance in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The paper concluded that economic hardship in Nigeria has affected academic staff job performance and students' academic performance in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Based on this findings, the paper recommends that

1. Government should increase the salaries of academic staff, provide subsidized transportation system to aid movement of lecturers from homes to campuses.
2. Government should increase the funding of students loan programme to cover more students, government should provide social safety net for students and subsidized bicycles for students to aid their movement to campuses.

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