

Economic Hardship and Curriculum Implementation in Nigerian Basic Schools

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Abstract:

This paper assessed the impact of economic hardship on curriculum implementation in Basic schools in Nigeria. Secondary data were used in the study and the data were collected in both online and print resources. The study revealed that economic hardship has affected teachers' job performance in basic schools and has negatively impacted the implementation of curriculum in Nigerian Basic schools. The high cost of instructional resources, instructional facilities and operational cost of running schools have disrupted effective implementation of school curriculum in Nigeria as a result of economic hardship and inflation. Based on this findings, the paper recommends that government should increase the salaries of teachers in basic schools across the country and provide subsidized school buses to aid their movement to schools. Government should provide instructional resources to schools and subsidize those that the schools are directly purchasing. Government should increase budgetary allocation to basic schools to aid the completion of infrastructural facilities in the schools.

Keywords: Curriculum Implementation, Economic hardship.

1.0 Introduction assess

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme is a nine-year basic educational plan, which was launched and executed by the government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance, poverty as well as stimulate and accelerate national development, political consciousness and national integration. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo flagged off the UBE programme on the 30th of September 1999 in Sokoto, Sokoto State. The UBE programme

in Nigeria is a strategy for the achievement of Education for all (EFA) and the education related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2013; Ogunode, 2020).

The concept of basic education has been viewed as a necessity to individuals, society, country and the world at large. This is because without education, no nation develops economically, socially, politically and technologically. Education therefore is a key to development. Thus the importance of basic education to the well-being of mankind is obvious it is a development index. Madugu (2000) postulates that basic education is a prerequisite for the success of democracy and a fundamental ingredient for the development of human potential.

The implementation of the Universal Basic Education in Nigeria have led to establishment of many basic schools across the country. The management and administration of Basic education appear to be facing the problem of inflation and economic hardship. The inflation in Nigeria has led to high operational cost for basic schools.

Nigeria's inflation rate surged from 32.7% in September 2024 to 33.88% in October 2024, according to the latest data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). This marks the second consecutive month of rising inflation, signaling persistent economic challenges for the country. The NBS' Consumer Price Index (CPI) report released, reveals the sharp increase in annual inflation, driven by a combination of factors that have plagued Nigeria's economy in recent months. Inflation began to accelerate in the second half of 2023, following significant economic policy shifts by Nigerian government including the devaluation of the naira and the removal of fuel subsidies. The inflation and naira devaluation and series of petrol price hikes that exacerbated the country's ongoing cost of living crisis. Nigeria is facing economic crisis which seems to have strong impact on operational and management of schools, especially curriculum implementation. It is based on this that this paper assesses the impact of economic hardship on curriculum implementation in schools across Nigeria.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of economic hardship on the curriculum implementation in schools in Nigeria. The specific objectives are

1. to find out the impact of economic hardship on teachers' job performance;
2. to ascertain the impact of economic hardship on instruction resources in schools in Nigeria and
3. to assess the impact of economic hardship on instruction facilities in schools in Nigeria

2.0 Review of Literatures

2.1 Concept of Economic Hardship

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 according to Ogunode, Olofinkua, & Sunmonu, (2024) is an economic enterprise that constantly decrease, and the decline affects wide economic activities which leads to inflation, unemployment and high standard of living among the citizens. Economic hardship also implies an economic situation whereby citizens of a country cannot afford to meet up with the

economic need as a result of inflation, unemployment, high debt burden, low direct investment and high poverty.

Economic hardship can be seen as economic challenge, people, firms and institutions face 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 economy, the people and institutions negatively. The example of economic hardship includes; unstable economic policies, inflation, high national debt, high exchange rates against dollars, unstable financial loss incurred by families and loss of job (Ogunode, Solomon, & Idonigie, 2024).

2.2 Concept of Curriculum Implementation

Curriculum is the vehicle for facilitating education in Nigeria (Ben, 2008). Curriculum are those things which students learn because of the way in which the work of the school is planned and organized but which are not in themselves overtly included in the planning or even in the consciousness of those responsible for the school arrangement (Kelly 2008). It is the planned and guided learning experiences and intended learning outcomes, formulated and provided under the auspices of the school for learners' continued and willful growth in cognitive, affective and psychomotor competences (Ivowi, 2003). It is a program of studies and activities designed so that learners will attain as far as possible, certain educational goals and objectives. Curriculum comprises of the courses and subjects and their contents to be studied by learners at all levels of education. Prescriptive view of a curriculum is defined as a plan for action or written document that includes strategies for achieving desired goals or ends (Olibie & Ehiametalor 2011).

Curriculum implementation has been noted earlier to involve the interaction of human and material resources with methods and content. It entails the coordination of content, and resources using varying methods in such a way that learners derive required or desired benefit. But because implementation vary in their experience, orientation, philosophy and understanding, they are liable to attach different interpretations to curricular implement. Curriculum implementation has the task of translating the curriculum document into the operating curriculum by the combined efforts of the students, teachers and others concerned, that is, curriculum implementation demands concerted efforts of end-users of the curriculum for its effective implementation at all levels in order to achieve the desired goals (Jamoh, & Aminu, 2021). Mkpa (2007) defined curriculum implementation as the task of translating the curriculum document into the operating curriculum by the combined efforts of the students, teachers and others concerned. That is, curriculum implementation demands concerted efforts of end-users of the curriculum for its effective implementation at all levels in order to achieve the desired goals.

Curriculum implementation is putting the curriculum to work for the achievement of the goals for which it is designed (Garba 2004). Okebukola (2004) defined curriculum implementation as the transition of the objectives of the curriculum from paper to practice. That is, only effective curriculum implementation ensures achievement of the objectives for which the curriculum was designed to attain. Curriculum implementation as the translation of theory into practice, or proposal into action (Ivowi (2004). "Curriculum implementation is the process of putting all that has been planned as a curriculum document into practice in the classroom through the combined efforts of teachers, learners, school administrators, parents as well as interaction with physical facilities, instructional materials, psychological and social environments" (Onyeachu 2008). Curriculum implementation is the execution of a planned and organized instruction in the school environment (Ogunode & Ohiosumua 2023; Ogunode & Akin-Ibidiran & Ibidiran 2021)

2.3 Concept of Teachers' job performance

Teachers' job performance is the measurement of the degree of success or failure of teachers who are assigned specific tasks or given responsibilities to perform towards the actualization of a predetermined educational goals and objectives (Cheng & Tsui, 2006). According to Ololube (2011), teachers' job performance is the measure of teachers' performance aimed at achieving school objectives. It is associated with the degree to which a teacher uses desirable skills, task performance and the level of students' achievement in examination. In his view, Adeyemi (2010, p. 85) described teachers' job performance as "the ability of the teachers to combine relevant input for the enhancement of teaching and learning process." It is also described as the duties performed by the teachers at a particular period in the school system in achieving organizational goals. Teachers' job performance is therefore, viewed as extremely important to the optimum effectiveness of the educational system at all levels hence, literatures on it is in abundant.

Adeyemi in Giami and Obiechina (2019), identified job performance, to include; effective teaching, lesson note preparation, effective use of scheme of work, effective supervision and monitoring of students' work. Disciplinary ability is a virtue which teachers should uphold effectively in schools. On this note, teachers' job performance can be measured through; annual report in terms of performance in teaching, lesson note preparation, lesson presentation, mastery of subject content, instructional proficiency, dedication to duty, commitment to assigned job and extra-curricular activities. Other areas include effective leadership, motivation, students' discipline, class control and management (Giami & Obiechina, 2019).

2.4 Concept of instructional resources

The school system is designed to function with the application and deployment of instructional materials. Instructional materials are very essential to the development of education. Instructional materials are one of the critical components of the educational system (Josiah, & Ogunode 2021). adeiye (2005) viewed instructional materials as visual and audio-visual aids, concrete or non-concrete, used by teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning activities in schools. Ibeneme (2000) defined teaching aids as those materials used for practical and demonstration in the classroom by students and teachers while Ikerionwu (2000) defined instructional materials as objects or devices that assist the teacher to present a lesson to the learners in a logical manner. Isola (2010) also described instructional materials as objects or devices that assist teachers to present their lessons logically and sequentially to the learners.

Instructional materials are used in all forms of educational institutions. The resources are influencing the implementation of teaching, research and community service in the various tertiary institutions. In secondary schools, instructional materials help to support the teaching and learning process. Teachers in educational institutions teach well with the deployment of instructional materials. Instructional materials serve as a channel between the teacher and the students in delivering instructions. They may also serve as the motivation for the teaching-learning process. It is used to get the attention of the students and eliminate boredom (Josiah, et al 2021). Enaigbe (2009) concluded that basic materials such as textbooks, chalkboard and essential equipment like computer, projector, television and video are very vital for curriculum implementation.

2.5 Concept of Instruction facilities

Infrastructural facilities according to Ogunode (2020) and Ebehikhalu, and Dawam (2016) are those facilities aiding the delivery of academic and non-academic services in educational institutions. Infrastructural facilities include; libraries, laboratories, halls, offices, administrative blocks, hostels, road facilities, water, electricity, internet and others. Ehiamezor (2001) described infrastructure as the operational inputs of every instructional programme and constitutes elements that are necessary for teaching and learning. Such include buildings, laboratories, machinery, furniture and electrical fixtures. These must be functional in relation to other aspects of the community, such as health

centres, libraries, and good roads and must be large enough to allow for expansion as enrolments expand.

The importance of infrastructural facilities in educational institutions according to Ogunode and Agwor (2021) include; it aids effective delivery of administrative functions in schools; it makes the delivery of services fast and reliable; it enables teachers to deliver lessons fast; infrastructural facilities provide a conducive working environment for both teachers and students. Infrastructural facilities enable learners to learn at ease and learn well; it enables teachers to teach well, prepare their lessons, and deliver them online (ICT). The importance of school infrastructural facilities in the realization of educational goals cannot be underestimated. School facilities aid the delivery of the teaching and learning process in schools. The school offices provide a conducive working environment for teachers, the classrooms help the learners to learn while the school fence protects students, the teachers, and school administrators from criminals.

3.0 Impact of Economic Hardship on Curriculum Implementation in Schools

3.1 Impact of Economic Hardship on Teachers Job performance

Economic hardship in Nigeria has affected the teachers in the school. The teachers who have been described as the implementer of the school curriculum are adversely affected by the high rate of inflation in Nigeria that has affected their productivities in the schools. Akum, (2024) and Afolabi, (2024) noted that the importance of teacher in curriculum planning, development and most importantly implementation cannot be over-emphasized. Teachers most at times are not involved during policy formulation even though they are expected to implement this curriculum. Teachers' movement to schools to deliver lessons have been affected by high cost of transportation fares (Ugo-onyeka, Nonyelum & Ogunode, 2024; Ahmed, & Tochukwu, 2024). Many teachers now miss classes due to high cost of coming to schools which has implication on syllable and scheme of work completion. The cost of living of teachers is affected by inflation because teachers who have access to little money at hand are constrained in terms of their movement to school and attendance in the classroom. When teachers miss class and cannot teach the entire period as planned in the scheme and syllable as a result of inflation; the missed classes and lessons will imply students resulting in poor quality of education because students do not learn what they are supposed to learn at the right time (Ogunode & Ukozor, 2023; Afolabi, 2024; Ogunode, Cletus, & Tswenji, 2024).

The psychological problems, mental health and high cost of living of teachers affects their job performance in schools. The psychological and economic status of the teachers have impact on the curriculum implementation in the schools. Inflation reduces the standard of living of the people especially those fixed income earners. Inflation is the era of continuous rise in the prices of goods and services. Where money loses its purchasing values as more money is often used to purchase fewer goods and services. This has affected teachers' morale and competencies in the performance of assigned tasks (Giami, 2023). Inflation erodes teachers' income, increase their expenditures while subjecting them to receiving loans with high interest, forcing the teachers to take an extra income generating works in an attempt to maintain their normal life and which directly affect their job performance (Gagarawa & Mehrotra 2017). Paul Jefferies & Boi-1da (2018), found that, inflation has a significant influence on the salaries of teachers and other educational expenses, such as the cost of tuition. This means that the cost of tuition and salaries of teachers increase as the rate of inflation increases. Inflation, economic hardship and subsidy removal in Nigeria has affected teachers' job performance in educational institutions in Nigeria (Okonkwo, 2023; Noispolls 2023; Ogunode & Aregbesola. 2023; Ogunode, & Ojochenemi, 2023; Ogunode & Ukozor, 2023).

3.2 Impact of Economic Hardship on Instruction Resources in Basic Schools in Nigeria

Inflation has affected adequate provision of instructional resources in the schools. Dike (1987) described instructional materials as alternative channels of communication which a teacher can use to compile information and make them more vivid to his learners. Instructional materials are ways and means of making the teaching and learning process easy, more meaningful and understandable. Babalola (2004) noted that instructional materials are designed to promote and encourage effective teaching/learning experiences, and also a resource material to curriculum implementation.

Ifezue, (2024) noted that inflation has not only affected tuition fees but also the cost of textbooks, school supplies, and other learning materials. Textbooks that would ordinarily cost two thousand, five hundred naira (₦2500) now cost over five thousand naira (₦5000). For most students in tertiary education, their monthly allowances, which once sufficed for basic expenses, now barely cover their needs due to skyrocketing prices. For instance, the cost of food and transportation has doubled or even tripled, which means students must often forego essential materials and services. As families face soaring living expenses, purchasing necessary school supplies will most likely become a lower priority, further hindering students' ability to participate in education fully. The inadequate provision of instructional resources hides effective curriculum implementation in the schools. There was relationship between perceived influence of inflation and the quality of education within the educational system in Nigeria. That is, inflation has a significant effect on the quality of education within the system. This is because inflation represents a rise in the general price level of goods and services over time, which means that educational institutions also face a rise in the cost of running their operations. This can lead to decrease in the resources for educational institutions, such as decreased funding for teachers, textbooks, technology, and other supplies (Musa, 2018; World Bank 2018).

3.3 Impact of Economic Hardship on Provision of Instructional Facilities in Basic Schools

Subsidy removal and high inflation in Nigeria have affected the supply of adequate instructional facilities in the various educational institutions across the country. Instructional facilities refer to the basic structures and facilities necessary for effective teaching and learning in the school. Facilities are plants, equipment, buildings, furniture which enable teachers to deliver effective teaching thereby leading to attainment of behavioural objectives. According to Ehiometalor (2011), facilities are those factors which enable production workers to achieve the goals of an organization. Oloror (2006) observed that the use of instructional facilities enhances learning experiences and leads to interaction within the learning environment.

The high cost of fuel has driven up electricity and generator expenses, leading to increased utility bills. The prices of food and supplies have also surged, further stretching school resources. Many middle-income families who are unable to keep up with these costs, have reluctantly reduce the number of facilities in schools to cut cost. Most schools now don't use electricity as usual, hours of internet service availability have been reduced and laboratories resources have been cut to minimize cost. The inadequacy of instructional facilities in schools often disrupt smooth implementation of the curriculum, and there is need for these facilities to be effectively implemented in the schools. Due to inflation, many schools have been forced to increase tuition fees to survive. Schools are not immuned to financial problems rather, inflation affects all aspects of the school budget, including employees' wages, electricity bills, and teaching materials (Oludun (2024).

The impact of inflation according to Ifezue, (2024) on educational quality extends to student learning outcomes in significant ways. Schools facing budget cuts and reduced resources are forced to operate with overcrowded classrooms and lower student-teacher ratios, which severely limits the ability to provide personalized attention and high-quality instruction. All these has implication on school curriculum implementation. Research shows that schools with inadequate infrastructure and insufficient teaching resources contribute to poorer academic achievement. In such environments, students struggle to concentrate and engage effectively in their studies due to discomfort and lack of

essential materials. Additionally, larger class sizes resulting from budget cuts diminish the quality of education, as teachers find it challenging to cater for the diverse needs of individual students (Ifezue, 2024).

Inflation and economic hardship in Nigeria has affected development of facilities in Basic schools across the country. Musa (2023) remarked that many public and private schools in Nigeria have intentionally delayed the commencement of new projects like the renovation of classrooms, and the building of toilet facilities and computer centres as a result of inflation. The money at hand cannot start and finish the projects as planned by the management. The above development has sentenced more people to poverty. Consequently, scholars have further argued that poverty causes insecurity (Muhammed, & Ayeni, 2018). Many projects are abandoned in Nigerian Basic schools as a result of inflation. The above development hinders access to education that is projected to empower people (Ayeni, Sani, Idris, & Uzoigwe, 2019). Inflation causes the prices of building resources to be high, making it impossible for contractors to complete the projects and the government due to bureaucratic processes may delay reviewing such contracts which has resulted in abandoned projects across Basic schools in Nigeria.

3.4 Findings

The study revealed that economic hardship has negative impact on the implementation of curriculum in Nigerian Basic schools. Inflation has affected teachers' job performance in basic and resulted to high cost of instructional resources, facilities and operational cost of running schools, which has disrupted effective implementation of school curriculum in Nigeria.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper concluded that economic hardship has negative impact on the implementation of curriculum in Nigerian schools. The high cost of instructional resources, instructional facilities and operational cost of running schools has disrupted effective implementation of school curriculum in Nigeria.

Based on this findings, the paper recommends that government should increase the salaries of teachers in basic schools across the country and as well provide subsidized school buses to aid their movement to schools. Government should provide instructional resources to schools and subsidize the ones that the schools are directly purchasing. Government should increase the budgetary allocation to basic schools to aid the completion of infrastructural facilities in the schools.

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