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IMPACT OF ECONOMIC CRISIS ON EDUCATION: CASE STUDY OF SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

The national politics determines the quality of education policies, programs and processes and eventually the products (results or outcomes). Government underfunding and commoditisation of education is likely to worsen the crisis in education. The current economic crisis confronting many governments is creating severe conflicts in educational sector of many nations. On the one hand they had to reduce, their budget deficits to avoid excess indebtedness. On the other hand, they had to promote education firstly to alleviate unemployment as a short run crisis measure and secondly to avoid the deterioration of human capital in the long run. High percentage of national budgets focuses on the public funding, which greatly affect the education sector. Some governments carried out overall budget cuts. These had negative effects on teachers, students and families. This research studies the impact of economic crises on education in the South-West part of Nigeria. The collected survey data shows that the current economic crisis in Nigeria had an observable impact on the education sector as many State Governments proceeded to drastic budget cuts on education. Only few State Governments, however, acknowledged the importance of the educational sector in overcoming the current economic crisis. These few States see the need of increased spending on education, supporting students, families and education providers as a way to enhance productivity and efficiency of State economy. The result of this research shows a great difference between the States cutting budget on education because of economy, economic downturn and those pumping more fund into education sector in the mist of economic crises. This research concludes that adequately funded educational system, if genuinely promoted and honestly managed is capable of creating mass-fully developed human talents whose creative thinking would get any nation out of the economic crisis and permanently shut the door to its future occurrence.

Keywords: Economic Crisis, Funding, Education, Government.

1 INTRODUCTION

The crisis, which has ravaged many economics around the world has caused noticeable imbalance in Nigeria. Besides depleting the country's external reserves, it has led substantially to the crash of the stock market, the erosion of the country's revenue by over 60 percent and the depreciation of the national currency, among others [1] reported that, "Nigeria has been hit by the global economic crisis together with developed and developing countries all over the world. The term economic crisis can be defined as a situation where there is a recession in nation's economic activities, a situation where the world's economy seems to be standing on its head [2]. In Nigeria, the educational system is almost completely dependent on government budgetary allocation and with the economic crisis; the sector will no doubt witness its fair share of budget cuts which will affect not only the teachers but also students and families. Teachers' salaries represent around two-thirds of public expenditure on education, which explains why in some countries the first signs of a slowdown had a direct impact on pay [3]. When the economy is in crisis, and graduate unemployment is high, the teaching profession used to be a safer and more attractive choice than other occupations because of the respect given to the profession and regular payment of teachers' salary but nowadays contrary is the case. But significant salary reductions due to economic crisis can also have a negative impact on a country's attempt to attract the best individuals to the teaching profession. As a consequence, countries will find it more difficult to maintain the quality of learning in the future. [4] reported that the challenges faced by most of the developing countries which have some serious effect on education burdened by disappointments and shortfalls in expectations are rooted on social, economic and political factors, which also mutually interact with each other. The global economic crisis has effects on Nigeria economy which has led to depletion of stocks, loss of investment, loss of jobs occasioned by the closing down of many companies, devaluation of the naira, culminating in government inability to fund education, especially in Southwest.

2 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the survey design; Data collection consisted of observations and structured interviews with key informants. The population of the study which was stratified into three consists of students and teachers, parents/guardian, officials from State Ministries of Education answered questions on if, where and how the crisis had affected the education in Southwest, Nigeria. In all, 10 teachers, 10 parents, 10 students and two officials from state Ministries of Education from each state of the southwest were randomly sampled. The research instrument used for the study was a questionnaire and oral interview developed by the researchers, the experts after examining the instrument made some corrections in precision of items and ambiguity of statements. These corrections were effected in the final draft of the instrument and administered to the respondents to find out the impact of economic crisis on education in southwest Nigeria. Out of the sixty copies of questionnaire administered to the students fifty eight were completely filled and returned. A modified four point Likert type scale was used to score the items of the questionnaire. The ratings of the responses were strongly agree = 4; agree = 3; disagree = 2; and strongly disagree = 1. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentage.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study as presented on table 1 indicate that the economic crisis has drastically affected the rate of government allocation to education sector. 87 % of ministry of education officials, 86% of the teachers and 85% of the parents/guardian strongly agreed. While 82 % of the respondents from the students and parents also attested that their purchasing power has dropped and as a result, it has affected the purchase of books and educational materials. 89 s% of ministry of education officials agreed to the reduction in recruitment of teachers and other personnel needed for effective education curriculum delivery. 75% of the students indicated that learning environment is not conducive as a result of schools underfunding. This is in agreement with [5] reported lack of funds stands out as the number one problem in the teaching and learning of core subjects. [6] Investigated that in view of the fact that the sources of revenue of most schools have drastically reduced in this economic crisis, an attempt should be made to maximize whatever has been given. In another view [7] reported that due to global economic crisis, the high prices of teaching equipment and materials make them out of reach to most schools in view of the high rate of foreign exchange brought about by unfavourable economic situations. Many of the respondents from the teachers and ministry of education departments agreed that there is a drop in government allocation which is due to economic crisis and it has affected the release of grant, payment of allowances to teachers, purchase of books, subscription for journals needed for effective education curriculum delivery, staff training through workshops, conferences and seminar as well as the rate of renovation of dilapidated buildings. [8] reported that this downturn in funding of schools and colleges has complicated matters. The rate of unemployment in Nigeria is embarrassing, the pace of scientific and technological development is slowed down, the improvement and solution on environmental problems for the use and convenience of man becomes elusive. All these points to the economic crisis in the nation which needs to be salvaged. Another major finding of this study is that teachers are not motivated to be effective in their task of effective education delivery. This finding is in agreement with [9]. They express that many teachers due to lack of motivation and prompt payment of salaries and other allowances cannot meet their daily needs due to high cost of living brought about by economic crisis. These conditions bring about divided attention and poor concentration on the teaching job thereby reducing their output. Some even become unnecessarily harsh to students and would not take time to give proper explanation on any concept taught, as students' loose interest in class activities thereby affecting the impartation of such knowledge. [10] maintains that if teachers are motivated enough, they will put in their best and find a way to obtain materials necessary to teach. Also, the table 1 below shows clearly that all the respondents: teachers, parents/guardian, students and officials from the State Ministries of Education were of the consensus that all the existing mechanisms used for education teaching were inadequate due to the financial crisis. This finding is in line with the view of [11], who observes that the problem of effective education teaching is due to lack of equipment and materials, large class size, use of inappropriate teaching methods and lack of students' interest.

Table 1: (Research) Does the drop in government allocation due to the current economic crisis result in a drop in government allocation to Southwest states education thereby affecting effective education delivery?

Variables	SA	A	D	SD
Due to the economic crisis, the education thus experienced a drop in government allocation	50	10	-	-
	83.3%	16.7%	-	-
The drop affects the purchase of material, and equipment for effective education delivery	46	8	6	-
	76.6%	13.3 %	10%	-
Payment of allowances to teachers has been affected due to the economic down turn	37	10	9	4
	61.7%	16.7%	15%	6.7%
Purchase of books, subscription for journals needed for effective education delivery has been affected with the drop in government allocation	43	9	5	3
	71.7%	15%	8.3%	5%
The drop has affected the regular servicing and maintenance of laboratories equipment	25	15	12	8
	41.6%	25%	20%	13.3%
The drop has affected the renovation of dilapidated buildings and the construction of new ones	40	6	8	6
	66.6%	10%	13.3%	10%
The drop has affected the supply of qualified teachers and other personnel needed for effective curriculum delivery	47	5	3	5
	78.3%	8.5%	5%	8.5%
Lack of training and retraining of education teachers due to drop of government allocation of funds	31	12	13	4
	51.7%	20%	21.7%	6.7%
Teachers are not motivated to be effective in their task of effective education curriculum delivery	30	11	5	4
	50%	18.3%	8.3%	6.7%
Inability of teachers to cope with class size since there are not enough manpower and classrooms	27	20	7	6
	45%	33.3%	11.7%	26.7%
The drop has affected salaries of teachers with adverse effect	25	19	7	9
	41.7%	31.7%	11.7%	15%

4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research considered the impact of economic crisis on education curriculum delivery. Economic crisis has affected all aspects of education delivery. Education which is the foundation of development ought not to be treated casually by its stakeholders. The findings vividly showed that, the current economic crisis has resulted to a drop in government allocation to educational sector and this has negatively affected the education curriculum delivery. The government and teachers should diversify their revenue base and also be judicious in spending their earnings and allocations in order to overcome this financial crisis. Based on the above, the following recommendations were made:

- 1 There is need for diversification of Nigeria revenue sources through improvement in, solid minerals, agriculture and tourism sectors to boost the economy
- 2 Teachers should be more innovative in the utilization of some teaching aid and equipment
- 3 Concerted efforts and good attempts should be made by education stake holders to maximize their allocated resources by the government.
- 4 Government should provide the necessary funds to reduce the effects of the crisis on educational development
- 5 Ensure teacher salaries are been regularly paid and up to date.

- 6 Support teachers training and retraining.
- 7 Ensure adequate provision of equipment and infrastructures.

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