

Impact of Subsidy Removal on Nigerian Educational System

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Abstract

This paper examined the impact of subsidy removal on education with specific reference to school administration, teaching, learning and school supervision. Using secondary data that were collected from print and online publications. The paper concluded that removal of subsidy has negatively affected school administration by increase the cost of running schools, affected teaching programme, learning programme and reduce school supervision activities in Nigerian educational institutions. Based on the impacts identified in the paper, the following are suggested among others that; Governments and other stakeholders should endeavour to come into the aid of schools' administrators and teachers in terms of school running and teaching programme as subsidy removal has majorly affected their delivery (virtual and physical instructional facilities), training, and majorly on transportation cut across schools (primary, school, and tertiary institution). Also, students are at the receiving end of the learning process, and whatever happens affect them directly thus, the hike of transportation today as been a major determinant of students' absentee in classes cut across primary, secondary and higher education, thus, governments, stakeholders and philanthropists and all well-wishers should look into the provision of school buses or to subsidize the transport fair for students and make lives meaningful for these younger generations.

Keywords: Education and Subsidy Removal

Introduction

Education is not just a mere legacy but a key to self-reliance, independence, and freedom, it shapes individuals, communities, and societies. Aregbesola, (2023) said that it is a pivotal instrument for social, political, and economic development. As societies and technologies change, education must continue to adapt to the change to meet the need of students, teachers, and the society at large. Education goes beyond academic excellent; it includes personal growth and character development. Government often set decisions that affect education in terms of curriculum, funding, standard and priorities. One such decision is the removal of subsidies on petroleum products. Subsidies are financial support or incentives provided by the government or other organizations to individuals, businesses, or specific industries to reduce the cost of certain goods or services. Promote economic growth or achieve specific policy objectives.

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Subsidies can take forms, and their purpose can vary widely, such as: Consumers subsidies- food, fuel, and transportation; producer subsidies- agricultural, renewable energy, and export; social subsidies- housing, education, and health care; infrastructural subsidies, research, and development; environmental subsidies, trade subsidies and cultural and art subsidies. Subsidies can have both positive and negative effects. They can be a useful tool for achieving various economic and social goals, such as reducing poverty, supporting industries during economic downturns, and promoting innovations. However, they can be costly, distort market dynamics and create inefficiencies if not carefully designed and managed. Balancing the benefits and drawbacks of subsidies requires thoughtful policy decision and regular evaluation.

Scholars and international organizations have long advocated for the elimination of gasoline subsidies due to the market distortions that result. In 2012, the Goodluck Ebele Jonathan administration began a partial deregulation of the Nigerian downstream oil sector, or the partial removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria, but it was unsuccessful due to a few strong political tycoons in the country who insisted that the removal of subsidies would cause a lot of difficulties for Nigerian citizens even for students studying ((Project clue 2023). Also in 2019, the Buhari administration attempted to eliminate subsidies, but the arrival of the Corona Virus in 2019 (COVID-19) made it impossible. At the time, the Nigerian government was grappling not only with leveling the curve of COVID-19 but also with a drop in revenue at a critical period when funds were needed to combat the spread of the coronavirus in the country. The falling government revenue was caused by the international market collapse of crude oil prices because of several countries' efforts to halt the worldwide spread of the coronavirus. As a result, more emphasis was placed on making citizens' lives easier and more worthwhile, hence sustaining the payment of the fuel subsidy (Project clue 2023).

Recently, the newly inaugurated presidents, led by Chief Bola Ahmed Tinubu, pledged full liberalization of the downstream oil sector or the abolition of all gasoline subsidies in the country. Within 30 minutes of the president's address, not only do fuel prices rise automatically, but so do the costs of transportation, food, and manufacturing. The removal of fuel subsidies will also affect small businesses, employees, and students in various ways. The impact will be felt across different sectors of the economy, regardless of location, and will depend on individuals' ability to adapt to the changing economic landscape. The elimination of fuel subsidies in Nigeria represents a significant shift in the country's economic policy. While the intention may be to address fiscal challenges and encourage market-driven pricing, the decision's impact on inflation, transportation costs, and individuals' livelihoods cannot be overlooked (Ogunode & Ukozor 2022; Ogunode, Ahmed & Olugbenga, 2023; Ukozor & Ogunode 2023). The removal of subsidies has affected both public and private institutions. Financial institutions, health institutions, religion institutions, political institutions, tourism sector, judiciary and educational institutions have been affected. This paper is to examine the impact of subsidy removal on education with specific reference to school administration, teaching, learning and school supervision.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of subsidy removal on education with specific reference to school administration, teaching, learning and school supervision. The sub-specific objectives includes:

1. To assess the impact of subsidy removal on school administration in Nigeria;
2. To find out the impact of subsidy removal on teaching programme in the Nigerian schools;

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3. To assess the impact of subsidy removal on learning programme implementation in Nigerian schools.
4. To assess the impact of subsidy removal on school supervision in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is hinged on the system theory. The system theory is basically concerned with the problem of relationship, of structure and of interdependence rather than the constant attributes of objects and individuals. The system approach deals with whole and on the complex interrelationships among its constituent parts. The system theory emphasizes the relationship between parts and interaction with each other. System theory sees institutions as organization that is unified with one objective and purpose that is composed of interrelated parts.

The perfect relationship between these parts will lead to the institutions realizing its objectives. The whole is greater than its component parts. A change in any component of a part may affect the entire system functionally or adversely. Systems are composed of key major elements such as input, process and output. The perfect condition and relationship among all the parts or units in the system will lead to attainment of the goals. Every unit or part in the system is important and its roles cannot be underestimated. The failure of one unit or part in the system will affect the entire system from realizing its objectives.

In the context of this study, the system theory will provide a foundation for understanding how the removal of petroleum subsidies educational administration in Nigeria. Nigeria as a country can be likened to be a system that have a national goals and objectives to achieve and made up of sub-system or parts like the education, health, political, religious, energy, and traditional institutions. All these sub-systems relate and depend on each other to realize the national goals of the country. The soundness and wholeness of each of the system is very important to the entire system. The faulty of any of the system will affect the function of the other system. The removal of subsidy on the energy sector will affect every other subsystem.

Statement of Problem

The removal of subsidies on fuel in Nigeria has led to increment in prices of goods and services which had impacted negatively on every institution in the country. The abrupt increase in fuel prices resulting from the subsidy removal has further compounded the economic hardships faced by the already struggling Nigerian masses that are grappling with high unemployment rates and pervasive economic challenges (Darlington & Monday, 2023). Educational institutions have been affected. School administrators, teachers and students are not exempted. Since the removal of the subsidy school administration and teaching and learning have not been the same again. It is imperative to examine the impact of subsidy removal on education with specific reference to school administration, teaching, learning and school supervision.

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Subsidy

Fuel subsidy means that a fraction of the price that consumers are supposed to pay to enjoy the use of petroleum products is paid by government to ease the price burden (Onyeizugbe & Onwuka 2012). A subsidy as defined by OCED in a study is basically government action that decreases the consumption. Energy subsidies and specifically fuel subsidies, which are the subject of this review, have a long history and have been applied in different forms with differing outcomes internationally. A subsidy is

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any government program that lowers the price of a good or service that is consumed by citizens compared to what the price would have been without the existence of the policy (project clue 2023). According to project clue (2023) subsidy is a decrease in the market price of products and services by the government so that people with limited purchasing power can obtain such goods and services. It occurs when the government assists customers in paying a price that is lower than the market price for consumer products. A subsidy is any measure that keeps prices consumers pay for good or product below market levels for consumers or for producers above market. Subsidies take different forms. Some subsidies have a direct impact on price. These include grants, tax reductions and exemptions or price controls (Adebiyi). A subsidy is policy adopts by an institutions or government to reduce prices of goods for an individual's or a firm by paying part of the production cost. A subsidy is an official payment on goods for an individual or a firm, usually in the form of a cash payment from the government to reduce to prices of goods. In economic theory, subsidies can be used to offset market failures and externalities to achieve greater economic efficiency.

Concept of Subsidy Removal

Subsidy removal is an official elimination of subsidy on products formerly subsidized. Subsidy removal is the decision of government or institutions to stop payment of subsidy on products or services previously subsidy. Subsidy removal is the stoppage of subsidy regime in an institutions or country. Subsidy removal is the policy of liberating the prices of goods and service to be regulated by forces of demand and supply.

Concept of Education

Education deals with the development of the total man or the whole man. This means that education is an act that trains man in the cognitive (knowledge), affective (feelings, attitude, behavior) and psychomotor domains. Education deals with the all-round development of the person. It therefore, develops an individual into a well-educated, cultured, disciplined, employable and productive person. Education leads, guides and directs the learner to the acquisition of desirable knowledge, attitude, and healthy behavior (Akpan, 2000). According to Froebel cited in Peerzada (2016), education is the unfolding of what is already enfolded in the man. This implies that education is a process through which a person is trained to develop his innate potentials so that it can be fully expressed externally. Education is an enlightening experience that illuminates the mind and enables the individual to make informed decisions about himself or herself and to constructively contribute to the development of the society. Therefore, it is the process of training an individual to develop his intellectual and mental potentials so that the person can make mature and useful decisions in various situations he finds himself (Akpan, undated).

Review of Related Studies

According to PWC, (2023) fuel subsidies began in the 1970s and became institutionalized in 1977, following the promulgation of the Price Control Act which made it illegal for some products (including petrol) to be sold above the regulated price. While the concept of subsidy itself is noble, its administration in Nigeria has been plagued with serious allegations of corruption and mismanagement. Thirteen years after diesel was deregulated, kerosene subsidy was removed in 2016. However, the subsidy on Petroleum Motor Spirit (PMS) has proven to be the biggest challenge to the managers of the Nigerian economy. On an annual basis, a substantial portion of the national inflow is committed to

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funding the subsidy scheme. Of course, there are good reasons for the astronomical growth in subsidy amount - price of crude oil in the international market, volume of PMS consumed albeit debatable, and Naira devaluation are some of the drivers. In view of the significance of the amount committed to funding the subsidy regime, there is a need to have a close look at this scheme.

Subsidy payment is draining the country's revenue that are supposed to be used for infrastructural facilities development, education, health, agriculture, and other social programmes. According to Ogbonnaya Orji, executive secretary, NEITI subsidy payment would continue to suffocate Nigerian economy and would not allow this economy to breathe because it is a payment that must be made, and then we do not also think that those expected to benefit are the beneficiaries," (The cable, 2022; Ogunode, et al 2023). The World Bank as quoted by Punch (2022a) submitted that the cost of fuel subsidy in Nigeria exceeded the government's spending on health, education, and social protection for Nigerians.

According to the Nigeria Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (NEITI) Nigeria has spent N13.7 trillion (\$74.386 billion) on petrol subsidy payments from 2005 to 2020. The data collected by the agency revealed that subsidy payments in 2005 were N351 billion (\$2.66 billion), N219.72 billion (\$1.70 billion) in 2006, N236.64 billion (\$1.89 billion) in 2007, N360.18 billion (\$3.03 billion) in 2008, N198.11 billion (\$1.60 billion) in 2009 and N416.45 billion (\$2.76 billion) in 2010 (The cable 2022; Ogunode, Ahmed & Olugbenga, 2023). In 2011, the payment was N1.9 trillion (\$12.18 billion), N690 billion (\$4.34 billion) in 2012, N495 billion (3.11 billion) in 2013, N482 billion (\$2.92 billion) in 2014, N316.70 billion (\$1.62 billion) in 2015, N99 billion (\$0.39 billion) in 2016, N141.63 billion (\$0.44 million) in 2017, N722.30 billion (\$2.36 billion) in 2018, N578.07 billion (\$1.88 billion) in 2019 and 134 billion (\$0.37 billion) in 2020 (The cable 2022;Ogunode, et al 2023).

World Bank declared that Nigeria's total revenue in 2000 was USD10.8 billion. By 2010, this amount increased to USD 67.9 billion. Yet the Nigerian government has spent over USD 30 billion on fuel subsidies over the past 18 years, (PWC, 2023). This has had a significant impact on funds available for critical infrastructure and other essential sectors such as education, health, and defence. According to the Debt Management Office, the country's public debt stock is being increased as the government had to borrow N1trn to finance fuel subsidy in the year 2022. Nearly 70 years after the discovery of crude oil in commercial quantity in Nigeria, Nigeria's oil and gas downstream sector is yet to develop to the desired levels, despite the recent enactment of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA). The downstream sector of the oil and gas industry had the least foreign direct investment compared to the midstream and upstream sectors, and the reason for this is not far-fetched. The current subsidy regime and the legal framework of the downstream sector generally discourages investments (PWC, 2023).

Impact of Subsidy Removal on Educational Variables

There are many impacts of subsidy removal on education. Some of these impact includes: increment in administrative cost of running schools, reduction of teaching hours and learning hours and reduction in the school supervision activities.

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School Administration

School administration of most educational institutions have been affected in Nigeria due to subsidy removal. The removal of subsidy has increased the cost of running the schools. School administration is the internal arrangement of school resources to the implementation of school programme. School administration look at education from the specific educational institutions. School administration is the internal activities that deal with coordinating of school programme for optimum performance. Okereke (2008) stated that school administration involves managing, administering the curriculum, teaching, pastoral care, discipline, assessment, evaluation, and examinations. Ogunode and Ahaotu, (2021); Ogunode, Ahaotu and Obi- (2021) stated that one of the major objectives of school administration is to integrate and coordinate all the physical and human resources efficiently towards a common goal.

The physical resources mainly contribute to building equipment and instructional materials. The human resources that school administration deals with include students, teachers, supervisors, administrators, and parents. The additional elements comprise the various aspects of educational theory and practice including philosophy of education, objectives of education, curriculum, method of teaching, discipline, the role of the teacher, rules and regulations etc. These elements are “parts, made into the whole” and are components brought into a harmonious relationship. So, the purpose of school administration is to fulfil different purposes which are known as the objectives. Zaifada, Olowonefa, & Ogunode (2023) submitted that school administration covers the following: school planning, organizing, controlling, coordinating and evaluating performance, decision making, curriculum development and planning, school plant management, students’ activities, teachers’ programme, human capacity development, school-community relationship, academic calendar planning, extra-curriculum programme, school discipline programme, school sport, school examination and school security.

School administration involves practical organization and arrangement of schoolwork schedules in effective ways using administrative structures to implement school programme and realize the school objectives whereby posts are created and assigned for the optimal performance of the school. Femi (2023) noted that all materials and human resources required to carry out school administration have gone up because of increment in fuel price in Nigeria. Ogunode & Solomon (2021); Ogunode, Ahaotu, & Solomon, (2021b); Ogunode & Musa (2021) observed office equipment like Stapler, Eraser, Pushpin, Drawing pin (U.K)/ Thumbtack (U.S), Paper clip, Rubber stamp, Highlighter, Fountain pen Pencil, Marker, Ballpoint, Bulldog clip, Tape dispenser, Pencil sharpener, Label, Calculator, Glue, Scissors, Sticky notes, 4A Paper, Notebook, Envelope, Clipboard, Monitor, Computer, Keyboard, Folder, Fax, Filing cabinet, Telephone, Swivel chair, Desk, Wastebasket, printer and calculators are needed in right quantities and qualities to enable the school carry out their administrative functions. Most of these resources are imported. Okonkwo (2023) noted that imported goods are transported from seaports and airports to their respective destinations within the country. The removal of fuel subsidy has increase transportation costs, as fuel prices directly impact shipping and logistics expenses. As a result, the prices of imported goods, including electronics, machinery, and consumer products, are likely to rise. The educational institutions rely on fuel and power supply for carrying out administrative services and functions to the students and parents, such as powering office machinery and transportation. The removal of fuel subsidy has increased the administrative costs of schools running.

Teaching Programme

Teaching programme implementation in Nigerian educational institutions have been affected by the subsidy removal. Teaching programme is one of the most cardinal programmes of educational institutions (Ogunode, 2021) Teaching programme is the act of imparting knowledge to the learners. Teaching involves physically or virtually delivering a lesson or instruction that has the capacity to modify behavior. Teaching in most Nigerian educational institutions is mostly done with the traditional teaching model of physical. Physical teaching method is a system that involve the teachers to deliver the lesson or lecture physically in the school environment. Physical teaching method is characterized with movement from teachers' abode to school environment. It involves the use of school buses, cars, or motorcycles to move from the teachers' homes to school facilities. The removal of subsidy in Nigeria have led to increment in price of fuel.

The increment in fuel price has led to increment in transportation fare which directly and indirectly affected the teachers' movement to schools. Many teachers are now missing classes due to their inability to come to schools while in tertiary institutions many lecturers have decided to compress their lectures to one or twice in a week. And other lecturers have changed to virtual model of teaching. The post-subsidy removal in Nigeria have affected implementation of teaching programme in Nigeria educational institutions. Subsidy removal have impacted negatively on the entire educational system leading to reduction in the teaching hours in schools because teachers cannot cope with the increment of transportation fare. Okonkwo (2023) observed that teachers are also affected by the removal of the fuel subsidy, as they have to pay more for transportation to and from work. Many teachers rely on public transport, such as buses, taxis and motorcycles, which have also increased their fares due to the higher cost of fuel. Some teachers may have to spend more than half of their salaries on transportation alone, leaving little for other expenses such as food, rent and health care.

Learning Programme

Learning programme have been negatively affected by the removal of fuel subsidy in Nigeria. Learning programme is implemented in educational institutions. It is a planned programme for students or learners. Ogunode, Hammadu, Ahmed & Ojo (2021) and Ogunode, Audu, Ahaotu, (2020) observed that students are learners in educational institutions. Studentship started from the early child education to basic education to secondary school education and ends in the higher institutions. Higher institutions students are learners in the higher institutions. Higher institutions students are matured learners. Students in higher institutions are aged from 18 years and above. The learning programme of many Nigerian students have been affected by the subsidy removal. Learning programme in most Nigerian educational institutions are anchored on movement from students' homes to schools. Most students or learners in Nigeria move from their homes to schools especially in the basic schools and senior secondary schools.

This movement is done mostly by buses, motorcycles or cars that use fuel. The subsidy removal has led to an increase in the fuel price which have also led to increase in transportation fare. Subsidy removal in Nigeria have affected learning programme of students in Nigerian educational institutions. The removal of subsidies has led to a hike in the price of fuel, which automatically leads to inflation in the country, it is evident that this hike in the price of fuel making it difficult for student's movement to

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schools. Okonkwo (2023) asserted that students are another group that is affected by the removal of the fuel subsidy, as they must pay more for transportation to and from school. Many students depend on public transport or private vehicles to get to school, which have become more expensive due to the higher cost of fuel. Some students may have to drop out of school or defer their studies if they cannot afford the transportation costs. Some students may also have to cope with poor learning conditions, such as inadequate facilities, overcrowded classrooms and frequent power outages, as schools struggle to provide quality education with limited resources.

School Supervision

Subsidy removal in Nigeria have led to reduction in the supervision activities in educational institutions across the country. Onele & Aja (2016); Ekundayo, Oyerinde & Kolawole (2013) and Ogunode & Ibrahim (2023) defined instructional supervision is a programme of instruction designed to improve teachers' job performance and students' academic performance in schools. Instructional supervision is a combination of activities meant to advance the work effectiveness of teachers and other personnel in the school business. Instructional supervision is the process of improving teaching and learning in educational institutions because of realizing the goals of education. Instructional supervision is critical to the development of education.

Emmanual, Akinloye & Olaoye (2014) and Ogunode & Richard (2021) classified supervision into external and internal supervision. Ogunode, Olatunde-Aiyedun & Akin-Ibidiran, Yemi (2021) and Ogunode & Ajape (2021) maintained that external supervision involves physical and virtual monitoring school activities for school improvement. Physical external supervision involve physically verifying school programme for the purpose of improving the quality. It is a system of supervision that involve moving from offices to educational institutions. The physical external supervision depends heavily on energy to aid its movement from one school to another schools. The removal of subside on fuel in Nigeria have trigger the prices of fuel making its difficult for supervisors to move from school to school for supervision. Musa (2023) quoted a school Supervisor who lamented the cost involve in carrying out school supervision have high and supervision budget have not been increased. Supervision of educational institutions have been affected due to the increment in the price of fuel because of subsidy removal.

Conclusion

This paper examined the impact of subsidy removal on education with specific reference to school administration, teaching, learning and school supervision. The paper concluded that removal subsidy has negatively affected school administration by increase the cost of running schools, affected teaching programme, learning programme and school supervision implementation in Nigerian educational institutions.

Recommendations

Based on the problems identified in the paper, the following recommendations were made:

1. Schools' administrators should be assisted in one way or the other by various arms of governments to reduce the high cost of running schools within the country.
2. Governments and other stakeholders should endeavour to come into the aid of schools' teachers in terms of teaching programme as this majorly affect their delivery (virtual and physical)

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instructional facilities), training, and majorly on transportation cut across schools (primary, school, and tertiary institution).

3. Apparently, students are at the receiving end of the learning process, and whatever happens affect them directly and this mean that there should be adequate provision for facilities such as: building water, electricity, and other facilities, instructional resources: computers, multimedia gadgets, textbooks and others and importantly the hike of transportation today as been determinant of students absentee in classes cut across primary, secondary and higher education, thus, governments, stakeholders and philanthropists and Nigeria well-wishers should look into the provision or subsidizing of transport fair for students and make lives meaningful for them.
4. There is a need for inclusive consumer education and awareness to educate the public about the implications of subsidy removal and provide information on alternative fuel sources and budgeting strategies. This will empower consumers to make conversant decisions, adapt to changing circumstances, and mitigate the impact of price hikes.
5. It is imperative to create a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of implemented of the subsidy decision on education. This will enable policymakers to make informed decisions, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that smooth running of schools across the country in this post-subsidy removal era.

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