Influence of Economic Recession on Lifelong Education in Nigeria

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Abstract
The study examined the influence of economic recession on lifelong education in Nigeria. Ex-post-facto design was adopted for the research. Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A 30-item questionnaire titled: Economic Recession and Lifelong Education in Nigeria Questionnaire (ERLENQ) was the instrument used for data collection, designed on a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was faced-validated by three experts: two from the Department of Educational Foundations and Child Education and one from the Department of Business Education, all of Cross River University of Technology, Calabar. A pilot test of the instrument was done and Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients of 0.88, 0.79 and 0.82 were obtained. The questionnaire was administered on 1,200 teachers drawn from all public higher educational institutions in 12 sampled states. Stratified random sampling techniques was used in selecting the respondents. The data obtained was analyzed using Simple Linear Regression tested at .05 level of significance with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Findings of the study showed that reduction in educational budget significantly influence lifelong education in Nigeria (F = 152869.053, p = .000 < .05) and there is significant negative influence of poor service condition of teachers on lifelong education in Nigeria (F = 10191.751, p = .000 < .05). Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were made to the effect that the Nigerian budgetary allocation to the educational sector should be increased and teachers' conditions of service be improved as a way of boosting lifelong education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Economic Recession, Influence, Lifelong Education, Nigeria.

Introduction

Man is not born with absolute knowledge. This is why he is always inclined to seek to know. This continuous quest for knowledge is called lifelong education. Matyas (2015) defined lifelong learning (education) as learning that is pursued throughout life. For Wikipedia (2017), it is all learning activities undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civil, social and/or employment related perspective. The lifelong education anchors on the four pillars of learning: Learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together.

The entire education system is designed to facilitate lifelong, and life-wide learning and the creation of formal, non-formal or informal learning opportunities for people of all ages. The concept of lifelong learning requires a paradigm shift away from the ideas of teaching and training towards those of learning; from knowledge-covering instruction to learning for personal development; and from the acquisition of special skills to broader discovery and the releasing and harnessing of creative potential (UNESCO, 2015). This paradigm shift places the learner at the centre of learning (heutagogy) at all levels of education.

However, since the dawn of civilization, human beings have put forth diverse economic arrangements for the world. Each of these economic arrangements is said to be devised for the purpose of improving humans' welfare. One thing however, which the introduction of each New Economic Order fails to emphasize is the effects of the change of order on the people of the world. Most people must have been too used to the older economic order that they may have to spend years to adjust to the new order. Indeed, some persons may have positioned their finances in such a way that the new economic order may only have come to make them lose money and financial opportunities. Under such a condition, the new economic order has actually brought pain and suffering to these individuals upon whom many other individuals would have been depending (Biao, 2010). This economic down-turn as a phenomenon, can also be called economic recession.

Economic recession is a period of severe liquidity crunch. It is a period of slump in economic activities in which there is an all-round decline in production, employment and income. National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), as cited in Investopedia (2017), viewed recession as a significant decline in economic activities spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months, normally visible in real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), real income, employment, industrial production and wholesale-retail sales. It is also a recessed or depressed stage of the trade cycle. It has to be borne in mind that a trade cycle consists of alternating periods of boom and depression. It is during the recessed period of the trade cycle that income, demand and output fall. Industries therefore adjust their levels of output to accommodate the low demand. Some workers may be downsized, leaving them unemployed (Anyanwuocha, 2011; Jhingan, 2009; & Cross River State Government, 2003). This cyclical fluctuation in the economy may be caused by international

forces, at times. However, management of the national economy cannot be ruled out.

Odufowokan (2001) highlighted that the economic depression brought about by the oil glut of the 1980s till date still has its grip on the education sector. Indisputably, the sector has not recovered fully from the sustained effect it had. Since then, there has been increasing evidence of financial constraint coupled with the proportion of government budget and GDP available to education financing. Contributing to these is the escalating cost of financing education which has placed the government in some serious dilemma.

Some States see education as an investment in their economic future, hence it is usually the last area to be cut. But today, many States have slashed their budgets to the bone in public schools. Collaborating, Amoramo (2016) revealed that the percentage of the Cross River State budgetary allocation to education between 2006-2014 increased at a decreasing rate with an average percentage of 13.37. Although budgetary allocation to education showed an appreciable increase but does not match with the increase in the entire budget. For example, in 2011, the state approved budget was N101,694,757,075.00 while the allocation to education was N17,847,578,782.75 (17.55% of the budget) and in 2014 the state approved budget was N180,145,763,224.00 with N21,698,308,605.77 (12.04% of the budget) allocated to education.

Hence, School software pro. (2017) stressed that raising costs, coupled with none substantial increase in funds, will challenge schools as never before, as some schools are finding ways to grapple with rising costs and limit the impact on students by cutting their expenditures. These cuts include: laying-off of teachers, which in turn increase class size; reducing extra-curricular activities; doing away with subjects not required for graduation; eliminating field trips; cutting instructional programmes; and lessening professional development opportunities for teachers and staff.

Bamigboye, Ede and Adeyemi (2016) in a study on impact of economic crisis on education: case study of South West, Nigeria, adopted the survey design. Data were collected through observation and structured interviews with key informants. The population of the study which was structured into three consisted of students and teachers, parents and guardians, officials from State Ministry of Education answered questions on if, where and how the crisis had affected the education in South West, Nigeria. In all, 10 teachers, 10 parents, 10 students and two officials from State Ministries of Education from each State of the South West were randomly sampled. The experts, after examining the instrument, made some corrections in terms of the precision of items. A modified four- point Likert- type scale was used to score the items of the questionnaire. The rating 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.

The result of the research showed a great difference between the States reducing budget on education owing to economic downturn and those pumping more funds into the education sector in the mist of economic crises. The research

concluded that adequately funded educational system, if genuinely promoted and honestly managed, is capable of enhancing human talents development whose creative thinking would get any nation out of the economic crises and permanently shut the door to the future reoccurrence of recession. It was recommended that concerted efforts should be made by education stakeholders to maximize their allocated resources by the government. It was equally recommended that government should provide the necessary funds to reduce the effects of the crises on educational development, among others.

Bamigboye, Ede and Adeyemi (2016) further affirmed that in Nigeria, the educational system is almost completely dependent on government budgetary allocation. With the economic crises, the sector will no doubt witness its fair share of budget cuts which will affect not only the teachers but also students and families.

During recession, unemployment figure tends to take centre-stage while families dealing with the recession suffer, often quietly. While many families do their best to carry on as if nothing is wrong with the world, recessions can have a profound effect on their day-to-day lives and on their children's education. In Nigeria, the education sector appears to be feeling this sharply. Whether students, teachers, lecturers, researchers, library workers, admin clerks, canteen workers, or proprietors, they all have their share in recession as it affects education (School Software Pro, 2017).

Evans, Schwap and Wagner (2014) revealed that the impact of the Great Recession of the 1930s was unprecedented. Nearly 300,000 teachers and other school personnel lost their jobs. Corroborating, Education International (2010) stated that Early Childhood Education teachers' salaries were reduced by seven percent in Ireland, and approximately 1,000 primary teachers' posts were taken out of the system. Similarly, in Africa, the workers' union in Cote d'Ivoire points to the increased hiring of unqualified teachers. Meagre pay package for teachers has witnessed Government's tendency to employ unqualified teachers in order to cut cost.

Education for All Monitoring Report (2010) lamented that the economic downturn in the poorest countries has had direct consequences for vulnerable households. For people surviving below or just above the poverty line, it has meant less secure livelihood. Income from remittance is falling. Employment prospects appear to be diminishing in many African countries. The downturn has followed hard on the heels of a steep rise in international food prices, with higher levels of poverty superimposed on deteriorating nutrition indicators. The combination of global food crises and financial crisis in the face of unemployment has worsened the environment for achieving the Education for All goals, which is the prelude for lifelong education.

More poverty means parents have less to spend on children's education as household poverty also pushes children out of school to take up employment. The impact of rising unemployment is already registering on education systems as household budgets come under pressure (World Bank & IMF as cited in Education

for All Monitoring Report, 2010).

Bamigboye, Ede and Adeyemi (2016) pointed out that 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. As a consequence, countries will find it more difficult to maintain the quality of learning in the future.

Anyanwuocha (2011) revealed that there are many unemployed persons, the contribution they would have made to total output is lost. The total volume of production in Nigeria is therefore, low, leading to a low standard of living. He further stated that since trained workers cannot find jobs which will engage them, the resources used in training them are wasted which could have been used more profitably in other ventures.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2013) aptly maintained that teachers' salaries were either frozen or cut between 2009 and 2011 in 12 out of the 25 OECD countries. On average across these countries, teachers' salaries at primary and secondary levels decreased in real terms by about 2% between 2009 and 2011, the first decline since 2000. Teachers' salaries were significantly affected in Estonia, Greece, Hungary and Spain. In Estonia, minimum teachers' salaries were cut back to their 2008 levels in 2009 and have been frozen at that level since then. In Greece, various reductions in teachers' benefits and allowances affected teachers' salaries in 2010 and 2011. In Hungary, a supplemental bonus that was paid to all teachers was suspended in 2009. And in Spain, all civil servants, including teachers, saw their salaries reduced in July 2010.

Despite these cost-saving measures, most State governments still eliminate jobs (teachers) to balance their budgets for the current school year. With this budget cuts, it is inescapable that jobs will be lost. This implies that many state governments may lay off teachers in core subject areas such as Mathematics, English language, humanities and sciences. This will hamper students' prospects for lifelong education.

Oreopolous, Page and Steven as cited in Gregg, Macmillan and Nasim (2012) in a study used variation induced by firm closures to explore the intergenerational effects of worker displacement. The researchers adopted a Canadian Panel of administrative data, following almost 60,000 fathers-child pairs from 1978 to 1999. The authors constructed treatment and control groups of displaced and non-displaced fathers with similar pre-1982 permanent income. Displacement was defined by a vector of dummy variables indicating that a displacement has taken or will take place in a future, current or previous year, based on observable firm closures. The data also provided a post-displacement period of at least 8 years. The vector of dummy variables was designed to capture wage effects prior to displacement (future displacement), immediate displacement effects (current displacement) and any persistence in displacement effects (previous displacement). It was proven that displacement leads to large permanent reduction (14%) in family income. It was also

established through a reduced form regression of displacement on child incomes, that individuals whose fathers experienced an unemployment shock compared to father's who did not experienced annual earnings that were 9% lower. The estimates were driven by the experiences of children whose family income was at the bottom of the income distribution. They concluded that there are long term impacts of unexpected job displacement that extend beyond the effect within one generation to the later labour market outcomes of their children. It was suggested that long term reductions in family incomes in childhood can substantially impact the earnings of their children in adulthood, indicating that the intergenerational transmission of income may be causal. This will have adverse effect on lifelong education of the child.

Statement of the Problem

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 which was predicated on quality education to ensure inclusive, equitable, quality and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all was put in place to enhance all round human development with its attendant positive effect on society.

Regrettably, in most communities in Nigeria, the youths are seen roaming the streets while Some resorted to gangsterism and restiveness. Some educational planners therefore, attributed this ugly trend to inability of government at all levels to make education a priority in their economic blueprint in spite of the United Nations' call for the promotion of lifelong education while other educational economists ascribed it to economic recession.

It was on this basis that the researchers were motivated to put forward the following poser: could economic recession be use to explain the extent to which lifelong education has been achieved in Nigeria?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out the influence of economic recession on lifelong education in Nigeria. Specifically, the study aimed at finding out the nature of the:
1. Influence of reduction in educational budget on lifelong education in Nigeria.
2. Influence of unemployment/under-employment on lifelong education in Nigeria.

Statement of Hypotheses
1. Reduction in educational budget does not significantly influence lifelong education in Nigeria.
2. There is no significant influence of unemployment/under-employment on lifelong education in Nigeria.

Methodology

Ex-post-facto design was adopted for the study. This was because the investigators did not have direct control over independent variables and their manifestations have already occurred, hence, they were inherently not manipulated. The researchers thus, examined the influence of reduction in educational budget, unemployment/under-employment (Independent variables) on lifelong education (Dependent variable). The current population of Nigeria is 191,053,022 as of Sunday, May 7, 2017, based on the latest United Nations estimates (Worldometers, 2017). Sampling was done in multiple-stages. First, the States were stratified based on the geopolitical zones. Two states each were randomly selected from each geopolitical zone and 1,200 teachers in all public higher educational institutions in the sampled states were randomly selected also, 100 per state. Thus; North Central Zone (Kogi and Plateau); North East Zone (Gombe and Taraba); North West Zone (Kano and Kebbi); South East (Enugu and Imo); South-South Zone (cross River and Delta); and South West (Ekiti and Ondo).

Economic Recession and Lifelong Education in Nigeria Questionnaire (ERLENQ) was the instrument for the study, structured on a four-point Likert type rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) with weight 4, 3, 2, and 1 for all positively worded items and weight 1, 2, 3, and 4 for all negatively worded items respectably. The instrument consisted of two sections, A and B. section A focused on demographic variables of the respondents while section B contained 30 items on reduction of educational budget, unemployment/under-employment and lifelong education. The instrument was duly face validated by three experts: two from the Department of Educational Foundations and Child Education and one from the Department of Business Education, all of Cross River University of Technology, Calabar.

A pilot test was conducted in which 60 respondents were drawn from an equivalent population of the study. The responses were coded and analyzed for Cronbach Alpha Reliability Estimate. A reliability coefficient of 0.88, 0.79 and 0.82 for each of the sub-scales: reduction in educational budget, unemployment/under-employment and lifelong education respectively were obtained ascertaining the internal consistency of the sub-scale. The questionnaire was administered with the help of research assistants. Simple Linear Regression with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used for data analysis.

Results

Hypothesis one (Ho$_1$): Reduction in educational budget does not significantly influence lifelong education in Nigeria. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was carried out. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Regression analysis of influence of reduction in educational budget on lifelong education in Nigeria

R = .996			Adjusted R^2 = .992		
R^2 = .992			Standard Error = .839		
Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	P
Regression	107505.504	1	107505.504	152869.053*	.000
Residual	842.496	1118	.703		
Total	108348.000	1119			
	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	P
Variable	B	std. error			
Constant	1.171	.068		17.295	.000
Reduction in educational budget	-1.026	.003	-.996	-390.985	.000

*Significant at .05 level, p < .05

The results in Table 1 showed that an R-value of .996 was obtained, giving R – square value of .992. This means that 99.2% of the total variation in lifelong education in Nigeria was accounted for by the variation in reduction in educational budget. The p - value (.000) associated with the computed f-value (152869.053) is less than .05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that reduction in educational budget significantly influence lifelong education in Nigeria. When the prediction model parameters were tested for significance, the regression constant made significant positive contribution (t= 17.295, p= .000) while reduction in educational budget made significant negative contribution to the prediction of lifelong education in Nigeria (t= -390.985, p= .000). Also, the result of the regression weights of the predictor variable (reduction in educational budget) in Table 1 showed negative coefficients (B and Beta) of -1.026and -.996respectively. This implies that an increase reduction in educational budget will lead to decline in lifelong education. The prediction equation is y= 1.171+ -1.026x.

Hypothesis two (Ho$_2$): There is no significant influence of unemployment/under-employment on lifelong education in Nigeria. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was carried out. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Regression analysis of influence of unemployment/under-employment on lifelong education in Nigeria

R = .966				Adjusted R^2 = .933	
R^2 = .933				Standard Error = 2.461	
Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	P
Regression	101091.751	1	101091.751	16690.154*	.000
Residual	7256.249	1118	6.057		
Total	108348.000	1119			
	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T	P
Variable	B	std. error			
Constant	-2.681	.232		-11.537*	.000
unemployment/under-employment	-1.096	.008	-.966	-129.190*	.000

*Significant at .05 level, p < .05

The results in Table 2 revealed that an R-value of .966 was obtained, giving R-square value of .933. This means that 93.3% of the total variation in lifelong education in Nigeria was accounted for by the variation in unemployment/under-employment. The p -value (.000) associated with the computed F-value (101091.751) is less than .05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is significant influence of unemployment/under-employment on lifelong education in Nigeria. When the prediction model parameters were tested for significance, both the regression constant and unemployment/under-employment made significant negative contributions to the prediction of lifelong education in Nigeria (t= -11.537 & -129.190; p= .000 & .000). Also, the result of the regression weights of the predictor variable (unemployment/under-employment) in Table 2 showed negative coefficients (B and Beta) of -1.096and -.966respectively. This implies that an increase in unemployment/under-employment will lead to a fall in lifelong education. The prediction equation is y= -2.681+ -1.096x.

Discussion of Findings

The results of hypothesis one showed that reduction in educational budget significantly influence lifelong education in Nigeria as the p-value (.000) which associated with the computed F-value (152869.053) is less than .05. The findings are in agreement with Bamigboye, Edet and Adeyemi (2016) who affirmed that in Nigeria, the educational system is almost completely dependent on government budgetary allocation and with the economic crises, the sector will no doubt witness its fair share of budget cuts which will affect not only the teachers but also students and families.

This study is in conformity with Odufowokan (2001) who highlighted that the economic depression brought about by the oil glut of the 1980s till date still has its grip on the educational sector. Interestingly, the sector has not recovered fully from the undying effect it had. Since then, there has been increasing evidence of financial constraint coupled with the proportion of government budget and GDP available to education financing. Contributing to these, is the escalating cost of financing education which has placed the government in a sort of serious dilemma.

The findings above was also in congruence with school software pro. (2017) which stated that States which do not prioritize education have slashed their own budgets to the bone in public schools. Some schools are finding ways to grapple with rising cost and limit the impact on students by cutting their expenditure. These cuts include: laying-off teachers, which in turn increase class size; cutting extra-curricular activities; cutting subjects not required for graduation; eliminating field trips; cutting instructional programmes; and cutting professional development for teachers and staff.

The results of hypothesis two portrayed that there is significant influence of unemployment/under-employment on lifelong education in Nigeria as the p-value (.000) which associated with the computed F-value (10191.751) is less than .05. The results are collaborated with Evans, Schwap and Wagner (2014) who maintained that the negative impact of the Great Recession was unprecedented. Nearly 300,000 teachers and other school personnel lost their jobs. The study also conformed with Education International (2010) which stated that Early Childhood Eucation teachers' salaries have been reduced by 7 percent in Ireland, and approximately 1,000 primary posts have been taken out of the system.

Bamigboye, Ede and Adeyemi (2016) pointed out that 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. As a consequence, countries will find it more difficult to maintain the quality of learning in the future.

This study aligned with Education for All Monitoring Report (2010) which lamented that the economic downturn in the poorest countries has had direct consequences for vulnerable households, employment prospects appear to be diminishing in many African countries. The downturn has followed hard on the heels of a steep rise in international food prices, with higher levels of poverty superimposed on deteriorating nutrition indicators. The combination of global food crises and financial crisis in the face of unemployment has worsened the environment for achieving the Education for All goals, which is the prelude for lifelong education.

The study supported School Software Pro (2017) which declared that during recession, unemployment figure tends to take centre-stage while families dealing with the recession suffer, often quietly. While many families do their best to carry on as if nothing is wrong with the world, recessions can have a profound effect on their day-to-day lives and on their children's education.

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Conclusion

Lifelong education which fosters continuous personal development and improvement of one's knowledge and skills required for employment and personal fulfillment suffers serious setback during economic recession, which manifests itself in reduction in educational budget and unemployment/under-employment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Nigerian budgetary allocation to the educational sector should be increased on the recognition that education is the bedrock of socio-economic development.
2. Employable graduates should be gainfully employed so as to boost lifelong education in Nigeria.

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