



Impact of Inflation and Standard of Living on Teacher's Job Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of inflation and standard of living on teacher's job performance in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey. Two research questions in line with the two objectives guided the study. The population of the study comprised all twenty-one (21) public senior secondary schools that consists of one thousand, two hundred and ninety-seven (1,297) teachers. The sample size for the study is four hundred (400) teachers using the Taro Yamane Formula, which represent 31% of the study population. A self-developed instrument title: "Impact of Inflation and Standard of Living on Job Performance among Teachers Questionnaire (IISLJPTQ) was used to elicit responses from respondents. The instrument contained twenty (20) items drawn along the four (4) points Likert scale. The data elicited from respondents were analyzed using weighted mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Based on the analysis of the data, the result revealed that inflation and standard of living have negative impacts on teachers' job performance among teachers in the study area. The study recommended the following; that government should as a matter of urgency increase budgetary allocation of not less than a minimum 20% of state budget to the education sector. Government should review teachers' salary upwards that would motivate them to be more professional in performing their assigned tasks. Lastly, government should provide welfare schemes in form of low costs housing, medicals and buses for transportation as part of efforts to boosting teachers' morale thereby alleviating their challenges during the period of inflation. These recommendations if implemented, would improve optimally teachers' job performance in the study area.

Keywords: Inflation, Standard of Living, Job Performance, Teacher, Secondary School.

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INTRODUCTION

The world all over, especially Nigeria in recent times is experiencing economic challenges due to the corona virus and the economic recession that follows as a result of shutdown on economic activities that brought some kind of hardship on the people. The resultant effects are the constant external borrowing and devaluation of the naira, which had necessitated the current inflation as evidence in the steady rise in the prices of goods and services. This development had rendered the money in circulation worthless. As much money can only buy or procure fewer goods and services. This had somewhat affected the purchasing power of many household and making it seemingly difficult in accessing the necessities of life irrespective of profession, career, location among others.

Inflation is an increase in general level of goods and services over a given period across boards resulting to a fall in the purchasing capacity of the fixed wages and income earners (Hages, 2016). The increase in the prices of commodities reduces consumer's marginal propensity to save, which adversely affect the peoples' standard of living. The uncertainty in prices of goods and services had crave in individual the desire to earn more income by getting engaged in more income generating jobs sometimes at the expense of their health in a bid to maintain a minimum standard of living (Farid et al., 2012). Gagarawa and Mehrotra (2017), averred that, for households to maintain their standard of living or meet up their expenditures, which always increases during inflation, many households have resort to extra income generating activities, which is a sign of dip down in the leisure time, productivity, better social as well as their physical health. This explain the effect of inflation on the level of the living standard of citizens as it reduces the real income of households, thereby compelling them cut down on their budget and avoid unnecessary expenditure while focusing more on how to increase their income to make ends meet in the challenging period.

Inflation is the continuous fall in the purchasing value of money, in that, more money chases fewer goods and services, which adversely affects negatively on the economy and reduces the standard of living of the population (Ogbebor et al., 2020). Inflation in Nigeria, has led to the obvious devaluation of the naira and this had grossly reduced the value of fixed income earners, of which, the teachers are the worst hit. Inflation is anti-workers' economic growth and prosperity because it allows for arbitrary increase of prices of goods and services to the detriment of workers' fixed income even when it is glaring that their purchasing power is being reduced persistently and that eventually erodes their propensity to save. In other words, the purchasing power of a given amount of money will be smaller over time when there is inflation in the economy. In the context of this study, the researcher view, inflation as a cankerworm that eat up the income of fixed earners and as such affects drastically the standard of living of citizens. This, oftentimes brings about frustration and anger due to the inability to attend to family needs and cope with the high cost of transportation to work, buying of food items to feed, paying of electricity or medical bills, renewing of house rent and other issues of utmost importance among others.

Inflation has been so pronounce since the beginning of 2023 in Nigeria. This has been so evidenced in the persistent increase in inflation in the last six (6) months between January to June 2023 as revealed by the Consumer Price Index and Inflation Report of the Bureau of Statistics 2023, stating that; in January 2023, the headline inflation rate rose to 21.82% compared to December 2022, headline inflation rate which was 21.34%. In February 2023, the headline inflation rate rose to 21.91% compared to January 2023, headline inflation rate which was

21.82%. In March 2023, the headline inflation rate rose to 22.04% compared to February 2023, headline inflation rate which was 21.91%. In April 2023, the headline inflation rate rose to 22.22% relative to March, which was 22.04%. In May 2023, the headline inflation rate increase to 22.41% relative to April 2023, headline inflation rate, which was 22.22%. In June 2023, the headline inflation rate increase to 22.79% relative to May 2023 relative to headline inflation rate, which was 22.41. (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Conclusively, between January 2023 to June 2023, the inflation rate in Nigeria accelerated marginally for the sixth consecutive time to a 17-year high of 22.79% (Odifa & Olatunji, 2023).

This revelation, confirms that the rise in inflation had increased geometrically, and had reduced the standard of living that had inadvertently affected the education sector where the teachers are the centre of focus in the implementation of educational policies for the attainment of predetermined goals and objectives. The situation becomes more pathetic with the steady decline in the budgetary allocation to the education sector in the past years. This had resulted to the near lack of provision of instructional materials, facilities and equipment, stagnated salaries, no promotion and payment of increment arrears, poor working condition, and unconducive teaching and learning environment among others. All these put together are strong indicators that may affect teachers' job performance and negate their level of productivity in the school system. In other words, inflationary period adversely affects teachers' motivation. Without motivation, organizational efficiency and effectiveness is near impossible.

It is believe generally that money not only helps people to attain their basic needs, but it is also instrumental in providing higher-level need performance for optimal productivity for employees. Hence, most employees value work according to how much they gain from it. In most developing countries, the salary scale for secondary school teachers is not lucrative despite the rapidly increasing costs of living with very small salary increments awarded based on seniority/experience, with little or no link with actual job performance. This experience dampened the morale of teachers to put in their best in the discharge of their duties.

Literatures are abound to the fact that teachers are the most neglected workforce despite the enormous tasks performed by the teachers for the overall advancement of the socio-economic well-being of the society and the nation at large. As teachers, they are expected to carry out effective teaching, satisfy the students with his/her quality teaching and style, manage the time effectively in the classroom, discipline the class, carry out the task assigned to them by school administrators, motivate the students, be punctual and orderly and assure students' academic achievement (Limon & Sezgin-Nartgun, 2020).

There is no doubt, that the success of an educational system depends largely on the performance of teachers, who can best be described as the engine room that propelled the growth and quality of education to the overall benefits of man and the society. The importance of education is the reason why most developed countries allocate a significant budget of minimum 26% of their national budget to education as recommended by UNESCO in recognition of its role in producing quality workforce required for the socio-economic, political and technological advancement of the nation.

Job performance is the extent to which an employee can carry out assigned tasks successfully using available organizational resources under regular condition (Jamal, 2007). In other words, it is employee's behaviour or outcomes produced by the employee in the course of performing assigned job to the overall benefit of self and the organization. Teacher's performance depends largely on characteristics such as knowledge base, sense of responsibility and inquisitiveness; student characteristics are opportunity to learn, and academic work; the

teaching factors are lesson structure, and communication; the learning aspects are involvement and success; and the classroom are environment and climate, and organization and management. If the teachers take these factors seriously, their performance would be enhance to the optimum level (Rao & Kumar in Manafa, 2022).

Adeyemi in Giami and Obiechina (2019), identified job performance, to include; effective teaching, lesson note preparation, effective use of scheme of work, effective supervision, monitoring of students' work. Disciplinary ability as virtue, which teachers should uphold effectively in the school. On this note therefore, 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). These aforementioned tasks as performed by the teacher, places him/her as an important resource input in the educational system that shaped, direct and influence to a great extent the attainment of school goals and objectives.

Teachers' job performance is the measurement of the degree of success or failure of teachers who are assign 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 inputs for the enhancement of teaching and learning process." It is also describe 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 education system at all level, hence, literatures on it is in abundant.

Statement of the Problem

The quality of students gaining admission into tertiary institutions of learning cast a lot of doubt if teachers in secondary level of education, especially the senior secondary schools are actually performing their assign tasks of imparting knowledge to the students towards the actualization of educational goals and objectives. Teachers all over the world are the essential inputs in the school system that translate educational policies towards the attainment of predetermined set goals. Teachers are the center of focus, which determine the success or failure of any educational system. The neglect and reckless abandonment teachers suffered in terms of poor condition of service, unconducive teaching environment, lack of training and retraining, poor remuneration package, no incentives to motivate among others, leaves much to be desire. Unfortunately, this era of inflation has impinged their standard of living badly due to the steady increase in the prices of goods and services, thereby reducing their purchasing power and rendering their income valueless or worthless.

This development has created much concern about the teachers' standard of living, as they are the worst hit due to the poor fixed income they earn in the face of the continuous rise in the prices of goods and services. It is this against this challenging scenario that the researcher set

out to examine the impact of inflation and standard of living on teacher's job performance in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of inflation and standard of living on teacher's job performance in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. Specifically, this study sought to:

- Find out the impact of inflation on teacher's job performance in the study area.
- Examine the impact of standard of living on teacher's job performance in the study area.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the impact of inflation on teacher's job performance in the study area?
- What is the impact of standard of living on teacher's job performance in the study area?

Empirical Review

Obiakor (2021) examined the impact of inflation and economic recession on education of secondary school students in Oji River Educational Zone of Enugu. The research adopted survey method. The design for the study was survey. A close-ended questionnaire was used as the instrument of the study. Two experts validated the instrument. The test-retest method was used to test for the reliability of the instrument. The population included 1786 teachers from secondary schools in the area, out of which a sample size of 360 (5%) was drawn at random. The mean statistic was employed as the method of data analysis. Findings revealed that economic recession has caused unemployment, lower wage, high taxation, budget deficit, rising bond yields and untold hardship on the people to a great extent and propelled poor quality and ineffective teaching in secondary schools to a great extent. The study recommended that government funding of the education sector should be increased by encouraging the government to always introduce and implement long-lasting policies and stand firm in staging was against corruption, government need for the employment of qualified teachers who are knowledgeable in different areas to teach in our secondary schools.

Gagarawa and Mehrotra (2017) investigated the impact of inflation on living standard of public primary school teachers in Gagarawa Local Government Area, Jigawa State – Nigeria, in terms of their monthly income, expenditures and their comparative standard of living over the period (2014-2016). Research hypothesis formulated based on the research problem and objectives. Survey design was used to collect data by use of a structured questionnaire. Samples of 155 teachers were selected from the population of the study. The data collected were analyzed using frequency distribution and percentages. Chi-square was used to test hypothesis, the result from hypothesis testing made the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative was accepted. Major findings and conclusion are that since inflation erodes teachers' income, increased their expenditures subjecting them to receiving loans with high interest, forcing the teachers to take an extra income-generating work in an attempt to maintain their normal life,

these consequently undermine their living standard. The study recommends that wage-rate should be increase in a way that it would match the expected increase in inflation rate. This will help to maintain a good standard for the whole classes of public primary school teachers. There is the need on the part of government to have quick and direct intervention on prices of goods and services particularly on food items, this would facilitate and create a safeguard to both the middle and lower classes of the teachers under study.

Bhattacharjee (2016) explained the impact of inflation on education. Inflation is a burning issue that hinders economic growth of the country. Inflation is dangerous because it directly affects standard of living of the people. The responsibility of government and politicians, economists are to protect/safeguard common-man from inflation. Inflation is price raise of goods and services, which decreases the purchasing capacity of the people. When the general price level rises, for each unit of currency fewer goods and services can be purchase. Consequently, the purchasing power of customer would gradually decrease. In this situation, the real value of currency would loss, the value of goods and services will increase. The sample of the present study consisted of 13 people involved in different professions. Data collected were through survey method. Data of the present study are analyze with bar diagram. The findings of the study led to the conclusion that inflation or price hike closely related with education.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all twenty-one (21) public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. A sample size of the study is four hundred (400) teachers, using Taro Yamane formula. A self-structured instrument titled; “Impact of Inflation and Standard of Living on Teachers’ Job Performance Questionnaire (IISLTJPQ), was used to elicit responses from the respondents. The instrument was design along the four (4) point likert-type scale, which range from Strongly Agree (SD), Agree (A), Disagree (D), to Strongly Disagree (SD). Experts validated the instrument through face and content analysis while the reliability was determined using the test-retest method, which produces a reliability index of 0.86. Out of the four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaires administered to the respondents, only 298 copies were retrieved representing 75% retrieval rate. The research questions were answer with mean and standard deviation statistics. A criterion mean of 2.50 was set for any item to be accepted.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the impact of inflation on teachers’ job performance?

Table 1: Mean and standard Deviation rating of responses on the impact of inflation on teachers’ job performance

| S/N | Items | Mean | Std. Dev. | Remarks |
|-----|---|------|-----------|----------|
| 1. | Teachers can afford their self-development to enhance their performance. | 1.93 | .48 | Disagree |
| 2. | The ability of teachers to buy basic needs improve their job performance. | 1.97 | .50 | Disagree |
| 3. | Teachers’ ability in footing their bills increase their job performance. | 1.9 | .48 | Disagree |
| 4. | Teachers’ ability have to save for the raining day enhance their job performance. | 1.96 | .50 | Disagree |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|------|-----|----------|
| 5. | Teachers' inability to go to work regularly enable them to perform their job optimally. | 2.13 | .53 | Disagree |
| 6. | Availability of instructional materials encourages teachers' to teach during inflation period. | 2.08 | .52 | Disagree |
| 7. | Punctuality to work improve teachers' job performance. | 2.18 | .55 | Disagree |
| 8. | Teachers' mental stability enhances their job performance. | 2.16 | .54 | Disagree |
| 9. | Incentives given to teachers motivate them towards high performance. | 1.77 | .44 | Disagree |
| 10. | Teachers perform their tasks optimally during the period of inflation | 2.39 | .60 | Disagree |
| Cluster Mean/Standard Deviation | | 2.05 | .42 | Disagree |

The result in table 1 shows that the impact of inflation on teacher's job performance in the study area is low as seen in the cumulative mean of 2.05 and standard deviation of 0.42. This reveals that inflation have negative impact on teachers' job performance in the study area.

Research Questions 2: What is the impact of standard of living on teachers' job performance in the study area?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation rating of responses on the impact of standard of living teachers' job performance

| S/N | Items | Mean | Std. Dev. | Remarks |
|---------------------------------|---|------|-----------|----------|
| 1. | Teachers are motivated with their take home emolument | 1.69 | .42 | Low Ext. |
| 2. | Teachers are well to do in the society in comparison to other professions | 2.08 | .52 | Low Ext. |
| 3. | Teachers enjoys respect from members of the public | 2.39 | .60 | Low Ext. |
| 4. | Teachers are satisfied with their condition of service | 2.03 | .51 | Low Ext. |
| 5. | Teachers are healthy to perform their assigned tasks | 2.18 | .55 | Low Ext. |
| 6. | Teachers are provided with low costs housing scheme | 2.34 | .59 | Low Ext. |
| 7. | Teachers enjoy subsidized medical scheme | 1.79 | .45 | Low Ext. |
| 8. | Teachers enjoys free transport scheme | 2.02 | .51 | Low Ext. |
| 9. | Teachers' salary is reviewed upwards making it a living wage | 1.6 | .4 | Low Ext. |
| 10. | Teachers enjoy soft loans from Government to cater for exigencies | 1.62 | .41 | Low Ext. |
| Cluster Mean/Standard Deviation | | 1.97 | .50 | Low Ext. |

The result in table 2 shows that the impact of standard of living on teachers' job performance in the study area is low as evidence in the cumulative mean of 1.97 and standard deviation of 0.50. This reveals that standard of living have negative impact on teachers' job performance in the study area.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the findings in research question one revealed that influence of inflation on job performance among teachers in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State is to a low extent with grand mean/standard deviation values of 2.11 and 0.53 respectively. The data analyzed, revealed that during inflation, teachers cannot afford self-development. Teachers lack the means to buy the necessities of life for their families. Teachers found it difficult footing their bills. Teachers cannot save for the raining day. Teachers go to work and are not punctual to work. Teachers are not mentally stable as a result excessive

thinking on how to make ends meet. Teachers do not get support to cushion the effect of inflation and as such hardly perform their tasks efficiently. These findings are in line with the opinion of Ewa and Agu in Akpomi, et al. (2018), which opined that the lives of all citizens suffered economic hardship during the period of inflation. Inflation in Nigeria, has led to the devaluation of naira and this had grossly reduced the value of the teachers' fixed income. Inflation is anti-workers' economic growth because it allows for arbitrary increase of prices of goods and services to the detriment of workers' fixed income even when it is glaring that their purchasing power is being reduced persistently and which erodes their propensity to save.

The findings of the study in research question two revealed that standard of living impact negatively on teacher's job performance in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State is to a low extent with grand mean/standard deviation values of 1.97 and 0.50 respectively. The analyze data revealed that, standard of living of fixed income earners are negatively affected in the period of inflation. For instance, teachers are not motivated with their take home pay, teachers do not do well in comparison to other professions, teachers are not satisfied with their condition of service, and teachers do not enjoy any form of welfare schemes namely, housing, medicals, transport or soft loan to boost their morale to perform their tasks efficiently. This corroborates the views of Gagarawa and Mehrotra (2017), as they averred that, for households to maintain their standard of living or meet up their expenditures which always increases during inflation, many households have resort to extra income generating activities which is a sign of dip down in the leisure time, productivity, better social as well as their physical health. As such, inflation reduce the level of living standard through the reduction in the real income of households, thereby compelling them to engage in extra income generating works and subjecting them toward receiving loans with high interest rates.

CONCLUSION

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 much money chases fewer goods and services. This has affected teachers' morale and competencies in the performance of assigned tasks. This situation had equally affected the quality of education in the country especially public senior secondary schools, Obio-Akpor in Rivers State. Therefore, there is need for government's intervention to increase budgetary allocation to the education sector and introduce an upward review of teachers' take home pay. Introducing teachers' welfare scheme, such as, housing, transportation, medicals and payments of arrears owed in terms of yearly increments and promotion, would go a long way in enhancing teachers' job performance for optimum productivity for the attainment of school goals and objectives.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended that:

- Government should as a matter of urgency increase budgetary allocation of not less than minimum 20% of state budget to the education sector;
- Government should review upwards teachers' salary, a living wage that would motivate them to be more professional in performing their assigned tasks; and

- Government should provide incentives in form of low costs housing, medical and transport scheme as part of welfare programmes for teachers to boost their morale.

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