

**Managing Depression among Lecturers in Public Universities in Rivers State:
Implications for National Economic Recovery**

Mukoro Michael,

Department of Educational Psychology, University of Port Harcourt

michaelmukoro90@gmail.com

Ojum Theresa

Department of Educational Psychology, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education

theresaojum@gmail.com

&

Ihedi Ogide Echendu

Department of Educational Psychology, University of Port Harcourt

Ihedi.echendu@uniport.edu.ng

Abstract

This study examined managing depression among lecturers in public universities in Rivers State: implications for national economic recovery. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Two research questions guided the study. The population of the study comprised all the lecturers in public universities in Rivers State. Multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample size of 800 respondent. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data; Cronbach Alpha method was used to compute for reliability test of the instrument, which is 0.79 and considered satisfactory. The study made use of mean and standard deviation to analyse research questions. Findings show that quality and functional education can still be achieved in a period of economic depression. And there should be an internal pragmatic synergy on how to improve internally generated revenue to complement government's efforts at making education worthwhile, since no nation can develop beyond the development level of her education sector. It also found out that quality and functional education can help to ameliorate the consequences of economic depression. The study gives prospect and affirmation that in the midst of economic challenges, quality and functional education is still achievable. It was recommended that the educational sector should be well funded and equipped with adequate facilities and requisite manpower needed to be effective. If national development was to be achieved, mediocre in leadership positions should be discouraged or eradicated and replaced with qualified individuals, experienced with sound minds. Organizations at all levels should endeavour to train leaders ahead of the Herculean task of leadership, since no meaningful growth and development can be achieved without leadership with clear vision and focus. Also, alternative but internally devised sources of revenue generation should be augmented to complement government's allocation to education.

Keywords: Managing, education, depressed, economy, development.

Introduction

The quality of knowledge produced in the educational sector is crucial to national competitiveness. Only a high-quality education can sharpen individual brains and help improve society economically, socially, and politically. Mental health disorders, particularly anxiety and depression, have become major worldwide concerns, impacting people of all ages and backgrounds. In schooling, the influence is especially important, impacting academic achievement, social connections, and general well-being. Furthermore, in countries undertaking national reconciliation and economic recovery, the obstacles are exacerbated by the complex interaction of historical trauma, socioeconomic inequalities, and cultural dynamics.

Education has been considered as the ideal tool for guaranteeing national development (FGN, 2014). This can only be accomplished with good management and administration. The management and administration of the educational system is the duty of all levels of government (local, state, and federal). A depressed economy is characterized in the education sector by a shortage or insufficient supply of instructional materials, infrastructure, inadequate salary, and poor teacher morale, among other things. According to Gandonu (2017), the recession may or may not have an impact on children's academic achievement. The author goes on to say that it may have an impact on academic achievement, but not from the perspective of the parents, but from the instructors who are educating the children. Teachers may wish to search for other sources of income to meet their demands, which will impair their output to students in schools. Individuals' capacity to cope with psychological difficulties differ. Depression and anxiety are exacerbated by social, physical, emotional, and family issues, all of which have an impact on their learning capacities and academic performance.

The management of education in the twenty-first century has seen active engagement from non-governmental organizations, communities, and people, as well as government action. One of the disadvantages of our current civilization is the depressed economy, which has a significant detrimental impact on national development. Education is a tool for guaranteeing a nation's social, political, and economic stability, hence it must be properly funded and managed. As a result, it is critical to examine educational administration and economic depression in the context of inadequate finance in Nigerian schools. There is no doubt that education is critical to a nation's social, political, and economic progress. This is why most countries aim to invest a significant amount of their GDP to the development of education. In Nigeria, education accounts for 7.6% to 9.9% of total yearly spending (UNESCO, 2000).

Management of education refers to the process of planning, organizing, directing, staffing, coordinating, budgeting, and reporting on the educational system.

This is because graduates and undergraduates who have received a high-quality education often make significant contributions to the advancement of society as a whole. Ehiamefor and Romina (2013) remarked that providing quality and useful education allows people to learn skills and methods that are then invested in human productivity, creativity, competence, initiative, invention, and inventiveness. To maintain quality in higher education, appropriate teaching and non-teaching personnel must be available to meet increasing intakes. Quality and functional education must address essential concerns such as worker dignity, quality leadership and citizenship, industrial harmony, political stability, religious tolerance, self-reliance, and security (Romina, 2013).

However, maintaining high-quality and functioning education amid a downturn, particularly in emerging nations, seem to be more difficult than previously anticipated. This is owing to decreased financing from all 'quarters' as a consequence of insufficient income creation. It is apparent that excellent education requires great educational inputs (money). Reduced financing resulted in low-quality education service delivery. Okebukola (2005) expressed concern about the low quality of graduates from Nigerian higher education institutions as a consequence of insufficient financing and corruption, noting that only around 30% of Nigerian students had appropriate access to classrooms, workshops, lecture halls, labs, and libraries. He went on to say that deficient libraries in terms of currency and number of books, journals, and electronic support facilities; an insufficient academic calendar as a result of staff unions' industrial action based on low salary, wages/welfare; and student strikes, which are frequently time-related due to inadequate facilities and a lack of practical experience, are all threats to quality attainment in Nigerian higher education.

Statement of the Problem

The economic depression and hardship brought about by the recent administration has its grip on the educational sector. Indisputably, the sector has not recovered fully from the ending effect it had from the failure of past administrations. Since then, there has been increasing evidence of financial constraints coupled with the proportion of government budget and GNP 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! Poor policy implementation is no more a news in Nigeria. In the current economic horror in Nigeria, salaries, allowances, and welfare of teaching and non-teaching staff are being neglected. The cost of living is on the high

side. Students are under financial pressure to remain in school. So many issues are making it difficult for students, academic and non-academic staff members to maintain concentration in the pursuit of qualitative and functional education. This paper analyzed how education can be managed in a depressed economy to be able to contribute to the national development.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is examining managing depression among lecturers in public universities in Rivers State: Implications for national economic recovery. Specifically, the following objectives guided the study:

1. To determine how effective and high-quality education can be achieved in the midst of the economic depression.
2. Find out ways by which effective and high-quality education can lessen the effects of economic crisis

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How can effective and high-quality education be achieved in the midst of the economic depression.
2. What are the ways by which effective and high-quality education can lessen the effects of economic crisis

Conceptual Clarification

Management

The utilization of people and material resources in order to accomplish predetermined goals and objectives is the process that is referred to as management. Management is the process of using both physical and human resources in order to accomplish the objectives of an organization. The optimization of production and the accomplishment of organizational objectives are the things that management strives to do. To be more specific, Obi (2004) describes the purpose of management in education as the process of planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating, and guiding the activities of educational institutions in the direction of accomplishing educational goals.

It is common practice to use the term “education management” interchangeably with “education administration.” In the article that was written by Orji, Mando, and Ajaegbo (2017), Orji and Umoren state that education management encompasses "the activities of planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling, commanding, directing, evaluating, staffing, and motivating teachers, non-teaching staff members, students, and others towards the attainment

of the overall goals of the school system." When it comes to ensuring that the principles of educational programmes are properly and adequately implemented at all levels of education, education management is a very important medium. The administration of education encompasses a wide range of responsibilities, including the efficient coordination of people, material, and resources both inside and beyond the institution.

Arrangement of the Nigerian Economy's Structure

Nigeria's economic structure, like that of other emerging economies, is characterized by an exceptionally low ratio of material to human resources and a backward technology. These combined produce very low levels of per capital income, usually just over the level required for sustenance. Often a considerable portion of the work force is publicly or disgustingly jobless. Low level of savings, low level of domestic entrepreneurship and technology can rule out major development. Even the most rudimentary preconditions for a sustained economic growth including geographic and political cohesion, lack of external market obstacles, effective communication system etc. which are required for welding material resources into a dynamic economy are missing. At times, even when and when the circumstances appear good, endeavours to strengthen the economy may meet severe obstacles because of too high population expansion and illiteracy with its consequent ignorance

Depressed Economy

Economic depression simply denotes challenging or unhappy economic experience during which every area of the economy observe down periods in patronage and income collection. Economic depression is typically interlaced with economic retreat or economic disaster. According to (Wikipedia, 2017), economic crisis is experienced when there is widespread reduction in expenditure as a consequence of financial crisis, foreign trade stock, unfavourable supply stock and fall in consumption, investment, government spending and net export activity. According to Azubuike (2017) a depressed economy is generally characterized with high unemployment, slowing gross domestic product (GDP) and high inflationary rate. These statistics are now being witnessed in Nigeria. As economic downturn impacts governments' and parents earnings, it also affects children's welfare and education in general. In such era, projected investments in all parts of the economy are constrained to decline. This is mainly because income production sources are imperilled. It is clear contraction in economic and corporate operations which restricts patronage and revenue creation.

Research Methodology

Research Design: Descriptive survey design was employed in this study. The descriptive research is often used when a researcher intends to elicit responses from a relatively large number of respondents by administering pertinent instruments for collecting primary data on a portion of the population known as sample. This research design is appropriate for this study, which seeks to administer questionnaire on a selected sample of lecturers in the three public universities in Rivers State. This is done in order to elicit responses on the qualitative and functional education in a depressed economy and its implications for educational management.

Population of the Study: the Population of the study comprised all the 5800-teaching staff in public universities in Rivers State. (Source: Planning and Statistics Units of Uniport, RUST and IAUE)

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques: In selecting the sample size, purposive sampling technique was used. According to Orji and Umoren (2016), 'purposive sampling technique is a non-randomized method of sampling in which a researcher chooses certain sample composition and size which she/he considers appropriate, relevant, and adequate for the study. Hence, a sample size of 800 lecturers was selected from the public universities in Rivers State.

Instrument for Data Collection: The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'managing education in a depressed economy and its implications for national development. The instrument has two (2) sections, namely: section A (Personal data) and section B. These sections are made up of ten (10) questionnaire items relating to whether or not economic crisis leads to poor quality education. Also, it seeks as well whether quality and functional education has the capacity to ameliorate the consequences of economic depression. Cronbach Alpha method was used to compute for reliability test of the questionnaire through SPSS. Thus, the result gave a reliability coefficient of 0.79 which was considered adequate for the study.

Instrument of Data Analysis: Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Software) was used to analyze the data and mean, and standard deviation was used to answer the research question.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: How can effective and high-quality education be achieved in the midst of the economic depression?

Table 1: Mean opinion rating of respondents on, how can effective and high-quality education be achieved

S/N	items	SA	A	D	SD	n	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Fighting corruption and increasing government investment in education can alleviate the negative impacts of an economic crisis	37	398	310	29	774	2.57	0.64	Agreed
2	incorporating financial literacy education into school curricula can help individuals navigate economic challenges better	20	483	244	27	774	2.64	0.59	Agreed
3	introduction of dedicated leadership in the educational sector can mitigate the effects of an economic crisis	418	176	35	145	774	3.12	1.15	Agreed
4	introducing support systems (financial, emotional, etc.) crucial for students facing economic difficulties to continue their education successfully	488	236	38	12	774	3.55	0.66	Agreed
5	integration of technology and the promotion of remote learning can help in maintaining educational standards during economic challenges	18	484	244	28	774	2.64	0.59	Agreed
Average Mean							2.90	0.73	Agreed

Research Question 2: What are the ways by which effective and high-quality education can lessen the effects of economic crisis?

Table 2: Mean opinion rating of respondents on the ways by which effective and high-quality education can lessen the effects of economic crisis?

S/N	items	SA	A	D	SD	n	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	institutions of higher learning can resort to alternative sources of revenue such as financial aid, sale of services and business enterprises.	218	378	155	23	774	3.02	0.78	Agreed
2	inclusion of mental health support within educational system to address the psychological impact of economic crises on students and educators will improve national integration	217	235	235	87	774	2.75	0.99	Agreed
3	locally-driven innovative solutions in education will play a role in lessening the effects of economic crises, especially in community-specific contexts	82	448	186	58	774	2.72	0.75	Agreed
4	international collaboration and cooperation will lessen the impact of economic depression on education	489	237	36	12	774	3.55	0.66	Agreed
5	partnerships between public and private sectors in education can help in mitigating the impact of economic crises and depression	219	217	255	83	774	2.74	0.99	Agreed
	Average Mean						2.96	0.83	Agreed

Discussion of Findings

Research Question One

From Table 1 above revealed that that majority the of respondents affirmed that quality and functional education can still be achieved in period of economic depression, fighting corruption. Also, increasing government investment in education can alleviate the negative impacts of an economic crisis, incorporating financial literacy education into school curricula can help individuals navigate economic challenges far better. In the same vein, introduction of effective and high-quality education can mitigate the effects of an economic crisis, introducing support systems (financial, emotional, etc.) crucial for students facing economic difficulties to continue their education successfully. The integration of technology and the promotion of remote learning can help in maintaining educational standards during economic challenges. This is in consonance with the study of Ule and Idemudia (2020) on Resuscitating the Educational Sector in a Depressed Economy: Relying on Transformational Leadership for Effective National Development. Who reported that ethnicism and nepotism, political corruption, accountability challenge are the cause of the economic hardship. . There is no doubt that functional education makes it easier for graduates to be more creative, productive and self-dependent. If graduates are creative, business ideas and wealth creation form the general ideology in the hearts of the people. This aids people to be engaged in meaningful living and depend less on the capacity of the government to provide job for them. Hence, quality education can be helpful in easing the pains of economic crisis

Research Question Two

The result in Table 2 above reported that greater number of respondents affirmed that institutions of higher learning can resort to alternative sources of revenue such as financial aid, sale of services and business enterprises. Also, inclusion of mental health support within educational system to address the psychological impact of economic crises on students and educators will improve national integration, international collaboration and cooperation will lessen the impact of economic depression on education. Hence, locally-driven innovative solutions in education will play a role in lessening the effects of economic crises, especially in community-specific contexts, partnerships between public and private sectors in education can help in mitigating the impact of economic crises and depression. This shows that during economic crisis in which government allocation to education is expected to dwindle; institutions of higher learning can resort to alternative sources of revenue such as financial aid, sale of services and business enterprises. Famurewa (2014) buttressed that financial aid

include: endowment fund and gifts, development appeal fund and alumni fund. Sale of services include: sale of admission forms and general services, rental of physical facilities and consultancy services; business enterprises are agriculture, manufacturing, commercial, and portfolio management. Internal revenue can be generated from the afore-mentioned to ensure adequate funding during recession to maintain qualitative and functional education. However, it is regrettably unfortunate that the democratic policy practiced in Nigeria had rather brought about retrogression, retardation, underdevelopment, and poverty (Godwin, 2017) which had reduced Nigerians to endless misery.

Conclusion

Nigeria undoubtedly boasts among the community of nations to be the giant of Africa whereas its teeming population wallow in abject poverty, penury and want in all aspects of life yet, the country is flourished with abundance of resources. Unfortunately, these resources end in the custody and control of few who perhaps lack moral and social value orientation of life to sustain the nation for economic growth and prosperity. The implication of these maladies is that, despite the abundance, Nigerian educational system lacks the quality and standard to compete with its contemporaries in Africa. As none of its tertiary institutions is listed among the best ten institutions, yet we clamour for development.

Economic depression is a reality. Its effects are alarming and dreadful. It is understandable that all sectors of the economy are affected during such experience. But the report of this study gives prospect and affirmation that in the midst of economic challenges, quality and functional education is still achievable. Emphasis is on ensuring internal pragmatic synergy on how to improve internally generated revenue to complement government's efforts at making education worthwhile. It is to be known that no nation can develop beyond the development level of her education sector. Quality education remains a priority, no matter the economic status of the society.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proffered:

1. Considering the relevance of education in nation building, the sector should be well funded and equipped with adequate facilities and requisite manpower needed to be effective, if national development is to be achieved.
2. Since no meaningful development can be achieved without efficient and effective leadership, mediocres in leadership positions should be discouraged or eradicated and replaced with qualified individuals, experienced with sound minds.

3. Organizations at all levels should endeavour to train leaders ahead of the Herculean task of leadership, since no meaningful growth and development can be achieved without leadership with clear vision and focus.
4. The promotion and placement of leadership positions in all sectors of the Nigerian economy should be on merit, moral and ethical standards rather than tribalism and ethnicity background and orientations.

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