ECONOMIC RECESSION AND THE MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated "Economic Recession and the Management of Secondary Schools in North Central Nigeria". The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of economic recession on students' enrolment and revenue generation in secondary schools. Two research questions guided the study, two hypotheses were formulated and tested for the study. The research design was ex-post-facto and the population comprised 34,412 teaching staff of 1,703 secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. A sample of 688 teaching staff was used for the study while 100 management staff was used for interview schedule. A Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. Impact of Economic Recession Questionnaire (IERQ) with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.98 and an interview schedule were the instruments used for data collection, the instruments were validated by 5 expects in Benue State University and University of Agriculture both in Makurdi. Mean and standard deviation were also used to answer the two research questions while chi-square goodness of fit was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Percentages and pie charts were also use to analyze the interview responses. The result showed that, there was significant difference in the impact of economic recession on students' enrolment and revenue generation in secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government should increase allocation of funds to secondary schools in order to improve school revenue while ministries of Education and school management should reduce spending on other items and make the funding of secondary schools a priority for infrastructural development and increase enrolment while government, ministries of Education and principals should make the welfare of teachers a priority by paying their salaries and allowances promptly even in times of economic recession because a motivated teacher is a builder of future generations.

Keywords: Economic recession, students' enrolment, revenue generation and school management.

Introduction

Economic recession is a period of significant decline in economic activities that spread over some months and visible in inflation, net income, low gross domestic production and unemployment. It is also known as period of business   contraction when economic resources are scarce. Economic recession seem to have impact on the management of secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. Education   is a catalyst for the development of an individual, community, nation and the world in general. This is because education is a sub sector of the economy and cannot operate in isolation. The Secondary school is the level of education which exists between Primary and Tertiary education. It is the middle level of the educational system in Nigeria. Education is a strong weapon in the fight against poverty and diseases. A good support for the promotion of sustainable development. In addition, education promotes endurance, maturity and enhances change. Through education people are able to take care of themselves and become solution providers to their communities and nation. Secondary school leavers can think for themselves and be useful to the society (FRN 2004). Therefore, secondary education does not need to lose its laudable objective due to impact of economic recession.

Bamigboye, Ede and Adeyemi (2017) reported that nations have been hit by economic recessions and these are experiences of some developed and developing countries of the world including Nigeria. A developed country like the United States of America have had some economic recessions in their history including the great depression of 1932 and another recession: that took place from 2007 to 2009 which they called Great Recession. The United Kingdom and other European Union member states may have had major and minor economic recessions for more than 20 times including the global economic recession of 1946 after the Second World War (Chris, 2016).

The National Bureau of Economics Research (NBER, 2016) declared on Wednesday 31st August, 2016 that the country has dropped into economic recession as its all important oil industry has suffered under weak global prices. According to NBER, the country's Gross Domestic product (GDP) dropped by - 2.06 percent in the second quarter of 2016 after falling - 0.36 percent in the previous three months. The technical definition of a recession is two consecutive quarters of negative growth rate.

In Nigeria, many sectors of the economy such as industries, mining, banking, commerce, agriculture and education may have been ravaged by economic recession which took place in 1987, 2007 to 2009 and another recession which occurred in 2016 to 2017 During economic recessions there is predominantly high cost of goods and services, low Gross Domestic Product, unemployment, insufficient funds, harsh economic conditions such as hunger, inadequate school materials and limited transport facilities. News about companies closing down, cutting down staff strength, non-payment of salaries and high interest rates take the centre stage. In most sectors of the economy, many organizations engage in cutting down cost to survive and keep afloat. Families do their best to carry on as the economic recession has profound impact on their day-to-day activities.

The Educational sector especially, secondary schools in North Central Nigeria may not be left out of the impact of economic recession, as students, teachers, parents, proprietors, infrastructure, management staff, none teaching staff or those who supply different kinds of school facilities may all have their share in economic recession. The rate at which economic recession seem to impact the management of secondary schools in North

Central Nigeria may be worrisome. This may be due to the important role secondary schools play as the pivot between primary and tertiary education and as a stepping stone for future career, which leads to economic development of a nation.

According to Chigbu (2016), Nigeria heavily depends on crude oil earnings and practice traditional agriculture for personal survival. In years past the price of crude oil was quite favourable to the nation and as such, could adequately take care of all sectors of the economy including education. Unfortunately, crude oil prices declined and there was economic recession with its attendant impact on secondary education. This is the major concern of this research.

National Bureau for Economic Research (NBER, 2016) defines economic recession as a negative real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate for at least two consecutive quarters of the year (say first and second quarters). Nigeria therefore, experienced recession in the first and second quarter growth rate of GDP in 2016, with -0.36% and -1.5% respectively. The third and fourth quarters' GDP for 2016 were: 0.03% and 0.8% growth rate respectively. Economic recession is characterized by high rate of price increase (inflation), devaluation of currency, negative growth of GDP, difficulty in obtaining the needed income and unemployment. Most countries of the world experienced downturn in economic activities after the second world war of 1945. In the early 1980s, countries the world over noticed a worldwide oil glut. This situation displayed itself in a pronounced economic recession mostly to countries like Nigeria that operated a mono product economy. Economic recession is also visible through poverty, high cost of living, low or negative Gross Domestic Product (GDP), inflation, excess demand over supply, devaluation of currency and high rate of unemployment.

Economic recession has its most devastating impact on children and their education as stated by Dele (2016). The author argues that for about ten years, precisely 2007 to 2017 which involves recession and its impact, over ten million school age Nigerian children were out of school. That figure represents about 20% of Nigeria's children which constitutes a vast army of future losers of career because their school enrolment was affected. As a matter of concern, they have lost today and might never recover lost ground in education.

School fees in public and private schools may have gone up with the rise in exchange rate. The price of goods and services sky- rocketed as inflation became the order of the day. A bag of rice which was sold at about ₦10,000 in Makurdi before the recession has risen to about ₦17,000 to ₦20,000 during the economic recession in 2016 and 2017. In response to devaluation and the rising cost of providing education, schools are forced to increase fees to unprecedented levels. That, by itself has resulted in lower school enrolment. Millions of parents with children in secondary schools have withdrawn their children as they battle with unpaid salaries, half salaries, partial shutdown of assembly plants, retrenchments, higher price of fuel, food and transportation fare increase (Emmanuel, 2016).

Ogbonnaya (2010) defines management as a social process which has goals and objectives to achieve. It involves planning, organizing, coordinating, leading, directing and controlling both material and non-material resources towards the accomplishment of organizational goals and objectives. Management according to Sherlekar (2010) implies the guidance, leadership, coordination and control of all efforts or activities of individuals or groups of people   within an organization towards reaching a common objective or goal. In education therefore, educational management involves not only planning, initiating and designing educational activities but also monitoring, supervising, motivating and organizing

such activities to produce positive result in the teaching and learning process. Secondary school management refers to the process of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating and controlling the activities of secondary schools to achieve educational objectives.

The justification for choosing this topic is that not much research has been carried out on the impact of economic recession on management of secondary schools in the study area. There is a definite need to carry out this investigation so as to fill the gap created by economic recession on the management of secondary schools in the North Central Nigeria.

The impact of economic recession on the management of secondary education in the North Central Nigeria seems probable. This could be in the areas of enrolment, school revenue, teachers' salaries, instructional materials, school infrastructure, staff recruitment, school feeding, curriculum management, manpower need, scholarship, training of teachers, increase in crime rate, students' dropout, transfer to other schools, parents and poor students' performance in schools. This study is focused on the impact of economic recession on students` enrolment and school revenue.

Economic recession may have impact on secondary school enrolment in North Central Nigeria. For instance enrolment figures obtained from the Benue State Teaching Service Board (TSB) Makurdi (2010) shows that students' enrolment figure of Government Secondary School Ede-Okpoga in Okpokwu Local Government Area of Benue State declined from 94 to 70 in the 2008/2009 academic year. This may be due to the economic recession witnessed during the period. This led to low revenue generated from the payment of school fees as many students were unable to pay fees and some of them dropped out of school. Students dropped out of school probably because of lack of money to pay fees and buy instructional materials. There was no money because parents' salaries were probably not paid promptly. Salaries were not paid because there was economic recession that is, the gross domestic product of the country declined and there was inflation.

Economic recession may have negative impacts on the revenue generation of secondary schools. Tuition fees, school dues and other maintenance fees are hardly paid by students whose parents are owed several months of salaries due to economic recession. Yanule (2017) opines that poor funding of students in schools tends to make it difficult for the management of secondary schools to generate enough revenue. This would enable them provide good infrastructure, maintain good feeding for boarding students, take care of the welfare of teachers and provide students with textbooks, uniforms, medical care, transportation among others. It is because of the foregoing that the current research is out to determine whether economic recession has any impact on the management of secondary schools in the areas of school enrolment and school revenue.

Statement of the Problem

During economic recession, it is likely that many sectors of the economy witness economic downturn especially the institutions of learning and the secondary school level may not be an exception. Many parents and guardians are forced to withdraw their children and wards from schools leading to students dropping out of schools for inability to pay school fees and fund other educational bills. This scenario is capable of spelling doom for the future of the country's human resources and the entire economy. Secondary education is the pillar for higher education and the backbone for sustainable development.

It is difficult for the school management especially the government and principals to provide the required human, material and social resources to public schools when revenue generation is not significant. In this case the school may not achieve educational objectives in the society. The hardship may also affect the performance of students in their academic pursuit. Meagre economic resources may put pressure on school quality. This is because with declining household income, revenues from school fees will fall. This will make schools to be more dependent on government grants which may also not be sufficient.

The quality of education will also be affected as economic recession may have impact on teachers' salary. Most teachers seek alternative means of survival outside the teaching assignment. Others become hungry, tired and show lackadaisical attitude towards teaching. The non-payment of salaries and allowances demoralizes teachers, increases absenteeism and reduces the quality of instruction and learning in secondary schools. One of the major tasks of personnel management is to ensure that staff are paid their entitlements as and when due. This is the expectation of teachers and workers in general, but financial calamity may negatively impact on the prompt payment of secondary school teachers' salaries and wages in North Central Nigeria. Schools' infrastructural development and instructional materials could be affected by economic recession. Bamigboye, Ede and Adeyemi (2016) noted that purchasing power of parents and students drop due to economic recession and as a result it may affect the purchase of books and other educational materials as well as provision of school infrastructure.

Economic recession may also have impact on staff recruitment in secondary schools. This is because most sectors of the economy such as the Banking industry, mining, engineering, medical profession, accounting and Agricultural sector also depend on the products of education for manpower supply. If the impact of economic recession on staff recruitment is not properly investigated and managed, secondary schools and other sectors of the economy may be in acute shortage of manpower in the future. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate the impact of economic recession on the management of secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. This was done with particular interest in students' enrolment and revenue generation in secondary schools.

Research Questions
The following research questions guided the study:
1. What impact does economic recession have on students' enrolment in secondary schools in North Central Nigeria?
2. To what extent does economic recession impact on revenue generation in secondary schools?

Hypotheses
The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.
1. Economic recession has no significant impact on students' enrolment of secondary schools in the North Central Nigeria.
2. Economic recession has no impact on revenue generation in secondary schools.

Research Method

This study adopted ex-post-facto research design. The population comprised 34,412 teachers from 1,703 public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria (State Ministries of Education in North- Central Nigeria, 2017).

The sample size for the study consisted of 688 teachers representing 2% of the population in North-Central Nigeria. This sample was considered adequate since it is in line with Achor and Ejibo's (2006) submission that for a large population, 2% could be used as a sample and if the population is small, 5% to 20% and above could be used. A large population is the population above 1000 people while a small population ranges between 0 and 1000 people. Scientifically, it has also been proven that for a population of 30,000 and above, a minimum of about 1% could be used as sample size. Therefore 2% is appropriate for the population of the study. The statistical approach for determining the size of a sample is given by the formula:

$$S = \left(\frac{Z}{E}\right)^2 (P)(1-P)$$

Where: S = the sample size

Z = the standard score corresponding to a given confidence level

E = the proportion of a sampling error in a given situation

P = the estimated proportion or incidence cases in the population.

A multistage sampling technique was adopted for this study. This sampling procedure is applied when different sampling techniques are used at several stages of a sampling process (Emaikwu, 2015). In this study, cluster sampling was used to select the states; proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select schools for the study while simple random sampling technique of incidental picking was used to select teachers from the sampled public secondary schools in each state.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The structured questionnaire titled "Impact of Economic Recession Questionnaire (IERQ)" was used to collect responses from teachers and management staff in secondary schools. It consists of two clusters. Cluster (A) has items ranging from 1 to 5 which are on school enrolment, cluster (B) consists of items from numbers 6 to 10 on school revenue.

In order to ensure the face and content validity of the instruments, they were developed and presented to two experts in Measurement and Evaluation, one expert in Guidance and Counselling, one expert in Curriculum and Instruction all in Benue State University, Makurdi and one expert in Educational Administration and Planning, University of Agriculture, Makurdi for validation. Five experts in all validated the instruments. The experts critically examined each of the items and made comments on their suitability or ambiguity and corrected grammatical errors. Unclear statements, wrongly conceived ideas, missing information and other observed errors were corrected by the experts. Their comments, suggestions and corrections were used to modify the instruments for the supervisors' approval. The final copies were produced and used for data collection during the reliability and main study. However, the total number of items was not changed after the validation. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was used to compute the reliability co-

efficient in order to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The overall reliability coefficient was 0.98 which shows that the instrument was high enough to be used for the study.

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The decision was based on mean in order to provide a numerical value for the responses. A response of 4.0 was used for Very High Extent (VHE), 3.0 represents the High Extent (HE), 2.0 for Low Extent (LE) while 1.0 for Very Low Extent (VLE). The cut-off points considered for the responses are: less than 2.50 is Low Extent while greater than 2.50 is High Extent.

Chi-square (x^2) analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Chi-square is considered appropriate for this study because it is a non-parametric statistic for treating data of this nature. It permits the researcher to determine whether a significant difference existed between the observed and the expected number of cases in each category based on the null hypotheses (Pallant, 2013).

Results and Discussions
The results are presented, analyzed and interpreted as follows:

Research Question One: What impact does economic recession have on students' enrolment in   secondary schools in North Central Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviations of Impact of Economic Recession on Students' Enrolment in Secondary Schools in North Central Nigeria:

S/No	Item Description	N	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	SD	Dec.
1.	Inflation and high cost of school materials have impact on enrolment	640	230	291	72	47	3.13	.85	HE
2	Unemployment during economic recession makes parents to withdraw their children from schools	640	114	249	145	132	2.54	1.01	HE
3	Low budgetary allocation to education has negative impact on enrolment of secondary school students	640	222	144	126	148	2.69	1.17	HE
4	Lean financial resources of parents during economic recession leads to low enrolment of students.	640	330	186	52	72	3.21	1.00	HE
5	Students drop out for inability to pay school fees during economic recession	640	126	270	160	84	2.68	.94	HE

Cluster Mean and Standard Deviation	**2.85**	**0.99**	**HE**

Table 1 shows the mean of 3.13, 2.54, 2.69, 3.21, 2.68 and cluster of 2.85 with corresponding standard deviations of .85, 1.01, 1.17, 1.00, .94 and cluster of 0.99 respectively. Respondents indicated high extent to items 1-5 showing that high cost of school materials has impact on enrolment while unemployment during economic recession makes parents to withdraw their children from schools and low budgetary allocation to education has impact on enrolment of secondary school students. It also shows that lean financial resources of parents during economic recession leads to low enrolment of students and students drop out for inability to pay school fees. The cluster mean of 2.85 is higher than 2.50 and the standard deviation cluster score of 0.99 is greater than the cut-off point of 0.50. This shows that respondents indicated High Extent (HE) to impact of Economic recession on students' enrolment in North Central Nigeria. This result also implies that economic recession has impact on students' enrolment as most respondents revealed that students find it difficult to pay school fees and some withdraw from school during economic recession and admission is reduced. Admission expenditure and payment of school fees are critical things to do during economic recession due to shortage of funds. This reduces the number of enrolment.

Research Question Two: To **w**hat extent does economic recession impact on revenue generation in secondary schools?

Table 2:   **Mean and Standard Deviations of Impact of Economic Recession on Revenue Generation in Secondary Schools**

s/no	Item Description	N	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	SD	Dec.
6	Economic recession has negative impact on school revenue because students find it difficult to pay school fees	640	231	135	162	112	2.76	1.12	HE
7	Low Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country leads to poor budgetary allocation to public secondary schools	640	151	222	110	157	2.57	1.10	HE
8	Donations from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as PTA and Old Students Associations are low due to economic recession	640	126	330	108	76	2.49	.56	LE
9	During economic recession, students drop out of school, and has impact on school revenue	640	144	270	166	60	2.78	.90	HE
10	Inflation leads to low revenue generation from sale of school books and uniforms.	640	114	249	165	112	2.57	.98	HE

Cluster Mean and Standard Deviation		2.52	0.93	HE

Table 2 shows the mean of 2.76, 2.57, 2.49, 2.78, 2.57 and cluster of 2.52 with corresponding standard deviation scores of 1.12, 1.10, .56, .90, .98 and cluster of 0.93. Item by item interpretation indicates that economic recession has negative impact on school revenue because students find it difficult to pay school fees and low Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country leads to poor budgetary allocation to public secondary schools. The Respondents said that donations from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) and Old Students' Associations reduced low due to economic recession. In like manner, during economic recession, students drop out of school and this has negative impact on school revenue generation from school fees, sale of school books and uniforms. The cluster mean and standard deviation show that respondents indicated High Extent (HE) for the impact of economic recession on revenue generation of secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. This result implies that economic recession has negative impact on revenue generation of secondary schools as most respondents said it was difficult to generate sufficient funds for school development.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant impact of economic recession on students' enrolment in secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Table 3: Chi-square Analysis of Impact of Economic Recession on Students' Enrolment in Secondary Schools in North Central Nigeria

	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Lev. of sign.	Df	x^2cal.	x^2 crit.	Dec.
Observed	237	291	72	40					
					0.05.	3	282.71[a]	7.82	Rejected
Expected	160.0	160.0	160.0	160.0					

x^2 cal. 282.71[a] >x^2 crit. 7.82. Sign.

Table 3 shows that chi-square calculated value of 282.71 is greater than the critical value of 7.82 at 0.05 level of significance and 3 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that there is significant impact of economic recession on students' enrolment in secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Degree of freedom is the level at which errors are not made: the limit which is free of error. The expected cases are four (4), if one (1) case of error is subtracted; the degree of freedom is 3. The chi square (x^2) critical is 7.82 in all the tables of hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance in this study.

Hypothesis Two: Economic recession has no significant impact on revenue generation in secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Table 4:   Chi-square Analysis of Impact of Economic Recession on Revenue Generation of Secondary Schools in North Central Nigeria

	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Lev. of sign.	df	x^2 cal.	x^2 crit.	Dec.

Observed	231	135	162	112					
					0.05	3	49.84[a]	7.82	Rejected
Expected	160.0	160.0	160.0	160.0					

x^2 cal. 49.84[a]. $>x^2$ crit. 7.82. Sign.

Table 4 shows that chi-square calculated value of 49.84 is greater than the critical value of 7.82 at 0.05 level of significance and 3 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that there is significant impact of economic recession on revenue generation of secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings
          Based on the analyses and interpretations of the results of the investigation of impact of economic recession on management of secondary schools in North Central Nigeria, the following findings are discussed:
          The first finding revealed that there is significant impact of economic recession on students' enrolment in secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. This means when there is increase in prices of items as a result of economic recession, for instance, parents spend more on household consumptions in order to survive the recession and the available resources are not sufficient for school fees and study materials that will keep a child in school. With this situation, some students drop out and school enrolment is affected. Lekwa and Anyaogu (2016) found that economic recession negatively affects school enrolment and has pulled many students out of school and pushed them into the streets to hawk. The educational implications of these are increasing number of illiterates and criminals in the society and general backwardness in the future educational development of the people. Ejeh (2014) also agreed that enrolment decline which is caused by economic recession has significant impact on school population. However, Chen (2019) argued that enrolment in community colleges in the United States greatly increased during economic recession due to unemployment and decreasing home values. Many parents withdraw their wards from private schools to public schools where school fees are minimal. The significant impact was the increase in number of students per teacher and the inefficient teaching and learning environment due to class overcrowding. Demographic factors could be responsible for this deference. Many people in some area may prefer to enrol in schools during economic recessions when there is inflation, unemployment and expensive private schools. Parents withdraw their wards from private schools to public schools during economic recession to reduce the harsh economic situation. The interview schedule revealed that economic recession has significant impact on students enrolment in North Central Nigeria as most respondents indicated that students finds it difficult to pay school fees and they withdraw from schools during economic recession.
          The second finding reveals that there is significant impact of economic recession on revenue generation of secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. More so, during economic recession grants from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and funds allocated to education are insufficient thereby affecting management of secondary schools. This finding corroborates with that of Muhammed and Akende (2008) who found that insufficient revenue and lack of funding by the government as a result of economic down turn were factors that impacted on secondary school students' performance. Ochai and Adikwu (2018)

found that there are several ways economic recession influences financial administration of secondary schools in Benue State. These included increased cost of education, accumulation of debt services, decline in internally generated revenue and underfunding of education. The result of the study indicated that economic recession influenced personnel administration of secondary schools. The result revealed that staffs are laid off and there is shortfall in personnel salaries and allowances, reduction in administrative costs and elimination of staff professional development because of economic recession. Economic recession has significant impact on revenue generation of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. This is because most respondents indicated that economic recession makes it difficult for schools to generate sufficient revenue for development and grants from Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as PTA and Old Students Associations are reduced. Low enrolment during economic recession also lead to low revenue generation for the school management.

Recommendations

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

1. Government and school administrators should reduce spending on other items and ensure that school investments like desks, chairs, physical structures, books, uniforms and other facilities are put in place to attract and retain students' enrolment or avoid students dropping out of school in time of economic recession. Extension of scholarship awards to secondary school students and affordable school fees charges during economic recession will also be a great boost to school enrolment.

2. Government should prioritize education and increase allocation of funds to secondary schools especially during recession in order to improve school revenue and enhance effective school management in North Central Nigeria.

3. Ministries of Education and Principals should make the welfare of teachers a priority by paying their salaries and allowances promptly even in times of economic recession because a motivated teacher is a builder of future generations.

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