

Assessing the Effects of Fuel Subsidy Removal on Students' Academic Achievement

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ABSTRACT

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The paper assessed the effects of fuel subsidy removal on students' academic achievement at university of Ibadan. The descriptive survey research design was adopted with sample consisted of 150 undergraduate students from three faculties of Arts, Education and the Social Sciences (50 from each faculty). The questionnaire entitled "Effects of Fuel Subsidy on Students' Academic Achievement at University of Ibadan Inventory (EFSSAAI)" was the major instrument used for data gathering. Data collected was analysed through descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages as well as multiple regression. The paper found that subsidy removal effect (effects (class attendance, course materials and stress level) significantly influence students' academic achievement ($F(3,146) = 33.983$; $R = .641$, $R^2 = .411$, Adjusted $R^2 = .399$, $p < 0.05$), explaining 41.1% of the variance. In light of these results, government and university management should expand financial aid programmes and provide information about scholarship opportunities to support students financially as well as collaborate with local businesses to create part-time job opportunities on or near the campus, enabling students to earn income to cover their living and educational expenses.

Keywords: Academic achievement, Fuel Subsidy Removal, Undergraduate Student, University of Ibadan.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, much like many other developing countries, has struggled for a long time to find a way to strike a balance between maintaining economic stability and ensuring social welfare. The provision for fuel subsidy has been one of the policy measures that has been utilized in order to manage this equilibrium. The goal of the subsidy is to lessen the effect that changes in the price of oil throughout the world have on the local market. This subsidy at a point turns to corruption among some bigwigs in the oil sector leading the government to lose a lot of government funds to the funding of subsidy (Ozili & Obiora, 2023). The government decided to eliminate the gasoline subsidy as a consequence. The Nigerian government is considering eliminating the gasoline subsidy in light of recent shifts in economic paradigms and the need for financial sustainability.

Since 2023, there has been a significant turning point in the progression of Nigeria's economy, society, and environment. It was the present government in Nigeria that eliminated the gasoline subsidy. To accurately understand the wide-ranging impacts of this policy change, each of its many ramifications must be carefully considered (Obasi et al., 2024). These repercussions encompass both positive and negative impacts, as well as direct and indirect consequences brought about by the situation in the economy and education especially on academic achievement.

There are many barriers to the elimination of fuel subsidies, which are driven by the desire to improve budgetary stability and align with worldwide trends in the elimination of fossil fuel subsidies (Al Jazeera, 2023). The potential for socioeconomic differences to increase is an inherent challenge. This is because the elimination of subsidies may raise the price of gas, which would raise living expenses generally. The concern raised by Ude (2023) is shown in the aforementioned example. Ude emphasizes that the withdrawal of subsidies, while it may be good in the future, may inflict financial burdens on families, particularly those families that are already marginalized. The economic structure of Nigeria is characterized by a multitude of basic aspects, which contribute

to higher degrees of complexity. The country's dependence on imported petroleum and the state of its refineries as of right now makes it more likely that gasoline prices would rise.

It must be noted that the Nigerian economy has always been structured to primarily depend on the production and distribution of cost-effective petroleum products. The average Nigerian household depends on subsidised crude oil byproducts like kerosene and petrol for both domestic and commercial use. Previous Nigerian governments' attempts to eliminate the fuel subsidy were met with demonstrations and strong opposition. The government of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu eliminated gasoline subsidies in Nigeria after taking office on May 29. According to Bola Tinubu, the incoming president of Nigeria, eliminating a well-liked fuel subsidy would put further strain on the populace but free up funds for healthcare, education, regular electricity supplies, and transportation development (Odewale, 2023).

Irrespective of the benefit of fuel subsidy removal as pointed out by the Nigerian president, the removal of the subsidy has resulted in increased transportation costs due to the high fuel prices, directly and indirectly influencing students' attendance in classes, and course materials and increasing in stress level of students. Based on this, this study was carried out to fill the gap created by the dearth of studies on the effects of fuel subsidy removal on students' academic achievement at the University of Ibadan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A multidimensional dilemma that is marked by complicated interdependencies among economic viability, social equality, environmental sustainability, and political stability is presented by the cessation of the petrol subsidy in Nigeria in the year 2023. It is necessary to have a comprehensive strategy in order to take into account the potential synergies and trade-offs that may result from the complex interactions that exist between various components. In order to have a complete understanding of the repercussions that this choice will have, it is necessary to do a comprehensive analysis that takes into account the large number of aspects that are involved. The aim of this research is to provide valuable perspectives that will broaden our understanding of the impact that the elimination of subsidies has had on Nigeria's economy and society. This study's main goal is to carry out a thorough analysis and assessment of the complex issues related to eliminating subsidies. Understanding this complexity is essential for policymakers because it would help them to make informed decisions that would strike a balance between short-term outcomes and long-term advantages, while also avoiding the adverse effects on groups that are susceptible.

It is, therefore, necessary to conduct a comprehensive inquiry in order to evaluate the intricate relationship that exists between the enhancement of local refining capabilities and the effective management of consumer expenditures. This research is crucial because it has the potential to make the issues associated with a domestic refining industry that is not running properly, which may be the outcome of the removal of subsidies, much more difficult to find solutions to. In addition to this, it is of the utmost importance to do a comprehensive analysis of the consequences that would result from the removal of subsidies on public services and infrastructure. As a result of the projected shift of funding from subsidies to public goods, such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure, there is a possibility for a transition that is positive. Nevertheless, it is of the utmost importance to carefully examine the efficient utilisation of these monies and the equal distribution of them. Ensuring that the removal procedure will result in observable benefits in these areas while also avoiding any unanticipated negative outcomes is the fundamental hurdle that must be overcome. The dynamic interplay of economic, political, environmental, and social issues contributes to the problem's complexity, which is going to be far more complicated than it already is.

As shown by the studies conducted by Greve and Lay (2023), Haring et al. (2023), and Osunmuyiwa and Kalfagianni (2017), many investigations have been conducted to examine the consequences of eliminating this subsidy. A computable general equilibrium approach is used by Nwafor, Ikenga, and Oluka (2023) to investigate the impacts of subsidy elimination on those with lower socioeconomic status. This study shed light on the complex link that exists between fiscal policy, the removal of subsidies, and social fairness with respect to the students of the University of Ibadan. It would highlight the need to take into account the distributive impacts of subsidy removal, regardless of the potential impact that it may have on the budget.

Osunmuyiwa and Kalfagianni (2017) investigated the larger energy environment by evaluating the potential for Nigeria's petrol subsidy changes to encourage energy revolutions. Specifically, the research highlights the potential repercussions that would come from the removal of subsidies on energy consumption patterns. These repercussions might potentially have significant implications on government revenue and spending as a consequence of the alterations that would occur in the dynamics of the energy sector. By studying the complicated connection between subsidy removal, energy transitions, and fiscal dynamics, this study highlights the need to have a complete understanding of the economic repercussions of policy changes. Previous studies provided a wealth of knowledge on the economic and environmental repercussions that are associated with various subsidy removal initiatives.

The economic crisis that has been brought about by the elimination of subsidies for petrol appears to be particularly severe in the Northern region of Nigeria, where the quality of life is going through a significant degeneration. In this region, the poverty rate is the greatest, with Borno, which is located in the northeast, having the highest poverty rate (NBS, 2015). The area has the highest poverty rate, which is around 76.8%. However, quality-of-life assurance practitioners and stakeholders continue to pay insufficient attention to the possible impact that the loss of petrol subsidies may have on the prevalence of extreme poverty in the state. This is a critical issue that has to be addressed.

It is necessary to conduct further research on this matter since it is critical. The elimination of subsidies for petrol has prompted a huge controversy in Nigeria regarding the impact that it would have on the country's living circumstances and overall well-being. The assessments carried out by SIP and the previous study (Osunmuyiwa & Kalfagianni, 2017) on this subject may be based on macro-level analysis, which may not fully reflect the consequences that occur at the individual level.

The political economics of eliminating gasoline subsidies in Nigeria was also covered by Obasi *et al.* (2024), who used secondary data to reveal the consequences of doing so. The research found that the chronic slow-motion economic progress that has made the situation of many Nigerians worse is mostly caused by widespread corruption in the nation's vast oil industry. Furthermore, the country's refineries are still in disrepair, which has allowed fuel subsidies to provide criminals more freedom to waste the country's riches. Godwin and Lilly-Inia (2024) investigated the problems and prospects of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. Three objectives were stated to drive the study with a public choice theoretical framework guiding the study, while data were collected using secondary data. The study reported that the introduction of fuel subsidies has brought about economic hardship to Nigerians, particularly the low-income households. The Government has not done much to address the hiccups caused by fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. It was also found that many elites could not drive their cars and many could not afford the cost of transportation leading to trekking long distances as well school pupils and university students could not meet with classes and lectures. Hence, this in turn is capable of affecting academic achievement.

Concerning its influence on the general public as well as its degree of attraction in Nigeria, the discussion has not yet reached a conclusion. In addition, is it possible that the removal of subsidies for petrol would have a negative impact on the well-being of those living in poverty in countries that are abundant in resources, such as Nigeria? If this is the case, are there many more effective alternatives that can be utilised to lessen the negative effects that it has on those who are economically disadvantaged? Attention must be paid to these queries. On the other hand, there is a dearth of studies on the consequences of the cessation of the subsidy on students' academic achievement. In order to build successful policies that would secure public support, handle any social unrest, and ensure the long-term sustainability of policy changes, it is essential to have a complete understanding of the numerous difficulties and possibilities that exist, as well as to accept the necessity. There is, therefore, the need to take into consideration its effects on the education sector. Therefore, the need to investigate fuel subsidy removal and its effect on the student's academic achievement at the University of Ibadan is necessary.

Purpose of Study

The specific purposes of this study are to:

1. Determines the extent to which fuel subsidy removal effects (class attendance, course materials and stress level) influence students' academic achievement at the University of Ibadan.
2. Ascertain the perception of students on the effect of fuel subsidy on their academic achievement in the university.

Research Questions

This study is based on the following research questions.

1. How did the fuel subsidy removal effects (class attendance, course materials and stress level) influence Students' academic achievement in the institution?
2. How did the students perceive the effects of fuel subsidies in relation to changes in their academic achievements?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The System Theory developed by David Easton serves as the foundation for this study's scientific understanding of the origins, application, and effects of public policy as a systemic whole. The System Theory is a tool used to explain and analyze social processes and issues that come from the biological sciences (Allen, 2011). In fact, eminent American political scientist David Easton is the primary proponent of this theory (Biestdt, 1995). The theory, in essence, reduces all phenomena to a whole, consisting of components that enable the whole to function as intended (Ibaba, 2014). This suggests, among other things, that all social phenomena exist within the context of the environment of which they are a part and interact and relate with other components in a symbiotic way in order to support and maintain both themselves and other constituents.

In light of this, system theory concentrates not only on how a political system transforms inputs from its surroundings, such as support and demand into outputs but also on how it adjusts to environmental influences in order to endure or maintain itself over time (Allen, 2011). As a result, Easton views the political system as an input-output model, with an emphasis on the internal dynamics of the system and how it interacts with its surroundings. The theory establishes an input-output relationship between the political system and its surroundings. While many different environmental activities could affect the system, input refers to anything in the environment that is pertinent to political stimulation or "stress." According to Easton, two essential inputs are support and demand. However, the output is more concerned with "consequences flowing from system members' behaviour than from environmental actions" (Easton, 1965:19).

In fact, it will be useful to list the system theory's primary characteristics, which are as follows: (a) political system units; (b) political system boundaries; in order to give the theory's overall perspective. The components of the political system are what we refer to as its units (Easton, 1965). In this instance, political roles and political groups can be used to distinguish between different political actions. Boundaries suggest that the political system is constantly a part of a particular setting or environment; it never exists in a vacuum. Therefore, the system's operation will be partially determined by how it reacts to the overall physical, biological, and social environment. All social actions that are more or less directly related to making legally binding decisions for a society constitute the boundary of a political system; any social action that does not share these characteristics will be excluded from the system and will consequently be automatically viewed as an external variable in the environment (Easton, 1965). As a result, when it comes to inputs, Easton (1963) argued that without input, a system cannot function, and without output, it is impossible to determine what the system has accomplished. Differentiation within a system is one of the political system's traits. The environment provides energy that the political system uses as inputs to carry out its functions, and the system also produces outputs that are distinct from the inputs. To this end, the political system receives the aforementioned inputs and processes them to create authoritative decisions or policies such as fuel subsidy removal policy. This is the point at which the theory holds up well to the investigation. It draws attention to the history of public policies (such as the removal of fuel subsidies) and how the system's structure influences them. In other words, if a system is corrupt, its outputs will inevitably operate in a corrupt environment (Ibaba, 2014).

This study was predicated on the theory that the endemic characteristics of a political system influence the public policy of that system. Therefore, it is valid for the study in addition to providing a theoretical explanation of the origin of public policy. It has even gone so far as to theoretically depict a trajectory of the degree of influence that policy would have on the elimination of gasoline subsidies in Nigeria. Thus, the system theory is suitable for this study because the fuel subsidy is the policy of the government as part of the economic system that has to do with other systems of government such as health, education, agriculture, and power among others. In this wise, the educational system is a sub-system under the system of government that interrelated and interdependent to one another.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research method was used in this study. The study also included the undergraduates of the University of Ibadan. The sample consisted of 150 people in total. The research participants, especially the students from the three faculties of Arts, Education, and Social Science, were selected using a straightforward random selection technique. From each faculty, fifty (50) students were chosen. The data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire entitled "Effects of Fuel Subsidy on Students' Academic Achievement at University of Ibadan Inventory (EFSSAAI)". The first section focuses on respondents' demographic information. The second section was constructed to measure the Effects of Fuel Subsidy on Students' Academic Achievement at the University of Ibadan. With the help of two research assistants, the respondents filled out the questionnaire on their own. The goal of the research was explained to the respondents, who were then gently reminded to fill out the questionnaire. The data collection took almost 3 months. All the 150 surveys were completed by respondents and used for data analysis. The demographic data was analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and basic respondent demographic percentages. The first research question was answered using multiple regression, while the second research question was answered using descriptive statistics of count frequencies and simple percentages at a significance level of 0.05.

Validity of the Instruments

The face, construct and content validity of the questionnaire, which served as the main instrument of study, were evaluated. The content validity of the questionnaire was assessed using expert opinion and literature review, and key indicators were identified. The validity of the instrument was assessed by expert academics at the Faculty of Education's Counselling and Human Development Studies. Improvements, critiques, and advice from these experts were incorporated into the final version before pretesting.

Reliability

A pretest was carried out to ascertain the instrument's reliability. The researcher created a scale to rate the perception of participants on the effects of fuel subsidies on their academic achievement at the University of Ibadan. This scale consists of 10 items, each of which has a Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SA). The weights of these options were 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively, and the researchers selected a similar population to the present study. Several other students in the selected institution had similar characteristics and were therefore selected. The questionnaire was given to other Alayande University of Education, Oyo students in 30 copies, and the coefficients were calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. Pretesting allowed us to obtain a reliability coefficient of $r = 0.81$ for the developed questionnaire. This indicates the internal consistency and reliability of the instrument.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic variable was presented first, followed by the study research questions.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of the Student by Gender

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	63	42%
Female	87	58%

Total	150	100%
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Table 1 indicated that 63 (42%) of the respondents were male, while the remaining 87 (58%) were female. The findings suggested a higher number of female respondents compared to male respondents.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of the Students by Age

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
16-20 years	78	52%
21-26 years	52	34.70%
Above 26 years	20	13.30%
Total	150	100%

Table 2 indicated that over half of the respondents, 78 (52%), were aged 16-20 years, followed by 52 (34.7%) in the 21-26 age group, while the fewest respondents, 20 (13.3%), reported being above 26 years old. The data indicated that most responders were aged between 16 and 20 years.

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of the Students by Level

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
100L	30	20%
200L	22	14.70%
300L	28	18.70%
400L	74	49.30%
Total	150	100%

Table 3 revealed that almost half 74(49.3%) of the respondents were in 400L, followed by 30(20%) of the respondents who were in 100L, while the least of them 22(14.7%) affirmed that they were in 200L. It is evident that most of the respondents who participated in the study were in 400L.

Answers to Research Questions

Research Question 1: To what extent do the fuel subsidy removal effects (class attendance, course materials and stress level) influence students' academic achievement at the University of Ibadan?

Table 4. Multiple Regression Analysis of Interpersonal relationship

R= 0.641 R Square= 0.411 Adjusted R Square= 0.399 Std. Error of the Estimate= 2.07257						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Remark
Regression	437.922	3	145.974	33.983	.000 ^b	Significant

Residual	627.151	146	4.296			
Total	1065.073	149				

Table 4 showed that the fuel subsidy removal effects (class attendance, course materials and stress level) influence students' academic achievement was shown in the above table by $R = 0.641$, indicating a positive correlation between the independent variables. The fuel subsidy removal effects' independent variables also had a 41.1% influence on students' academic achievement, with an R square of 0.411 suggesting that the variance in these conditions may have resulted from factors not included in the research. Consequently, the model seems to be significant for prediction ($F(3,146) = 33.983$; $R = .641$, $R^2 = .411$, Adjusted $R^2 = .399$, $p < 0.05$).

Research Question 2: How did students perceive the effects of fuel subsidy removal on (class attendance, course materials and stress level) and academic achievement at the University of Ibadan?

Table 5: Descriptive Analysis of students' perception of fuel subsidy removal effects on class attendance, course materials and stress level and their academic achievement.

Table 5.1. Fuel subsidy removal on course materials and students' academic achievement

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have little or no money to buy course materials due to the present condition.	52	45	32	21
	-34.60%	-30%	-21.30%	-14%
The price of most textbooks is out of reach for me to purchase and this affected my academic pursuit.	42	61	18	29
	-28%	-40.70%	-12%	-19.30%
I have fewer textbooks to read and this seriously affected my academic achievement.	32	41	36	41
	-21.30%	-27.30%	-24%	-27.30%
I need financial assistance to get some textbooks and improve my academic achievement.	57	46	28	19
	-38%	-30.70%	-18.70%	-12.70%
Getting some relevant textbooks to my academic success is important but there is no way of getting them with the present condition.	38	55	31	26
	-25.30%	-36.70%	-20.70%	-17.30%
Not having enough course materials negatively affected my academic success.	41	57	20	32
	-27.30%	-38%	-13.30%	-21.30%
I enjoy learning with little course	30	39	43	38

materials available to me.	-20%	-26%	-28.70%	-25.30%
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Please note that Strongly Agree and Agree were aggregated to be Agree, while Strongly Disagree and Disagree were aggregated to be Disagree.

Table 5 revealed that a large proportion of the respondents 103(68.7%) agreed that the price of most textbooks is out of reach for me to purchase and this affected my academic pursuit and need financial assistance to get some textbooks to improve my academic achievement respectively. Furthermore, 97(64.6%) of the respondents reported they have little or no money to buy course materials owing to their present condition. Despite having limited access to course materials, the majority of respondents (81, or 54%) disagreed with the notion that they liked learning. This implies that the removal of fuel subsidies has not only caused economic hardship but rather also affected students' academic achievement negatively.

Table 5.2. Fuel Subsidy removal on class attendance, stress level and students' academic achievement

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The present condition has led to my irregular in class and high stress level and a decline in my academic achievement.	32	28	56	34
	-21.30%	18.7%)	-37.30%	-22.70%
I have serious issue about the transportation cost of coming regularly to school.	49	56	25	20
	-32.70%	-37.30%	-16.70%	-13.30%
I engage in menial jobs during the school period.	45	49	22	34
	-30%	-32.70%	-14.70%	-22.70%
I borrow for transportation most time of coming to school during this present condition.	34	43	36	37
	-22.70%	-28.70%	-24%	-24.70%
I do not have enough time to study struggling with transportation fares.	57	48	32	13
	-38%	-32%	-21.30%	-8.70%

I trek to school most of the time.	53	64	19	14
	-35.30%	-42.70%	-12.70%	-9.30%
I manage my stress level in order to complete my education programme.	46	55	27	22
	-30.70%	-36.70%	-18%	-14.70%

Please note that Strongly Agree and Agree were aggregated to be Agree, while Strongly Disagree and Disagree were aggregated to be Disagree.

Table 5.2 indicated that a significant majority of respondents, 117 (78%), concurred that they frequently walk to school. This was closely followed by 105 (70%) who acknowledged that transport costs impact their regular attendance, alongside challenges related to insufficient study time and difficulties with transport fares. However, 90(60%) of the respondents disagreed with the fact that the present condition has led to my irregularity in class and high stress level caused a decline in academic achievement. It is evident in the above analysis that fuel subsidy removal has caused the students stress of trekking to school and even borrowing money for transport fare which in turn affects their class attendance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The outcome of the findings regarding the first research inquiry indicates how the fuel subsidy removal effects (class attendance, course materials and stress level) influence students' academic achievement. The results demonstrated that three components collectively contributed to forecasting students' academic achievement. Specifically, the amalgamation of the three components explained 41.1% of the variance in predicting students' academic achievement. This suggests that by considering the three components in the study, the academic achievement of students could potentially increase by 41.1%, while the remaining 58.9% of the variation falls outside the scope of this research. Consequently, the combined effects of class attendance, course materials and stress level account for 41.1% of the influence on the academic achievement of the students in this investigation. This finding supports the claim made by Ogunode and Aregbesola (2023) that a significant factor in students' absences from class and overall poor academic performance across primary, secondary, and higher education is the increase in transport costs brought on by the elimination of fuel subsidies. This is because, students are at the receiving end of the education system, and whatever happens to it affects them directly. Similarly, in harmony with the findings of the current study, Okonkwo, (2023) and Tribune Online, (2023a) emphasised that the recent rise of fuel pump prices as a result of subsidy removal has the capacity to negatively influence students' academic performance, particularly those in the country's institutions of higher learning. This is evident in its impact on the costs of academic stress, transportation, feeding and educational resources which are essential for better academic performance of students. Transportation enables students to attend school regularly and punctually, reducing absenteeism rates and ensuring they have equitable opportunities to learn. Moreover, transportation systems facilitate access to educational institutions, especially for those living in remote or underserved areas, promoting inclusivity and diversity in student populations (Daily Trust, 2023; Tribune Online, 2023b; Okonkwo, 2023).

The findings of study question two examined how students at the University of Ibadan perceived the impact of the elimination of gasoline subsidies on their academic performance and attendance, course materials, and stress levels. The results indicated that the three components effectively predicted serious effects on students' academic achievement. This discovery resonates with the views expressed by Alaribe et al. (2023) who stated the increased cost of fuel indirectly affects the affordability of academic resources, including textbooks and study materials, placing financial constraints on students and hindering their pursuit of academic excellence. Abamara, Ezech, Ikeorah, Oguamanam and Abamara (2018) in their study expressed that fuel subsidy removal has been a source of worry to most people in Awka, including students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka irrespective of their

gender and sex. This is because of the negative impact it has on their livelihood. Transportation is vital for students to attend classes regularly and punctually, ensuring equitable access to education. However, the skyrocketing road transport fares resulting from the removal of fuel subsidies have disrupted daily commutes, affecting students' class attendance and thereby causing stress on students' daily activities. Additionally, the rising cost of food, linked to the fuel price hike, seems to threaten students' access to nutritious meals, potentially compromising their physical and cognitive development and, consequently, their academic performance. This finding agrees with that of Omoniyi (2023) who revealed that due to the removal of fuel subsidies, sellers of academic materials have been forced to increase the prices of their goods, further burdening students, especially those from economically disadvantaged families which affects their academic performance. The study also revealed that both public and private institutions, such as the University of Lagos, have increased their school fees substantially, making education less accessible for many.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, students' academic performance has suffered not just at the University of Ibadan but also throughout the country as a whole due to the removal of the gasoline subsidy, which has raised the cost of transportation, course materials, and students' stress levels. The findings underscore the multifaceted adverse influence of fuel subsidy removal on students, including heightened academic challenges such as absenteeism in class, late arrivals to lectures, reduced participation in academic activities, and compromised stress levels due to the escalating cost of living. These factors collectively contribute to decreased academic achievement and increased hardships for students.

Recommendations

This study's results prompted the following recommendations:

1. For students in particular, the government must establish a subsidised transportation programme to lessen the financial strain that rising transportation expenses have on them. This should be executed in collaboration with transportation providers or introduce a student discount card system to reduce transportation expenses for students commuting to the university.
2. Government and university management should work together to make educational resources more affordable and accessible to students. This can be achieved through initiatives such as bulk purchasing of textbooks for resale at reduced prices, and establishing a central repository of academic materials for students to access at a lower cost or for free.
3. Government and university management should expand financial aid programmes and provide information about scholarship opportunities to support students financially. Additionally, collaborate with local businesses to create part-time job opportunities on or near the campus, enabling students to earn income to cover their living and educational expenses.
4. The use of blended learning in university instruction should be authorised by the management.
5. The lecturers should encourage students to leverage the use of virtual libraries and open educational resources to generate learning materials.
6. The use of learning and Google platforms as well as social media should be encouraged in teaching and learning to reduce stress levels among learners, tutors and lecturers.

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