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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ECONOMIC CRISIS AND POVERTY STRICKING SOCIETY AS PREDICTORS OF POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN OGUN STATE PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

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This study was carried out to investigate the effect of economic crises and poverty stricken society on students' Academic Performance in Ogun state Public Secondary Schools. Descriptive research design was used for the study. Forty (40) secondary schools were randomly selected and 10 teachers were selected from each school. Chi-square analysis was used in analyzing the data. The instruments used are questionnaire and students' WAEC results. The result revealed significant combined contributions of economic crisis and poverty to the predictors of students' academic performance. It was recommended among other things that schools should source for alternate funding through the assistance of old students association, Parents-Teachers-Association and corporate bodies to complement the meager allocation from government. Government should also key into private and public partnership in education to reduce its educational responsibilities and unemployed Nigerians should be assisted through skill acquisition centers and soft loans to help reduce the poverty level of our parents so that students will be provided with necessary support that will incorporate improved students' performance.

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Introduction

Stakeholders in the education sector have continued to express serious concern about the poor academic performance of students at all levels of education system especially in the recent times. Education in Nigeria is regarded by the government and the entire citizenry as capable of achieving rapid development and national integration and to bring about desirable change in all spheres of human endeavors. This may explain why the various levels of government strive to achieve the goal of providing qualitative education to the ever rising population of school aged children in realization of the roles of education in accelerating economic performances in internal and external examinations which is the yardstick for measuring the success or otherwise of the education sector. The National Examination Council (NECO) and the West African Examination Council (WAEC) are the two examination bodies mandated to conduct external examinations to assess secondary school students

nationwide and the results obtained by the students will determine their progress or otherwise.

Education has been in crisis for many years largely due to the fact that the sector is poorly funded. This results in shortage of material and human resources experienced in the system. Inadequate qualified teachers, high turnover rate of teachers, shortage of classroom, and poor remuneration of teachers and a host of other problems abound in the education sector. These problems are more pronounced at the primary and secondary school levels. The education system has undergone rapid changes and growth within the contest of unstable economy. The economic crisis experienced in Nigeria and impacted on the education system had played a major role in the decline of the quality of Education offered (Olabanjo and Abayomi 2010).

In the 1970s, Nigeria experienced oil boom which led to the expansion of the economy with a

spillover effect in the education sector. The education sector then witnessed rapid growth and development. However, by the 1980s, in contrast to what was experienced in the 1970s, it was a period of economic recession. By 1995, the value of the Naira had fallen to #85 to \$1 i.e. 85 naira to one US dollar instead of #1:\$1 experienced before. Presently, the exchange rate is #150 to \$1. the rate of inflation remain high and this has a negative impact on the education sector leading to the transfer of funding responsibilities from one level of government to another as well as to families to help subsidize education through fee payments at secondary and higher levels of education. According to Teboho (2000), alternative sources of funding education have been explored. In 1995, the government established the education tax fund in which companies with more than 100 employees contribute 2% of their Re-tax to the fund. Secondary education received 10% of the contribution addition to budgetary allocation. The infrastructure and facilities in most secondary schools remain inadequate to cope with the rapid growth pace. School environment is therefore in general terms not conducive for learning due to the physical condition and inadequate teaching and learning resources. The annual growth rate estimated at 3.3 percent contributed to children who have to be accommodated in school. He further hammered on the financial crisis in the education sector when he declared that existing facilities in most schools are inadequately maintained and has retarded progress in building new facilities. This shows that the rising students' population is not matched with adequate facilities.

Ollon (as cited in Muhammad and Akanle 2008) made it clear that in the quest for funding survival in the education sector, the nation has evolved series of socio-economic and policy measures such as Structural Adjustment Programmed (SAP), Austerity Measure, Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Basic Education (UBE) and devaluation of naira. Johnson (2010) lamented that as a result of these hard measures, most parents became poor the more such that they could no longer provide adequately for the upkeep and education of their children. This situation led to the drop out of students to engage in menial jobs to support their academic pursuit. Most of the students therefore saw schooling as a secondary assignment and school attendance was on rotation basis. The resulting problem posed by this development is poor academic performance in school external examinations conducted by West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO).

Shittu (2004) revealed that the quality of parents and home background of a student goes a long way to predict the quality and regularity of the satisfaction and provision of a child's functional, survival and academic needs. In a similar way, poor parental care with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a child as a result of poverty usually yield poor academic performance of the child.

Martins and Emmanuel (2009) declared that the immediate effect of economic meltdown on organizations and the inability to maintain the current productive capacity leading to inadequate fund. It raises the possible implication of government's control measures such as cutting down expenditure which may likely affect educational expenditure. Ogun state public secondary school teachers experienced hardship during the period of economic meltdown as they experienced delay in the payment of salaries and allowances, payment of net salary only, roof blowing taxation, depletion of the personal co-operative savings and stagnation on a grade level and step. This according to them affected the teachers' morale which prevented them from giving out the best to the students.

The relationship between educational system and the nations cannot be overemphasized. The school system is part of the general macro-economy hence whatever happens in the system will definitely affect the schools. The school system cannot compromise standards and quality on the account of poor funding and the rising school population indicates the need for a proportionate annual increase in school enrolment and its consequent demands on the national economy and since no economy can survive without human capital stock, all aspects of the school system must be up and doing to continue the production of manpower at all levels.

Most institutions in Nigeria are confronting economic constraints and this slows down the pace of achieving the institutions' activities. The expected funds from funding agencies i.e. government are delayed and in most cases some of the fund are not released at all and this has negative impact on the effort of the institutional administration in execution of institution projects. Since the funding of education is exclusively external at lower levels, it is likely to be mostly affected with the economic hardship. Staffing situation may be affected as school heads would prefer to substitute high quality staff with low quality ones. General quality may decline due to lack of funding for the maintenance of infrastructures, lack of funds to purchase laboratory equipment and support training and development.

The economic recess has direct effect on parent's income since most of them live below the poverty line. This in turn affects the education of children because parents could not meet up with the financial responsibility that is attached. Loss of income during the crisis may cause parents to withdraw their children from expensive private schools to already saturated public schools. Yussuf (2003), found a positive correlation between academic achievement and parents' academic status. Bello (1987) also found that children from high economic background have a better chance of succeeding in school than low economic counterpart having homes that provide physical environment appropriate for child growth, enrolment for extra lesson, ability to buy necessary textbooks and stationery are the hallmark of children from high income earning parents. It was also found that parental interest and altitude as well as support given at home may be a major factor influencing child's academic achievement in school.

Statement of the Problem

Secondary level of education is the worst hit by the down turn in our economy. The lofty objectives of secondary education might not be achieved due to myriads of problems affecting it. This development has led to serious comparison between the academic performance of students between the period of oil boom and the presents state of economic meltdown, hence the need to research on the composite and independent contributions of economic crisis and poverty on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Ogun state.

Purpose of the Study

1. To diagnose the composite effect of economic crisis and poverty on students' academic performance in Ogun state public secondary schools.
2. To investigate the independent relative effect of economic situation and standard of living on student's academic performance in Ogun state public secondary schools.

Research Hypotheses

- Ho1** there is no significant effect of economic crisis on students' academic performance in Ogun state public secondary schools.
- Ho2** There is no significant effect of the level of parental income and provision of school basic needs on the academic performance of students in secondary schools.

Significance of the Study

This study will serve as a guide for future funding pattern of schools and provide alternate for school management under the current economic meltdown. It will educate policy makers, school administrators, teachers and parents on the roles the economic crisis and poverty play in determining academic performance of students in our secondary schools.

Design and Sampling Method

The study employs descriptive design for the study. Random sampling method was used to select the forty (40) public secondary schools out of the three hundred and twenty three (323) public secondary schools in Ogun state and ten (10) teachers were selected from each school. Students' NECO results for 2007 to 2012 were collected from the selected schools to measure students' academic performance.

Research Instrument

A self-developed and validated questionnaire tagged Economic Crisis and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (ECSAPQ) was designed. The questionnaire was administered through research assistants and 92% return rate was achieved.

Validation of Instrument

The instrument for the study was validated by subjecting the design to screening by experts which include colleagues to ascertain the adequacy of the instrument. The instrument was further subjected to retest reliability coefficient of 0.76 and 0.77 for both teachers and students using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient test.

Data Analysis

The two null hypotheses stated in the study were tested using SPSS package subjected to chi-square statistical method.

Results

Ho1: There is no significant effect of Economic crisis on students' academic performance.

Table1 shows the chi-square result on the effect of economic crisis on students' academic performance.

Test Statistics		
	HIS1	HIM1
Chi-square	56.366	81.762
Df	17	20
Asymp.Sig	.000	.000

- a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. the minimum expected cell frequency is 5.6
- b. 21 cells (100%) have expected frequencies less than 5. the minimum expected cell frequency is 4.8

Chi-square (*2)	= 56.366a
Mean	= 81.762b
Df	= 17
Table value	= 27.587

Table 1 reveals that the calculated value 56.366 is greater than the table value 27.587 at 0.5 level of significance. The null hypotheses are therefore rejected. The finding shows that economic crisis has a significant effect on students' academic performance.

Ho2: There is no significant effect of the level of parental income and provision of child's basic needs on students' academic performance.

Table 2 shows the chi-square results on the effect of level of parental income and provision of child's basic needs on students' academic performance.

Test Statistics

	HTS2	HTM2
Chi-square	59.846	72.198B
DF	14	16
ASYMP.SIG	.000	.000

- a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. the minimum expected cell frequency is 67.
- b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. the minimum expected cell frequency is 59.

Chi-square (X2)	= 59.846a
Mean	= 72.198B
Df	= 14
Table value	= 23.685

Table 2 above reveals that the calculated value of 59.846 is greater than the table value of 23.685 at 0.5 level of significance. The null hypothesis Ho2 is therefore rejected. The finding shows that there is a significant effect of parental level of income and provision of basic needs on the students' academic performance.

Discussion of the Result

The two hypotheses were generated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The two hypotheses were tested on the effect of economic crisis and poverty on the academic performance of students in Ogun state.

The first hypothesis states that there is no significant independent relative effect of economic crisis on the prediction of secondary school students' poor academic performance in Ogun state, Nigeria.

Table 1 revealed the significant effect of economic crisis on students' academic performance ($X^2=56.366$, $P<0.05$)

The null hypothesis is therefore rejected in favour of alternative hypothesis. This means that economic crisis has significant effects on students' academic performance. The finding is in line with Ojo (2004) and David (2008) that economic meltdown has resulted in low morale and low esteem of the teaching profession which in return has negative effect on the academic performance of the students. Olubanji and Abayomi (2010) also supported the finding when he declared that the economic crisis has a negative impact on the educational system and played a major role in the decline of the quality of education offered.

The second hypothesis states that there is no significant effect of the level of parental income and provision of basic child's needs on students' academic performance. Table 2 reveals significant effect of the level of parental income and provision of the basic needs of students on students' academic performance ($X^2=59.846$, $P<0.05$). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. This means that the level of parental income and provision of basic needs of the students have significant effects on students' academic performance. This finding is supported by Shittu (2004) who emphasized that poor parental care with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a child usually yield poor academic performance of the child. It is also in line with the work of Bello (1987) which found that children from high economic background have a better chance of succeeding in school than low economic counterpart. The finding also commemorates Ezewa (2008) that there is a positive correlation between academic achievement and parents' economic status.

Statement of Findings

It could be deduced from the above analysis that:

- There is a significant effect of economic crisis on students' academic performance

among secondary school students in Ogun state.

- Poverty is a potent factor of academic performance among secondary school students in Ogun State.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusively, it was observed that economic crisis and poverty have great influence on students' academic performance. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher found it pertinent to make the following recommendations:

- a. Schools should look inward to generate more funds to prosecute school programmes since the government grant; subvention and allocations seemed to be going on the low side on yearly basis due to economic meltdown. They can do this by approaching old students association, Parents-Teachers-Association, corporate bodies and religious bodies for assistance.
- b. Government should key into Private Public Partnership (PPP) in the education sector to allow well-to-do individuals, religious bodies and corporate bodies to participate actively in the provision of education service to reduce the burden on government.
- c. The school can also embark on small scale venture like business center, catering services and consultancy to rake in more income and reduce the level of poverty plaguing people as parents would be employed to run the ventures.
- d. Notwithstanding the economic meltdown, government should ensure that it allocates 26% of the nations' GDP to education knowing fully that no nation can rise above its human capital development index.
- e. Unemployed Nigerians should be assisted through the provision of skill acquisition centers and soft loan to help reduce the level of poverty.

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