

Influence of Petroleum Subsidy Removal on Administrative Variables in Public Secondary Schools in Benue North West Senatorial District, Nigeria

¹Jacob Ternenge Nevkaa

¹Shaayongo Benjamin Toryila

shaayongobt@gmail.com

¹Department of Educational Foundations

Faculty of Education

Benue State University, Makurdi



Abstract

Using survey research design, this study investigated the influence of petroleum subsidy removal on administrative variables in public secondary schools in Benue North West Senatorial District. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were formulated and tested for the study. The population comprised 1,910 teachers in the 89 public secondary schools. A sample of 382 teachers was selected for the study, using multi-stage sampling procedure. The instrument for data collection was a researchers-designed questionnaire titled “Petroleum Subsidy Removal and Administrative Variables Questionnaire” (PSRAVQ). The questionnaire was validated and a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.94 was established. Data were analyzed using mean scores, standard deviation and chi-square. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study showed significant positive influence of petroleum subsidy removal on teacher training and provision of library facilities in public secondary schools in Benue North West Senatorial District, Nigeria. It was recommended that educational managers in public secondary schools in Benue North West Senatorial District should seek alternative source of funding such as grant and support from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). This could help in enhancing teacher training and provision of library facilities in public secondary schools.

Keywords: Petroleum subsidy removal, teacher training, library facilities, administrative variables, secondary school

Introduction

Administrative variables are important in the administration and operation of any organization including public secondary schools. However, administrative variables seem

to receive considerable attention among educational administrators in public secondary schools in many parts of the world in recent times. Administrative variables in schools refer to factors or elements related to the administration and operation of the institution (Chukwu & Ngozi, 2023). These variables may positively or negatively influence the efficiency, effectiveness and overall performance of a school. Administrative variables are often associated with decision-making, resource allocation and policy implementation. According to Bua (2020), administrative variables in schools encompass many aspects but not limited to school leadership, teacher training, curriculum implementation, provision of facilities, students' enrolment and demographics, school policies and regulation as well as community and stakeholder involvement. These variables constitute factors which may mar or make the realization of objectives of public secondary schools.

Public secondary schools are those post-primary institutions established by state or federal government to provide post-primary education to children aged 13 to 21 years (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2014). Secondary education is seen to be pivotal in the development of any nation because it serves as a bridge between primary and tertiary levels of education, producing individuals to be useful to themselves and the society (FRN, 2014). The effectiveness of public secondary schools may depend on other factors including administrative variables. However, globally, many public secondary schools seem to face numerous challenges. In Nigeria particularly in Benue North West Senatorial District, public secondary schools seem to face many administrative problems such as ineffective teacher training and inadequate provision of library facilities.

The provision of quality secondary education requires quality teachers through effective teacher training and adequate provision of library facilities in public secondary schools. Moreover, to provide quality education capable of enhancing the achievement of national goals and objectives, public secondary school administrators must be able to respond to shifting policy reforms and general economic situations of the country. This requires integrating national priorities and adapting to dynamic economic circumstances to address emerging challenges that may hinder the achievement of the goals and objectives of public schools (Wali, 2016). In recent time, specifically in 2023, the Federal Government of Nigeria announced petroleum subsidy removal in Nigeria. A subsidy is an economic policy adopted by institutions or governments to reduce the prices of goods for an individual or a firm by paying part of the production cost.

Petroleum subsidy removal is an official elimination of subsidies on petroleum products which were formerly subsidized. Ogunode and Ojochenemi (2023) describe subsidy removal as the decision of the government or institutions to stop payment of subsidies on products or services previously subsidized. Petroleum subsidy removal has to do with the stoppage of the subsidy regime, one of essential products in institutions or countries. Okonkwo (2023) opines that subsidy removal is an economic policy that has both strengths and weaknesses. An important strength of subsidy removal is its boost on public revenue generation while the weakness of the policy is that it leaves the regulation of prices of goods and services to external market forces, rather than government control. The removal of petroleum subsidy in Nigeria seems to have a profound influence on administrative variables in public secondary schools in Benue North West Senatorial District especially in the area of teacher training and provision of library facilities.

Teacher training is regarded as a crucial administrative variable that significantly enhances the quality of instruction in public secondary schools. However, the removal of petroleum subsidy in Nigeria seems to have significant influence on various aspects of school administration including teacher training. The sudden rise in the prices of goods and services as a result of the economic reform has added financial strain on educational institutions, limiting their capacity to invest in essential teacher training programmes (Ogunode & Ojochenemi, 2023). Public secondary schools, which often depend on government funding, seems to be facing budget constraints that make it challenging to allocate adequate resources for teacher training which seems to be vital for improving teachers' pedagogical skills and keeping them abreast on the latest educational trends. This is in line with the study by Ndegwa (2015) that there was significant negative effect of financial constraint on provision of staff development programme, payment of teachers' salaries and provision of library facilities in secondary schools in Gatundu South sub county, Kiambu County, Kenya. Jemilatu and Ahiakwo (2023) also revealed that there was significant negative impact of economic recession on training of teachers and provision of school facilities in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Moreover, the economic pressure appears to have caused a decline in external funding and support from donor agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations that previously contributed to teacher training initiatives. These organizations also seem to be dealing with increased costs and as such prioritizing more immediate humanitarian needs over educational support in areas such as training of teachers and provision of library facilities.

The provision of library facilities is also a crucial function of administration that ensures effective teaching and learning in public secondary schools. Nkwagu (2016) opines that

the high cost of fuel, following subsidy removal, has led to increased prices for transportation and commodities, adding to economic hardships for many Nigerians. This has a direct influence on the budgets and resources available for public secondary schools to invest in library facilities and resources. With limited funding, many public secondary schools in Benue North West Senatorial District appear to be struggling to maintain and upgrade their library facilities. This seems to have hindered effective teaching and learning, as students have reduced access to books and other educational materials that are essential for their academic progress. Ogunode and Ojochenemi (2023) affirm that economic challenges, as a result of petroleum subsidy removal, have made it difficult for the government to prioritize investments in public schools across the country. This has widened the gap in the provision of educational resources such as library. Mwanyi (2016) revealed that subsidy removal leads to reduced funding for schools, resulting in budget cuts and limited resources therefore leading to inability to provide library facilities, train teachers and provide health facilities, thus hindering effective management of public schools in Mtwara Mikindani Municipality, Tanzania. It is based on the above background that the researchers investigated teachers' perception of the influence of petroleum subsidy removal on administrative variables in public secondary schools in Benue North West Senatorial District.

Statement of the problem

Administrative variables are crucial for the sustenance and development of any organization including public secondary schools. Administrative variables set the pace for operation of school activities. However, in Nigeria particularly in public secondary schools in Benue North West Senatorial District, it appears that there is growing concern by relevant stakeholders such as government, school administrators, teachers and parents that, since the removal of petroleum subsidy, there are challenges of administrative variables in terms of teacher training and provision of library facilities in public secondary schools in Benue North West Senatorial District. This appears to hamper achievement of public secondary schools' objectives. Many speculate that there is inadequate fund to cater for teacher training and provision of library facilities in many public secondary schools in the study area. It may be that because of petroleum subsidy removal, government and even donor agencies seem to reduce their financial allocations to education because they have other sectors to attend to, such as the health sector. They seem not to adequately finance or support public secondary schools with adequate facilities such as library facilities. This seems to create a bottleneck to effective realization of the objectives of public secondary schools. It is based on the above background that the researchers investigated teachers' perception of the influence of petroleum subsidy removal on

administrative variables in public secondary schools in Benue North West Senatorial District.

Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the influence of petroleum subsidy removal on teacher training in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State?
2. What is the influence of petroleum subsidy removal on provision of library facilities in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State?

Hypotheses

Ho1: Petroleum subsidy removal has no significant influence on teacher training in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State.

Ho2: Petroleum subsidy removal has no significant influence on provision of library facilities in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State.

Methodology

The design adopted for the study was survey research design. This type of research involves predicting possible causes based on observed outcomes, as the effects cannot be manipulated or altered (Tuckman, 2018). The population of the study comprised 1,910 teachers in the 89 public secondary schools in Benue North West Senatorial District (Benue State Teaching Service Board Makurdi, 2024). A sample of 382 teachers representing 20% of all the teachers from 13 public secondary schools representing 15% of the school population was used for the study.

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire constructed by the researchers titled “Petroleum Subsidy Removal and Administrative Variables Questionnaire” (PSRAVQ). It was divided into two parts, A and B. Part A covered demographic data of the respondents while part B was made up of Cluster A and B which contained 10 items and elicited information from the respondents on the two variables of the study. A four-point rating scale with the response mode of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) =3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) =1 was adopted in the instrument to answer the two research questions of the study.

The instrument was presented to three experts, two experts in Educational Management in the Department of Educational Foundations and one expert in the Department of Science and Mathematics Education, Faculty of Education, Benue State University,

Makurdi. A reliability test was conducted on 30 teachers in two public secondary schools. Using Cronbach Alpha statistics, a reliability co-efficient of 0.94 was obtained. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The cut-off point of 2.50 was used to determine agreement or disagreement responses of subsidy removal on management of public secondary schools in Benue North West Senatorial District. The 2.50 was used such that any mean score less than 2.50 was regarded as disagree. Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for retaining or not retaining the hypothesis is that if $P < 0.05$, it is significant therefore do not retain the null hypothesis; but if $P > 0.05$, it is not significant therefore retain the null hypothesis. Chi-square was chosen for test of hypotheses because it is a statistical tool that shows the influence of two categorical variables on one another. Hence, it helped the researchers to determine the influence of petroleum subsidy removal on administrative variables in public secondary schools in Benue North West Senatorial District.

Presentation of results

Research question 1: What is the influence of petroleum subsidy removal on teacher training in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviation ratings of the influence of petroleum subsidy removal on teacher training in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State

S/N	Item Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
1	School funding has increased due to petroleum subsidy removal thereby by improving teachers' seminar attendance	382	120	119	89	54	2.78	1.03	Agree
2	High cost of transportation due to the removal of petroleum subsidy has prevented some teachers from attending workshops	382	123	111	91	57	2.76	1.05	Agree
3	Due to increase in school fees as a result of	382	114	124	87	57	2.75	1.03	Agree

	petroleum subsidy removal, some schools have more funds to sponsor teachers to conferences									
4	NGOs have increased their efforts to sponsoring teachers for workshops in schools facing financial challenges due to subsidy removal	382	117	120	88	57	2.75	1.03	Agree	
5	Government uses the savings from petroleum subsidy removal to sponsor teachers for seminars.	382	123	117	85	57	2.78	1.04	Agree	
	Cluster Mean						2.76		Agree	

Table 1 shows mean ratings of 2.78, 2.76, 2.75, 2.75, 2.78 and cluster mean of 2.76 with a corresponding standard deviation ratings of 1.03, 1.05, 1.03, 1.03 and 1.04 respectively. The result indicated that individual ratings in items 1 to 5 agreed that school funding has increased due to petroleum subsidy removal thereby improving teachers' seminar attendance, high cost of transportation due to the removal of petroleum subsidy has prevented some teachers from attending workshops, increase in school fees as a result of petroleum subsidy removal has made some schools to have more funds to sponsor teachers to conferences, NGOs have increased their efforts to sponsor teachers for workshops in schools facing financial challenges due to petroleum subsidy removal and government uses the savings from petroleum subsidy removal to sponsor teachers for seminars. With a cluster mean of 2.76, which is above the benchmark of 2.50, the results indicate influence of petroleum subsidy removal on teacher training in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State.

H₀₁: Petroleum subsidy removal has no significant influence on teacher training in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State.

Table 2: Chi-square analysis of influence of petroleum subsidy removal on teacher training in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State

Responses	Fo	Fe	P	Df	χ^2 Cal.	Decision
SA	112	95.5				
A	118	95.5	0.000	3	27.848 ^a	Sig.
D	88	95.5				
SD	64	95.5				
Total	382					

Table 2 showed Chi-square calculated value of 27.848^a at 3 degree of freedom; P=0.000 is less than 0.05. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that subsidy removal has no significant influence on teacher training in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State was therefore rejected. This implies that petroleum subsidy removal has significant influence on teacher training in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State.

Research question 2: What is the influence of petroleum subsidy removal on provision of library facilities in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State?

Table 3: Mean scores and standard deviation ratings of influence of petroleum subsidy removal on provision of library facilities in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State Nigeria

S/N	Item Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
6	Money that would have been used to pay petroleum subsidy is now used to provide books in libraries.	382	118	123	84	57	2.77	1.03	Agree
7	Savings from petroleum subsidy removal is used by government to provide bookshelves to schools.	382	120	122	83	57	2.78	1.04	Agree
8	Increased revenue from petroleum subsidy removal has enabled schools to provide quality chairs in libraries.	382	120	125	80	57	2.78	1.03	Agree

9	As a result of petroleum subsidy removal, PTA levies have eased financial challenges for providing printers in libraries.	382	123	121	81	57	2.79	1.04	Agree
10	Government provides school libraries with computers as palliative measures following petroleum subsidy removal.	382	123	120	82	57	2.79	1.04	Agree
Cluster Mean							2.78		Agree

Table 3 shows mean ratings of 2.77, 2.78, 2.78, 2.79, 2.79 and cluster mean of 2.78 with a corresponding standard deviation ratings of 1.03, 1.04, 1.03, 1.04 and 1.04 respectively. The result indicated that individual ratings of items 6 to 10 agreed that money that would have been used to pay petroleum subsidy is now used to provide books in libraries, savings from petroleum subsidy removal is used by government to provide bookshelves to schools, increased revenue from petroleum subsidy removal has enabled schools to provide quality chairs in libraries as a result of petroleum subsidy removal, PTA levies have eased financial challenges for providing printers in libraries and government provides school libraries with computers as palliative measures following petroleum subsidy removal. With a cluster mean of 2.78, which is above the benchmark of 2.50, the results indicate influence of petroleum subsidy removal on provision of library facilities in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State.

Ho2: Petroleum subsidy removal has no significant influence on provision of library facilities in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State.

Table 4: Chi-square analysis of influence of petroleum subsidy removal on provision of library facilities in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State

Responses	Fo	Fe	P	Df	χ^2 Cal.	Decision
SA	124	95.5				
A	120	95.5	0.000	3	37.710 ^a	Significant
D	84	95.5				
SD	54	95.5				
Total	382					

Table 4 showed Chi-square calculated value of 37.710^a at 3 degree of freedom; P=0.000 is less than 0.05. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that petroleum subsidy removal has no significant impact on provision of library facilities in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State was therefore not retained. This implies that petroleum subsidy removal has significant influence on provision of library facilities in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State.

Discussion of the findings

The first finding of the study revealed that petroleum subsidy removal has significant influence on teacher training in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State. This finding means that school funding has increased due to petroleum subsidy removal thereby improving teachers' seminar attendance, high cost of transportation due to the removal of petroleum subsidy has prevented some teachers from attending workshops, due to increase in school fees as a result of petroleum subsidy removal, some schools have more funds to sponsor teachers to conferences, NGOs have increased their efforts to sponsoring teachers for workshops in schools facing financial challenges due to petroleum subsidy removal and government uses the savings from petroleum subsidy removal to sponsor teachers for seminars. This finding disagreed with Ndegwa (2015) whose findings revealed a significant negative effect of financial constraint on provision of staff development programme, payment of teachers' salaries and provision of library facilities in secondary schools in Gatundu South sub county, Kiambu County, Kenya. The finding also disagreed with Jemilatu and Ahiakwo (2023) whose findings revealed that there was significant negative impact of economic recession on training of teachers and provision of school facilities in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

The second finding of the study revealed that petroleum subsidy removal has significant influence on provision of library facilities in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State. This finding means that money that would have been used to pay subsidy is now used to provide books in libraries, savings from petroleum subsidy removal is used by government to provide bookshelves to schools, increased revenue from petroleum subsidy removal has enabled schools to provide quality chairs in libraries as a result of petroleum subsidy removal, PTA levies have eased financial challenges for providing printers in libraries and government provides school libraries with computers as palliative measures following petroleum subsidy removal. The finding of the study disagreed with Mwanyi (2016) whose findings revealed that subsidy removal leads to reduced funding for schools, resulting in budget cuts and limited resources therefore leading to inability to provide library facilities, train teachers and provide health facilities, thus hindering effective management of public schools in Mtwara Mikindani Municipality, Tanzania.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that petroleum subsidy removal has significant influence on administrative variables in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State. This implies that with removal of petroleum subsidy there is improvement in teacher training and provision of library facilities in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

1. Educational managers particularly those in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State should seek alternative sources of funding such as grants and partnerships with NGOs. This would help to ensure continuous support for teacher training even in the face of financial constraints due to petroleum subsidy removal.
2. Teachers in public secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Benue State should advocate for and actively participate in establishing and improving library facilities by engaging in fundraising activities, collaborating with local communities and utilizing available resources creatively. This can help secure books, digital resources and other learning materials to enrich students' access to diverse learning materials in public schools.

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