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## **Influence of Economic Recession on the Management of Secondary Schools in Benue State: Implication for Counseling**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined influence of economic recession on the management of public secondary schools in Benue state. The study adopts descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 2,194 respondents (83 principals and 2,111 teachers) in public secondary schools in Benue state. Out of the population, a sample of 21 principals and 231 teachers were selected through random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was 21-item questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test statistic. The finding of the study shows that there is several ways economic recession influence financial administration of secondary schools in Benue state. This includes increase cost of education, accumulation of debt services; decline in internally generated revenue and under funding of education. The result of the study also indicates that economic recession influence personnel administration of secondary schools. The result reveals laying off staff, shortfall in personnel salaries and allowances, reduction of administrative cost and elimination of staff professional development. It was recommended that Benue state government should support public secondary schools with financial grants regularly. This will enable the school administrators to meet the demand of staff, students and the general administration of the school system. The study also recommended that salaries and allowances of personnel should be paid as at when due. It is necessary to pay salaries and allowances because personnel are a vital component of school administration.

**Keywords:** Economic, Recession, Management and Counseling.

## Introduction

The right to education has been enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Access to education is a fundamental right of every Nigerian school aged child. Parents and guardian play a major role in the education of their children in Nigeria. Both public and private owned institutions of learning, the secondary schools inclusive, charges school fees for educational services rendered. Ochai (2012) defines school fees as money charged terminally by secondary school administrators for educational services rendered at a given term. It has been observed that the school fees continue to play an insignificant role in the Nigerian education and economy system.

Occasioned by the fall in the oil price and increased rise of dollar to naira has impacted negatively on the economy of Nigeria. Ayorinde (2016) revealed that the macro-economic environment became non-conducive to investment in Nigeria. The capital market witnessed low capacity output and policy initiative of President Buhari administration to ensure transparency and accountability in public fund, to curb corruption and linkages seems to have led the nation into economic recession.

Nigerian current economic situation has taken a toll on many families, individuals and institutions of learning. According to Noko (2016), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) have agreed that Nigeria economy has plunged into recession with low growth rate of 1.5 percent. National Bureau of Economic Research (2016) defines recession as a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months. In the context of this study economic recession implies the global economic forces that have place the world economy, Nigeria inclusive, in a position of wrestling with her internal economic distortions. Economic recession has led to high inflation and depreciation of school facilities for lack of maintenance due to gross diminished value of the naira to meet day-to-day administration of secondary schools. Regrettably, classrooms, books and laboratory facilities provided to secondary schools school seems to be in state of disrepair. During the rain it is common to see the school environment flooded with run off waters. Ogbonnaya (2000) argued that funds are required for the maintenance of the school and for daily school administration. Adequate funding and availability of funds will enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Availability and utilization of funds is a source of personnel motivation and commitment to duty.

The teaching and non-teaching staff is the key factor required for effective implementation of any educational system. It is the teacher who teaches and makes learning to occur at the secondary school level. Achimugu (2000) argued that the teacher needs conducive environment to interact with the learners within and outside the classroom environment. The teacher plays a role outside the classroom environment. The teacher participates actively in impacting knowledge and interacting with the learners. The teacher receives salaries and wages at the end of the month for services rendered. However, it seems that economic recession has negative effect on the welfare of the teachers and non-teaching staff in public secondary schools in Benue State. Delay and non-payment of teacher's salaries and allowances is a common phenomenon. Teacher's salaries and allowances are delayed for months. Facilities required for teaching and for practical are lacking in most public secondary schools. School Software (2016) revealed that many secondary schools in Nigeria have put on belt-tightening measures that

include reducing administrative staff, eliminate none essential travel, deferring maintenance, reducing consumable supplies and cutting down training staff costs.

Economic recession has taken a toll on secondary school students in Benue State. Sahara Report (2016) revealed that many parents and guardians have been forced to withdraw their children and wards from private secondary schools to affordable public secondary schools. Recession seems to have profound effect on day to day lives of teachers and non-teaching staff and on general administration of public secondary schools in Nigeria, Benue state inclusive. The education sector in Nigeria is feeling the sharp economic recession whether teachers, library workers, administrative clerk, students, stakeholders and the general public alike. It becomes necessary to conduct a study on influence of economic recession on the management of public secondary schools in Benue state, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Secondary school administration is an important factor in the era of economic recession. Management provides a solid guide in proper costing of school activities, programs, projects and spending thereby avoiding waste in expenditures. However, secondary school management in Nigeria, Benue state inclusive in recent time has witness a number of challenges since the emergence of economic recession in Nigeria. The problem is that many parents and guardian in north central Nigeria cannot afford school fees for their wards and children, there is no equitable situation and distribution of facilities to secondary schools in Benue state.

The current economic recession in Nigeria though alleged to be global problem is more felt in developing countries Nigeria inclusive. This has adverse effect on parents, teachers, students, increased unemployment rate, low standard of living and over dependency on others. It is obvious that economic recession will eventually have adverse effect on the administration of secondary school. The present study intends to find out whether economic recession influence financial, personnel and students administration of secondary schools in Benue state.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to ascertain the influence of economic recession on the management of public secondary schools in Benue State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain influence of economic recession on financial administration of secondary school in Benue State.
2. Determine influence economic recession on personnel administration in secondary schools in Benue State.
3. Find out influence of economic recession on students administration in secondary school in Benue State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of economic recession on financial administration of secondary schools in Benue State?
2. What is the influence of economic recession on personnel administration of secondary schools in Benue State?

3. What is the influence of economic recession on student administration of secondary schools in Benue State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated at 0.05 level of significance and guided the study.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>** Economic recession has no significance influence on financial administration of secondary school in Benue state.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>** Economic recession has no significance influence on personnel administration of secondary school in Benue State.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>** Economic recession has no significance influence on student administration of secondary schools in Benue State.

### **Methodology**

Survey design was adopted for the present study. Survey design is concerned with describing events as they are without any manipulation of what caused the event or what is being observed. The study aimed at ascertaining the influence of economic recession on the management of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. Survey design was considered most suitable for this study because it permits the collection of original data from the respondents themselves, describes the present conditions as they exist in their natural school settings and allows only a representative of the population to be sampled

Benue State has three senatorial District (Zone A, B and C). The study was carried out in Zone B senatorial District. Zone B senatorial District comprised seven local government areas. The population of the study comprises 2,194 respondents (83 principals and 2,111 teachers) Teaching Service Board 2016) in public secondary schools in Benue state. The respondents were chosen in order to ensure that those used for the study were sufficiently knowledgeable about the variables under study and could supply useful information on the research instrument. (Source: Benue State Teaching Service Board 2016).

The sample of the study consist 252 respondents drawn from the total number of respondents. Applying proportionate random sampling technique 3 public secondary schools were selected from each local government area in the zone making a total of 21 schools. 11 teachers were randomly selected from the 21 schools making total of 231 teachers. The entire 21 principals were selected for the study making a total of 252 respondents.

The instrument for data collection was a researcher development questionnaire titled Influence of Economic Recession Questionnaire (IERQ). A twenty-one item survey questionnaire was structured on a 4-point rating scale of Very High Influence, High Influence, Low Influence and No Influence. The items on the questionnaire were developed using information obtained from literature reviewed and was based on the three research questions that guided the study. The items on the questionnaire elicit information on influence of economic recession on the management of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

The research instrument was face validated by three experts. An expert from test and measurement and two experts from Educational Administration and Planning, from the Federal University of Agriculture, Benue State, Nigeria, validated the instrument.



The validated instrument was trail tested in Zone A Senatorial District with teachers and principals that possess the same characteristic with teachers and principals in Zone B Senatorial District in Benue State. This was done to ensure the reliability of the instrument and for the instrument to measure what it is suppose to measure. The validated instrument was analyzed using Crobach alpha method. The reliability co-efficient was 0.71. This indicates that the instrument is reliable.

Two research assistants were trained and employed in the distribution of the questionnaire and collection of all the data. This was done to ensure that the entire questionnaire were duly completed and returned.

Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The t- test statistic was used in answering the three null hypotheses formulated for the study. The level of significance was set at 0.05 with 250 as degree of freedom. The null hypotheses were rejected if the t-calculated is equal to or higher than the table value. A mean score of 2.50 and above constitutes Accepted. A mean score less than 2.50 was adjusted rejected.

## Results

The results are presented on table 1-6 according to research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

1. Research Question 1: What is the influence of economic recession on financial administration of secondary schools in Benue State?

**Table 1: Responses of Economic Recession on Financial Administration.**

S/N	Financial Administration	Principal			Teachers		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec	$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec
1	High government borrowing	2.61	0.78	HI	2.71	0.78	HI
2	Increase cost of educational resources	3.02	0.21	VHI	3.14	0.34	VHI
3	High inflation	2.78	0.78	VHI	3.58	0.79	VHI
4	Accumulation of debt services	3.00	0.91	HI	2.81	0.91	HI
5	Decline in internally generate income	3.4	0.27	HI	2.66	0.34	HI
6	Under funding of education	3.70	0.88	HI	2.78	0.58	HI
7	Ridged financial policies	3.80	0.71	VHI	3.09	0.77	VHI
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>VHI</b>	<b>3.17</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>VHI</b>

( $\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = standard deviation, DEC = Decision)

Table 1 present the responses of secondary school principals and teachers on influence of economic recession on financial administration of secondary schools in Benue State. A look at the table shows that item 1-7 are rated 2.61, 3.02, 2.78, 3.00, 3.04, 3.70 and 3.80 by principals.

Teachers rated the same item with mean score of 2.71, 3.14, 3.58, 2.81, 2.66, 2.78 and 3.09 respectively. This implies that both secondary school principals and teachers agreed to the entire items on the table that economic recession influence financial administration of secondary schools in Benue State.

### Research Question 2

2. What is the influence of economic recession on personnel administration of secondary schools in Benue State?

**Table 2: Responses on Economic Recession on Personnel Administration.**

S/N	Personnel Administration	Principal			Teachers		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec	$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec
8	Laying off staff	3.91	0.28	VHI	3.10	0.38	VHI
9	Cutting professional development of staff	2.78	0.14	HI	3.71	0.49	VHI
10	Training of personnel	3.50	0.78	VHI	2.84	0.58	HI
11	Short fall in personnel salaries, allowances	3.27	0.41	VHI	2.96	0.68	HI
12	Increase inequality among staff	3.14	0.15	VHI	3.71	0.91	VHI
13	Unstable salary and allowance of staff	3.61	0.71	VHI	2.85	0.87	HI
14	Poor conditions of service	2.79	0.82	VHI	3.01	0.98	VHI
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.80</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>VHI</b>	<b>3.91</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>VHI</b>

( $\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, DEC = Decision).

Table 2 indicates the opinion of principals and teachers on the influence of economic recession on personnel administration. The table reveals that items 8-14 have mean score of 3.91, 2.78, 3.50, 3.27, 3.14, 3.61 and 2.79 for principals. Teachers rated the same item with a mean score of 3.10, 3.71, 2.84, 2.96, 3.71, 2.85 and 3.01 respectively. The respondents agreed with the entire item as mean of economic recession influencing personnel administration of secondary schools in Benue State.

3. What is the influence of economic recession on student administration of secondary schools in Benue State?

**Table 3: Responses on Economic Recession on Student Administration.**

S/N	Student Administration	Principal			Teachers		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec	$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec
15	Increase in class size	2.61	0.71	HI	2.89	0.21	HI
16	Massive withdraw of students	3.14	0.28	VHI	3.07	0.58	VHI
17	Eliminate holiday class	3.91	0.51	VHI	3.50	0.44	VHI
18	Eliminate practical and field trips	2.78	0.91	HI	3.17	0.78	VHI
19	Poor conditions of service	3.01	0.12	VHI	2.91	0.41	HI
20	High cost of reading material	2.61	0.51	HI	2.78	0.82	HI
21	Low motivation for study	3.74	0.71	VHI	3.41	0.14	VHI
<b>Grand Mean</b>		3.70	0.54	VHI	3.72	0.72	VHI

( $\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, DEC = Decision).

Table 3: reveals the views of principals and teachers on influence of economic recession on student administration in secondary schools in Benue State. The mean rating is above the criterion score of 2.50 for both principals and teachers. This implies that, massive withdrawer of students, poor condition of service and low motivation for study are economic recession factors that influence the student administration in secondary schools in Benue State.

**Hypotheses 1:** Economic recession has no significance influence on financial administration of secondary school inn Benue State.

**Table 4: Summary of t-test of Economic Recession on Financial Administration**

S/N	Respondents	No	$\bar{X}$	df	Level of Sign.	t-cal	t-value	Dec
1	Principals	21	2.81	250	0.05	0.39	1.96	Not Sign.
2	Teachers	23	2.86					

Table 4 indicates that the calculated t-value is 2.39 at 250 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value of 2.39 is higher than the table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis of the study is rejected as stipulated. Therefore, economic recession has significance influence on financial administration of secondary schools in Benue State.



**Hypotheses 2:** Economic recession has no significance influence on personnel administration of secondary school in Benue State.

**Table 5: Summary of t-test of Economic Recession on Personnel Administration**

S/N	Respondents	No	$\bar{X}$	df	Level of Sign.	t-cal	t-value	Dec
1	Principals	21	2.91	250	0.05	2.52	1.96	Not Sign.
2	Teachers	231	2.87					

Table 5 reveals that the calculated t-value of 2.52 at 250 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance is higher than the table value of 1.96. Since, the calculated value of 2.52 is higher than the table value of 1.96, the second null hypotheses of the study is rejected. Therefore, economic recession has significance influence on personnel administration of secondary schools in Benue State.

**Hypotheses 3:** Economic Recession has no Significance Influence on student Administration of Secondary Schools in Benue State.

**Table 6: Summary of t-test of Economic Recession on Student Administration**

S/N	Respondents	No	$\bar{X}$	df	Level of Sign.	t-cal	t-value	Dec
1	Principals	21	3.01	250	0.05	2.49	1.96	Not Sign.
2	Teachers	231	2.95					

Table 6 indicates that the calculated value is 2.49 at 250 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value of 2.49 is higher than the table value of 1.96, the null hypotheses of the study is rejected. Therefore, economic recession has significance influence on student administration of secondary schools in Benue State.

### Discussion of Findings

From the results of the data analysis made, it is obvious that there are similarities between the principals and teachers in their responses. The findings on the influence of economic recession on financial administration of secondary schools reveals increase cost of education, accumulation of debt services, decline in internally generated income and under-funding of education. The finding agreed with the findings of Ochai (2012) who maintained that the current economic situation in Nigeria has taken a toll on many families, individuals and institutions of learning. The Nigerian economy has plunged into recession with low growth rate.

Respondents disagreed with the first hypothesis made that economic recession has no significance influence on financial administration. The respondents were of the opinion that economic recession influence payment of school fees, increase cost of education and under-funding of secondary school education in Benue state.

Economic recession was identified to have influence on personnel administration. In the era of economic recession, teachers are lay off, cutting professional development of staff and shortfall in personnel salaries and allowances. The finding is in line with the findings of Achimugu

(2000) who argued that the teacher needs conducive environment to interact with learners. The teachers expect salaries and wages at the end of the month for services rendered. However, school Software (2016) revealed that many secondary schools in Nigeria have put on belt-tightening measure by laying off staff, eliminate non-essential travel and reduces administrative cost.

Both respondents agreed that economic recession influence students administration in terms of increase class size, massive withdraw of students, poor condition of services and high cost of learning materials. The finding agreed with Obi (2004) who maintained that high rate of inflation in the last few years is higher than the present years. It was estimated that free education for students in the country at all levels would cost more in the era of economic recession. Sahara Report (2016) revealed that many parents and guardians have been forced to withdraw their children and wards from private secondary schools. The respondents disagree with the third hypothesis. The responses and the results of the analytical findings are in supportive in rejecting the stated null hypothesis. Therefore, economic recession influence students administration in Benue State.

### **Implications of the Study for Counseling**

The decrease in the enrolment rate of students in public and private secondary schools in Benue state has created the demand for urgent counseling services in public and private secondary schools in Benue state. The considerable shortfall in the distribution of resources to public secondary schools, withdrawal of children from schools by parents and guardian and shortfall of staff salaries as revealed in the present study implies that effective teaching and learning might not have been taken place in most of the public secondary schools in Benue state. Increase cost of educational resources, decline in internally generated revenue and underfunding of education as revealed in the finding of this study seems to have implication on the management of public secondary schools in Benue state. This implies that economic recession could affect teachers and parents psychologically while academic performance of students might be at risk because of ill-preparation before examination. It was concluded that effective counseling at the secondary school level could direct the school management, the individual personnel, the general public and students on possible strategies for coping with the effect economic recession on secondary school management.

### **Conclusion**

From the findings of the study, conclusions were drawn. Economic recession was found to have influence on financial, personnel and student's administration in public secondary schools in Benue State. This is evident in the finding of the study which indicated high inflation, laying off staff, unstable salaries and massive of withdraw of students from schools. The findings have led the researchers to conclude that economic recession influence administration of public secondary schools in Benue State.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made bearing in mind the importance of secondary school administration in Benue State.

1. Benue State government should support public secondary school with financial grants. This will enable the school administration to meet up with the demand of both students and staff.
2. Personnel administration is a vital component of the school administration. Salaries and allowances of teachers should be paid regularly.
3. The needs and demands of students should be met. Both parents and guardians should provide and support student needs.

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