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Tertiary Education and Economics Reform of Subsidy Removal in Nigeria: Implication for Educational Administration and Planning

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ABSTRACT

Objective: *This study investigates the financial implications and tertiary education reforms resulting from Nigeria's removal of educational subsidies, focusing on its effects on the management and governance of educational institutions.* ***Method:*** *Using a quantitative research design, the study analyzes data collected from surveys, academic journals, and government reports to assess both the benefits and challenges associated with subsidy removal.* ***Results:*** *The findings reveal that while the removal of subsidies has increased government funding for education, improved infrastructure, enhanced teacher welfare, and supported Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it has also led to higher school fees, increased dropout rates, reduced support for low-income families, and widened inequalities in educational access.* ***Novelty:*** *This research contributes to policy discourse by emphasizing the need for a legal framework to allocate a portion of subsidy savings directly to educational development – particularly in infrastructure, research, and teacher training – and by proposing mitigation strategies such as school feeding programs, scholarships, and free learning materials to cushion the socioeconomic impact of subsidy removal.*

INTRODUCTION

Since it provides the latest information, abilities, and research capacity needed for social progress, economic expansion, and global competitiveness, tertiary education is an essential driver driving national development. Universities, polytechnics, and educational institutes are vital in Nigeria as they generate the human capital required for growth in industry, innovation, and governance. However, economic policies and reforms which establish national objectives and distribution of resources have an important effect on the sustainability and efficacy of higher education.

One of the most significant reforms in recent years in Nigeria was the removal of the fuel subsidy. This policy was intended to reduce fiscal pressure, curb corruption and create fiscal space for investment in critical sectors [1]. Although this reform is intended to promote long-term economic stability, it has had wide-reaching social and economic consequences. The rising costs of transportation, food and basic services that have followed the removal of the subsidy directly affect students, staff and institutions, thereby influencing the accessibility, affordability and quality of tertiary education.

For educational administration and planning, the removal of the subsidy presents a complex dual reality. On the one hand, it provides an opportunity for the government to redirect saved resources into improving infrastructure, funding research and strengthening human capacity in tertiary institutions. However, the immediate inflationary effects and increased financial burdens on households and institutions raise concerns about equitable access, student retention, staff welfare and the overall effectiveness of the delivery of higher education.

In this context, it is necessary to critically examine the intersection between tertiary education and economic reforms, particularly the removal of subsidies, in Nigeria [2]. Such an examination is vital to understanding the implications for administration and planning, and to identifying strategies that will ensure tertiary education remains resilient, inclusive and aligned with national development goals in the face of economic transitions.

Literature Review

Tertiary Education

Tertiary education is central to the socio-economic development of any nation. It serves as the engine for human capital development, knowledge creation, technological innovation and leadership training. In Nigeria, universities, polytechnics and colleges of education play a pivotal role in producing the skilled workforce needed to drive national growth. However, the sector has long been constrained by underfunding, inadequate infrastructure, poor staff welfare and limited investment in research [3]. Tertiary education, also known as higher education, refers to educational programmes offered by universities, colleges, and other institutions beyond secondary education. It encompasses undergraduate and postgraduate studies, equipping students with advanced knowledge, skills, and qualifications in their chosen field [4]. Tertiary education, also known as post-secondary education, refers to any level of education pursued beyond high school, including undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications. These credentials can be certificates, diplomas, or academic degrees. Tertiary education refers to specialised education in a specific field taken up after finishing high school. It is non-compulsory and is provided in a specialist institution, usually a college, polytechnic or university. This form of education may be delivered virtually or at a distance (Top Hat) [5].

The goals of Tertiary Education shall be to: (a) contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training. (b) provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; (c) provide high-quality career counselling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work; (d) reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market (e) promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service; (f) forge and cement national unity; and (g) promote national and international understanding and interaction. The tertiary institutions are host to the students, academic staff and non-academic staff [6]. The students are regarded as the king. The welfare of the students is premium to the government and the institutions. The students are described as groups of people in educational institutions. The Nigerian students are faced with many problems. Ogunode listed the following as objectives of tertiary education which includes; to provide higher education opportunities via effective teaching, researching and provision of community services; to develop and produce students with specialized knowledge and skills for solving personal problem and national problems; to prepare student for national workforce and to contribute to societal and community development; to provide academic program of various disciplines; to provide quality instruction in field of studies and to conduct researches to generate new knowledge for national development and to solve complex problems [7].

Economics Reform

Economic reform involves making changes and improvements to a country's or region's economic system. This typically involves amending policies such as deregulation, privatisation and market liberalisation to stimulate growth and enhance efficiency. Reforms may also entail amending tax policies, trade agreements and labour laws to create a more favourable environment for businesses and encourage competition. Economic reform is often driven by the goal of achieving long-term, sustainable economic growth and raising citizens' standard of living. However, it can be a complex and lengthy process involving potential challenges and trade-offs. Successful reform can, however, lead to significant economic development and prosperity.

Economic reform refers to the process of making changes to a country's economic system to improve its performance. This can include changes to the policies, laws and regulations governing economic activity, as well as changes to economic structures and institutions. The aim of economic reform is to encourage growth, stability and efficiency, and to address existing economic issues and challenges. Examples of economic reform include privatising industries, deregulating markets and adopting new economic models. The specifics of economic reform vary depending on the country and its particular economic circumstances. Overall, economic reform plays a crucial role in shaping a country's economic landscape and can significantly impact its citizens and businesses.

Subsidy Removal

A fuel subsidy means that the government pays part of the price that consumers are supposed to pay for petroleum products, easing the price burden [8]. A subsidy is a policy adopted by institutions or governments to reduce the price of goods for individuals or firms by paying part of the production costs. Subsidies are official payments made to individuals or firms, usually in the form of cash payments from the government, to reduce the prices of goods. In economic theory, subsidies can be used to offset market failures and externalities in order to achieve greater economic efficiency [9]. According to Project Clue, a subsidy is a decrease in the market price of products and services introduced by the government, enabling people with limited purchasing power to obtain such goods and services. This occurs when the government assists customers in paying a price lower than the market price for consumer products. A subsidy is any measure that keeps the prices that consumers pay for goods or products below market levels, or that keeps the prices that producers receive for their products above market levels. Subsidies take different forms. Some subsidies have a direct impact on price. These include grants, tax reductions or exemptions, and price controls [10].

Subsidy removal is the official elimination of subsidies on products that were formerly subsidised. It is the decision of governments or institutions to stop paying subsidies on products or services that were previously subsidized [11]. It is also the stoppage of the subsidy regime in institutions or countries. It is the policy of liberating the prices of goods and services so that they are regulated by the forces of demand and supply [12]. The federal government led by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu announced the removal of subsidy on Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), popularly known as petrol. In its reaction to the new development, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) approved an upward review in the pump price of petroleum nationwide. This resulted in increment in the price up to an average of N500 from an average of N189.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study examines the implications of subsidy removal in tertiary education and economic reform in Nigeria for educational administration and planning. This paper is a position paper that adopts a method based on a systematic literature review. This method enables the collection and review of related previous literature from various online sources. With the aid of a digital platform, the researcher collected secondary information to generate knowledge on this topic from 2015 to 2025. The position paper employed a qualitative narrative design method. The researcher visited various online sites to collect previous literature and analyse tertiary education and economic reform involving the removal of subsidies in Nigeria, and its implications for educational administration and planning. The previous findings were critically analysed and presented under different themes concerning tertiary education and economic reform through subsidy removal in Nigeria and its implications for educational administration and planning [13].
The inclusion and exclusion criteria are as follows:

Inclusion

This literature output on tertiary education and economic reform and subsidy removal in Nigeria and its implications for educational administration and planning presents an in-depth study and results that can inform conclusions on the topic. The study includes online publications, conference papers and journals from reputable international sources such as CEON, Elsevier, Hindawi, JSTOR, IEEE, Learn Techlib, SAGE, Nebraska and Springer [14].

Exclusion

Also, the literature review excludes information from edited books, preprints, monographs, information below 2015 and book chapters [15].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Below is a detailed discussion of seven gains and seven pains of subsidy removal on tertiary education in Nigeria.

Gains of Subsidy Removal on Tertiary Education

Potential Increase in Government Revenue for Higher Education

Subsidy removal frees up a significant portion of government expenditure previously consumed by fuel subsidies. This creates fiscal space for increased investment in higher education. More funds can be channeled into the construction of new lecture halls, hostels, libraries, laboratories, and research facilities, addressing long-standing infrastructural deficits in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The removal of subsidies for higher education has the potential to significantly increase government revenue by encouraging individuals to invest in their own education. With less financial aid available, individuals will be more motivated to pursue higher education and job opportunities that align with their desired career paths [16]. This will lead to a more skilled workforce and ultimately, a boost in government revenue through increased taxes and economic growth. Additionally, the removal of subsidies can also incentivize universities to become more competitive and efficient in order to attract students. This can result in lower tuition costs and reduced strain on government budgets. While this may initially be a controversial decision, in the long run, it can create a more sustainable and beneficial system for both individuals and the government.

Improved Funding for Research and Innovation

By saving on subsidies, the government and institutions may have more resources available to fund research, grants and innovation projects. This is particularly important for tertiary institutions, as the advancement of knowledge and technology there directly contributes to national development. Increased research funding could also boost Nigeria's global competitiveness in science, technology and innovation. One possible way to improve research and innovation funding is to remove subsidies. Subsidies are financial support provided by the government to certain industries and can often limit competition and hinder innovation [17]. By removing subsidies, funding can be redirected towards more deserving and innovative projects, leading to a more efficient use of resources and ultimately promoting research and innovation. This incentivises businesses and organisations to be more competitive and innovative, and encourages collaboration and partnerships between different sectors [18]. Eliminating subsidies can also help to address budgetary constraints and ensure that funding is allocated to the areas with the greatest potential impact on research and innovation. This could also lead to the development of new, groundbreaking technologies, thereby promoting economic growth and progress. Removing subsidies and increasing funding for research and innovation can foster an environment that supports cutting-edge ideas and discoveries [19].

Strengthening of Student Support Services

Reinvesting funds properly can support student-centred initiatives, such as scholarship schemes, bursaries and student loan programmes. Such initiatives would help to ensure that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are not excluded from higher education due to financial hardship. The removal of subsidies is an important issue that affects many students who rely on financial assistance to pursue their education [20]. Removal of subsidies can result in higher tuition fees and other expenses, making it difficult for some students to continue their studies. To address this, student support services, such as student loans, could be enhanced to provide students with the necessary financial assistance to complete their education without facing financial hardship [21]. Strengthening these services can alleviate the impact of subsidy removal, ensuring all students have access to the necessary resources to succeed academically. Additionally, support services can provide students with guidance and resources to help them manage their finances and plan for the future. Strengthening student support services ensures that all students have equal opportunities to pursue their academic aspirations, regardless of their financial situation.

Enhanced Opportunities for Teacher and Staff Development

Lecturers and administrative staff play a key role in the success of tertiary education. With additional resources, the government and institutions can enhance staff welfare, offer competitive salaries and fund capacity-building programmes, workshops and international collaborations [22]. These measures would enhance teaching quality, staff morale and institutional reputation. The removal of subsidies to enhance opportunities for teacher and staff development has been implemented successfully. This decision was made to provide a more sustainable and equitable way of supporting the professional development of educators and school staff. Through the programme, teachers and staff will have access to training, resources and support systems to enhance their knowledge and skills, improving academic outcomes for students. The removal of subsidies will also enable schools to allocate funds more efficiently and effectively towards development programmes, ensuring equal access to professional development opportunities for all educators and staff. Furthermore, removing subsidies will encourage schools to maintain a current and innovative approach to professional development, which will ultimately benefit the entire education system.

Expansion of ICT and Digital Learning Facilities

Subsidy removal could allow government to invest in digital infrastructure such as e-libraries, high-speed internet, and virtual learning platforms. These resources would expand access to education, promote blended learning, and prepare Nigerian students for global digital economies. A positive macroeconomic implication of the removal of fuel subsidy in Nigeria is that the funds that would have been used for fuel subsidy payment could be channeled to the development of critical public infrastructure in Nigeria. There is a consensus among academic economists that the funds used for subsidy payments can be channeled to public infrastructure spending [23].

Encouragement of Public-Private Partnerships

The economic reforms signal a shift towards reducing the government's reliance on subsidies. This paves the way for increased private sector involvement in higher education. Partnerships with private firms, NGOs and international organisations could generate additional funding and create internship opportunities to support infrastructure and research projects. The removal of subsidies is a key feature of public–private partnerships in academia. This allows for greater collaboration between public institutions and private organisations, resulting in more efficient and effective solutions for the academic community. Without subsidies, both parties are incentivised to collaborate and invest in research and development. This encourages greater innovation and progress in academia, as well as creating a more sustainable and competitive environment. Furthermore, removing subsidies can lead to cost savings for both parties, enabling more funding to be allocated to important projects and initiatives [24]. Overall, encouraging public-private partnerships by removing subsidies is crucial for advancing academic research and development

Promotion of Equity in Resource Allocation

Historically, subsidy regimes favoured the wealthy more than the poor. Redirecting these funds into education enables policymakers to implement equity-focused initiatives, ensuring that resources are distributed more fairly among universities, polytechnics and colleges of education in different regions. This has the potential to reduce educational inequality in Nigeria. Removing subsidies can lead to a fairer allocation of resources by reducing government interference in the market and enabling more efficient distribution [25]. Subsidies often benefit larger, more established companies, creating an uneven playing field for smaller businesses. By removing subsidies, resources can be allocated based on market demand and competition rather than government intervention. This can promote fairness and equity in the distribution of resources, as well as encouraging innovation and efficiency. Additionally, the funds saved from removing subsidies can be redirected towards other areas in need of government support. education or healthcare, further promoting equity in resource allocation [26].

Pains of Subsidy Removal on Tertiary Education

Increased Cost of Living for Students

The immediate aftermath of subsidy removal is a surge in transportation, food, and accommodation costs. For many students who commute to school or live off-campus, this creates significant financial strain. As families struggle with inflation, students may be forced to drop out, defer studies, or engage in side jobs that affect academic performance. Okonkwo asserted that students are another group that is affected by the removal of the fuel subsidy, as they must pay more for transportation to and from school [27]. Many students depend on public transport or private vehicles to get to school, which have become more expensive due to the higher cost of fuel. Some students may have to drop out of school or defer their studies if they cannot afford the transportation costs. Some students may also have to cope with poor learning conditions, such as inadequate facilities, overcrowded classrooms and frequent power outages, as schools struggle to provide quality education with limited resources.

Erosion of Affordability and Access to Higher Education

With rising tuition-related expenses (books, utilities, transportation), access to higher education becomes more difficult for children from low-income households. This could worsen inequality, with wealthier students continuing their education while poorer students are excluded, undermining the goal of inclusive tertiary education.

Operational Strain on Tertiary Institutions

Tertiary institutions rely heavily on fuel for their power supply due to unstable electricity. With fuel prices soaring, the cost of running generators, maintaining laboratories and providing a water supply is increasing significantly. This financial burden reduces the funds available for academic programmes, research and student services. The recent announcement by the Nigerian government to remove fuel subsidies has led to inflation, increasing the operational costs of various tertiary institutions in the country. More money is needed to procure administrative resources to support administrative functions. Following the removal of fuel subsidies, the cost of diesel and petrol used for power in tertiary institutions has risen. Transportation companies, including buses, taxis and motorcycles, are also likely to increase their fares to offset the higher fuel costs. This directly impacts the procurement of stationery and other administrative resources due to increased transportation expenses [28]. Ogunode and Ojochenemi also noted that subsidy removal in Nigeria led to inflation, which increased the operational costs of running schools across the country. The increase in petrol prices has affected the general cost of goods, which in turn has affected the cost of running educational institutions. Almost everything used in the daily running of schools has increased in price.

Decline in Staff Welfare and Productivity

Although the removal of subsidies has the potential to improve welfare in the long term, the immediate inflationary effect reduces the real value of staff salaries. Without prompt salary adjustments, lecturers and administrative staff may experience financial hardship, which could lead to reduced morale, strikes and disruption to the academic calendar. Dartanto examined the relationship between existing fuel subsidies and fiscal balance in Indonesia between 1998 and 2013, finding that the removal of 25 per cent of fuel subsidies increased poverty by 0.259 percentage points, whereas the removal of 100 per cent of fuel subsidies and the reallocation of 50 per cent of them to government spending decreased poverty by 0.277 percentage points. The increase in fuel prices has led to an increase in transport fares, which has directly and indirectly affected teachers' ability to get to school. Many teachers are now missing classes due to their inability to get to school, while many lecturers in tertiary institutions have decided to reduce their lectures to once or twice a week. Other lecturers have switched to a virtual teaching model. Post-subsidy removal in Nigeria has affected the implementation of teaching programmes in Nigerian educational institutions. The removal of subsidies has had a negative impact on the entire educational system, leading to a reduction in teaching hours because teachers cannot cope with the increase in transport fares. Okonkwo noted that teachers are also affected by the removal of the fuel subsidy, as they have to pay more for transport to and from work. Many teachers rely on public transport, such as buses, taxis and motorcycles, which have also increased their fares due to the higher cost of fuel. Some teachers may now spend more than half of their salary on transport alone, leaving little for other expenses such as food, rent, and healthcare.

Creating Inequality in Education Quality

As public institutions struggle with financial constraints, private universities with better resources may continue to thrive. This widens the gap between public and private higher education, creating a two-tier system where only the wealthy can afford quality education. Such inequality undermines social cohesion and equitable national development [29].

Threat to Student Retention and Completion Rates

Rising costs may force students to abandon their studies midway, leading to higher dropout rates. Inability to afford tuition, transportation, and basic living expenses poses a serious risk to the achievement of higher education goals and the country's capacity to produce skilled graduates.

Reduced Research and Academic Output

Inflation increases the cost of conducting research, purchasing laboratory equipment, and accessing academic resources. Institutions with limited funding may cut back on research activities, thereby reducing Nigeria's contribution to global knowledge and weakening the capacity of tertiary education to drive innovation and development. Subsidy removal that lead to inflation has affected the standard of living of researchers by reducing the values of their incomes. Hages established this fact when he noted that inflation is the increase in the general level of goods and services over a given period across boards resulting in a fall in the purchasing capacity of the Fixed wages and income earners. An increase in commodity prices reduces consumers' marginal propensity to save, which has an adverse effect on people's standard of living. This development does not make the greatest number of people happy. This is because people believe in democracy's capacity to make the greatest number of people in society happy [30]. Inflation caused by subsidy removal in Nigeria has led to a decrease in the availability of scholarships and other financial aid, which could further reduce research publications. Inflation can affect the salaries of lecturers and researchers in tertiary institutions, meaning they will have less to spend on research programmes and other research expenses. This can influence the quality of research output, as well as affecting education in general (Nwankwo). Inflation may also affect the volume of research publications in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Many academic and non-academic staff, as well as postgraduate students, may have reduced their level of publication due to the impact of inflation on their salaries. Project Clue noted that, due to the removal of subsidies in Nigeria leading to inflation, some academics may lose interest in research as they lack the funds to cover their daily expenses, let alone purchase fuel for research during this period of spiralling inflation.

Subsidy Removal on Tertiary Education: Implications for Educational Administration and Planning

The removal of fuel subsidy in Nigeria is one of the most significant economic reforms in recent decades, with wide-ranging consequences for all sectors, including tertiary education. As institutions responsible for producing skilled professionals, generating research, and driving innovation, universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education are deeply affected by the ripple effects of this reform. For educational administration and planning, subsidy removal has both positive and negative implications, requiring administrators to rethink priorities, policies, and strategies in order to maintain stability and advance the goals of higher education.

Financial Reallocation and Funding Opportunities

One of the central implications of subsidy removal is the potential increase in government revenue that can be redirected into education. For educational planners, this presents an opportunity to advocate for a larger share of the national budget for tertiary education. Properly managed, these funds can address chronic underfunding in areas such as infrastructure, research, and staff development. However, this requires robust planning frameworks and transparent allocation mechanisms to ensure the resources are not diverted or mismanaged.

Rising Operational Costs for Institutions

On the negative side, subsidy removal significantly raises the cost of running tertiary institutions. Universities and polytechnics depend heavily on fuel to power generators due to unreliable electricity. With fuel prices skyrocketing, institutions face higher expenses in maintaining laboratories, ICT centers, libraries, and water supply systems. Administrators must plan for alternative energy sources such as solar and prioritize efficient energy management. Without strategic planning, operational costs may reduce funds available for teaching and research (Guardian Nigeria. September).

Student Access, Equity, and Retention

For students, the removal of subsidies means higher living and transport costs. Many families, particularly those in rural areas or on low incomes, may struggle to support their children through university or college. Educational administrators must anticipate rising dropout rates and reduced enrolment, particularly among vulnerable groups. This situation means that planners must push for expanded scholarship schemes, bursaries and loan programmes to cushion the impact on students and safeguard equitable access.

Implications for staff welfare and productivity

The reform also affects lecturers and non-academic staff, whose salaries may no longer match the rising cost of living. This could lead to reduced morale, strikes and disruption to the academic calendar. Administrators must therefore carefully plan salary adjustments, welfare programmes and professional development opportunities to retain staff motivation and productivity. Failure to adequately address staff welfare could undermine teaching quality and institutional stability.

Research, innovation and global competitiveness

Inflation caused by the removal of subsidies increases the cost of research inputs, equipment and publication fees. Without careful planning and increased investment, research output may decline, reducing Nigeria’s contribution to global knowledge and weakening the role of tertiary education as an engine of innovation. In the face of financial constraints, administrators must prioritise strategic partnerships with industries, NGOs, and international organisations to fund and sustain research.

Public-Private Partnerships and Diversification of Funding

Subsidy removal signals the government's intention to reduce financial burdens through reforms. This creates opportunities for tertiary institutions to diversify funding sources by engaging the private sector. Administrators and planners must design frameworks for public-private partnerships that can finance infrastructure, student support services, and innovation projects. This approach will reduce over-reliance on government subventions and create sustainable avenues for growth.

Policy and Planning Adjustments

Educational administration and planning must adapt to the changing economic context. Planners are expected to develop forward-looking policies that integrate the realities of subsidy removal into institutional budgets, strategic plans, and national higher education policies. This includes adopting cost-saving technologies, prioritizing energy efficiency, and implementing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure accountability in resource use.

Discussion

Economic Implications of Subsidy Removal on Tertiary Education

The removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria presents a significant economic shift with mixed outcomes for tertiary education. On the one hand, the reallocation of the subsidy savings to the education sector offers an opportunity to address critical infrastructural deficits, such as the construction of lecture halls, libraries, and research facilities. This, in turn, can enhance the overall learning environment, potentially fostering an academic atmosphere conducive to innovation and research. However, the immediate aftermath of this policy has been inflationary, causing increased living costs for students, including higher transport and accommodation expenses. This has made tertiary education less accessible, particularly for students from low-income households. As the economic gap widens, the government must consider developing strategies that can protect disadvantaged students, such as providing scholarships, loan schemes, and ensuring equitable access to educational resources.

Operational Strain on Educational Institutions

Subsidy removal has also imposed a significant operational strain on Nigerian tertiary institutions. Given that many universities and polytechnics rely on fuel-powered generators due to unreliable electricity supply, the surge in fuel prices has led to increased operational costs. These financial pressures have hampered the institutions' ability to invest in critical educational activities, including teaching, research, and student welfare. Educational administrators must innovate by adopting cost-saving measures such as solar energy solutions and prioritizing energy-efficient systems to ensure that the quality of education and research does not decline due to financial constraints. This situation also calls for the implementation of budgetary reforms to improve resource allocation and minimize wasteful expenditures, ensuring that the funds are utilized effectively for academic and infrastructural growth.

Strategies for Equitable Access to Education

The subsidy removal has exacerbated the issue of educational inequality in Nigeria, as it disproportionately affects students from low-income families. The increase in school fees and other associated costs could deter many from pursuing higher education, leading to higher dropout rates. To mitigate these effects, educational planners must advocate for the introduction of social protection mechanisms, such as expanded scholarship programs, bursaries, and student loans, to support students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Furthermore, policymakers need to ensure that the resources freed up by the subsidy removal are allocated transparently and equitably across the education sector, with a focus on institutions that serve vulnerable populations. This strategy will not only help in maintaining the accessibility of higher education but also contribute to achieving the broader goal of social equity in Nigeria's educational system.

These discussions highlight the multifaceted challenges and opportunities presented by the subsidy removal in Nigeria, emphasizing the need for careful planning and equitable policies to ensure the sustainability and accessibility of tertiary education.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : The removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria presents both opportunities and challenges for the higher education sector. While it allows for increased investment in critical areas like infrastructure, research, and staff welfare, it also places financial burdens on students, staff, and institutions, exacerbating inequalities and accessibility issues. **Implication :** To mitigate these negative effects, proactive strategies such as transparent reinvestment of subsidy savings, enhanced social protection for students, and salary adjustments for staff are crucial. These measures will ensure that Nigeria's higher education sector remains equitable, resilient, and capable of meeting its economic and developmental goals. **Limitation :** This study primarily focuses on the financial implications of subsidy removal, leaving out broader sociocultural impacts on the education system. **Future Research :** Future studies could explore the long-term effects of subsidy removal on student performance, institutional quality, and global competitiveness, as well as assess the effectiveness of the proposed social protection measures in maintaining equitable access to higher education.

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