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EFFECTS OF FUEL SUBSIDY REMOVAL ON CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELLBEING OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the effects of fuel subsidy removal on consumption behaviour and socio-economic well-being of primary school teachers in Nigeria using the theoretical research design. The study is anchored on the Social Exchange theory which views consumption behaviour as a form of social exchange where individuals weigh the costs and benefits of their consumption decisions. The paper observed that the removal of fuel subsidy has remained a controversial issue in Nigeria with strong arguments for and against the policy. What is clear, however, is that this policy has had a significant impact on the consumption behaviour and socio-economic wellbeing of primary school teachers in Nigeria. The paper identified some of the changes in consumption behaviour of the populace, occasioned by the removal of subsidy. These include, but not limited to a sharp decrease in disposable income which has led to a significant cut back on spending, inability to eat balanced diet as a result of soaring prices of food items, and inability to afford transportation cost, due to high prices of fuel. Other changes in consumption behaviour resulting from subsidy removal include panic buying and hoarding of petroleum products and food items, increase in demand for alternative sources of energy, and a sharp increase in general cost of living. The paper also observed that the removal of fuel subsidy will likely lead to a decrease in investment and a slowdown in economic growth. The paper concluded that the removal of fuel subsidy has adversely affected the socio-economic well-being of Nigerian workers particularly primary school teachers. As a result of this, it was advocated that the government put in place sustained palliative to cushion the effects of subsidy removal on teachers. These should include a significant increase in minimum wage of Nigerian workers, prompt and regular payment of salaries, a review of the multiple taxation policy, and the provision of basic amenities such as good roads, access to quality health care, among other things.

Keywords: consumption behaviour, fuel subsidy, palliatives, socio-economic wellbeing

Introduction

Subsidy removal has long been a subject of intense debate and policy consideration in many economies, with its implications reaching far beyond the realm of economics to touching various aspects of the society. In the context of Nigeria, a country rich in oil resources, but plagued by economic challenges, the removal of subsidies has been a contentious issue that has generated both praise and criticism. This research seeks to delve into the intricate relationship between subsidy removal, consumption behaviour, and the socio-economic well-being of primary school teachers in Nigeria.

Nigeria, as one of the largest oil-producing countries in Africa, has traditionally provided subsidies on petroleum products as a means to alleviate the economic burden on its citizens and stimulate industrial growth. These subsidies have, over the years, led to the provision of fuel and other essential commodities at prices lower than their market values, resulting in increased consumer purchasing power and influencing consumption patterns. However, the sustainability of these subsidies has come under scrutiny due to their significant negative impact on the national budget and potential distortions in the economy.

In recent times, the Nigerian government has made attempts to address its fiscal challenges by considering the removal or reduction of subsidies on petroleum products. These policy shifts are expected to have multifaceted effects on the economy and society at large. One of the key areas of concern is how the removal of subsidies might impact the consumption behaviour of primary school teachers, a significant segment of the population, and subsequently affect their overall socioeconomic well-being. Primary school teachers, who typically fall within the low- to middle-income bracket, are particularly vulnerable to the effects of subsidy removal (Obayelu & Ogun, 2021.

Siddig, *et al*. (2014) delve into Nigeria's complex socioeconomic landscape, highlighting the country's dual reality of having a per capita gross domestic product slightly higher than sub-Saharan Africa's average, while grappling with elevated poverty and inequality rates. Despite being the continent's second-largest holder of proven petroleum reserves, Nigeria heavily relies on imported petroleum products, primarily fuels, due to operational failures and underutilization of domestic refineries. The government's subsidy on imported petroleum products, intended to maintain stable consumer prices, has inadvertently led to several challenges. Notably, the subsidy disproportionately benefits importing companies and affluent households, rather than efficiently aiding the poor. The study underscores the need for targeted policies aimed at genuine poverty reduction, investments in infrastructure, and improved energy efficiency to address Nigeria's intricate economic landscape.

It is evident and expected that the removal of subsidy will trigger a lot of reactions from the citizenry, which will be reflected in their spending habits (consumer behaviour) and their socioeconomic wellbeing. The relationship between subsidy removal and consumption behaviour is complex and multifaceted. When subsidies are removed, the immediate effect is an increase in the prices of goods and services, particularly those dependent on petroleum products such as transportation and energy. This effect consequentially translate to a change and increment of the prices of all other goods and services which directly or indirectly relies on other essential commodities that are also affected directly or indirectly by the fuel subsidy removal. Invariably, such price hikes would lead to inevitable adjustments in the spending habits of consumers, as they are forced to allocate larger portions of their income to essential expenses. This, in turn, would lead to changes in consumption patterns, as individuals prioritize basic necessities over discretionary spending.

Furthermore, the socioeconomic well-being of primary school teachers, who form an essential component of a nation's workforce, can be profoundly influenced by subsidy removal. Rising fuel prices increase transportation costs, reduce disposable income and trigger inflationary pressures that impact the cost of essential services. Since many teachers rely on public transportation and earn modest salaries, these financial pressures could significantly alter their consumption patterns and overall socio-economic wellbeing (Adegbite, 2022). These changes could potentially lead to adjustments in saving behaviour, household budgeting, and overall financial planning.

As subsidy removal policies can have far-reaching effects on both the micro and macro levels of the economy, it is imperative to comprehensively understand its implications on consumption behaviour and socioeconomic well-being of the populace. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by examining how the removal of subsidies in Nigeria, influences the consumption behaviour of primary school teachers and the subsequent effects on their overall socioeconomic well-being. By shedding light on these dynamics, the research seeks to provide insights that can inform policy decisions, improve the understanding of consumer responses to subsidy changes, and contribute to the broader discourse on economic reform in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework: The Social Exchange Theory

The Social Exchange Theory proposes that human behaviour can be thought of as the result of cost-benefit analysis by people attempting to interact with society and the environment (Jonason & Middleton, 2015). This implies that people make decision to do certain things if they are able to extract more of a reward from doing such things than they lose by doing same. By extension, if the cost of performing an action outweighs the benefit, such an action will not be performed.

The social exchange theory, as outlined by Emerson (1976), offers a valuable lens for examining the research topic on the effects of fuel subsidy removal on consumption behaviour and socio-economic well-being of primary school teachers in Nigeria. According to the theory, individuals engage in relationships or transactions based on the expectation of mutual benefit and fair exchange. In this context, the removal of fuel subsidies alters the perceived balance of costs and benefits for teachers, potentially affecting their consumption decisions (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Furthermore, social exchange theory emphasizes the importance of perceived fairness in relationships (Blau, 1964). Equally, in the context of this study, it offers a framework to understand how individuals make decisions regarding their consumption choices and the impact of these choices on their overall well-being. This theory suggests that people engage in relationships, interactions, and transactions with the expectation of receiving rewards that outweigh the costs they incur (Lawler, Thye & Yoon, 2009). When applied to studies on consumption behaviour and socioeconomic well-being, Social Exchange Theory can help illuminate several key aspects viz:

Consumption Behaviour and Rewards: Social Exchange Theory posits that individuals seek to maximize rewards while minimizing costs. In terms of consumption behaviour, teachers make choices about what goods and services to consume based on the perceived rewards they will gain. Rewards can include tangible benefits like quality, functionality, and status associated with the products, as well as intangible benefits like emotional satisfaction and self-expression.

Socioeconomic Well-being and Outcomes: The theory suggests that individuals assess the outcomes of their interactions in relation to their comparison levels – personal standards for what they consider acceptable. In the context of socioeconomic well-being, teachers evaluate their financial and material circumstances against their own standards. If their consumption choices contribute positively to their well-being by aligning with their comparison levels, they are likely to experience greater satisfaction and a sense of well-being.

Costs and Well-being: While rewards are important, Social Exchange Theory acknowledges that individuals also consider costs. In consumption behaviour research, costs go beyond the monetary price of products. They encompass the time, effort, and sacrifices required to attain and maintain certain consumption patterns. High costs can impact workers' overall well-being if they lead to stress, time constraints, or financial strain.

Relationship between Consumption and Work: The theory also highlights the interplay between consumption behaviour and the work environment. Primary school teachers' consumption choices can be influenced by their income levels, job satisfaction, and work-related stress. The theory helps explain how teachers might adjust their consumption behaviour based on their job situation and its impact on their overall well-being (Wang, 2019).

Equity and Fairness: Social Exchange Theory's principle of equity – the expectation of fairness in interactions – is relevant to both consumption behaviour and socioeconomic well-being. Primary school teachers might perceive their well-being as equitable when their consumption choices align with their income levels and job-related rewards. Unfair imbalances between the rewards received from work and the costs of living can lead to dissatisfaction.

Investment in Work and Consumption: Just as individuals invest in relationships, primary school teachers also invest in their jobs and careers. These investments can include time spent acquiring skills and building relationships within the workplace. The theory suggests that workers might align their consumption patterns with their investments in work, seeking rewards that match their efforts.

Dependence and Consumption: Primary school teachers' dependence on their jobs for income and stability aligns with Social Exchange Theory's concept of dependence in relationships. In terms of consumption, teachers might make choices that ensure their well-being is less reliant on their jobs alone, reducing the potential negative impact of economic uncertainties.

By applying Social Exchange Theory to studies on consumption behaviour and socioeconomic well-being of primary school teachers, researchers can gain insights into the motivations behind consumption choices, how these choices contribute to well-being, how the work environment interacts with consumption patterns to influence overall life satisfaction and evaluate the trade-off between increased fuel costs and the perceived benefits of the policy change. Therefore, in the Nigerian context, the Nigerian government's transparency and communication regarding the subsidy removal could influence how primary school teachers perceive the fairness of the policy change. Trust in the government's intentions and the perceived equity of the exchange could shape reactions and attitudes towards the subsidy removal (Tyler & Lind, 1992). Additionally, the theory can shed light on the role of fairness and trust in shaping individuals' reactions and attitudes towards the government's decision to remove fuel subsidies. This theory's implication can help policymakers, employers, and individuals make informed decisions to enhance primary school teachers' well-being and financial stability.

Historical Perspective of Oil Subsidy in Nigeria

The issue of oil subsidies has long been a contentious topic in the Nigerian policy landscape. These subsidies, primarily aimed at ensuring affordable domestic fuel prices, have undergone significant shifts over time, influenced by economic fluctuations, political agendas, and global energy dynamics. Oil subsidies in Nigeria can be traced back to the early days of the nation's oil production. As one of the world's leading oil exporters, Nigeria sought to ensure a stable supply of petroleum products for its domestic market. Subsidies were initially introduced as a means of cushioning the impact of global oil price fluctuations on local consumers. The oil boom of the 1970s further solidified the government's commitment to subsidizing fuel prices, aiming to maintain social stability and promote economic growth. Over time, the rationales behind oil subsidies in Nigeria have evolved. While initially driven by economic considerations, subsidies increasingly became intertwined with political agendas. The practice of subsidizing fuel prices gained popularity as a way for successive governments to garner political support and maintain social cohesion. However, the mismanagement and lack of transparency in the subsidy regime led to widespread corruption, smuggling, and inefficiencies.

Hence, the economic impact of oil subsidies has been very profound on the populace, especially the primary school teachers. While intended to alleviate the burden of rising fuel prices on consumers, the subsidies have strained government finances. The substantial financial resources directed towards subsidies could have been invested in critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Additionally, the distortionary effects on the market have discouraged investments in refining capacity, making Nigeria heavily reliant on imported petroleum products. Similarly, Oil subsidies have also had significant social and political repercussions. While they have provided short-term relief for consumers, the lack of proper targeting mechanisms has meant that a considerable portion of the subsidies has benefited higher-income individuals rather than the most vulnerable segments of society. However, the removal or reduction of subsidies has often sparked public protests and opposition, underlining the contentious nature of the issue. The global energy landscape, characterized by fluctuating oil prices and increasing environmental concerns, has added complexity to the issue of oil subsidies in Nigeria. As the nation grapples with the need to diversify its economy and reduce its over dependence on oil, revisiting subsidy policies becomes imperative. The experiences of other countries that have successfully phased out or reformed subsidies provide valuable lessons for Nigeria's future policy direction.

The historical trajectory of oil subsidies in Nigeria is a testament to the complex interplay of economic, political, and social factors. As the nation navigates the challenges of a rapidly changing global energy landscape, a critical evaluation of its subsidy policies is essential. The lessons from the historical evolution of oil subsidies can guide policymakers in making informed decisions that balance the needs of the economy, society, and the environment. Fuel subsidy implementation commenced in Nigeria during the 1970s. Initially, the government sold petrol to citizens at prices lower than the production cost to mitigate the effects of increasing global oil prices. With the enactment of the Price

Control Act in 1977, fuel subsidies became an established practice, prohibiting the sale of specific items, including petrol, above regulated prices. This legislation was introduced to counter the impact of the 1970s' global "Great Inflation," which resulted from a worldwide surge in energy costs (Punch, 2023). However, corruption and mismanagement have tainted their execution. Kerosene subsidy ended in 2016 after a thirteen-year diesel deregulation period. Still, the Petroleum Motor Spirit (PMS) subsidy posed a significant challenge, consuming a notable portion of national revenue annually. This rise is due to factors such as fluctuating global oil prices, debated PMS consumption, and Naira devaluation. A thorough evaluation of the subsidy programme's structure and function is crucial due to its substantial financial demands (PwC, 2023).

According to the data from the World Bank, Nigeria's total revenue stood at USD 10.8 billion in 2000. However, this figure rose to USD 67.9 billion by 2010. Despite this, the Nigerian government has expended more than USD 30 billion on fuel subsidies within the last 18 years. Consequently, this practice has significantly impacted the availability of resources for vital infrastructure and critical sectors including education, healthcare, and national defense. As reported by the Debt Management Office, the country's public debt has increased due to the necessity of borrowing N1 trillion to finance the fuel subsidy in 2022 (PwC, 2023)

The PwC (2023) report titled "Fuel Subsidy in Nigeria - Issues, Challenges, and the Way Forward" delves into key concerns and popular suggestions. It observes that in Nigeria, petrol prices significantly affect the cost of living due to its widespread use by individuals, households, and small businesses, especially given the incidence of unstable electricity. Thus, fuel price hikes can swiftly influence nationwide goods and services costs. Affordable petrol also carries a psychological weight. Rising petrol prices lead small businesses to increase their prices, offsetting operational costs and potentially causing higher consumer prices. This chain reaction can make basic necessities less affordable, risking reduced living standards, increased poverty, and inequality.

Crucially, Nigeria, a prominent OPEC oil exporter, has profited from vast oil reserves over five decades. Yet, inefficiencies, corruption, mismanagement, and excess subsidies hinder societal progress nonetheless. The government, however, aims to privatize and liberalize the downstream sector, previously regulated by NNPC. It is worth noting that the initial deregulation before 1973 impeded private refinery ventures. Despite resistance, the government persists in deregulation since 2009, addressing issues of underused refineries and high import dependency. Therefore, good-intentioned subsidies clash with volatile oil prices, straining finances with massive costs, like N1.3 trillion yearly. Despite purported assistance for the poor, subsidies favor the wealthy more to the detriment of the larger populace who are mostly salary earners and artisans. Reform, including privatization, is suggested to be crucial to rectify the inefficiencies and promote fairer resource allocation (Balouga, 2012).

Moreover, past attempts to remove the Petroleum Motor Spirit (PMS) subsidy often caused hoarding and scarcity, intensifying the impact of price hikes beyond the subsidy's removal. Hence, Nigeria's link between petrol price increases, inflation, and living costs is intricate. Deregulating petrol prices could heighten living costs and inflation, which can affect consumer bahaviours, yet careful policy integration can temper this impact effectively (PwC, 2023). Nwachukwu and Chike (2011), citing Aminu (1993) noted that the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation asserted that fuel subsidy was in existence and its elimination would be advantageous for the country. However, they contended that discontinuing the subsidy would deter extravagant consumption and smuggling. The funds generated from this action could be allocated towards enhancing mass transit and road infrastructure, healthcare advancements, quality education, ensuring food security, and creating fresh employment prospects, among other benefits.

Similarly, in the research conducted by Onuk, (2019), it was emphasized that the development pattern of industrialized nations is significantly influenced by their consumption patterns. The key factor behind variations in food consumption patterns is the level of disposable income. However, alterations in consumption patterns are not solely reliant on the increase in calorie intake with higher income; they also involve changes in the proportion of animal products within overall diets. In addition to income, various other factors such as culture, religion, and potentially lifestyle choices play a crucial role in shaping consumption patterns. Furthermore, it was noted that even at similar high-income levels, consumption structures can vary significantly.

Fuel Subsidy Removal, Consumer Behaviour and Socioeconomic Wellbeing of Primary School Teachers

In Nigeria, the widespread dependency on fuel for economic activities arises due to persistent electricity supply challenges. Power outages have forced businesses and individuals to turn to fuel-powered generators for energy needs. Fluctuations in fuel prices significantly impact living costs and business operations, especially for entrepreneurs and small-scale businesses. The government implemented fuel subsidies to provide affordable access to petroleum products. However, these subsidies became tainted by corruption, raising concerns about transparency in resource management. The substantial subsidies, estimated at nearly USD 3.9 billion for petrol, led to debates about their removal. Amidst this, the Nigerian president, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, announced the subsidy removal, resulting in higher fuel prices and subsequently raising transportation and living costs. Investigating the repercussions of subsidy removal on consumer behaviour, alongside effective marketing and governmental strategies to alleviate suffering, has become imperative (Nwachukwu & Tumba, 2023).

Consumer behaviour and socioeconomic wellbeing of primary school teachers in relation to fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria, refers to how the change in fuel subsidy policies affects the spending patterns, choices, and overall quality of life of individuals who teach at the primary school level. This encompasses changes in consumption, purchasing decisions, and the broader economic impact on their financial stability and standard of living due to alterations in fuel prices resulting from subsidy removal. Inadvertently, the increase in fuel prices can lead to changes in commuting habits, expenditure on transportation, and consumption patterns. Consumers might prioritize essential goods over non-essential items due to increased fuel costs, potentially affecting sectors such as retail, hospitality, and entertainment. Socioeconomic wellbeing can be affected significantly in so doing. Consequentially, higher fuel costs can contribute to overall inflation, affecting the cost of living and essential goods. This can impact the discretionary income of teachers, potentially leading to adjustments in their spending habits and potentially reducing their overall quality of life.

In addition, the National Bureau of Statistics reported that Consumer behaviour in Nigeria is intricately tied to economic conditions, influencing goods and services' prices. Economic hardships and unemployment have dramatically impacted purchasing power and decision-making. The unemployment rate surged from 10.4% (January 2016) to 23.1% (July 2018) (Nwachukwu & Tumba, 2023). However, the removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria has triggered a spectrum of responses and attitudes among low income earners such as primary school teachers, unveiling the intricate interplay between economic policy shifts and individual socioeconomic contexts. The abrupt rise in fuel prices led to immediate discontent among teachers, as the alteration disrupted their spending patterns and is perceived as a direct blow to their purchasing power and overall financial stability. The subsidy removal necessitated lifestyle adjustments for many. Escalating fuel costs increased transportation expenses, altering daily commutes and travel habits. Some saw the subsidy removal as worsening existing socioeconomic disparities, as increased fuel costs disproportionately impacted lower and middle-income groups, particularly primary school teachers. Nonetheless, this perception contributed to citizen's negative attitudes towards the policy. Hence, subsidy removal prompted shifts in consumption behaviour among salary earners, primary school teachers inclusive. Thus, people leaned towards fuel-efficient transport, explored carpooling, and occasionally switched to public transportation.

Several studies have explored related concepts on fuel subsidy removal and consumer behaviour and socioeconomic wellbeing of workers. Greve and Lay (2023) presented a quasi-experimental Ghanaian findings, assessing the impact of eradicating fossil fuel subsidies on cooking fuel choices. The study noted a "step-down the energy ladder" trend, with decreased modern fuel usage and expanded traditional/transition fuels. A 50% LPG price hike and 20% diesel increase raised firewood users by 3%. Urban areas saw 17% more charcoal use, stable LPG spending—suggesting lower usage. Preliminary cost-benefit analysis indicated slightly higher welfare costs due to escalated emissions, overshadowing fiscal savings. Therefore, LPG subsidy removal appeared socially detrimental.

Harring, *et al*. (2023) investigated the expenditure patterns of 51 countries, revealing a substantial allocation of US$697 billion towards fossil fuel subsidies. They argued that eliminating these subsidies holds significance in curbing CO2 emissions, enhancing carbon pricing efficiency, and ensuring resource optimization. While there exists a lack of scientific clarity on the policy implications of public sentiment, their study involved a cross-continental comparative assessment of attitudes towards carbon taxation and the removal of fossil fuel subsidies across five developing nations. The findings suggested that the aversion towards subsidy removal wasn't notably stronger than the resistance towards implementing carbon taxation. Additionally, the specification of effective fund utilization positively influenced public acceptance of subsidy removal.

Nwachukwu and Tumba (2023) undertook an investigation into the repercussions of removing petroleum subsidies on consumer behaviour within Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Employing the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), their study examined the aftermath of altered purchasing patterns and proposed measures to address resulting challenges. The removal of subsidies led to sudden fuel price hikes, contributing to increased transportation expenses and essential outlays. Adverse consumer behaviours, including panic purchasing, aggravated price volatility, inflation, and social unrest. As a response, consumers shifted towards alternative energy sources due to perceived unaffordability. The study advised governmental interventions such as transport vouchers, adoption of energy-efficient practices, promotion of awareness, and exploration of fuel-efficient transportation options. Implementing targeted strategies can help alleviate challenges and promote a sustainable economic landscape.

In a study by Omotosho (2020), an investigation was conducted into the macroeconomic consequences of oil price shocks and the prevailing fuel subsidy framework in Nigeria. For this purpose, a New-Keynesian DSGE model was developed and estimated, incorporating the influence of global oil price fluctuations on local fuel retail prices. The results revealed enduring and notable effects of oil price shocks on output, accounting for approximately 22 percent of its variations over four years. The study's base model, which considered fuel subsidies, demonstrated that a negative oil price shock led to a contraction in aggregate GDP, boosted non-oil GDP, raised headline inflation, and triggered exchange rate depreciation. However, in the model excluding fuel subsidies, the contraction in aggregate GDP due to negative oil price shocks was moderated, headline inflation decreased, and short-term exchange rate depreciation intensified. The research further showed that removing fuel subsidies led to increased macroeconomic instabilities and noteworthy consequences for the monetary policy's response to oil price shocks. Hence, the study stressed the importance of adopting a comprehensive strategy for successful fuel subsidy reform, involving targeted safety nets and the establishment of sustainable adjustment mechanisms.

Mitigating the Effects of Subsidy Removal on Consumer Behaviour and Socioeconomic Wellbeing of Primary School Teachers

Several studies have highlighted the perceived resultant effects of fuel subsidy removal on consumer behaviour and socioeconomic wellbeing of low income earners such as primary school teachers. According to Ikenga and Oluka (2023), the advantages of the policy of subsidy removal encompass various aspects. It guarantees the involvement of the private sector in the importation of petroleum products, thereby liberating the market and empowering numerous Nigerians. Moreover, it permits the government to redirect its focus towards pivotal sectors of the economy. Another benefit lies in the assurance of constant availability of petrol for all citizens, as the market will be sufficiently supplied with petrol, deterring any diversion by marketers. Additionally, the policy aims to counteract tendencies towards excessive profit-seeking and disruptive actions within the oil sector.

Furthermore, Ikenga and Oluka (2023) advised that the government ought to identify areas of inefficiency within governance, such as the allocation of resources in the guise of allowances within the budget for fuel subsidies. This allocation should be restructured to address social needs and enhance citizens' well-being. To mitigate the policy's impact, they suggested pre-emptive measures such as enforcing a uniform minimum wage across all sectors, including the private sector. Proposing a gradual deregulation process over six years or more, they anticipated a less pronounced policy shock. The authors also emphasized empowering law enforcement agencies like the ICPC and EFCC for effective anti-corruption actions against those involved in fuel subsidy abuse. Furthermore, the federal government should prioritize development in sectors like education, agriculture, communication, transportation, tourism, healthcare, and infrastructure, to foster employment opportunities and improve living standards, ultimately easing the consequences of subsidy removal and promoting holistic progress in Nigeria.

Shagali and Yusuf (2022) emphasized the necessity for the Nigerian government to ensure transparent allocation and oversight of funds redirected from the fuel subsidy programme. While the government aimed to invest these funds in infrastructure, small business support, and safety nets, their success relied on robust oversight by civil society. The authors proposed a committee of civil society organizations to monitor fund allocation. Programmes funded by these redirected funds should be targeted at uplifting the disadvantaged, aligning with broader development goals. The authors urged sustainable investments, highlighting the importance of a people-centered political approach to address Nigeria's challenges. They emphasized the role of the National Assembly and Civil Society Organizations in safeguarding against power misuse. The authors stressed the need for resolute action, similar to the 2012 fuel subsidy protest, to liberate Nigeria from socio-economic challenges posed by governmental policies.

Summarily, the means of mitigating the negative impact of fuel subsidy removal on consumers behaviours and the socioeconomic wellbeing of low income earners like primary school teachers can be summed up in the following recommendations viz;

Financial Literacy Programmes: Implement comprehensive financial literacy programmes to educate consumers about budgeting, saving, and prudent financial management. This can empower primary school teachers to make informed decisions and navigate economic challenges

Social Safety Nets: Establish and expand social safety net programmes to cushion the impact of subsidy removal on vulnerable populations. Direct cash transfers, food assistance, and healthcare support can mitigate the adverse effects on low-income households (World Bank, 2020).

Investment in Public Transportation: Allocate resources to enhance and expand public transportation systems, making them more accessible, reliable, and affordable. This can provide an alternative to private vehicle usage and reduce the financial burden on teachers.

Energy Efficiency Initiatives: Promote energy-efficient practices such as encouraging the use of energy-saving appliances, adopting cleaner cooking technologies, and promoting green energy alternatives. This can help consumers reduce their reliance on costly petroleum products (World Bank, 2020).

Subsidies for Alternative Energy Sources: Introduce subsidies or incentives for renewable energy sources such as solar power and electric vehicles for teachers. This can encourage a shift towards cleaner and more affordable energy options.

Public Awareness Campaigns: Launch public awareness campaigns to educate consumers about the reasons behind subsidy removal, its long-term benefits, and the government's efforts to mitigate its impact on citizens' livelihoods.

Collaborative Stakeholder Engagement: Foster collaboration among government agencies, teacher unions, civil society organizations, and private sector stakeholders to develop holistic strategies that address both short-term challenges and long-term socioeconomic development

Enhanced Governance and Accountability: Strengthen oversight mechanisms to ensure that the funds saved from subsidy removal are effectively utilized for infrastructure development, poverty reduction, and other targeted interventions

By adopting a combination of these recommendations, it is believed that policymakers, government officials, and stakeholders can work collaboratively to mitigate the negative consumer behaviour and improve the socioeconomic wellbeing of primary school teachers in Nigeria.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study underscores the intricate interplay between economic policies and individuals' livelihoods. The removal of fuel subsidies has brought about significant shifts in consumer behavior, causing alterations in spending patterns and lifestyle adjustments. The resulting challenges, including increased costs of living, inflation, and social unrest, have been felt particularly by primary school teachers who are striving to maintain their economic stability. Therefore, the study highlights the need for well-structured strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of subsidy removal. These strategies include targeted subsidy reforms to protect the most vulnerable, gradual deregulation to ease the transition, investment in critical infrastructure to alleviate the impact of increased fuel prices, enhanced governance and accountability to combat corruption, and public awareness campaigns to educate citizens on the rationale behind the policy change.

As Nigeria moves forward, it becomes evident that a comprehensive approach is crucial to effectively manage the consequences of fuel subsidy removal. The government's commitment to redirect the saved funds towards sectors that promote economic growth, welfare, and sustainable development is a positive step. However, close collaboration between the government, civil society, and other stakeholders is essential to ensure that the policy changes positively impact the lives of primary school teachers and contribute to the overall socioeconomic progress of the nation.

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