AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF INFLATION ON EDUCATIONAL DELIVERY IN ABEOKUTA SOUTH, OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of inflation on educational delivery from the perspectives of critical stakeholders in Abeokuta South, Ogun State, Nigeria. With a descriptive survey design, a total of 150 respondents were the sample size. A 24-item 'Questionnaire on Inflation Impact on Education Delivery' (QIIED) was used to test the five research questions. The test-retest assessment of the items yielded 0.76 reliability index. Using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation calculations, the findings showed that there was negative impact of inflation on education affordability, resources adequacy, teachers' effectiveness and learners' academic performance in the local government. It was therefore recommended that improved government funding needs to be inflation-adjusted. There are also urgent necessities for significant upward review of teachers' remuneration, partnership-based resources support for schools, community-based cooperative financing from parents and adoption of inflation-sensitive educational policy frameworks.

Keywords: Impact, Inflation, Educational delivery.

Introduction

Effective education delivery requires adequate funding and support from all-Parents, governments, Parents-Teachers-Associations, donors' agencies. Unfortunately, inflation has limited the impact of educational funding and support in Nigeria and elsewhere. Inflation as a sustained increase in the general price level of goods and services over a time usually erodes the real value of income and purchasing power (Blanchard, 2017, Dornbusch, Fischer & Startz, 2014). According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (2022), inflation that rose from single-digit levels in the early 2000s to over 20% in 2023 in Nigeria adversely affect households, government spending and educational institutions. The National Bureau of Statistics (2023) reported that the rising cost of living that involves food, fuel and tuition hikes made many families to struggle in keeping their children in schools in Nigeria. The Ogun State Ministry of Education (2021) also noted that parents and guardians in the state face increasing difficulty in meeting the cost of textbooks, transportation, feeding, uniforms and tuition, thereby reducing school enrollment and retention rates as a result of galloping inflation. The current over 50 percent increases in petroleum and diesel oil due to the USA/ Isreal versus Iran war are pushing-up transport costs and deepening the rising cost of living and education (Athekame, 2026).

Despite several interventions by the Federal and State governments through the Universal Basic Education (UBE) matching grants and Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) sponsorships, inflations continue to undermine educational progress to the extent that scholars (Anyanwu, 2013; Asaju & Akume, 2015) have expressed concern about the sustainability of quality in Nigeria's educational system. Using the Monetarist Theory of Inflation by Friedman (1968), it is conjectured in this paper that inflation erodes the real value of public education budgets, leading to underfunded, decline in infrastructure quality, poor remuneration of teachers and a drop in the overall standard of education.

The Cost-Push Theory of Inflation posits that inflation as arisen is driven by increases in energy prices, wage increase, exchange rate volatility, resource cost and insecurity leading to higher cost of operating educational institutions (Akpan & Udoh, 2009). This in turn contributes to declining educational outcomes among students, particularly in low and middle-income households (Ekundayo, 2012; Akintoye & Olayiwola, 2021). However, the Human Capital Theory of Inflation as espoused by Psacharopoulos (1994) submitted that inflation lowers educational skills and productivity as a result of deterioration in learning environments, teaching quality and poor long-term educational outcomes (UNESCO, 2021 & Dauda, 2011). Consequently, the objectives of this paper were to:

i. assess the extent to which inflation has affected the affordability of education in Abeokuta South area of Ogun State;
ii. examine how inflation has influenced the quality and availability of educational resources in both public and private schools;
iii. investigate the impact if inflation on teachers' salaries, job satisfaction and instructional performance;
iv. assess the effect of inflation on government education budgets, policies and funding priorities in the local government; and
v. analyze the consequences of inflation on students' academic outcomes, enrollment rates and retention in schools.

Research Questions

The following questions were answered in this study:

1. To what extent has inflation affected the affordability of education?
2. What impact does inflation have on availability and quality of educational resources?
3. What impact does inflation have on teachers' welfare, motivation and instructional delivery?
4. What effect does inflation have on government education funding and policy executions?
5. How has inflation affected students' enrollment, retention and academic outcomes?

Methods

A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study with a population of 1,450 participants cutting across secondary school students (from both public and private schools), teachers, school administrators (Principals and Vice-Principals), parents of students and officials from the Ogun State Ministry of Education. Using a multi-stage and random sampling techniques, a sample size of 150 respondents was selected for the study thus: 15 students each from 6 schools totalling 90, 5 teachers each from 6 schools totalling 30, 6 schools' Principals/Vice Principals, 6 parents from 3 wards totalling 18 and 6 Ministry officials randomly selected from the local government.

A Self-Structured 24-item 'Questionnaire on Inflation Impact on Education Delivery'(QIIED) was used to seek information from the selected respondents. The questionnaire items were divided into six sections involving demographic characteristics on age, gender and education level; impact of inflation on affordability of education; impact of inflation on availability and quality of educational resources; effects of inflation on teachers' salaries, job satisfaction and teaching performances; effect of inflation on government education funding and policy executions; impact of inflation on students' enrollment, retention and academic performance. Apart from the demographic characteristics which the respondents were to tick their choice, other items were measured through four-point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). Face and Content validities of the instrument were determined by two experts in Educational Management and one in Applied Economics. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.76 was also obtained for the reliability of the instrument using test-retest method. Data were collected personally within two months. Frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation were calculated on items' responses. However, the cut-off mean for each item was 2.50.

Results

Research Questions 1: To what extent has inflation affected the affordability of education?

Table 1: Responses on impact of inflation on affordability of education

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1. Inflation has made payment of school fees difficult for many parents	54 (36%)	63 (42%)	22 (14.6%)	11 (7.4%)	3.07	0.89	Agree
2. Rising cost of books, uniforms and supplies affects attendance	61 (40.7%)	58 (38.7%)	17 (11.3%)	14 (9.3%)	3.11	0.94	Agree
3. Families are withdrawing students from private to public schools due to cost	49 (32.7%)	66 (44%)	21 (14%)	14 (9.3%)	3.00	0.92	Agree
4. Parents now delay or owe school fees because of inflation	72 (48%)	51 (34%)	14 (9.3%)	13 (8.7%)	3.21	0.94	Agree
5. Students struggle with transportation cost to school	58 (38%)	64 (42.7%)	17 (11.3%)	11 (7.3%)	3.13	0.88	Agree

Weighted Average Mean = 3.10
Source: Field Survey, 2025.

In Table 1, all the responses on the impact of inflation on affordability of education proved true as expressed by all the sampled stakeholders with the mean scores ranging from 3.0 to 3.21 being above the cut-off mean of 2.50. Thus, according to the respondents, inflation has made payment of school fees difficult for many parents; has led to the rising cost of books, uniforms and supplies to schools; is making the parents to withdraw their children from private schools to the public ones; causing delay in school fees payment or owing of school fees; making students to struggle with transportation cost to schools.

Research Questions 2: What impact does inflation have on availability and quality of educational resources?

Table 2: Responses on Educational Resources under Inflation

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1. Schools cannot maintain or upgrade infrastructure due to high cost	63 (42%)	55 (36.7%)	20 (13.3%)	12 (8%)	3.13	0.93	Agree

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
2. Textbooks and learning materials prices are now too high	69 (46%)	53 (35.3%)	17 (11.3%)	11 (7.4%)	3.20	0.91	Agree
3. Instructional materials are becoming scarce in schools	58 (38.7%)	60 (40%)	18 (12%)	14 (9.3%)	3.08	0.93	Agree
4. Laboratory/ ICT equipment are now difficult for schools to afford	65 (43.3%)	56 (37.3%)	17 (11.4%)	12 (8%)	3.16	0.92	Agree

Weighted Average Mean = 3.14
Source: Field Survey, 2025

Findings from Table 2 shows that inflation has impacted availability of educational resources in schools negatively with the mean score of 3.08 to 3.20. According to the respondents, schools cannot maintain or upgrade infrastructure due to high cost with 3.13 mean agreement, cost of textbooks and learning materials too high with a mean agreement of 3.20, instructional materials becoming scarce with 3.08 mean agreement and laboratory/ICT equipment becoming difficult for schools to afford with 3.16 mean agreement.

Research Questions 3: What impact does inflation have on teachers' welfare, motivation and instructional delivery?

Table 3: Responses on Teachers' Welfare, motivation and Instructional Delivery

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1. Teachers salaries have not increased despite inflation	71 (47.3%)	49 (32.7%)	18 (12%)	12 (87%)	3.19	0.94	Agree
2. Inflation has weakened teacher motivation	62 (41.3%)	56 (37.3%)	19 (12.7%)	13 (8.7%)	3.11	0.93	Agree
3. Teachers now take extra jobs to survive	68 (45.3%)	57 (38%)	14 (9.3%)	11 (7.4%)	3.21	0.89	Agree
4. Inflation reduces classroom effectiveness of teachers	55 (36.7%)	61 (40.7%)	18 (12%)	16 (10.6%)	3.03	0.96	Agree
5. Teacher shortage are partly caused by bad economy/ inflation	50 (33.3%)	62 (41.3%)	22 (14.7%)	16 (10.7%)	2.97	0.95	Agree

Weighted Average Mean = 3.10
Source: Field Survey, 2025

From Table 4, it can be observed that the respondents with 3.19 agreement submitted that government budgetary allocation to education is no longer sufficient due to inflation, as education funds lose value with 3.13 mean responses, leading to delays in educational policies implementations with 3.11 mean responses. They therefore noted that government support to schools is declining with 3.06 mean responses as they further observed that inflation henceforth discourages capital projects in schools with 3.09 mean responses.

Research Questions 5: How has inflation affected students' enrollment, retention and academic outcomes?

Table 5: Responses on Student Outcomes under Inflation

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Decision
1. Inflation has reduced students' school attendance	52 (34.7%)	57 (38%)	23 (15.3%)	18 (12%)	2.95	0.99	Agree
2. Many students drop out because they cannot afford schooling	48 (32%)	63 (42%)	21 (14%)	18 (12%)	2.94	0.97	Agree
3. Inflation contributes to poor academic performance	56 (37.3%)	60 (40%)	18 (12%)	16 (10.7%)	3.04	0.96	Agree
4. Lack of study materials due to high prices affects learning	67 (44.7%)	47 (31.3%)	19 (12.7%)	17 (11.3%)	3.09	1.01	Agree
5. Students now move to cheaper schools because of inflation	51 (34%)	59 (39.3%)	23 (15.3%)	17 (11.3%)	2.96	0.97	Agree

Weighted Average Mean = 3.00
Source: Field Survey, 2025

As can be seen from Table 5, majority of the respondents with 3.04 mean submission agreed that inflation contributes to poor students' academic performance, as a result of reduction in school attendance and making students to move to cheaper schools (with 2.95 and 2.96 mean responses respectively). Thus, according to the respondents many students are dropping out of schools with 2.94 mean responses which is complicated by lack of study materials caused by high prices (with 3.09 mean responses agreement).

Discussions

After the analysis of the data, the findings revealed that inflation negatively affects affordability of education (Weighted mean = 3.10), availability and quality of educational resources (Weighted mean = 3.14), teachers' welfare and productivity (Weighted mean = 3.10), government education funding and policies implementation (Weighted mean = 3.12) and students' enrollment and academic outcomes (Weighted mean = 3.00). These results were in line with the findings and submissions of the Ogun State Ministry of Education (2021) and UNICEF (2020) that inflation has made parents and guardians to find it difficult to afford meeting the cost of textbooks, feeding, uniforms and tuition, thereby reducing school enrollment and retention rates. Along similar consequences of inflation and in line with the outcomes of this study, Akintoye and Olayiwola (2021) had earlier observed that rising living costs stagnate wages leading to poor motivation and declining teaching quality from teachers. The findings were also along the observations of Ekundayo (2012) that inflation has made public schools to suffer from overcrowding, dilapidated buildings and poor sanitation, consequently leading to poor learning outcomes (Dauda, 2011; Adediran & Afolabi, 2018; Akintoye & Olayiwola, 2021).

Conclusion

In line with the findings of this study, it is apparent that the galloping inflation has made the cost of education difficult to bear leading to inadequate instructional resources, poor infrastructure, low teachers' morale and performance, poor government education funding and policies' implementation as well as poor students' enrollment, retention and academic outcomes.

Recommendations

To ameliorate the appalling impact of inflation on education affordability, resources, policies implementation, teachers' performance and students' learning outcomes therefore, the following recommendations are made: Government alone cannot bear the cost of quality education, therefore it is urgently necessary that all stakeholders must join hands together to fund education in terms of providing classrooms, instructional resources and laboratories' equipment. Government must create special teachers' salary scales that can retain and motivate teachers on their job. Schools should adopt cost-effective strategies in managing available resources judiciously. This can be achieved through priority-based funding, good maintenance culture, improvisation and donations from collaborative partnerships with international agencies like UNESCO and UNICEF. Government should devise inflation-responsive education policies that focus on subsidizing learning materials, public transportation for students and school-feeding programmes. Local production of instructional materials such as textbooks, workbooks and basic laboratory kits to reduce excessive dependence on importation are very necessary to curtail inflationary cost. Continuous monitoring and evaluation systems to track inflation impacts on education should be developed to ensure timely adjustment of school fees, teachers' remunerations and educational budgetary funding.

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