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Impact of Inflation on Infrastructure Facilities Development of Basic Schools in Nigeria

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Abstract: Objective: This paper examined the impact of inflation on infrastructural facilities development of Basic schools in Nigeria.
Methodology: A documentary research method was employed, where secondary data were used in this paper and the secondary data were collected from online publications and print materials. The paper adopted the elimination method and content analysis to delve into the various literature gathered for this study and scanned them to sizable works of literature that are fit for the study.
Findings/Conclusion: The study established that inflation has affected the development of infrastructure facilities in Basic schools in Nigeria. The paper also concluded that contract review, increment in cost of building materials, increment in labour, suspension of projects and delay in the commencement of new projects are the impact of inflation on infrastructure facilities development in the Basic schools in Nigeria.
Recommendations: The government should develop a master plan for building industries for local sources of materials and encourage more local production of building materials in Nigeria to reduce the prices. The government should provide a conducive business environment for manufacturers of building materials by giving them access to loan facilities, constant power supply and a secure environment. The government should diversify the economy by encouraging more local production of material resources for local uses and exportation. The government should reduce import duties on construction materials and equipment to reduce the cost of construction.
Keywords: Basic schools, Inflation, infrastructure facilities development, and Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Basic Education is the education given to children between the age of 0 to 15 years. It encompasses the Early Child Care and Development Education (0-4) and 10 years of formal schooling. Early Child Care and Development Education however is segmented into ages 0-4 years, situated in daycare or crèches, fully in the hands of the private sector and social development services, whilst ages 5-6 are within the formal education sector. The goals of Basic Education are to:

a. Provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship, wealth generation and educational advancement;

b. develop patriotic young people equipped to contribute to social development and in the performance of their civic responsibilities;

c. inculcate values and raise morally upright individuals capable of independent thinking, and who appreciate the dignity of labour;

d. inspire national consciousness and harmonious co-existence, irrespective of differences in endowment, religion, colour, ethnic and socio-economic background; and e. provide opportunities for the child to develop manipulative skills that will enable the child `to function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capability.

The realization of Basic school objectives depends on the availability of human and material resources. The materials resources include; infrastructure facilities, instructional resources, school plant. According to Osagie (2003), infrastructure facilities represent the aesthetic picture of the school conveyed by the position of structures with one another. It also represents the empirical relevance of the totality of the school environment for the realization of the school business (teaching/learning). He asserted in specific terms that school plant is made up of landscapes, trees, lawns, hedges, accompanying paths, playgrounds, buildings, security facilities and utilities. However, a well-equipped and well-maintained physical plant can make learning a more pleasant experience and discourage early drop-outs. The above development is because physical infrastructure can enhance people's performance (Ayeni, 2017). It can also attract better-quality teachers. Anike and Tari (2011) viewed physical facilities as those things that enable the teacher to do his work very well and help the learners to learn effectively. For example, the chalkboard facilitates imparting information to the learner.

Emetarom (2004) also, defined school facilities as physical equipment that assists and enables teaching and learning in other to enhance results. She noted that such facilities function as the fulcrum for which teaching and learning are pleasurably built. The role of infrastructure is germane to the extent that it has been argued that a university without library infrastructure for students lacks integrity (Ayeni, 2018). More importantly, Ehiametalor (2001) described infrastructure as the operational input of every instructional programme and constitutes elements that are necessary for teaching and learning. Such include buildings, laboratories, machinery, furniture and electrical fixtures. These must be functional with other aspects of the community, such as health centres, libraries, and good roads and must be large enough to allow for expansion as enrolments expand. From the above, infrastructure facilities can be viewed in this paper as those materials resources for supporting the implementation of service delivery in any institution. Specifically, in tertiary institutions, infrastructure facilities are facilities designed to assist implementation of teaching, research and community services. Odey, (2018) and Abdulkareem (2000) defined educational facilities as non-human and non-financial resources that comprise movable and immovable materials that enhance teaching and learning.

The importance of infrastructural facilities in educational institutions according to Ogunode and Agwor (2021) include the following; it aids effective delivery of administrative functions in schools; it makes the delivery of services fast and reliable; it enables teachers to deliver lessons fast; infrastructural facilities provide a conducive working environment for both teachers and students; infrastructural facilities enable learners to learn at ease and learn well; infrastructural facilities enable the teachers to teach well, prepare their lessons, and deliver them online (ICT). The importance of school infrastructural facilities in the realization of educational goals cannot be underestimated. This is why it has been noted that infrastructural development enhances human security (Ayeni, Andeshi, & Uzoigwe, 2022). School facilities aid the delivery of the teaching and learning process in the schools. The school offices provide a conducive working environment for teachers; the classrooms help the learners to learn while the school fence protects students, the teachers, and school administrators from criminals. However, infrastructure also has some unintended benefits (Ayeni, Sani, Andeshi, Ibrahim, & Adamu, 2021). The school plant protects the entire human resources from the sun, rain, heat cold, and snow (Ogunode, & Agwor, 2021).

The development of school facilities is an ongoing process in all Nigerian educational institutions due to an increment in students' enrolment yearly. Nigerian educational institutions can be described as construction sites because no single educational in Nigeria without ongoing school facilities development projects. The Basic school in Nigeria is one of the forms of educational institution that is characterized by infrastructure facilities development due to expansion and enrolment of students every year. There is no basic school in Nigeria without ongoing project facilities projects except those that have just been renovated and expanded by the government or private individuals.

Infrastructural development is known to provide a suitable environment (Ayeni, Abdullahi & Andeshi, 2021). However, infrastructure facilities development in Nigerian Basic schools is hampered by many factors such as inflation. Inflation has been described as economic evil militating against economic development. Inflation depicts an economic situation where there is a general rise in the prices of goods and services, continuously. It could be defined as a continuing rise in prices as measured by an index such as the consumer price index (CPI) or by the implicit price deflator for Gross National Product (GNP)'. Inflation is frequently described as a state where "too much money is chasing too few goods". When there is inflation, the currency loses purchasing power. The purchasing power of a given amount of naira will be smaller over time when there is inflation in the economy. For instance, assuming that N10.00 can purchase 10 bags of cement in the current period if the price of cement doubles in the next period, the same N10.00 can only afford 5 cements. Inflation is defined by Ogunode and Ukozor (2023) as the continuous rise in the prices of goods and services over some time. Femi (2022) viewed inflation as when a large amount of money can only purchase a few goods and services. For Tucker (2007), inflation measures prices relating to consumers and the Gross Domestic Product GDP. The deflator measures prices relating to goods and services produced locally. From the above, inflation can be seen in this paper as an economic period when there is much money in circulation that can only buy a few goods and services. Inflation occurs when the purchasing power of money is lost or low to buy what it used to normally buy before. It is when a large sum of money is chasing only a few goods and services during a given time.

It has been noted that inflation has direct and indirect consequences on the performance of students in secondary school (Ukozor, Ayeni, & Andeshi, 2024). Going forward, Ishaya and Ogunode (2021); Omuru, (2022) and Oludare (2024) concluded that inflation is an economic problem that has the potential to limit development. Inflation discourages investment and may lead to a high unemployment rate in the country. Inflation is a global problem affecting both developed and developing countries like Nigeria. Olufemi (2024) and Ogunode and Ukozor (2023) opine that Nigerian inflation always affects every public and private institution especially the educational institutions which include Basic education. It is based on this that this paper aimed to examine the impact of inflation on infrastructure facilities development in the Basic schools in Nigeria.

The disengagement of teachers and other administrative staff during inflation by school management to reduce the cost of operation and to be in the market has implications for quality education. When the teacher-student ratio is low and few teachers are teaching larger numbers of students, it affects the quality of education.

During inflation, managers of schools due to a shortage of funds available to schools decided to reduce procurement of all needed educational resources and only purchase a few as a result inflation increases the operational cost of the schools. This decision of not buying the required and adequate teaching and learning resources affects the quality of education because education can be likened to a system in that all resources must be provided with the right qualities and deployed. The failure to do this will affect the quality of education.

The cost of living of teachers is affected by inflation because teachers who have access to little money at hand are constrained in terms of their movement to school and attendance in the classroom. When teachers miss class and cannot teach the entire period as planned in the scheme and syllable as a result of inflation; the missed classes and lessons will imply students resulting in poor quality of education because students do not learn what they are supposed to learn at the right time.

During inflation many poor parents cannot afford to transport their wards to schools regularly and some wards do not eat well in their rooms due to the high prices of foodstuff in the market. The poor feeding of the children at home leads to malnutrition and poor class attendance. This action affects student learning and has led to poor quality of learning.

Inflation can hamper education development because it makes all educational resources unreached to school managers, students and parents. Inflation leads to an increase in school fees that affect student enrolment, retention and school completion. Inflation affects facility development and maintenance in schools and can lead to poor quality of education if those resources are not provided as a result of inflation.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is hinged on system theory. The theory offers an alternative approach to the planning and management of education like Basic education. The systems management theory proposes that education can be likened to the human body that has a goal to attain and consists of multiple components that work harmoniously so that the larger system can function optimally. According to the theory, the success of an educational system depends on several key elements: synergy, interdependence, and interrelations between various subsystems. The realization of the education goals depends on the effective relationship between the sub-unit or component in the system. Every component is important and its role is very vital to the attainment of the institution's goals. Therefore, the failure of the governance system to perform its responsibility is affecting the educational system (Ogunode, Ayeni, & Olorundare, 2024)

In the application to this paper, Nigeria can be likened to a system made up of sub-components like education, health, energy, politics, infrastructure, religious institutions, culture, economy (Inflation, unemployment, deflation) et cetera. All the sub-component needs one another to work effectively and to realize the goals of Nigeria. The malfunction of one component affects the functioning of other components. Thus, it has been noted that when a structure is not performing its function optimally; depravities often appear (Joseph, Cinjel, & Ayeni, 2017). The above further is explained by scholars when they argued that when a structure like a government fails to perform its expected role, there are bound to be negative consequences (Ayeni, & Nwaorgu, 2018). If the economy that is made up of Inflation, unemployment, and deflation is allowed to be disrupted by inflation, it will affect the operation of the entire system because it is a system that depends on several key elements: synergy, interdependence, and interrelations between various subsystems.

Impact of Inflation on Infrastructure Facilities Development in Basic Schools in Nigeria

There are many impacts of inflation on infrastructure facilities development in the Nigerian Basic schools. Some of these impacts include; contract review, increment in cost of building materials, increment in labour, abandonment of projects and delay in the commencement of new projects.

Contract review

Inflation in Nigeria has led to a review of some major contracts awarded for the building of facilities in some basic schools across the country. Contractors handling various infrastructure facilities projects in some Basic schools in Nigeria have called for a review of the contract due to the high rate of inflation that has pushed up the prices of human and materials resources needed to complete the projects assigned and planned. Peter (2022) maintained that due to the high cost of building materials in Nigeria, many contractors managing projects in various educational institutions across the country are calling for a review of contract agreements because initial agreements on the contracts are no longer visible and implementable. Studies by Obi (2023) confirmed that contract review is a major feature of an inflationary economy because there will always be variation.

Increment in cost of building materials

The price of building materials has increased drastically in the market due to inflation and this has affected facilities development in most Basic schools where projects like building of more classrooms, computer centres and offices are going on. Contractors handling various projects in Basic schools across the country are complaining about the high prices of building resources. This has slowed down many projects because contracts need to seek review of the contracts to get more funds to deploy for the completion of the facilities in the Basic schools. Muhammed and Abu (2022) noted that inflation is a major problem of infrastructural facilities development because it affects the procurement of resources for the projects. Peter (2022) lamented that many school projects have been suspended due to inflation and this has affected the quality of education because teaching and learning must take place in an environment that is conducive for both teachers and students. Femi (2022) observed that when facilities that are supposed to be in use are not there because of problem link inflation it affects the implementation of school programmes. Oludare (2024) and Ogunode and Ukozor (2023) concluded that inflation in Nigeria has led to an increment in the general prices of building materials which hurts the facilities' completion. Livinspace (2023) quoted a Guardian article that stated that Nigeria's inflation rate as of December 2023 climbed to 28.9% due to the effects of petrol subsidy removal and the aforementioned exchange rate crisis, both exerting substantial impacts on consumer prices. The direct effect of this (particularly the exchange rate) is being felt mostly on imported materials like windows, doors, tiles, plumbing and sanitary fixtures et cetera, which represent over 20% of the construction materials in the market. The prices of the local materials, which account for almost 40% of materials in the market, have also been affected by the increase in the cost of production and transportation due to the subsidy removal. Put together, this accounts for 60% of the materials that go into a given construction project, increasing the overall cost of construction. Prices of essential building materials such as cement, blocks, doors, reinforcement rods, sand, timber, paints, roofing sheets, glass and tiles have risen by over 75% in the last 12 months to as high as 100- 200 per cent over the last two years.

Table 1.1 Prices of construction materials

Items	**Previous Rate**	**New Rate**
Cement	N4700 / bag	N6500 – N9500 / bag (depending on location)
9 inch Blocks	N450	N550
6 inch Blocks	N370	N500
Steel Rebar 8mm	N225 000 / tonne	N518 000 / tonne
Steel Rebar 10mm	N422 000 / tonne	N520 000 / tonne
Steel Rebar 12-16mm	N446 000 / tonne	N515 000 / tonne

Source: Guardian

The development has made it difficult for property developers and contractors to deliver affordable housing for over 75 per cent of Nigerians, who lack access to desirable, dignified accommodation. This has implications for infrastructure facilities development in the educational institutions in Nigeria.

Increment in labour

Inflation in Nigeria has led to an increment in the salaries of workers in the building industries across the country especially those working in educational institutions like Basic schools. Yusuf (2018) observed that workers in the building industries are Nigerians who buy goods and services every day. The workers spend a lot on transportation, feeding and family needs. So, they have justifications to demand for increase in wages or salaries as the economy is a chain and system that affects everybody in it. Omuru (2022) and Ogunode, Eze, and Olumodeji (2024) opined that one of the reasons for the increases in the wages of workers in the building industries is inflation. An economy that is inflation-inclined affects the salaries and wages of workers. Livinspace (2023) noted that the naira has nose-dived beyond any record in history. Most of the building materials are imported, which are usually imported with foreign currency. Secondly, the cost of transporting materials has skyrocketed because of the increase in the pump price of petroleum products under the claim of removal of petroleum subsidy. The prices of these products go up almost every week. These and other factors such as the cost of labour have generated high multiplier effects on the cost of construction.

Abandonment of projects

Many projects are abandoned in Nigerian Basic schools as a result of inflation. The above development hinders access to education that is projected to empower people (Ayeni, Sani, Idris, & Uzoigwe, 2019). Inflation causes the prices of building resources to be high, making it impossible for contractors to complete the projects and the government due to bureaucratic processes may delay reviewing such contracts which has resulted in abandoned projects across the Basic schools in Nigeria. Nwanekezie, and Nwanguma, (2019) undertook a study on the causes of abandoned projects and found that inflation, wrong estimates, inadequate planning, poor risk management and inadequate finance are the significant factors causing the abandonment of building projects in Nigeria. Another study by Mac-Barango (2017) examined the causes and effects of abandonment of construction projects in Nigerian schools and indicated inflation, bankruptcy of contractors, inadequate funding, inadequate planning, variation of project scope, faulty design, delay, and quackery are factors responsible for projects" as factors responsible for projects abandonment in Nigeria. Ogunode and Murtala (2022) concluded that inflation has contributed to project abandonment in Nigerian schools.

Delay in the commencement of new projects

Due to inflation in Nigeria, many Basic school administrators have decided to suspend the commencement of new projects that the PTA and SBMCB are financing in their respective schools. The funds generated and available for the identified school project can no longer finance the school projects as a result of inflation. Musa (2023) remarked that many public and private schools in Nigeria have intentionally delayed the commencement of new projects like the renovation of classrooms, and the building of toilet facilities and computer centres as a result of inflation. The money at hand cannot start and finish the projects as planned by the management. The above development has sentenced more people to poverty. Consequently, scholars have further argued that this poverty causes insecurity (Muhammed, & Ayeni, 2018).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper critically assessed the impact of inflation on infrastructural facilities development in Basic schools in Nigeria and established that inflation has affected the development of infrastructure facilities in Basic schools in Nigeria. The paper also concluded that contract review, increment in cost of building materials, increment in labour, abandonment of projects and delay in the commencement of new projects are the impact of inflation on infrastructure facilities development in the Basic schools in Nigeria.

Based on the findings of this study, the paper hereby recommends that:

1. The government should develop a master plan for building industries' local sources of materials and encourage more local production of building materials in Nigeria to reduce the prices.
2. The government should provide a conducive business environment for manufacturers of building materials by giving them access to loan facilities, constant power and a secure environment.
3. The government should diversify the economy by encouraging more local production of material resources for local uses and exportation.

4. The government should lower the import duties on construction materials and equipment to reduce the cost of construction.

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