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Impact of Middle East Crisis on the Management of Basic Education in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined the impact of the Middle East crisis on the management of basic education in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria, and identified mitigation measures. Two research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey design was adopted with a sample of 430 teachers and school administrators. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Findings revealed that the Middle East crisis significantly affects basic education management through inflation, rising transportation costs, reduced funding, and declining staff morale. It was also found that strategic funding, policy reforms, and administrative innovations can mitigate these effects. The study concludes that although the crisis is external, its economic consequences strongly influence school management in Nigeria. Recommendations were made to improve resilience in the education sector.

Keywords: Middle East crisis, basic education, school management, inflation, Nigeria, FCT Abuja

1. Introduction

The Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, serves as the administrative and political centre of Nigeria and hosts a rapidly growing population drawn from different parts of the country. As a planned city, Abuja plays a strategic role in national development, including the coordination and implementation of educational policies [1], [2]. Within this framework, basic education which comprises early childhood, primary, and junior secondary education remains a fundamental pillar for national growth, social stability, and human capital development. Basic education in Nigeria is designed to provide foundational literacy, numeracy, and life skills necessary for individual and societal advancement. In recent years, however, the management of basic education in Nigeria, particularly in Abuja, has been confronted with several external economic pressures [3]. One of the most significant among these is the Middle East crisis, which refers to ongoing geopolitical conflicts involving major oil-producing countries in the Middle East region. Although geographically distant from Nigeria, the crisis has far-reaching global economic consequences due to the region's central role in global oil supply [4].

Recent global and national reports indicate that the Middle East crisis has contributed to rising oil prices, inflation, and economic instability, particularly in developing economies like Nigeria. For instance, analysts note that geopolitical tensions in the Middle East have led to increased fuel and transportation costs, which in turn drive up food prices and general inflation in Nigeria. Similarly, macroeconomic assessments show that the effects of the crisis are transmitted through oil prices, exchange rates, and inflationary pressures, thereby influencing government revenue and public sector spending.

Evidence from the World Bank suggests that the Middle East conflict has already led to a significant increase in fuel prices by over 50% with direct implications for transportation, production, and household costs in Nigeria [5]. These rising costs have intensified the existing cost-of-living crisis in the country, reducing the purchasing power of households and increasing financial pressure on public institutions, including schools. Emerging scholarly studies have begun to explore the implications of the Middle East crisis for Nigeria's education sector. Recent research highlights that economic shocks arising from global conflicts negatively affect educational management through increased operational costs, reduced funding, and declining access to educational resources [6]. In particular, inflation and rising energy costs make it more difficult for school administrators to effectively manage resources, maintain infrastructure, and support staff welfare.

Economic instability linked to global crises has been identified as a major factor influencing educational outcomes. When inflation rises, governments often face fiscal constraints, which may lead to reduced investment in education. At the same time, families struggle to afford school-related expenses, thereby increasing the risk of student dropout and reduced participation in basic education [7]. This situation is particularly critical in urban centres like Abuja, where the cost of living is relatively high. Despite these emerging insights, there is still a limited body of empirical studies specifically examining how the Middle East crisis affects the management of basic education in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Most existing studies have focused broadly on economic impacts or national-level effects, with little attention to how these global shocks translate into day-to-day administrative challenges within schools.

This gap in knowledge creates a strong justification for the present study. Understanding the specific ways in which the Middle East crisis influences school management—such as budgeting, staff welfare, instructional delivery, and supervision—is essential for developing effective policy responses [8]. Furthermore, identifying practical mitigation strategies will help education stakeholders strengthen the resilience of the basic education system against external economic shocks. Therefore, this study is designed to examine the impact of the Middle East crisis on the management of basic education in Abuja and to identify measures that can be adopted to mitigate its effects, thereby contributing to improved educational planning and policy formulation in Nigeria [9].

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the impact of the Middle East crisis on the management of basic education in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria, and identified mitigation measures. Two research questions guided the study [10]. The specific objectives include;

1. To find out the impact of the Middle East crisis on the management of basic education in FCT, Abuja
2. To identify the mitigation measures to reduce the impact on basic school management in FCT

1.3 Research Questions

To guide the study, the following questions were formulated:

- 1) What is the impact of the Middle East crisis on the management of basic education in FCT, Abuja?
- 2) What are the mitigation measures to reduce the impact on basic school management in FCT?

2. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which is appropriate for collecting data from a large population to describe existing conditions and relationships among variables. The design enabled the researcher to obtain the opinions of teachers and school administrators on how the Middle East crisis affects the management of basic education in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

The population of the study comprised all teachers and school administrators in public basic schools within the FCT. According to records from the FCT Universal Basic

Education Board (UBEB), this population runs into several thousands. From this population, a sample size of 430 respondents was selected using a simple random sampling technique, ensuring that each member of the population had an equal chance of being selected. The sample included both head teachers and classroom teachers to ensure balanced representation of administrative and instructional perspectives.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “*Middle East Crisis and Basic Education Management Questionnaire (MECBEMQ)*”. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A captured demographic information of respondents. Section B contained 20 items aligned with the two research questions, structured on a two-point Likert scale (Agree/Disagree).

To ensure the validity of the instrument, it was subjected to face and content validation by experts in educational management and measurement and evaluation. Their suggestions led to refinement of ambiguous items and improvement in clarity and relevance. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha method, which yielded a coefficient of **0.82**, indicating high internal consistency and reliability of the instrument.

Data collection was carried out personally by the researcher with the assistance of trained research aides. Out of the 430 copies of the questionnaire distributed, all were properly completed and returned, representing a 100% return rate. Data analysis was conducted using **descriptive statistics**, specifically frequency counts and percentages. A benchmark of 50% agreement was used as the decision rule for accepting or rejecting each item.

3. Result and Discussion

Q1: What is the impact of the Middle East crisis on the management of basic education in FCT, Abuja?

Table 1: Impact of Middle East Crisis on Basic Education Management (n = 430)

S/N	Items	Agree	Disagree	% Agree
1	Rising transportation costs affect school management	360	70	83.7%
2	Increased cost of instructional materials	350	80	81.4%
3	Inflation affects school budgets	372	58	86.5%
4	Reduction in government funding	340	90	79.1%
5	Increased cost of feeding programmes	355	75	82.6%
6	Poor staff welfare	330	100	76.7%
7	Delay in salary payments	315	115	73.3%
8	Increased dropout rate	300	130	69.8%
9	Difficulty in supervision	320	110	74.4%
10	Increased administrative challenges	345	85	80.2%

The results in Table 1 show that a majority of respondents (above 70%) agreed that the Middle East crisis significantly affects basic education management in FCT Abuja. The most prominent impact is inflation (86.5%), followed by transportation costs and instructional material costs. Rising cost of school transportation, Increase in cost of instructional materials, Inflation affecting school budgets, Reduction in government funding, Increased cost of school feeding programmes, Poor staff welfare and motivation, Delay in salary payments, Increased dropout rates, Difficulty in school supervision and Increased administrative challenges are the Middle East crisis significantly affects basic education management in FCT Abuja [11], [12].

Q2: What are the mitigation measures to reduce the impact on basic school management in FCT?

Table 2: Mitigation Measures (n = 430)

S/N	□	Items	Agree	Disagree	% Agree
1	Increased	government funding	380	50	88.4%
2	Subsidies for materials		370	60	86.0%
3	Effective	budget management	365	65	84.9%
4	Staff welfare improvement		372	58	86.5%
5	Alternative	funding sources	350	80	81.4%
6	Community participation		340	90	79.1%
7	Digital learning adoption		330	100	76.7%
8	Policy reforms		360	70	83.7%
9	Training administrators		345	85	80.2%
10	Monitoring strategies		355	75	82.6%

The result showed that respondents strongly agreed that mitigation measures such as increased funding (88.4%), subsidies, and improved staff welfare can reduce the impact [13]. The result on table two obtained showed that respondent agreed that Increased government funding, Subsidies for education materials, Effective budget management, Staff welfare improvement, Alternative funding sources, Community participation, Adoption of digital learning, Policy reforms in education financing, Training for school administrators and Monitoring and evaluation strategies

3.1 Findings

The findings indicated that the Middle East crisis significantly affects school management through inflation and rising operational costs. Economic instability reduces effective administration and service delivery in schools [14]. Teachers and administrators experience reduced welfare and motivation and adequate funding and policy interventions can mitigate the negative effects.

3.3 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that the Middle East crisis has a significant and multidimensional impact on the management of basic education in FCT Abuja. One of the most prominent findings is that inflation and rising operational costs are the primary channels through which the crisis affects school administration [15]. This outcome is consistent with global economic analyses which indicate that geopolitical conflicts in oil-producing regions often lead to increases in global oil prices, thereby triggering inflation in oil-importing economies like Nigeria [16]. Since Nigeria depends heavily on imported refined petroleum products, increases in global oil prices translate directly into higher transportation and energy costs. These increased costs affect school operations, including transportation of students and staff, procurement of teaching materials, and general administrative expenses.

The study also found that instructional materials have become more expensive, making it difficult for school administrators to maintain adequate teaching and learning resources [17]. This aligns with findings by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which noted that economic shocks often disrupt education systems by reducing access to learning materials and increasing inequality in education delivery. Another key finding is the decline in staff welfare and motivation, as indicated by delayed salaries and reduced purchasing power of teachers. This finding supports earlier studies which argue that teacher motivation is strongly influenced by economic conditions, and that inflation erodes real income, leading to decreased job satisfaction and productivity [18]. In the Nigerian context, where teachers already face welfare challenges, external economic shocks further worsen their working conditions.

The study further revealed that the crisis contributes to increased administrative challenges, including difficulties in school supervision and management. Rising

transportation costs limit the ability of supervisors and administrators to carry out effective monitoring of schools. This is in line with research indicating that economic constraints can weaken institutional effectiveness and governance in the education sector [19].

The finding that student dropout rates are increasing reflects the broader socio-economic impact of the crisis. As household incomes are strained by inflation, parents may struggle to meet educational expenses, leading to increased dropout rates. This agrees with UNICEF, which reported that economic hardship is a major driver of school dropout in developing countries. On mitigation measures, the study found strong support for increased government funding, subsidies, and policy reforms. This aligns with economic policy recommendations that emphasize the need for governments to cushion vulnerable sectors, including education, during global crises. Increased funding can help schools cope with rising costs, while subsidies can make educational materials more affordable.

The finding on alternative funding sources and community participation is also significant. It supports the growing consensus that education financing should not rely solely on government funding but should involve partnerships with communities and private stakeholders [20]. The adoption of digital learning strategies as a mitigation measure reflects global trends in education resilience. Studies have shown that integrating technology into education systems can help reduce the impact of disruptions and improve efficiency [21]. The findings demonstrate that while the Middle East crisis is geographically distant, its economic consequences have direct and profound effects on education management in Nigeria.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has demonstrated that the Middle East crisis exerts a significant indirect influence on the management of basic education in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The impact is largely transmitted through economic mechanisms such as inflation, rising fuel prices, increased cost of goods and services, and declining real income. The study concludes that these economic pressures have serious implications for school administration, including reduced operational efficiency, inadequate instructional resources, low staff morale, and increased student dropout rates. The crisis, therefore, poses a threat to the achievement of educational goals and the overall quality of basic education in the FCT.

The study also establishes that these challenges are not insurmountable. With appropriate policy responses, strategic planning, and effective resource management, the negative effects of the crisis can be mitigated. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) The government should significantly increase budgetary allocation to basic education to cushion the effects of inflation and rising operational costs. Subsidies should be provided for essential educational materials, transportation, and school feeding programmes to reduce financial pressure on schools and families. Teachers' salaries and allowances should be reviewed regularly to reflect economic realities. Prompt payment of salaries should also be ensured to maintain morale and productivity.

- 2) School administrators should be trained in modern financial management practices to ensure efficient use of limited resources. Schools should explore partnerships with private organizations, NGOs, and community groups to supplement government funding. Communities should be actively involved in school management to provide support and enhance accountability. Schools should integrate digital technologies into teaching and administration to reduce operational costs and improve efficiency.

- 3) Government should develop policies aimed at protecting the education sector from external economic shocks. Regular training programmes should be organized for school leaders to enhance their ability to manage crises effectively. Effective monitoring systems should be established to ensure proper implementation of policies and programmes aimed at mitigating crisis impacts.

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