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PSYCHO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF REMOVAL OF FUEL SUBSIDY ON ACADEMIC STAFF OF FEDERALUNIVERSITIES IN NORTHCENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined psycho-economic impact of removal of fuel subsidy on academic staff of Federal Universities in Northcentral Nigeria. The study was guided by two objectives and two research questions. Two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of 6804 academic staff of federal universities in North-Central Nigeria, and 357 were used as sample for the study. Impact of Removal of Fuel Subsidy on the Psycho-Economic Well-Being of Academic Staff Questionnaire" (*IRFSP-EW-BASQ*) *was used to collect data for study. The data collected were analyzed through the use of simple percentages, frequency counts, mean and t-test statistics. The study revealed among others that there was a decrease in performance of academic staff of federal universities in North-Central Nigeria due to the psychological effects of the removal of fuel subsidy. Also, the findings revealed that there was significant psychological impact of removal of fuel subsidy on academic staff among federal universities in North-Central Nigeria. The study further revealed that the removal of fuel subsidy has created financial challenges that affect the overall quality of academic staff of federal universities in North-Central Nigeria. The study, therefore recommended among others that the management of federal universities in North-Central should offer mental health services like counselling and wellness programs so that staff can get help dealing with stress and anxiety caused by rising costs of living and job pressure; and staff salaries need to be reviewed regularly and adjusted to keep up with financial demand of present economic reality academic staff of federal universities in North-Central.*
Keywords: Psycho-Economic Impact, Removal Fuel Subsidy, Academic Staff

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 significant negative impact on the national budget and potential distortions in the economy (Ogunyemi & Oladapo, 2025).

The Nigerian government use fuel subsidies to make petrol more affordable for its citizens. This meant the government paid part of the cost so that people didn't feel the full effect of changes in global oil prices. While the idea was good, over time, it became too expensive and was often mismanaged. Because of this, the Federal government in the year 2023, decided to remove the subsidy entirely in order to reduce spending and fix economic issues. Subsidies involve direct cash transfers from the government to either producers or consumers to supplement their income and lower prices (Taylor, 2022). There are also implicit or hidden subsidies where governments provide services, inputs or infrastructure below market rates that benefit specific sectors, like cheap land or underpriced utilities (Whitley & van der Burg, 2023). Loan guarantees, preferential lending or debt relief are also forms of subsidies that promote investment by reducing risks for commercial projects (World Bank, 2020). Prabowo et al. (2022) argued that the idea of subsidy is a notable one, there have been serious allegations of corruption and poor management regarding their implementation and management under the previous regimes.

Psycho-economic highlights state of mind and financial conditions of an individual. Some policy enacted by the government may be favourable or unfavorable which is capable of exposing the citizens to economic shocks which contribute to psychological trauma/distress, cum financial hardship (Manning, 2020). Government policies which financially support individuals can alleviate economic anxiety, contributing to overall positive mental health, psychological adjustment and provide therapeutic economic opportunities. Consequently, more supportive economic policies may escalate or alleviate psychological distress. However, academic staff of public universities, especially those in the North Central part of Nigeria, places like Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, and Abuja are encountered challenges with prices of transportation, food, electricity, and other basic needs, coupled with late salaries and poor working conditions with the increased cost of living and financial struggles make their situation worse.

Education is important to national growth, it's crucial to understand how the removal of the fuel subsidy is affecting university staff members as many lecturers are now dealing with stress,

anxiety, and low morale (Hairing, Jonsson, Matti, Mundaca and Jagers, 2023) analyzed the effect of fuel subsidy removed on country's economy, there are paucity of study on psycho-economic effects of removal of fuel subsidy on staff of universities. Subsidy removal intends to align with global trends of fossil fuel subsidy reduction and enhance fiscal sustainability, eliminates corruption, excess profiteering, minimal borrowing cum savings for job creation, power and transport infrastructure, yet the pronouncement resulted to exacerbation of psycho-socioeconomic inequality, high price of petroleum and consequently affects the prices of other goods and services of the country (Ude, 2023) in turn affected low-income earners

According to Nwachukwu and Tumba (2023), fuel subsidy a means of government intervention aimed at decreasing the cost of fuel by offering direct financial assistance to oil companies. It is the instrument used in cushioning the effects of price fluctuations and maintaining stability in the transportation sector which have played a crucial role in supporting economy and improving the welfare of the Nigerian population (Popoola, 2020). Fuel subsidies are usually imposed when a government sets the petrol price below the market or international price to make the product accessible and affordable to the consumers. Therefore, fuel subsidy means to sell premium motor spirit (also called petrol) below the cost of production. In all, Nigerians have viewed fuel subsidies as one of the few benefits they receive from oil, the endowed resources of Nigeria, particularly given the absence of a constant and stable electricity supply in the country as well as indeterminate and inherent volatile fuel price in the internal market which fluctuates every time (Eyiuche, 2012). Research in Delta State has established that staff unions play a crucial role in improving workers' wages and employment conditions in tertiary institutions (Ubah & Nkedishu, 2021). This perspective becomes particularly relevant as academic staff grapple with increased transportation costs and diminished purchasing power following the removal of fuel subsidies.

Based on the fact that many persons have been clamoring for subsidy removal due to market misrepresentation. The government of President Ahmed Bola Tinubu led administration announced the fuel subsidy removal on May 29th 2023. This means that the government will no longer provide financial assistance to reduce fuel price for consumers (Soremekun, 2023). The idea of removing fuel subsidy is usually to make the government spend less and promote more judicious use of resources. When subsidy is removed, it often leads to a hike in price of petrol, and consumers pay higher for fuel (Prabowo, Harianto, Juanda, and Indrawan, 2022) Manning (2020) opined that fuel subsidy removal helps to free up resources for other sectors of the economy like healthcare, education and development of other sectors and the establishment of local refineries for the production of petroleum products. According to McCulloh, Moreenhout and Yang (2019). Removing subsidies without improving social welfare protection may be considered unilateral change in the social contract, which can result to protest and political instability.

For many years, the Nigerian economy has been heavily reliant on the supply of low-cost petroleum products. As noted by Mohammed, Ahmed, and Adedeji (2020), a typical Nigerian household heavily relies on subsidized petroleum byproducts like petrol and kerosene for both domestic and commercial needs. This dependence further exacerbated by the unreliable electricity supply from public power distributors. Consequently, generators powered by subsidized fuel have become a mainstay for most homes and businesses, this reliance extends to individuals like students and lecturers who heavily depend on fuel for their transportation needs (Mohammed,

Ahmed, and Adedeji, 2020). The recent removal of fuel subsidies has significantly impacted the country's inflation rate, currently exceeding 25% (Manning 2020), the cost of transportation has already surged due to the ripple effect across various sectors, particularly those reliant on transportation. This has resulted in a sharp increase in the prices of goods and services, making them unaffordable for many. The removal of fuel subsidies has had a detrimental impact on all institutions within the country by significantly increasing the cost of goods and services. The sudden surge in fuel prices following the removal of subsidies has further exacerbated the economic hardships faced by the Nigerian populace" (Imam, 2023).

The removal of fuel subsidy has influenced staff welfare in higher institutions Stone (2012) sees staff welfare as part of management which is concerned with the physical and mental being of employees. Mekuri-Ndimele and Ukata (2024) noted that teachers' and non-teachers' salaries were not adequate and that they are the least paid (remunerated) workers in the Nigerian economy and they have become notorious for poverty. Removal of fuel subsidy brings untold hardship to the teaching and non-teaching staff in tertiary institutions The minimum wage of workers is nothing to write home about considering rising costs of food items and transportation. We must also not lose sight of the increase in school fees in the institution occasioned by the removal of subsidy in petroleum products. Okwa, Okwonu, Owoyi (2024) also noted that workers with fixed salary may find it difficult to cope with the increase of prices of commodities as a result of the high cost of fuel, especially providing adequately for the academic needs of their children.

The government as a role to play in ensuring that this hardship occasioned by the removal of fuel subsidy can be reduced. Hence Kale, Sowande, and Salaudeen (2023), submitted that there is need for the government to intervene in the sufferings of the masses as a result of subsidy removal by increasing the salary of workers and provision of low transport services. According to Ukozor and Ogunode (2023), the removal of subsidies has affected both private and public institutions, in fact it has adversely affected every aspect of the economy. In fact, Ogwuche, Adejor, Dabish,Garba and Dole (2024) submitted that effect of the constraints associated with fuel subsidy removal can be cushioned by providing cheap transportation services and use of government buses as means of transportation for the citizenry. The sufferings occasioned by the removal of fuel subsidy on staff and students in tertiary institutions is alarming.

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 and their socioeconomic wellbeing. The relationship between subsidy removal and psycho-economic is complex and multifaceted (Prabowo, Harianto, Juanda, and Indrawan, 2022), 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 translates 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 psycho-economic patterns, as individuals prioritize basic necessities over discretionary spending.

Furthermore, the psycho-economic well-being of university lecturers, 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 lecturers rely on public transportation and earn modest salaries, these financial pressures could significantly alter their psychological patterns of living and overall socio-economic wellbeing (Adegbite, 2022). These changes could potentially lead to adjustments in saving behaviour, household budgeting, and overall financial planning.
Even though university lecturers play a key role in shaping the country's future through teaching and research, not much research has looked into how policies like this affect them personally emotionally and economically. We don't yet fully understand how this situation is impacting their lives, which makes it hard to create solutions that truly help. This study aims to fill that gap. It will explore how the removal of fuel subsidies is affecting the financial and psychological health of academic staff in federal universities across North Central Nigeria, and offer practical recommendations that can help both institutions and the government respond better.

Statement of Problem

Fuel subsidy is one of the government interventions in Nigeria aimed at lowering fuel costs for the benefit of its citizens and involves providing subsidizing fuel prices for consumers. This intervention plays a crucial role in supporting vital sectors of the economy and infrastructure development. However, despite its benefits, the removal of fuel subsidies has significantly impacted low-income households. Since President Tinubu's administration announced the end of fuel subsidies on May 29, 2023, Nigerians, particularly students and employees, have experienced a sharp increase in transportation costs due to increase in fuel prices. Furthermore, rising inflation has worsen household hardships, leading to increased prices for food, rent, and other essential commodities. The removal of fuel subsidies has driven up the prices of goods and services across all sectors of the Nigerian economy. Staff of Federal Universities have been particularly affected, as staff, many of whom are low-income earners, face significant financial strain in meeting academic requirements due to the high cost of fuel. This has negatively impacted the efficiency of staff including academic and non-academic staff of Federa Universities across North Central, Nigeria. Based on the above, this study examined psycho-economic impact of removal of fuel subsidy on the academic staff among Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study intends to answer the following questions.

1. What is the psychological impact of removal of fuel subsidy on academic staff of federal universities in North-Central Nigeria?
2. What economic impact does removal of fuel subsidy have on academic staff of federal universities in North-Central Nigeria?

Objectives of the study

Generally, the research intends to examine the psycho-economic impact of removal of fuel subsidy on academic staff of Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the psychological impact of removal of fuel subsidy on academic staff of federal universities in North-Central Nigeria.
2. To examine the economic impact of removal of fuel subsidy on academic staff of federal universities in North-Central Nigeria.

Hypotheses

$H0_1$: There is no significant gender difference in the psychological impact of removal of fuel subsidy on academic staff of federal universities in North-Central Nigeria.

$H0_2$: There is no significant gender difference in the economic impact of removal of fuel subsidy on academic staff of federal universities in North-Central Nigeria.

Methodology

Descriptive research design was adopted for this study. This is justified based on the view of Osuala (2015) who posited that descriptive research design is a useful fact-finding investigation in education and social sciences meant to provide a strategy for the researcher to systematically obtain data that can be analyzed and generalized on the entire population. The population of this study comprised of six thousand, eight hundred and four (6804) academic staff from Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria (NUC Statistical Digest, 2025), while the sample size was 357. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample Size. The instrument used for data collection was a structured-item questionnaire. It was titled "Impact of Removal of Fuel Subsidy on the Psycho-Economic Well-Being of Academic Staff Questionnaire" (IRFSP-EW-BASQ). The instrument was designed by the researchers which comprised of 26 structured items. The instrument has 3 sections as section "A" of the questionnaire sought for demographic data of the respondents. Section "B-C" measured the impact of fuel subsidy removal on the psycho-economic well-being of academic staff. The items were structured on a four-point scale rating ranging from Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The instrument was given to linguists, counsellors, and economic experts for context and face validation. Based on their expert advice, some items were modified, some dropped, and others were added.

To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted on thirty (30) academic staff from Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai in Niger State. The instrument was administered using a test-retest method at an interval of 14 days. The two results were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC), and the result r value obtained was 0.88, which implied the instrument was reliable for administration. In the process of data administration, the researchers administered the instruments using "Google Forms". This was done with the help of research assistants from the selected universities that assisted virtual responses. The lead researcher regularly checked the level and percentage of responses through his email. The data collected were analysed using simple percentages, frequency counts, mean, and sample t-test.

Results

Out of 357 instruments distributed, only 352 were correctly filled and returned. A mean score of 2.5 and above indicated a positive response to the research question and accepted while a mean score below 2.5 indicated a negative answer and rejected.

Table 1: Opinions of Respondents on the Psychological Impact among Removal of fuel Subsidy on Academic Staff of Federal Universities in North-Central Nigeria

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Std. De.	Remark
1	The removal of the fuel subsidy has caused me significant stress.	352	3.9	.443	Agreed
2	I feel anxious about the increase in transportation costs due to the fuel subsidy removal.	352	3.9	.302	Agreed
3	I am concerned that the fuel subsidy removal will affect my overall financial stability.	352	3.9	.267	Agreed-
4	I have noticed a decrease in my work. performance due to the psychological effects of the fuel subsidy removal.	352	3.9	.250	Agreed
5	The fuel subsidy removal has made me feel uncertain about my future financial situation.	352	3.9	.309	Agreed
6	I feel more frustrated at work due to the increased cost of living after the fuel subsidy removal.	352	3.9	.076	Agreed
7	The removal of the fuel subsidy has impacted my job satisfaction negatively.	352	3.9	.142	Agreed
8	I have experienced a decrease in my motivation to work because of the economic strain caused by the subsidy removal.	352	3.8	.518	Agreed
9	I feel that the removal of the fuel subsidy is affecting my mental well-being and emotional state.	352	3.5	.621	Agreed
10	Despite the challenges posed by the fuel subsidy removal, I am able to maintain a positive outlook on my job.	352	3.5	.549	Agreed
	Grand Mean		**3.8**		**Agreed**

Table 1 sought the opinion of respondents on the psychological impact removal of fuel subsidy on academic staff of federal universities in North-Central Nigeria. All the items attracted negative responses from the respondents. The mean scores of items 11 to 17 were 3.9, 3.9, 3.9, 3.9, 3.9, 3.9, and 3.9, while the mean scores for item 7, 9, and 10 are 3.8, 3.5, and 3.5. The grand mean is 3.8 which indicates that removal of fuel subsidy has psychological impact on the academic staff among federal universities in North-Central Nigeria.

Table 2: Opinions of Respondents on the Economic Impact of Removal of fuel Subsidy on Academic Staff of Federal Universities in North-Central Nigeria.

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Std. De	Remark
11	The removal of the fuel subsidy has led to an increase in my monthly expenses.	352	3.9	.093	Agreed
12	I am finding it more difficult to afford basic necessities due to the fuel subsidy removal.	352	3.9	.108	Agreed
13	The increase in fuel princes following the subsidy removal has negatively impacted my disposable income.	352	3.9	.131	Agreed
14	I have had to make adjustments to my personal budget as a result of the fuel subsidy removal.	352	3.9	.224	Agreed
15	The removal of the fuel subsidy has reduced my overall financial security.	352	4.0	.054	Agreed
16	I have experienced a decline in my purchase power due to the increased cost of living after the fuel subsidy removal.	352	4.0	.000	Agreed
17	I am now spending more on transportation due to the rise in fuel princes after the subsidy removal.	352	4.0	.054	Agreed
18	The removal of the fuel subsidy has made it harder for me to save money.	352	3.9	.076	Agreed
19	I have to reduce my spending on non-essential items as a result of the economic impact of fuel subsidy removal.	352	3.9	.285	Agreed
20	The fuel subsidy removal has created financial challenges that affect my overall quality of life.	352	3.9	.302	Agreed
	Grand Mean		**3.9**		**Agreed**

Table 2 sought the opinion of respondents on the psychological impact removal of fuel subsidy on academic staff of federal universities in North-Central Nigeria. The analysis revealed that all the items attracted positive responses from the respondents. The mean scores were 3.9, 3.9, 3.9, 3.9, 4.0, 4.0, 4.3, 3.9, 3.9, and 3.9. However, the grand mean is 3.9 which indicated that removal of fuel subsidy has psychological impact on academic staff among federal universities in North-Central Nigeria.

Hypotheses Testing

A hypothesis is retained or rejected by comparing the P-value with the levels of significance, which is 0.05. When the P-value is less than the levels of significance, the hypothesis is rejected, and if the P-value is greater than the levels of significance, the hypothesis is retained.

Table 3: T-Test Analysis between Male and Female on the Psychological Impact of Removal of fuel Subsidy on Academic Staff of Federal Universities North-Central Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	Df	t-cal	P-value
Male	175	121.253	4.32			

				350	5.81	0.000
Female	175	119.588	4.57			

Table 3, revealed t-test analysis between male and female on the psychological impact of removal of fuel subsidy on the academic staff among federal universities in North-Central Nigeria. The result revealed that t-value is 5.81 and p-value is 0.000, this indicated that p-value 0.000 is less than 0.05 levels of significance. This indicated that there is no significance gender difference in psychological impact of removal of fuel subsidy on the academic staff among federal universities in North-Central Nigeria. Hence, null hypothesis which states that there is no significant gender difference in the psychological impact of removal of fuel subsidy on academic staff among federal universities in North-Central Nigeria is hereby retained.

Table 4: T-Test Analysis between Male and Female on the Economic Impact of Removal of fuel Subsidy on Academic Staff of Federal Universities in North-Central Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	Df	t-cal	P-value
Male	175	189.57	4.69			
				350	4.96	0.002
Female	175	190.18	4.53			

Table 4, revealed t-test analysis between male and female on the economic impact of removal of fuel subsidy on the academic staff among federal universities in North-Central Nigeria. The result shows that t-value is 4.96 and p-value is 0.002, this indicated that p-value 0.002 is less than 0.05 levels of significance. This shows that there is no significance gender difference in economic impact of removal of fuel subsidy on the academic staff among federal universities in North-Central Nigeria. Hence, null hypothesis which states that there is no significant gender difference in the economic impact of removal of fuel subsidy on academic staff among federal universities in North-Central Nigeria is hereby retained.

Discussion of findings

The first hypothesis revealed that there was no significant gender difference in the psychological impact of removal of fuel subsidy on academic staff among federal universities in North-Central Nigeria. The study by Manning (2020) confirmed that might be unfavorable and expose the citizens to economic shocks which contribute to psychological trauma/distress, cum financial hardship. According to Harrringet al. (2023); Meludu et al. (2024); Oyasipe (2024), removed fuel subsidy has psycho-social effect on the academic staff of the federal Universities in North-Central Universities, Nigeria and Akpojotor et al. (2025) study indicated that fuel subsidy removal affected staff and students' welfare in tertiary institutions in Delta State, Nigera.

The second hypothesis indicated there is no significance gender difference in economic impact of removal of fuel subsidy on the academic staff among federal universities in North-Central Nigeria, the removal of fuel subsidy has created financial challenges that affect the overall economic wellbeing of academic staff of federal universities in North-Central Nigeria. Hairing, Jonsson, Matti, Mundaca and Jagers (2023) and reported that there is psycho-economic effect of fuel subsidy removed on the staff of universities in Nigeria. Akpojotor, Mordi, Onoka and Ogah (2025)

study revealed that fuel subsidy removal affected staff and students' welfare and student' academic performance in tertiary institutions. Ogunyemi et al. (2025) study revealed that removal of fuel subsidy has adversely affected the socio-economic well-being of Nigerian workers particularly primary school teachers. Also, the study by Ude (2023) affirmed that removal of fuel subsidy resulted to exacerbation of psycho-socioeconomic inequality, high price of petroleum and consequently affects the prices of other goods and services of the country which in turn affected standard of living of academic staff of federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria, and it's also led to decrease in job performance of academic staff among federal universities due to the psychological and economic effects of the removal of fuel subsidy.

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 (Obayelu & Ogun, 2021).

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 (World Bank, 2020). 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 (Ikenga & Oluka, 2023).

Conclusion

The removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria has taken a serious toll on universities lecturers, especially those working in federal universities across North Central Nigeria. It's not just about the rising cost of fuel everything from food to transportation has become more expensive, putting extra psychological and economic pressure on academic staff who were already dealing with low pay, inflation, and underfunded institutions. On top of the financial stress, many are also struggling stability of mental health. Lecturers play a huge role in shaping the future of the country through their teaching and research. If they're constantly stressed and unsupported, it's going to affect their routine work (research), their health, and even their willingness to stay in the profession. This study makes it clear: the need to pay closer attention to how national economic policies impact the people who educate our next generation

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were offered:

1. Management of universities should offer mental health services like counselling and wellness programs so that staff can get help dealing with stress and anxiety caused by rising costs of living and job pressure as staff salaries need to be reviewed regularly and adjusted to keep up with current economic reality.
2. Federal government should step in to help academic staff who are feeling the pinch from removal fuel subsidy. This could be in the form of transport support, housing allowances, or fuel subsidies specifically for staff as management of the universities could look into setting up staff shuttle buses or partnerships with transport companies to make commuting easier and cheaper for lecturers of federal universities in North Central Nigeria.

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