

## GLOBAL ECONOMIC RECESSION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE OF BIOLOGY STUDENTS IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

*Biology is a science which studies living things. Since man is among the living things, its importance cannot be over emphasised. Recession is an economic crisis: a situation where there is a crisis in a nation's economic activities, that is, a situation where the world's economy seems to be standing on its head. Great numbers of families have been highly affected by recession throughout the country. Since students are the products of the families, therefore many of the students cannot be easily overlooked in the implications of economic recession. A survey research design was chosen in this work. This study was carried out in Emmanuel Alayande College of Education Oyo in Oyo State. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed in a way that responses could be elicited from the respondents and weighed on a four point scale of strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. Three research questions were formulated and tested. The questions were based on causes of economic recession, level of affection and methods of the eradication on teaching and learning of Biology. The major cause was the dependence of government on crude oil and it was confirmed that recession highly affects academic performance of the students with the mean =3.20 and 80.91% respondents. The solution adopted by the respondents was reduction of food or meal quality. The researcher recommended that government should find possible ways to put a stop to all activities that can lead to economic recession in the country.*

**Keywords:** Biology, recession, teaching, learning, students

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### **Introduction**

Recession can be defined as a significant decline in economic activity spread across the macro-economy, lasting more than a few months, normally visible in real gross domestic product (RGDP), real income, employment, industrial production and wholesale and retail sales (The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), 2008). When a country is in the phase of recession, the economy is far from the point of effective use of resources, that is, far from the optimal production and the natural rate of unemployment (Nikoloski, & Lazarov, 2000).

According to Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2012 referenced by Shido-Ikwu, 2017),

economic recession can be caused by two broad factors: internal (endogenous) and external (exogenous) factors. The former is usually because of a conflict of ideas, misapplication of economic theory and regulatory negligence or policy inconsistency. The external causes of recession have to do with factors that are exogenous to the economy over which policy makers have little or no control which include factors like natural disaster, climate change, revolution and wars. The reasons for the emergence of the current economic recession in Nigeria can be linked to the above factors to include; legacy factors, policy factors and political/security factors (Shido-Ikwu, 2017).

The great number of families has been highly affected by recession throughout the country and since the students are the product of the families, many of the secondary school students cannot be easily overlooked in the implications of economic recession. The economic crisis had an impact on their lifestyle, education and many have felt an effect on their own financial lives (Kerim, 2012). Economic recession also ultimately affects students' confidence, behaviour, trusts in financial institutions and overall well-being (NEFE, 2010). Research findings further indicate that adverse economic conditions, through the disruption of normal family processes and parenting put students' mental health at risk, making them more susceptible to risk behaviours which has an adverse effect on their lifestyles (Carlo, Padilla-Walker, & Day, 2011; Solantaus, Leinonen, & Punamaki, 2004; Kokkevi, Stavrou, Kanavou, & Fotiou, 2014). Also, many parents are currently finding it very difficult to pay their children's school fees and provide other basic needs (Olowolagba, 2016).

Education is one of the most important aspects of human resource development. The students' performance plays an important role in producing best quality secondary school leavers who will later become graduates who will become great leaders and manpower for the country, thus responsible for the country's economic and social development. Academic achievement is one of the major factors considered by employers in hiring workers, especially the fresh graduates. Thus, students have to put greatest effort into their study to obtain good grades and prepare themselves for future opportunities in their career at the same time to fulfil the employers' demand. Academic performance in secondary schools determines whether the students will proceed to the university for higher degree or be able to secure a teaching job. Students' performance also determines the quality of education that is being passed to the students by the potential teachers at the primary and secondary school levels. Students' academic performance is affected by several factors which include students' learning skills, parental background, peer influence, teachers' quality, learning infrastructure,

among others. Government's efforts to improve academic performance have led to series of interventions like scholarship, training of the teachers, provision of infrastructure and so on. In Nigeria, the crisis which has ravaged many economies around the world has caused noticeable imbalance. Besides depleting the country's external reserves, it has led to a lot of havoc, such as substantial crash in the stock market, the erosion of the country's revenue by over 60 percent and the depreciation of the national currency, among others. Okonjo-Iweala (2009) reported that, "Nigeria has been hit by the global economic crisis together with the developed and developing countries all over the world". Kumuyi (2010) defined economic crisis as a situation where there is a recession in nation's economic activities, that is, a situation where the world's economy seems to be standing on its head. In Nigeria, the educational system is almost completely dependent of government budgetary allocation and with the economic crisis; the sector will no doubt witness its fair share of budget cuts which will affect not only the teachers but also students and families.

Teachers' salaries represent around two-thirds of public expenditure on education, which explains why in some countries the first sign of a slowdown had a direct impact on pay (Coombs 1985). When the economy is in crisis, and graduate unemployment is high, the teaching profession used to be a safer and more attractive choice than other occupations because of the respect given to the profession and regular payment of teachers' salary, but in Nigeria nowadays contrary is the case. But significant salary reductions due to economic crisis can also have a negative impact on a country's attempt to attract the best and intellectual individuals to the teaching profession. As a consequence, countries will find it more difficult to maintain the quality of learning in the future. Ochu (2010) opined that the challenges faced by most of the developing countries which have some serious effect on education burdened by disappointments and shortfalls in expectations are rooted on social, economic and political factors, which also mutually interact with each other. The global economic

crisis has effects on Nigeria's economy which has led to depletion of stocks, loss of investment, loss of jobs occasioned by the closing down of many companies and devaluation of the Naira, culminating in the government's inability to fund education, especially in some parts of the country.

There are numerous problems facing education system in Nigeria due to the fact that the sector is poorly funded and led to shortage supply of learning materials and human resources being experienced in the system. Inadequate qualified teachers, high turnover rate of teachers, shortage of classroom, and poor remuneration of teachers and a host of other problems abound in the education sector. The economic crisis experienced in Nigeria impacted on the education system and had played a major role in the decline of the quality of education offered in the country (Olabiyi and Abayomi 2010). Adediran, Ojomo & Adeyanju (2015) opined that the future of every nation depends largely on the fate of every child that is born into her; most especially those that are privileged to go through the academic walls of the nation starting from the primary level of education to the tertiary institution.

Education is an important industry for social, political and economic development, and it is being affected by the environment within which it exists. Hence, national development has been founded by those who are experts in their areas of specialization, and this would not have been imaginable without the instrumentality of the educational system. Every country endeavours to provide quality education for its people. The present economic recession in Nigeria has numerous effects on the teaching and learning of Biology ranging from exorbitant cost of necessary materials, insufficient textbooks, brain drain, unavailability of materials and poor environment (personal observation). That is, the number of students venturing into science has been very low due to economic crisis/recession and this crisis also leads to poor students' performance etc. (Ejezie, Oluchi, Uwakwe, Ukamaka and Ifeanyi-Uche 2017).

This research was conducted to identify the effects of recession on the

academic performance of Biology students in colleges of education and provide suggestions that would promote a better academic performance in the study area and Nigeria at large. This is because poor performance in Biology by students is attributed to the problem of non-availability of necessary facilities for practical work which has affected the performance of the teachers (Fatokun, 2012). It is on this point that the researcher wants to find out the effects of this economic recession on the teaching and learning of Biology in Emmanuel Alayande College of Education (EACOED) Oyo, in Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Some of the major problems militating against the functional Biology education in Nigeria are lack of funds, lack of reliable textbooks, absence of well-equipped Biology laboratories and inadequate instructional materials (Ochu, 2010). A functional education, especially in the area of science and Biology in particular, is the most fundamental requirement for economic and technological growth of any nation. Economic recession has resulted to problems such as exorbitant cost of necessary materials, inadequate chemicals for practical, unavailability of materials, poor enrolment etc. This makes the stated and desired objectives in teaching and learning of Biology unachievable. In addition to that, there is great need to study and analyse, finding out from the students and teachers / lecturers in higher institutions how far this economic recession has affected the teaching and learning of Biology in the study area.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The focus of this study is to determine the effects of economic recession on the teaching and learning of Biology in Colleges of Education. Hence, this study focuses on the following;

- The roots causes of economic recession presently in Nigeria.
- The effects of economic recession on the teaching and learning of Biology in EACOED, Oyo, Oyo State.
- The strategies for the eradication of the challenges of economic recession

on the teaching and learning of Biology.

### **Significance of the Study**

The researcher hopes that the findings of this study will help the school administrators (both private and public) to reflect upon various factors that help students achieve their academic goals in Biology. The result of the research work will enable the teachers to identify the areas of strength and weakness in academic performance in Biology. It will also help them to see the need for improvisation and improve on their teaching methods used in teaching Biology to the College of Education Students. The findings will make the students to be able to appreciate the importance of Biology and put up a positive attitude which will help them to understand themselves and all other living things around them better. The findings of this research work will enable the government to see the need to help in improving the education sectors by allocating substantial amount of funds to education, particularly schools and provide necessary materials/equipment for effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, it is hoped that the findings so obtained from this empirical process will provide relevant data for future reference and citations.

### **Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study or investigation is limited to the Biology lecturers and students in Emmanuel Alayande College of Education (EACOED), Oyo in Oyo State.

### **Methodology**

A survey research design was chosen in this work. This study was carried out in EACOED, Oyo, in Oyo State. The population of the study comprises all the Biology lecturers and Biology students in EACOED, Oyo in Oyo

State. A total population of five (05) lecturers and two hundred and fifteen (215) students were sampled making a total of two hundred and twenty (220). All the lecturers and students in the sampled College were used, since the population was small.

The instrument used in this work for data collection was a questionnaire. The questionnaire used was a structural response questionnaire which consisted of sections A and B. Section A contained the personal data of the respondents while the section B consisted of questions formulated under each of the three research question. The questionnaire was designed in a way that responses could be elicited from the respondents and weighed on a four (4) point scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The instrument was assessed by experts in the field to ensure lucidity of the items as well as aptness of language expressions and instructions conveyed to the respondents. The researcher distributed a total of two hundred and twenty (220) copies of questionnaire which were completed and returned. This gave a 100% return rate. Data collected were analysed using mean, simple percentage and Pearson moment ranking mean.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the causes of economic recession in Nigeria?
2. To what extent has the economic recession affected the teaching and learning of Biology in EACOED, Oyo, Oyo State.?
3. What are the methods for the eradication of the challenges of economic recession on the teaching and learning of Biology?

## Results

**Research question 1:** What are the main causes of economic recession recently in Nigeria?

The findings of research question 1 are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Respondents' perception on the causes of economic recession presently in Nigeria

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	$\pi$	Rank
1	The government depends majorly on crude oil	102 (46.36%)	76 (34.55%)	27 (12.27%)	15 (6.82%)	3.20	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	Border closure in some parts of Nigeria	92 (41.82%)	80 (36.36%)	28 (12.73%)	20 (9.09%)	3.11	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	High inflation (general rise in price) rate indicates economic recession.	98 (44.55%)	70 (31.82%)	20 (9.09%)	32 (14.55%)	3.06	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4	Problem of Fulani herdsmen killing and destroying farm products	75 (34.09%)	85 (38.64%)	36 (16.36%)	4 (1.82%)	2.87	4 <sup>th</sup>
5	General rise in terrorism, armed robbery, and kidnapping are indicators of economic recession.	77 (35.00%)	84 (38.18%)	27 (12.27%)	32 (14.55%)	2.94	5 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Author's Analysis, 2021 (n=220).

Table 1 showed the results of research question 1 on the factors responsible for current recession in Nigeria. The respondents agreed that the government depend majorly on crude oil, closing the border, high inflation rate, problem of Fulani herdsmen killing and destroying farm products and general rise in terrorism among others were the major factors responsible for recession going on in Nigeria, although dependence on crude oil ranks first, followed by with closing the border in some parts of country while high inflation rate came third. Fulani herdsmen killing and destroying farm products and general rise in terrorism, armed robbery and kidnapping were 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively.

**Research question 2:** To what extent has the economic recession affected the teaching and learning of Biology in EACOED, Oyo in Oyo State?

**Table 2:** Mean rank and percentage on how economic recession affected the teaching and learning of Biology in EACOED, Oyo, Oyo State.

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	$\pi$	Rank
1	Economic recession affects my class work, and academic performance.	81 (36.82%)	72 (32.73%)	51 (23.08%)	16 (7.27%)	2.99	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	Lifestyle of students was affected such as group reading, peer group and communication among mates	84 (38.18%)	77 (35.00%)	29 (13.18%)	30 (13.64%)	2.98	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	I lose my sense of direction and purpose during economic recession	70 (31.82%)	84 (38.18%)	46 (20.90%)	20 (9.09%)	2.93	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4	My relationship and	90	60	20	50	2.86	4 <sup>th</sup>

	communication with family, friends and relatives were affected with economic recession.	(40.91%)	(27.27%)	(9.09%)	(22.73%)		
5	Economic recession affects the wellbeing (health and income status) of students.	66 (30.00%)	80 (36.36%)	40 (18.18%)	34 (15.45%)	2.81	5 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Author's Analysis, 2021 (n=220).

Table 2 revealed and provided answer to research question 2. This research question trying to confirm the extent to which the economic recession affected the teaching and learning of Biology in EACOED of Oyo State. Economic recession affects class work and academic performance ranks first while wellbeing, that is health and income status of the students, ranks 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Research question 3:** What are the methods adopted by the respondents to reduce or eradicate effects of economic recession on their teaching and learning of Biology?

**Table 3:** Mean rank and percentage on the methods adopted by the respondents to reduce or eradicate the effects of economic recession on their teaching and learning of Biology.

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	$\pi$	Rank
1	The quality of my meals were highly reduced	76 (34.55%)	94 (42.73%)	30 (13.64%)	20 (9.09%)	3.03	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	My way of communication and interaction with my colleagues, friends and family were adjusted	65 (29.55%)	80 (36.36%)	55 (25.00%)	20 (9.09%)	2.86	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	I set scale of preference on what I do in my social life to reduce cost	66 (30.00%)	75 (34.09%)	61 (27.73%)	18 (8.18%)	2.86	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4	I maintain my physical and mental development during recession.	70 (31.82%)	65 (29.55%)	55 (25.00%)	30 (13.64%)	2.80	4 <sup>th</sup>
5	Skipping of meals	50 (22.73%)	70 (31.82%)	60 (27.27%)	40 (18.18%)	2.59	5 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Author's Analysis, 2021 (n=220).

Table 3 provided the solution adopted by the respondents to eradicate the challenges of economic recession on their teaching and learning of Biology. The quality of meals was highly reduced (mean was 3.03) is ranked first, while reduction in communication and interaction with colleagues and set scale of preference on what to do in social life to reduce cost took second and third ranks respectively. I maintain my physical and mental development during recession and skipping of meals ranked 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively.

### Discussion

This study has revealed the major causes of recession in Nigeria (Table 1) and it was in agreement with that of Ejezie, Oluchi, Uwakwe and Ukamaka (2017). It shows that too much dependence on crude oil, border closure in some parts of the country, high inflation rate or general rise in price indicates economic recession, problem of Fulani herdsmen killing and destroying farm products and general rise in terrorism, armed robbery, and kidnapping are indicators of economic recession. Total dependence on crude oil with 80.91% ranked first while general rise in terrorism, armed robbery, and kidnapping

ranked 5<sup>th</sup> at 73.18%. Agriculture which is supposed to be the next option has been destroyed by the Fulani herdsmen and those people working in the farms have also been killed by the terrorists and armed robbers. In any area where lives are not secure there will be no development.

The finding of the study as presented in Table 2 indicates that the economic crisis has drastically affected the education sector and performance of the students, 69.55 %. The effect of the economic recession on lifestyle of the students was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> according to the mean. Lifestyle of students was affected, that is group reading, peer group and communication among mates, 73.18% of the respondents. The teacher also attested that their purchasing power has dropped and as a result, it has affected the purchase of books and educational materials. This is in agreement with Adikwu (2008) that lack of funds stands out as the number one problem in the teaching and learning of core subjects. Table 2 showed that the loss of sense of direction and purpose during economic recession with mean of 2.93 ( $\pi = 2.93$ ) ranked third, while the effect on relationship and communication with family, friends and relatives with mean of 2.86 ( $\pi = 2.86$ ) ranked fourth. The Economic recession affects the wellbeing (health and income status) of students with mean of = 2.81 ( $\pi = 2.81$ ) ranked fifth.

The results indicate that respondents do not enjoy making plans and working to make them a reality as a result of the recession and that recession affects students' lifestyle (fashion, entertainment, peer groups, status). This implies that the economic recession ultimately affects students' sense of direction, lifestyles, behaviour, trust in financial institutions and overall well-being. Oyesiku (2009b) reported that over 4,000 Nigerian doctors practise in Canada, Europe and United States of America because of the effects of economic recession, causing brain drain which is a great loss for Nigeria. This corroborates the results of this study that economic recession affects students' sense of direction in terms of contributing to the development of the nation that has invested so much in their education.

Also, economic recession may as well affect how students handle their money, on a fixed

cost (e.g. books, transport, and food) or for leisure. This agrees with Kerim (2012) who reported that an assessment by the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) on how the impact of recession cripples students' finances concluded that 93% of students felt the effect of economic recession on their financial lives.

The research question 3, sought out the strategies for eradication of the challenges of economic recession on teaching and learning of Biology. Ejezie *et al.* (2017) submitted that the government should ensure that teachers' salaries are being regularly paid and up-to-date, ensure teachers are being trained and retrained and ensure adequate provision of equipment and infrastructure are made. According to them, adequately funded educational system, if genuinely promoted and honestly managed is capable of creating mass-fully developed human talents whose creative thinking would get any nation out of the economic crisis and permanently shut the door to its future occurrence. The respondents also suggested that teachers should improvise materials for teaching of practical Biology.

This finding is in agreement with the finding of Neziyana (2000) referenced by Ewetan (2013) in his study on the impact of global hardship on Nigerian students which suggested that the government should find possible ways to put to a stop the activities of Boko Haram. To address the threat to national security and combat the increasing waves of crime, Federal Government of Nigeria in the 2013 budget made a huge allocation to security, and the National Assembly passed the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011 (Ewetan, 2013). This finding also supported by Dogara (2012) referenced by Ejezie *et al.* (2017) who opined that science teachers should resort to improvisation in the production of some science equipment to reduce the impact of global economic crisis on teaching and learning of science. Some of the findings also suggested that the government should find solution to the problem created by Fulani herdsmen destroying farm product and other security challenge in the country

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This work considered the impact of economic crisis on teaching and learning of Biology. Economic crisis has affected all aspects of education delivery. Education, which is the foundation of development, ought not to be treated casually by its stakeholders. The findings vividly showed that the current economic crisis has resulted to a drop in government allocation to educational sector and this has negatively affected the teaching of Biology study, which is very important among science subjects. The government should diversify their revenue base and also be judicious in spending their earnings and allocations in order to overcome this financial crisis. Based on the above, the following recommendations were made:

- iv. Government should find possible ways to put to a stop the activities of Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen destroying farm products and killing of farmers to address the threat to national security and combat the increasing waves of crime.
- v. There is need for diversification of Nigeria revenue sources through improvement in solid minerals and agriculture and tourism sectors to boost the economy.
- vi. Teachers should be more innovative in the utilisation of some teaching aids and equipment needed for Biology subject.
- vii. Government should provide the necessary funds to reduce the effects of the crisis on educational development.
- viii. Government should ensure that teachers' salaries are adequately paid.
- ix. Concerted efforts and good attempts should be made by education stakeholders to maximise their allocated resources by the government.
- x. There should be reduction in the money spent on the political leaders.
- xi. Scholarship opportunities should be granted to students especially the less privileged.

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