

INSTITUTIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE AND CURRICULAR ACTIONS FOR POVERTY REDUCTION IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the extent to which institutional administrative and curricular actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian Universities. Two (2) research questions and 2 hypotheses were answered and tested in the study, respectively. The design for the study was the analytic descriptive survey, the population was 6 federal universities with education programmes in South-South Nigeria and sample was 210 academic staff, selected from the sample using the convenient, purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. The subjects of the study responded to a 22-item instrument titled 'Institutional Administrative and Curricular Action for Poverty Reduction Scale' (IACAPRS), designed by the researchers in the 4-point Likert scale model with a reliability index of 0.89, obtained using Cronbach Alpha statistical mode. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions while z-test was used in testing the hypothesis at .05 level of statistical significance. The results of the study showed that, institutional administrative and curricular actions assist in poverty reduction in South-south Nigerian Universities to a high extent and also established no significant and significant differences on the mean ratings of male and female and less experienced and experienced academic staff on the extent to which institutional administrative and curricular actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities. The study concluded that institutional administrative and curricular actions are viable instrumentalities for confronting poverty in South-South Nigerian universities. Consequently, the study recommended that, institutions should continue to make use of the already identified instrumentalities for confronting poverty while also making efforts to identify new ones for utilization in order to maintain and increase the tempo of poverty reduction.

Keywords: Institutional, Administrative actions, Curricular Actions, Poverty Reduction, Universities.

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INTRODUCTION

Since May 29, 2023, on which date it is set aside after every four years as handover and take-over ritual in Nigeria's political life with the return of civil rule in Nigeria since 1999, Nigeria as a nation has not been the same, when considered from the economic and social points or perspectives. What used to be a day of celebration became what most Nigerian consider as the beginning of anti-people economic and social darkness. The particular day in question was when Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu was sworn in as Nigeria's 15th leader, since independence in 1960 and as the eighth person as a democratic leader. As most Nigerians know, the most remarkable aspect of the 2023 hand-over and take-over ritual was an aspect of the inaugural speech of the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu that; subsidy is gone which signaled the removal of oil subsidy.

Since that day, the official price of fuel jumped from One Hundred and Eighty-Nine Naira (N189.00) to Five Hundred and Ninety-One Naira (N591) and in late August 2024, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) once again increased the pump price to Eight Hundred and Ninety-Seven Naira (N897.00). Today, a litre of petrol goes for between N1,200.00 and N2,000. Apart from the increase in fuel pump price, the Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration had increased electricity tariffs by more than 200% in the early part of 2024. Also, the price of cooking gas has been going up and down between one thousand naira (N1,000.00) and two thousand naira (N2,000.00) in the past.

Arising from the foregoing antecedents, Nigeria has not been the same again. On a daily basis, people complain of poverty, hardship and lack of food. There is also increase in the cost of movement of goods, service and people from one place to another by land, air, water and rail, as a result of the high cost of petroleum products and not forgetting the alarming rate of unemployment and insecurity, that finally results in poverty, which Haralambos and Healds (2001) consider as a social problem and which Oxford Languages (2024) considered as the state of being extremely poor or the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material resources (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024). These and others may have led to the End Bad Governance protest of August, 2024.

The foregoing presentations have been on the state of Nigeria. In societal studies, it is considered that, socially-laden problems that take place in society find routes into the various organizations and groups in the society. As S. B. Nwideeduh (Personal Communication, September 02, 2019) explained positive and negative vibrations from society do also lead to positive and negative vibration in schools. In quite a different perspective, S. O Oluwuo (Personal Communication, August 21, 2020) observes that, most of the social vices perpetuated in schools have their roots from the larger society. In line with the foregoing presentation, the poverty in the larger Nigerian society has crept into the Nigerian school system. Encounters with most students in institution of higher education show that, some students go to schools without food, repeat clothing materials, do not have money to buy instructional resources like books and other school materials among them computers and android phones, which they (students) should use for browsing and other Information and Communication Technology (ICT) activities. These among others result in poor performance on the part of the students and present managerial and curricular problems to school management, their teachers, other stakeholders in education and the general society.

As it is in educational management and the general field of management, as they relate to the entire society and organizations, management is inevitable and important because resources are not in abundant supplies, hence the need to make do with the resources that are available (Ebong

& Agabi, 2004; Abraham, 2024) educational managers must therefore look for means to handle the issues of poverty as they relate to the school system. This study was planned to handle these roles of the institutions in handling the issues of poverty reduction in schools. Poverty reduction refers to efforts made by individuals, groups, organization and governments to cut down on the level of poverty in entities. (O. Obasanjo, Personal Communication, September 20, 2000). For Barden (2009), poverty reduction means to lift up the people from the level of poverty and promotion in their economic conditions. As can be seen, poverty is a multi-faceted and multi-group action which must be handled through joint efforts, whether in the larger society or in organizations like schools. As the scourge connects the school system, internal and external stakeholders are expected to put up certain actions in order to contain the dysfunctional effects of poverty in schools, as it has the capability of lowering standards of administration and teaching. In order to prepare for this, the proceeding sections of the review will be on the efforts institution should make to confront poverty in schools. These actions are classified into two and they are administrative and curricular. Thus;

Institutional Administrative Action for Poverty Reduction in Schools

One recognized type of action to curb poverty in educational institutions is the use of administrative actions. Administrative actions are the legal action concerning the conduct of a public administrative body (European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights, ECCHR, 2024). For the Centre, administrative action can lead to the reversal of certain decisions by public bodies or compel an authority to take certain decisions.

However, for an administrative action to be accepted as prepared, it must have full backing of the law (I. S. Afangideh, Personal Communication, September 01, 2024). In schools whether in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, administrative actions for poverty reduction are considered to be administrative actions and decisions that ameliorate the effects of poverty in schools. On this, educational scholars and researchers among them Gorski (2008) and Parret and Budge (2015). In the thinking or position of Gorski (2008), administrative actions to reduce poverty in schools include encouraging educators to become knowledgeable about issues relating to eliminating poverty, joining forces with others who advocate for social reforms, joining forces with others who advocate for economic reforms, summoning courage to do the much needed work closer home in their schools and summoning courage to do the much needed work closer to home in their respective communities. As for Gorski (2007), schools that want to reduce poverty should come up with the will to fight poverty in their schools, create a situation where every stakeholder works with the schools to make parents involvements affordable and convenient for providing transportation, on-site childcare and time flexibility, keep stock of school supplies, snacks, clothes and other basic necessities handy for students who may need them and find quiet ways to distribute resources to avoid singling any one out. For Parret and Budge (2015), schools should fight to get their children into gifted and talented programmes to give them opportunities, usually reserved for economically advantaged students and keep them from being assigned to special education, continue to reach out to parents even when they feel they are being unresponsive to establish trust and challenges colleagues, when they stigmatize poor students and their parents reminding them of the inequitable conditions in our schools and classrooms.

Institutional Curricular Activities for Poverty Reduction in Schools

In the preceding presentation, efforts were made to roll out the administrative actions for poverty reduction in schools. However, since administrative actions alone cannot solve the problems associated with poverty, scholars and researchers have looked the other way. Based on this alternative thinking, curricular actions become viable alternatives. Curricular activities are academic activities that typically occur within the walls of a classroom and are part of a school curriculum (Splashlearn, 2024). They are basically subject-specific learning, encompass different modes of evaluation and work to improve students numeric and language literacy if at the elementary level. They are what teachers teach learners in the course of introducing them to the knowledge, skills and values of their various societies. In the fight against poverty in schools, schools through their agents (teachers) are expected to condition their academic activities in manners that they will help in reducing the dysfunctional effects of poverty on the school system and stakeholders.

Parret and Budge (2015) listed such action to include assigning works requiring a computer and internet access or other costly resources only when they can provide in school time and materials for such work to be completed, educating students to a high standard to eliminate poverty, giving students from poverty homes access to the same high level of curricular and pedagogical opportunities and high expectations as their wealthy peers, teaching students about classism, consumer culture, the dissolution of the labour union, environmental pollution and other injustices. From Barr and Parret (2007) and Education Trust (2002), there is need to develop curricular that are relevant and meaning to our students lives and draw on their experiences and surroundings. While Teddlie and Strongfield (1993) offered that teachers need to challenge themselves, their bias and prejudices by educating themselves about the cycle of poverty and classroom in and out of the school.

An analysis on the two different presentations in the literature show that, the information came basically from theoretical sources and those that came from empirical sources are not connected to South-South Nigerian. Hence, the gap which the result of this study will fill.

Statement of the Problem

Arising from the excruciating effects of economic hardship on Nigerians, which has led to widespread poverty and which has also affected organizations like schools, stakeholders in education and the business of educating hold the opinion that some specific institutional administrative and curricular actions are needed if schools must help reduce the effects of the scourge of poverty in schools. As a results, stakeholders in school administration and teaching make efforts through adopting some administrative and curricular measures in carrying out their functions. Surprisingly, instead of these actions to help alleviate poverty in schools, those traces of poverty are still prevalent as observations, discussions, scholarly opinions and comments from stakeholders show. This calls to question whether the administrative and curricular actions do not have the capabilities to reduce poverty in schools. The continuous prevalence of poverty in schools bothered the researchers who then came up with the need to find explanations to the extents to which institutional administrative and curricular actions can assist in poverty reduction in universities. Hence the study.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study examined the extent to which administrative and curricular actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities. In specific terms, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To determine the extent to which administrative actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities.
- To ascertain the extent to which curricular assist in poverty in South-South Nigerian universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

- To what extent do administrative actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities?
- To what extent do curricular actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study at .05 level of statistical significance:

- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff on the extent to which administrative action assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities.
- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of less-experienced and experienced academic staff on the extent to which curricular actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities.

METHODS

The design for the study was the analytic descriptive survey, the population as the six (6) Federal Universities in South-South Nigeria with Education programmes and sample as 210 academic staff selected from the population, the purposive convenient and stratified random sampling techniques. Respondents of the study responded to a 22-item Institutional Administrative and Curricular Actions for Poverty Reduction Scale (IACAPRS), designed by the researchers in the modified 4-point Likert scale model of Very High Extent (VHE) High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) with a reliability index of .89, obtained using Cronbach Alpha statistical model. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions while z-test was used in testing the hypotheses at .05 level of alpha significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent do institutional administrative actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian Universities?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on Mean Ratings of Male and Female Academic Staff on the Extent Institutional Administrative Action Assist in Poverty Reduction in South-South Nigerian Universities

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES					Remark
		\bar{X}_1	SD_1	\bar{X}_2	SD_2	$\bar{X}\bar{X}$	
1	School encouragement of educators to become knowledgeable about issues relating to poverty is one way to reduce poverty in schools	2.79	0.49	2.71	0.48	2.75	HE
2	Institutional mergers with people who advocate for social reforms can reduce poverty in schools	2.76	0.56	2.90	0.45	2.83	HE
3	Institutional collaboration with people who advocate for economic reforms can reduce poverty in schools	2.88	0.43	2.78	0.50	2.83	HE
4	Summoning courage to do needed works that are closer to homes in schools can reduce the effects of poverty	2.86	0.44	2.69	0.54	2.78	HE
5	Summoning courage to do need work closer to homes in their respective communities can reduce the level of poverty in schools	2.60	0.59	3.11	0.32	2.86	HE
6	Schools that desire to fight poverty should muster the right will to fight poverty	2.74	0.58	2.80	0.40	2.77	HE
7	Creating of opportunities for school stakeholders to work together with parents can reduce the amount of poverty in schools	2.68	0.64	2.59	0.59	2.64	HE
8	Keeping stocks of school supplies for members consumption can reduce poverty	2.90	0.53	2.79	0.59	2.64	HE
9	Ensuring equitable distribution of stocked school resources can reduce poverty in schools	3.00	0.29	3.01	0.28	3.01	HE
10	Getting talented children from poor families to gifted school can reduce the level of poverty in schools	2.89	0.44	2.99	0.50	2.94	HE
11	School authorities continuing contacts with parents can reduce the effect of poverty on students	2.66	0.69	2.89	0.52	2.78	HE
12	Directly confronting colleagues who stigmatize children from less affluent home can reduce the effects of poverty in schools	2.59	0.70	2.88	0.53	3.24	HE
$\bar{A}\bar{X}\bar{X}$		2.87	0.53	2.85	0.46	2.86	HE

Data on Table 1 show that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11 had weighted mean ratings between 2.01 and 3.00 and were considered as administrative actions that can assist in poverty reduction in universities to a high extent. Differently, item 9 and 12, had weighted mean rating with the range of 3.01 and 4.00 and were considered as the administrative actions that can assist in poverty reduction in universities to a very high extent. Summarily, with an aggregate weighted mean of 2.86 within the scale of measurement range of 2.01 and 3.00, male and female academic

staff agreed that institutional administrative action assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian Universities to a high extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent do the institutional curricular actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Mean Ratings of Less-Experienced and Experienced Academic Staff on the Extent to which Institutional Curricular Actions Assist in Poverty Reduction in South-South Nigerian Universities

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES					Remark
		\bar{X}_1	SD_1	\bar{X}_2	SD_2	$\bar{X}\bar{X}$	
13	Assigning school works requiring Information Communication Technology facilities to be handled in schools in a poverty reduction measure for those from less affluent homes	3.20	0.22	3.11	0.23	3.16	VHE
14	Educating students to a high standard is capable of dominating the influence of poverty in schools	2.70	0.39	2.81	0.36	2.76	HE
15	Affording children from poverty-stricken homes access to the same high level of curricular pedagogical opportunities assuage the feeling of the effects of poverty	2.65	0.42	2.61	0.41	2.57	HE
16	Teaching students about classism can improve their understanding of poverty in organizations	2.53	0.42	2.61	0.41	2.57	HE
17	Teaching students about consumer culture education will affect their attitude towards consumption of products in schools	3.88	0.21	3.09	0.21	3.49	VHE
18	Teaching students about environmental education will expose them to the root of poverty in society	2.89	0.35	2.83	0.32	2.86	HE
19	Teaching students social justice is a poverty reduction strategy in schools	2.61	0.43	2.87	0.32	2.59	HE
20	Teaching students about the dissolution of the labour union can educate them on the effects of poverty	2.78	0.33	2.69	0.35	2.74	HE
21	Developing a curricular that has meaning to the students sensibilities is capable of reducing poverty in schools	3.01	0.32	3.21	0.30	3.11	VHE
22	Scholars deliberate efforts to learn about the cycle of poverty help them in handling students from various economic backgrounds in schools	2.11	0.49	2.42	0.42	2.27	HE
$\bar{A}\bar{X}\bar{X}$		2.84	0.36	3.08	0.33	2.82	HE

Data on Table 2 show that items 13, 17 and 21 had weighted mean ratings between 3.01 and 4.00, showing that those curricular actions assist in poverty reduction in universities to a very high extent. Differently, items 14, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 20 had mean ratings within the range of 2.01 and 3.00 showing that those items assist in poverty reduction to a high extent.

Summarily, with an aggregate weighted mean of 2.82, within the range of 2.01 and 3.00, less-experienced and experienced academic staff responded that institutional curricular actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities to a high extent.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff on the extent to which institutional administrative actions assists in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities.

Table 3: Summary of z-test Analysis of the Difference between the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Academic Staff on the Extent to which Institutional Administrative Actions assist in Poverty Reduction in South-South Nigerian Universities

Variable	N	\bar{X}	Std.	Df	z-cal	Sig. value	Alpha value	Result
Less-Experienced Academic Staff	140	2.87	0.53	208	.29	0.35	0.05	Not Significant (failed to reject)
Experienced Academic Staff	60	2.85	0.46					

Data on Table 3 presents the summary of z-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff on the extent to which institutional administrative actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities. With 210 respondents, the calculated z-value used in testing the hypotheses resulted in .29, using 208 degrees of freedom, 0.35 significant value, at 0.05 alpha level of significance. At 0.05 level of alpha significance, 0.35 significance value, and 208 degree of freedom, the z-calculated value of 0.29 is accepted because the significant value of 0.35 is greater than the alpha value of 0.05. Hence there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the respondents. Based on these observations, the researcher accepted the hypothesis that, there is a significant different between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff on the extent to which institutional administrative actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of less-experienced and experienced academic staff on the extent to which Institutional curricular actions assists in poverty reduction in South-south Nigerian Universities.

Table 4: Summary of z-test Analysis of the Difference between the Mean Ratings of Less Experienced and Experienced Academic Staff on the Extent to which Institutional Curricular Actions Assist in Poverty Reduction in South-South Nigerian Universities

Variable	N	\bar{X}	Std.	df	z-cal	Sig. value	Alpha value	Result
Less-Experienced Academic Staff	89	2.87	0.36	208	5.00	0.00	0.05	Significant (Reject)
Experienced Academic Staff	21	2.08	0.33					

Data on Table 4 present the summary of z-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of less experienced and experienced academic staff on the extent to which institutional curricular actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities. With the total number of respondents as 210, the z-calculated value used in testing the hypothesis resulted in 5.00, using 208 degrees of freedom, 0.00 significant values at 0.05 alpha level of significance. At 0.00 significant values, 0.05 level of alpha significance and 208 degree of freedom, the calculated z-value of 5.00 is rejected because the significant value of 0.00 is less than the alpha

value of 0.05, Hence, there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of the respondents. Based on the observation, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative that, there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of less-experienced and experienced academic staff on the extent to which institutional curricular actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities.

DISCUSSION

Institutional Administrative Actions for Poverty Reduction in South-South Nigerian Universities

The first finding of the study is that institutional administrative actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities to a high extent. This finding agrees with Gorski (2008), Parret and Budge (2015), Gorski (2007) and Barr and Parret (2007). These scholars and researchers have in their scholarly and empirical contributions to knowledge establish that, institutional administrative actions assist in poverty reduction in schools. A possible explanation for the finding may be in the fact that, quite very recently administrative efforts in educational institutions have directed at inclusivity which preaches social justice and integration of individuals in groups. Surprisingly, a corresponding finding from test of hypothesis establishes a no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff on the extent to which institutional administrative actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities. These latter finding negates the position of Gorski (2008), Parret and Budge (2015), Gorski (2007) and Barr and Parret (2007). A possible explanation for this difference in output may be in the fact that, the statistical instrument used was out to test for significance which came out as not significant. However, this result does not invalidate the fact that, institutional administrative actions assist in poverty reduction in educational institutions. These findings imply that, universities that want to reduce the incidence of poverty school adapt and implement appropriate administrative actions.

Institutional Curricular Actions for Poverty Reduction in South-South Nigerian Universities

The second finding of the study is that institutional curricular actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigeria to a high extent. Also, a corresponding finding from test of hypothesis established a significant difference between the mean ratings of less- experienced and experienced academic staff on the extent to which institutional curricular actions assist in poverty reduction in South-South Nigerian universities. These findings are in tandem with results and comments from Parret and Budge (2015), Barr and Parret (2007), Education Trust (2002) and Teddlie and Strongfield (1993). These scholars and researchers have made imprints on the fact that, curricular actions assist in poverty reduction in schools'. Explanations for the foregoing findings may be in the fact that arising from the scourge of poverty in schools. Teachers have been urged to integrate elements of poverty education in their teaching activities, and they appear to be adhering to such instructions. The findings imply that, universities with reduced impacts of poverty integrate poverty reduction variable in their teaching materials and actions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of the study, it is concluded that institutional administrative and curricular actions are strong instrumentalities for confronting and reducing poverty in South-south Nigerian universities.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, it is recommended as follows:

- Universities leaders should continue to make use of appropriate administrative actions for continuous poverty reduction while also identifying new actions.
- Institutional curriculum implementers should continue to use the identified curricular strategies for poverty reduction while also identifying new ones for use in order to sustain the tempo of poverty reduction in schools.

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