Perceived Influence of the Growing Inflation on Undergraduate Students' Learning Processes in Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Inflation is an inevitable property of any nation that affects all sectors of the economy across board such as the rise in prices of valuable items for human survival, many affected undergraduates dropping out from the university system, mass failure, and death as a result of anger and starvation. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This study specifically explores undergraduates' opinions on the perceived influence of the growing inflation on their learning process in universities, identify the causes of inflation as perceived by undergraduates in universities, identify possible solutions to ameliorate the impact of inflation on undergraduates' learning processes in universities and determine the perceived influence of inflation on learning resources that enhance their learning processes based on school type in Kwara state. Three research questions were formulated and one hypothesis was postulated respectively. The population for this study comprised all undergraduates in universities in Kwara State, the target population were undergraduates of one private university, one state-owned university and one federal university that were purposively selected, all located in Kwara State. A simple random sampling technique was used to sample undergraduates (respondents) for this study. The results showed that students strongly agreed that inflation has an adverse influence on learning processes and that they need to enhance their learning activities in universities at Kwara State. Undergraduates also considered the increase in the cost of transportation, and persistent increase in the cost of food and wears as significant causes of inflation and providing alternative means of transportation, and investing in the production of competitive goods and services are the possible solutions of inflation identified by the students. The result also showed that $F_{(2,197)} = 1.009$, $p > .05$. This study concluded that the undergraduates in public and private universities in Kwara State, Nigeria perceived inflation as having adverse effects on learning processes.

KEYWORDS: Perceived, Growing, Inflation, Undergraduates, Learning processes

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Education is the greatest investment that the nation can make for the quick development of its economic potential, political orientation, and sociological and human resources. It is the most important instrument of change, or fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society can be preceded by educational revolution (Ejiogu 2022). Adegoke (2023) defined inflation as a sustained or continuous rise in the general price level or, alternatively, as a sustained or continuous fall in the value of money. Several things should be noted about this definition. Inflation refers to the movement in the general level of prices. It does not refer to changes in one price relative to other prices. These changes are common even when the overall level of prices is stable. The rise in the price level must be somewhat substantial and continue over a period longer than a day, week, or month.

Inflation is the rate of increase in prices over a given period of time. Inflation is typically a broad measure, such as the overall increase in prices or the increase in the cost of living in a country. But it can also be more narrowly calculated for certain goods, such as food, or for services, such as a haircut, for example. Whatever the context, inflation represents how much more expensive the relevant set of goods and/or services has become over a certain period, most commonly a year. It is the persistent increase in the general price level within the economy that affects the value of the domestic currency (Fatukasi, 2023). Inflation is a continuous exercise that affects all sectors of the economy across board such as the rise in prices needed items for human survival. Inflation can be defined as a hike in prices as measured by an index such as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or by the implicit price deflator for Gross National Product (GNP). Inflation is frequently described as a state where "too much money is charged to few goods" when there is inflation in any nation, the currency loses its purchasing power. (Balogun, 2020).

Fakiyesi (2023) said that those two causes of inflation have been identified, namely, demand-pull and cost-push. Demand-pull inflation is caused by an increase in the conditions of demand. This could either be an increase in the ability to buy goods or an increase in the willingness to do so. Cost-push inflation arises from anything that causes the conditions of supply to decrease. Some of these factors include a rise in the cost of production, an increase in government taxation, and a decrease in the quantity of goods produced. Asogu (2021) focused on the econometric investigation of the nature and causes of inflation in Nigeria. The study found that an increase in real GDP or supply situation, especially food, and low cost of production of consumables tended to ameliorate inflation. He added that an increase in government expenditures – deficit financing tends to increase the money supply and worsen the depreciation of the exchange rate, which in turn intensifies the inflationary pressure. The monetary model does not adequately explain the inflation process in Nigeria.

Fakiyesi (2023) identified the major determinants of inflation in Nigeria using data from 1960 to 1994, The growth in real income and the level of rainfall were significant in explaining the movement of inflation in Nigeria; while Onwioduokit (2022) showed that fiscal deficit causes inflation in Nigeria and that it takes at least two years to impact on inflation. Masha (2023) indicated that inflation in Nigeria is driven by both the demand and the supply. The demand-side

pressures arise from changes in monetary aggregates, while the supply-side pressures arise from the salient characteristics of the economy including climatic conditions, the structure of production, currency devaluations, wage increases, and changes in terms of trade. Balogun (2020) opined that, over the years students across tertiary institutions especially those in the universities face serious problems with the items needed on campus to enhance their studies, such materials needed are adequate food items, reading materials, hostel accommodation, internet facilities, and many more.

Adegoke (2023) stated that many students dropped out of university as a result of poverty. This indicated that his parents could not provide the items he needed to have good access to sound education as a result of inflation in the country. Daramola (2019) stated that many students were out of school as a result of constant inflation while some were out of school because they could not pay their school fees when the need arose. He further stated that the following are the implications of inflation on education which affects the learning processes of students, includes: - Mass failure, Death as a result of anger and starvation, sickness, dropping out of school, expelled from school (students with low grades) and joining of the bad gang as a result of peer influence or poverty.

Learning is the process of acquiring new understanding, knowledge, behaviors, skills, values, attitudes, and preferences. Balogun (2020) stated that there are four predominant learning styles: these include visual, auditory, read/write, and kinesthetic. An undergraduate who lives on campus needs food, clothes, textbooks, reading materials and some other valuable things that would make learning processes easier for them, with the advent of hyperinflation across board makes things difficult on campus and outside the campus. He further gave the example of hyperinflation in the society, a notebook that was sold at the rate of two hundred naira Nigeria money in 2023 now selling at the rate of one thousand naira Nigeria money respectively, consequently, this is one hundred percent inflation which could eventually affect the needs of many students across board.

Roubini and Sala (2023) stated that students perceived inflation in the country as a major problem that affects all knocks and crannies of economic sectors in Nigeria. On the other hand, the income of most parents could no longer commiserate to take care of their wards on campus. They further said that inflation in any situation results in economic hardship for the people living in that area, consequently, the perception of students on the current growing inflation in the country is a disaster for the educational system of Nigeria. Karras (2024) pointed out that the current inflation in Nigeria emanated from the removal of oil subsidies by the current regime and this affects all kinds of economic sectors, such as transportation fees that are high by one hundred percent, food items prices increased tremendously while students that can no longer afford to pay for it. Lastly, food items are extremely expensive everywhere and reading materials are no longer easy to purchase for students at all tertiary institutions across board.

1.1 Types of inflation on undergraduates' learning processes

Creeping Inflation occurs when the rise in price is very slow. A sustained annual rise in prices of less than 3 per cent per annum falls under this category. Walking inflation occurs when prices rise moderately and annual inflation rate is a single digit. This occurs when the rate of rise in prices is

in the intermediate range of 3 to less than 10 per cent. Inflation of this rate is a warning signal for the government to control it before it turns into running inflation. Running Inflation takes place when prices rise rapidly at the rate of 10 to 20 per cent per annum, it is called running inflation. This type of inflation has tremendous adverse effects on the poor and middle class. Its control requires strong monetary and fiscal measures. Hyperinflation occurs when prices rise very fast at double- or triple-digit rates. This could get to a situation where the inflation rate can no longer be measurable and absolutely uncontrollable. Prices could rise many times every day. Such a situation brings a total collapse of the monetary system because of the continuous fall in the purchasing power of money. Abdullahi (2020) stated that it's a known fact that based on the prevalence of hyperinflation in the country, undergraduates in universities are facing serious problems in achieving the desired goals in terms of their learning processes which eventually leads to dismissal, dropping out from the university system, mass failure and sudden death as a result of anger and starvation.

1.2 Marx and inflation theory

Micheal and Schauerte (1774) Marx's treatment started with the economic law that the use of a particular commodity to serve as the money commodity, e.g., gold or silver, rests on the fact that the commodity like all other commodities is an embodiment of value, the amount of "socially necessary labour required to produce it. The conversion of value into price takes place through the minting of coins of uniform weight and purity. The next stage in Marxian monetary theory was based on the proposition, confirmed by long experience, that with a given total volume of production and buying-and-selling transactions. What Marx put forward was that the total value of needed currency represented a total mass of value, and therefore a total weight, of gold, and that if the total of gold is replaced by inconvertible paper money and the paper money is then issued in excess, prices will go up. If the paper money is in excess, if there is more of it than represents the amount of gold coins of like denomination which could be current.

The inflationary period in this nation has become a social issue. Even though the working class in society does not find things easy because the take-home salary cannot take care of the entire family. On the other hand, many parents of undergraduates. Onah (2019) opined that the quantity and type of goods and services purchasable by individuals at any point in time have always been inflated by marketers. The undergraduates in society are unable to purchase the quantity of materials needed during inflation. Income earners especially those with fixed income and very poor ones in society find it difficult to match with the increasing prices of goods. This continues long hike in prices and there is a fall in the purchasing power of the undergraduates, more value of money is being required by the undergraduates for the purpose of materials needed in school during an inflationary period as opposed to normal economic situations. This brings about a decline in purchasing the items needed for learning processes. There is a large gap between the income of fixed-income earners and profit earners because the income of profit earners rises with the rising prices of materials as opposed to those of fixed-income earners. During this hard time (inflationary), very hard for parents to provide food stuff, clothes for their wards in school, people tend to satisfy their wards in terms of what they need to make the learning process easier in tertiary institutions across board in the country so that those wards would have a good result at the end of

their studies. Many researches have been written on the parent's economic hardship in the society, but there is no research on the perceived influence of inflation on undergraduate learning processes in universities in Kwara State, Nigeria while this is the gap this research intends to fill.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to assess students' perceived influence of inflation on the material needs of undergraduates in public and private universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. explore undergraduates' opinions on the perceived influence of the growing inflation on their learning process in universities in Kwara State.
2. identify the causes of inflation as perceived by undergraduates in universities in Kwara State.
3. identify possible solutions to ameliorate the impact of inflation on undergraduates' learning processes in universities in Kwara State.
4. determine the perceived influence of inflation on learning resources that enhance their learning processes based on school type.

1.3 Research Questions

In order to achieve the stated objectives of this study, the following research questions were raised:

1. What is the perceived influence of inflation on undergraduate students' learning processes in universities in Kwara State?
2. What are the causes of inflation on undergraduate students' learning processes in universities in Kwara State?
3. What are possible solutions to curb inflation on undergraduate students' learning processes in universities in Kwara State?

1.4 Research Hypothesis

H_0: There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of inflation on undergraduates learning resources that enhance their learning processes on the basis of school type.

2.0 METHODS

2.1 Study Design and Population

The study adopted descriptive survey research that focus on the analysis of the perceived influence of the growing inflation on undergraduate students in universities in Kwara state, Nigeria. The population for this study consists of all undergraduates of universities in Kwara State while the targeted population consists of undergraduates of one (1) federal university, one (1) state university, and one (1) private university making three universities that were purposively selected for this study.

2.2 Participants

The simple random sampling technique was used to sample undergraduates for this study. Three hundred (300) level and four hundred (400) level students were used because they have stayed in the university for a longer period of time, meanwhile, they had known much about the resources they need in school and only two hundred (200) respondents were randomly sampled. Seventy-five (75) respondents were sampled from the University of Ilorin, seventy-five (75) respondents were also sampled from Kwara State University while fifty (50) respondents were sampled from Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin respectively. The researcher visited the three universities that were purposively selected to seek permission for access to their various lecture rooms. The researcher with the aid of the research assistants went around the institutions selected to administer the questionnaire.

2.3 Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was adopted and designed in such a way that the undergraduates were required to tick options in items that were mostly appropriate to them. The questionnaire consists of three (3) sections, A, B, and C. Section A deals with the influence of inflation on the material needs of undergraduates. Section B deals with the causes of inflation on the material needs of undergraduates. Section C deals with the possible solution to curb inflation on the material needs of undergraduates. All the items in ections B, and C, were prepared on a response of 3 scales (I.e., Agree, not sure, and Disagree). The validity of the instrument is how well it fulfills the functions for which it is being used or the degree to which a test actually measures what it intends to measure and how it does so (Boyd, Levine, Ross & Smith (2022). To ascertain the validity of the instrument, drafts of the questionnaire were made available to at least four (4) lecturers in the Department of Social Sciences Education for scrutiny and comment on the items that addressed each of the sub-sections in the questionnaire. The researcher went back to adjust the items in the questionnaire, in line with the corrections made by the lecturers. The reliability of the instrument is the extent to which the instrument that was used yielded the same result on repeated trials. The test-retest method was employed. The reliability of the instrument was carried out by administering the instrument to 3 universities.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis was done with descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage, mean and SD as well as an inferential statistic of One-way Analysis of Variance was used to analyze data for the study. The mean and SD were used to answer research questions 1 to 3. Also, One Way Analysis of Variance was used to test the only one null hypothesis postulated in the study and it was tested at a 0.05 level of significance. All the analyses were done with the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

3.0 RESULTS

Research Question 1. What is the perceived influence of inflation on undergraduate students' learning processes in universities in Kwara State?

Table 1: Undergraduates perceived influence of inflation on learning processes

S/N	Perceived Influence	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Inability to afford quality hostel due to rise in the price of hostel rent	3.7	0.5	1st
2	Lateness to school as a result of the high cost of transportation	3.7	0.5	1st
3	Inflation in the price of certain commodities affects student's ability to purchase other material needs	3.7	0.5	1st
4	Inability to purchase laboratory materials needed for learning as a result of hike in price of materials	3.6	0.5	6th
5	Poor studying as a result of inability to purchase books due to the rise in price	3.6	0.5	6th
6	Poor academic performance resulting from the high cost of reading materials	3.6	0.5	6th
7	An increase in food prices affects student's performance/ability to feed well	3.7	0.5	1st
8	The inability to afford reading materials due to the rise in cost affects student's ability to read effectively	3.7	0.5	1st
9	Inflation of material needs reduces access to the food supply	3.6	0.5	6th
10	Congestion in the hostel results from inflation in the price of hostels	3.5	0.6	10th
	Weighted Mean	**3.6**		

Key: 1.00-1.50= Strongly Disagree, 1.60-2.50= Disagree, 2.60-3.50= Agree, 3.60.4.00=Strongly Agree

The result in Table 1 shows undergraduates' perceived influence of inflation on the learning processes that students need to enhance their learning activities in universities in Kwara State. It is shown that students strongly agreed that inflation has adversely influenced the price of hostels, cost of transportation, price of commodities, food price, cost of reading materials, laboratory materials, books, and materials such as food, and as well agreed that it has affected the cost of hostels. This has in turn resulted in their inability to afford quality hostel, lateness to school, inability to purchase other material needs, adversely affects student's performance/ability to feed well, inability to afford reading materials, etc. The overall weighted mean of 3.6 indicated that students strongly agreed that inflation has an adverse influence on learning resources that they need to enhance their learning activities in universities in Kwara State.

Research Question 2: What are the causes of inflation on undergraduate students' learning processes in universities, Kwara State?

Table 2: Perceived causes of inflation in learning processes.

S/N	Causes	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Increase in student population	2.3	0.9	7th
2	Persistent increase in the cost of food and wears	3.4	0.7	2nd
3	Scarcity of fuel	3.0	0.8	5th
4	Hike in the price of fuel as a result of scarcity	3.2	0.7	3rd
5	Increased cost of transportation	3.5	0.6	1st
6	High electricity tariff	3.1	0.8	4th
7	Lack of maximum security of goods and services to prevent theft	2.4	1.2	6th
	Weighted Mean	**3.0**		

The result in Table 2 shows that the causes of inflation as perceived by the undergraduate students. In this result, the causes with the mean value higher or equal to the weighted mean of 3.0 are considered as significant. Therefore, as shown in Table, increased cost of transportation is ranked first with a mean of 3.5 and SD of 0.6 while persistent increase in cost of food and wears is ranked 2nd with a mean of 3.4 and SD of 0.7. Also, the hike in the price of fuel as a result of scarcity, high electricity tariff, and scarcity of fuel are respectively ranked 3rd, 4th, and 5th with mean values of 3.2, 3.1, and 3.0 while their respective SD values are 0.7, 0.8, and 0.8.

Research Question 3: What are possible solutions to curb inflation on undergraduate students' learning processes in universities in Kwara State?

Table 3: Possible solutions to curb inflation on learning processes

S/N	Possible Solutions	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Managing the admission process to curb the increasing population	3.0	1.0	6th
2	Investing in the production of competitive goods and services	3.5	0.7	1st
3	Adequate supply of fuel	3.4	0.7	3rd
4	Ensuring price control of fuel, especially during scarcity	3.3	0.7	4th
5	Providing alternative means of transportation	3.5	0.6	1st
6	Monitoring power supply companies to ensure that tariffs are moderate	3.1	0.8	5th
7	Provision of a security force saddled with the responsibility to ensure that goods and services are protected	2.4	1.2	7th
	Weighted Mean	**3.2**		

The result in Table 3 shows the possible solutions to curb inflation to learning processes in the universities and to enhance undergraduate students' learning activities. The items with the mean value higher or equal to the weighted mean of 3.2 are considered as significant. As shown in Table 3 it provides alternative means of transportation, and investing in the production of competitive goods and services are ranked 1st with the mean of 3.5 and SD of 0.6 and 0.7 while adequate supply of fuel is ranked 3rd with a mean of 3.4 and SD of 0.7. Also, ensuring price control of fuel, especially during scarcity is ranked 4th among other possible solutions with a mean value of 3.3 and SD value of 0.7.

Testing of Research Hypothesis

H$_0$: There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of inflation on undergraduates learning resources that enhance their learning processes on the basis of school type.

Table 4: One-way analysis of variance test of significant difference in students' perceived influence of inflation on learning resources on the basis of school type.

Source of Variance	SS	Df	MS	F	P	Decision
Between Groups	.172	2	.086			Do not reject
Within Groups	16.812	197	.085	1.009	.366	Ho$_1$
Total	16.984	199				

Table 4 shows a one–way between–group analysis of variance conducted to explore the difference in students' perceived influence of inflation on learning resources that students need to enhance their learning activities based on school type. It can be observed that there was no statistically significant difference in how students in private, federal, and state universities perceived the influence of inflation on learning resources as determined by one-way ANOVA (F ($2,197$) = 1.009, p >.05 (p = .366). This result therefore shows that there was no significant difference in students' perceived influence of inflation on learning resources that students need to enhance their learning activities based on school type.

4.0 DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed that undergraduates strongly agreed that inflation has an adverse influence on the learning processes because they need to enhance their learning activities in universities in Kwara State so far, the needed learning materials are available for them always. Inflation describes a situation of persistent increase in the general price level within the economy and consequently affects the value of the domestic currency. It is evident from the findings that perceived inflation has adversely affected the prices of goods and other commodities and has in turn resulted in their inability to afford quality hostel, lateness to school, inability to purchase other material needed for learning processes on campus, adversely affects student's performance/ability to feed well, inability to afford reading materials, etc. The finding is consistent with findings of Bruno and Easterly (2020) that inflation does influence the prices of goods and services within the economy. It is a known fact that inflation tends to put a burden on an individual in society as well as reduce the purchasing power of money. Students as members of society also feel the heat imposed by increases in general price level as prices of all their learning resources have to jump

up and most of the time contribute to their experience of hardship and thereby result in living below expectations.

The findings of the study also showed that students considered the increased cost of transportation students, persistent increase in the cost of food and wears, hikes in the price of fuel as a result of scarcity, high electricity tariff, and scarcity of fuel as significant causes of inflation. Whenever an economy is experiencing a high level of inflation, it is conspicuously evident in the price tag of commodities and services. The ripple effect is also felt in other important sectors of the economy. The consequences therefore include increased cost of transportation, persistent increase in cost of food and wears, hike in price of fuel as a result of scarcity, high electricity tariff, and scarcity of fuel. These in turn result in a drastic reduction in the purchasing power of money. A situation where the value of money is reduced due to an increase in the general price level tends to exacerbate and further worsen the inflationary trend in the economy. The finding of the study corroborates the findings of Malik (2023) and Olusanya (2023) who found that exports, imports, consumer price index for food, interest rate, and exchange rate were important in explaining the inflationary process in Nigeria.

The findings of the study further revealed that providing alternative means of transportation, investing in the production of competitive goods and services, adequate supply of fuel, and ensuring price control of fuel, especially during scarcity are the possible solutions to inflation identified by the students. When there is the provision of alternative means of transportation, increase in the production of competitive goods and services, adequate supply of fuel, and ensuring price control of fuel, especially during scarcity, a situation where more money is chasing few available goods and services will put on the check and as a result stabilize the prices of goods and services in the economy. Production of competitive goods and services tends to reduce over-reliance on imports while an adequate supply of fuel will go a long way in checking commodities hoarding.

Findings of the study revealed that there was no significant difference in students' perceived influence of inflation on learning resources that students need to enhance their learning activities based on school type. This implies that students irrespective of ownership of universities in which they are currently, effects of inflation on learning resources that they need to enhance their learning activities are similar. Examining the possible difference in the perception of students on the basis of school type is based on the fact that parents' socioeconomic status to some certain extent determines the type of university an individual attends and that children whose parents are rich usually attend private universities. Ejiogu (2022) pointed out that, the finding of the study tends to support the fact that inflation in any economy is a phenomenon that adversely affects everyone irrespective of socio-economic status.

4.1 Practical Implications

The practical implications of these findings are to call on the government to relieve members of the society from the current growing inflation in the country, by doing so the hardship on the people would be minimized. The government should increase workers' salaries that go along with this growing inflation and economic hardship. Consequently, if parents are relieved surely students would be relieved. Part of the implication of this study are sudden death of many students as a result of insufficient food and other valuable things that would enhance and promote their education system.

4.2 Conclusion

This study concludes that the undergraduates in public and private universities in Kwara State, Nigeria perceived inflation as having adverse effects on learning processes that they need to enhance their learning activities and their perception is independent of their school type. Also, identified as significant causes of inflation are increased cost of transportation, persistent increase in the cost of food and wears, hike in the price of fuel as a result of scarcity, high electricity tariff, and scarcity of fuel as significant causes of inflation.

4.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government should introduce a more friendly policy that can tame the rising cost of goods and services in the Nigerian economy.
2. The government should demonstrate more commitment in areas of assistance such as bursary, scholarship as well as creating student loan schemes to cushion the adverse effect of inflation on essential learning resources.
3. The school management should intensify their efforts towards making life more conducive for learning in the university. They can improve their students' welfare programmes and seek external funding and collaborations that can ease students' life while studying on campuses.

DECLARATION

Authors' contribution: This paper is a single author's effort, the researcher single-handedly worked on the paper.

Ethical Statement: The study was conducted adhering to all ethical protocols. Ethical clearance was also sought.

Data availability: The data will be made available upon reasonable request from the corresponding author.

Consent Declaration: Permission was sought from the Dean of faculty of education to have access to undergraduates in the sampled universities especially those in 300 and 400 level because they have stayed in the university for the period of time.

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