Fuel Subsidy Removal and University Staff Performance (A Study of Selected Universities in Bayelsa State)

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Abstract
This study examines the relationship between fuel subsidy removal and university staff performance in Bayelsa State, focusing on the impact on motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction. The study adopts descriptive research designs. The population comprises academic and non-academic staff employed in universities (Niger Delta University and Federal University Otuoke) in Bayelsa State. A total of 200 respondents, comprising 100 academic staff and 100 non-academic staff, from the studied universities. The study employs both primary and secondary data collection methods. Structured questionnaires are administered to the selected participants to capture quantitative data on how subsidy removal affects their job performance, financial stability, and overall morale. Data collected from the study is analyzed using both quantitative methods. Survey responses are coded and analyzed using statistical tools such as SPSS. Findings reveal a significant and positive relationship between fuel subsidy removal and staff performance, indicating that despite the economic challenges posed by such policy changes, staff performance improved in terms of motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction. The study contributes to existing knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the impact of fuel subsidy policies in the education sector and offers practical recommendations for policymakers and university management to enhance staff welfare and performance amidst economic reforms.

Keywords: *Fuel Subsidy Removal, University Staff Performance, Job Satisfaction, Motivation, Productivity*

Introduction

Subsidies are critical economic tools employed by governments worldwide to stabilize markets, protect consumers, and promote equitable access to essential goods and services. In the context of Nigeria, subsidies have predominantly been associated with petroleum products, given the country's heavy reliance on oil as a primary economic driver. Over the decades, the Nigerian government has subsidized fuel prices to cushion the effects of global oil price volatility and ensure affordability for citizens. However, these subsidies have become a contentious issue, with successive administrations grappling with the economic strain they place on national resources (Abiodun, 2022).

The decision to remove subsidies is often justified as a means of reallocating government spending towards infrastructure development, education, and healthcare. However, the immediate and far-reaching consequences of such policy shifts cannot be ignored. Subsidy removal leads to a sharp rise in the cost of living, as fuel prices influence the prices of goods and services across various sectors. This economic ripple effect disproportionately impacts low- and middle-income earners, including university staff, who form a significant segment of Nigeria's public workforce (Adesina, 2021).

University staff performance is a multifaceted concept encompassing the quality of teaching, research output, administrative efficiency, and community engagement. The productivity of academic and non-academic staff is intricately linked to their welfare, job satisfaction, and the work environment. Subsidy removal poses a direct threat to these factors by eroding disposable income, increasing financial stress, and disrupting work-life balance. For instance, the hike in transportation costs—a direct consequence of subsidy removal—has led to absenteeism and reduced punctuality among university staff, further exacerbating the challenges faced by Nigeria's tertiary education sector (Eze & Umeh, 2023).

The historical context of subsidy removal in Nigeria highlights its contentious nature. During the 2012 nationwide protests—famously dubbed the "Occupy Nigeria" movement—citizens voiced their opposition to the government's decision to remove fuel subsidies. The protests underscored the deep mistrust between the government and the governed, fueled by concerns over corruption and the mismanagement of subsidy funds. Despite the resistance, successive administrations have continued to advocate for subsidy removal, citing unsustainable fiscal deficits and the need for economic reform (Ogunleye, 2020).

The impact of subsidy removal on university staff performance extends beyond individual financial strain to institutional challenges. Universities, as semi-autonomous entities, rely on government funding and internally generated revenue to function effectively. The increased cost of utilities, transportation, and maintenance resulting from subsidy removal places additional pressure on university budgets. Consequently, institutions may struggle to provide conducive work environments, further diminishing staff morale and productivity (Okon, 2022).

This study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by exploring the specific ways in which subsidy removal affects university staff performance in Nigeria. While previous research has examined the broader economic implications of subsidy removal, there is a paucity of studies focusing on its impact on the education sector, particularly on university staff. By filling this gap, the study aims to inform policy decisions and institutional strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of subsidy removal on university staff.

Statement of the Problem

The removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria has been one of the most debated policy decisions, with far-reaching implications across socio-economic strata. While policymakers argue that subsidy removal is necessary to address fiscal deficits and foster national economic stability, the immediate effects of such policies are borne disproportionately by citizens, including university staff. This study focuses on how subsidy removal impacts the performance of university staff in Bayelsa

State, a region where economic challenges are compounded by high unemployment rates, inflation, and inadequate infrastructure (Adesina, 2021).

University staff, both academic and non-academic, are integral to the effective functioning of tertiary institutions. Their performance influences teaching quality, research output, administrative processes, and the overall educational environment. However, the abrupt removal of subsidies has exacerbated existing economic hardships, significantly affecting their job performance. Rising transportation costs, inflated prices of goods and services, and reduced disposable incomes have eroded the financial stability of university staff, leaving many struggling to meet their basic needs (Eze & Umeh, 2023). These financial pressures directly impact their ability to focus on their professional responsibilities, thereby compromising their overall performance.

The situation in Bayelsa State is particularly dire due to the state's dependency on public-sector employment and its geographical challenges. With limited access to affordable transportation and a high cost of living, university staff are disproportionately affected by subsidy removal. For instance, staff members commuting to work are forced to allocate a significant portion of their salaries to transportation, leading to reduced morale and productivity (Okon, 2022). Moreover, the ripple effects of subsidy removal have created a sense of insecurity, as university staff grapple with the dual pressures of professional obligations and personal financial instability.

The Nigerian government has justified subsidy removal as a strategy to redirect funds towards infrastructure development, education, and healthcare. However, evidence suggests that the anticipated benefits of subsidy removal are not immediately realized by vulnerable populations, including university staff (Abiodun, 2022). Instead, the policy has widened the gap between government objectives and the realities faced by workers. The lack of comprehensive welfare programs to cushion the effects of subsidy removal has further alienated university staff, contributing to dissatisfaction and demotivation.

Furthermore, the impact of subsidy removal extends beyond individual performance to institutional challenges. Universities in Bayelsa State, already operating under strained budgets, now face increased operational costs due to rising utility and transportation expenses. These financial burdens hinder the institutions' ability to maintain conducive working environments, further diminishing staff morale and efficiency. The compounded effect of these challenges jeopardizes the sustainability of tertiary education in the state, with potential long-term implications for human capital development and societal progress.

Despite the profound implications of subsidy removal, limited empirical research has been conducted to explore its specific effects on university staff performance in Bayelsa State. Existing studies predominantly focus on the broader economic and political ramifications of subsidy removal, overlooking its localized impact on critical sectors such as education (Ogunleye, 2020). This gap in the literature underscores the need for a focused investigation to understand the nuanced challenges faced by university staff and identify practical interventions to address them. Based on these issues, this present study addresses the urgent need to examine the intersection of subsidy removal and university staff performance in Bayelsa State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the impact of fuel subsidy removal on university staff performance in Bayelsa State. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the effects of fuel subsidy removal on the job motivation of university staff in Bayelsa State.
2. To ascertain the effects of fuel subsidy removal on the productivity of university staff in Bayelsa State.
3. To determine the effects of fuel subsidy removal on the job satisfaction of university staff in Bayelsa State.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses will guide the study:

H_{01}: There is no effects of fuel subsidy removal on the job motivation of university staff in Bayelsa State.

H_{02}: There is no effects of fuel subsidy removal on the productivity of university staff in Bayelsa State.

H_{03}: There is no effects of fuel subsidy removal on the job satisfaction of university staff in Bayelsa State.

Literature and Theoretical Review

Concept of Fuel Subsidy

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018) defines a subsidy as a government program that lowers the cost of products or services that citizens purchase, making them more affordable than they would have been without the policy. Essentially, a subsidy is when the government enters the market to reduce the cost of goods and services, making them accessible to people with low incomes who may not otherwise be able to purchase them.

A subsidy is a form of financial assistance in which the government lowers the price of a good or service below the market price by paying a portion of the cost. Similar to this, manufacturers might profit from subsidies by being able to offer their goods for more than the going rate without putting a strain on consumers. There are several types of subsidies. While some incorporate financial incentives like grants, tax breaks, tax exemptions, or price restrictions, others are specifically focused on lowering product prices. The prices that producers and consumers pay for goods and services are directly impacted by these policies (Adebiyi, 2011).

Fuel subsidy in Nigeria has long been a contentious issue, with significant implications for the economy, government policy, and the everyday lives of citizens. The government's provision of subsidies on fuel prices aims to mitigate the cost burden on the populace, but it has also led to numerous economic and social challenges. One of the critical areas affected by the fuel subsidy policy is employee performance, particularly in terms of productivity, motivation, and job satisfaction. This literature review examines the relationship between fuel subsidy and employee performance in Nigeria, exploring various dimensions such as economic impacts, work behavior, and productivity in different sectors.

An Overview of Fuel Subsidy Removal in Nigeria

The fuel subsidy scheme was introduced in Nigeria as a way to alleviate the cost of fuel for citizens, especially in a country where petroleum products form the backbone of the transportation and energy sectors. However, the sustainability of the subsidy has been questioned due to its impact on public finances and the economy. According to Akinbobola (2017), fuel subsidies have been a significant drain on Nigeria's annual budget, diverting resources that could otherwise be used for infrastructural development and poverty alleviation. The government's decision to continue the subsidy despite mounting fiscal pressures has led to growing debates on its economic viability and social justice.

Fuel subsidy is often justified on the grounds that it helps reduce the burden on the poor and ensures economic stability by preventing fuel price hikes. However, critics argue that it benefits the wealthy more than the poor, as the rich consume more fuel, thus intensifying income inequality (Yusuf & Bakare, 2020). Moreover, the increasing cost of the subsidy has led to a rise in the national debt, thereby worsening Nigeria's economic instability (Ibrahim & Ali, 2019).

University Staff Performance

Job performance encompasses an employee's ability to effectively perform their tasks, contributing to the overall success of the organization and its ability to meet its objectives (Moonsri, 2018). It is a measure of an individual's productivity, assessed against the performance of their peers, and is evaluated based on a range of work-related behaviors and outcomes. The level of performance is typically influenced by both the quality and the quantity of the work completed in relation to the responsibilities assigned to the employee (Anitha, 2014). Employee performance plays a critical role in shaping an organization's financial and non-financial results. As such, it is essential for organizations to have a workforce that consistently demonstrates high performance, as it directly impacts the achievement of corporate goals, supports the realization of the organization's vision and mission, and helps in securing a competitive edge in the market. High-performing employees are key assets that drive the long-term success and sustainability of any organization.

University staff performance plays a crucial role in the overall success of higher educational institutions. The effectiveness and efficiency of academic and non-academic staff directly impact the quality of education, student satisfaction, and the institution's reputation. Staff performance in universities can be assessed through a variety of criteria, including teaching quality, research output, administrative efficiency, and engagement with students and the community (Adebayo, 2018).

In the academic context, teaching performance is a primary indicator of staff effectiveness. Effective teachers not only impart knowledge but also inspire students, foster critical thinking, and create an engaging learning environment. The evaluation of teaching performance often involves student feedback, peer reviews, and self-assessments, which can provide valuable insights into the areas of strength and improvement for faculty members (Kehm & Teichler, 2017). However, assessing teaching effectiveness remains a complex task as it involves not only measuring academic achievements but also understanding the pedagogical methods employed and their impact on student learning outcomes (Hattie, 2015).

In addition to teaching, university staff performance is also evaluated based on research productivity. Research is a fundamental aspect of university life, contributing to the institution's reputation and fostering academic innovation. Research output, such as publications in reputable journals, conference presentations, and successful grant applications, are commonly used to measure the research performance of faculty members (Boyer, 1990). The level of research engagement reflects the staff's commitment to academic excellence and knowledge advancement, which enhances the institution's standing in the academic community.

Non-academic staff, including administrative personnel, also play a significant role in supporting the university's mission. Their performance can be evaluated based on efficiency in managing resources, providing student support services, and facilitating the smooth operation of university activities (Kellerman, 2017). The collaboration between academic and non-academic staff is essential in creating a well-rounded educational environment, where administrative duties complement teaching and research.

Furthermore, performance management in universities involves setting clear goals, providing regular feedback, and offering professional development opportunities. It is essential that universities create a supportive environment where staff can thrive, develop their skills, and contribute effectively to the institution's strategic goals. Implementing performance management systems that align individual staff performance with institutional objectives can lead to improved outcomes for both the staff and the university as a whole (Locke & Latham, 2002).

In conclusion, university staff performance is integral to the functioning of higher education institutions. By focusing on comprehensive evaluation methods, fostering professional development, and encouraging a collaborative work environment, universities can enhance staff performance, leading to improved educational quality, research excellence, and overall institutional success.

Economic Impact of Fuel Subsidy Removal on Employee Performance

The fuel subsidy has direct and indirect economic effects on various sectors, influencing employee performance in the process. A study by Olabode (2018) revealed that the fuel subsidy directly affects transportation costs, which in turn influences workers' daily expenses. As fuel prices increase, workers are often required to spend a greater portion of their income on transportation, leading to a decrease in disposable income. This financial strain can lower employee morale, reduce job satisfaction, and ultimately affect performance.

For instance, high transportation costs can lead to employee absenteeism and tardiness, as workers are unable to afford the increasing costs of commuting to work. This behavior, as reported by Okafor and Adeyemo (2017), results in reduced productivity, as employees are often exhausted or distracted by their financial worries. Furthermore, employees who are financially stressed may lack the motivation to go beyond basic job requirements, affecting the overall performance of organizations.

The informal sector is also significantly impacted by fuel price fluctuations. In Nigeria, many small businesses rely heavily on fuel for their operations, whether in transportation, power generation,

or production. The volatility of fuel prices can cause small business owners to reduce their workforce or cut back on wages to manage operating costs, which in turn affects the livelihood and performance of employees (Ogunbiyi & Fapohunda, 2020).

Fuel Subsidy Removal and Employee Motivation

Employee motivation is a crucial factor in determining performance. According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, external factors such as salary, benefits, and working conditions are essential in ensuring job satisfaction and motivating employees (Herzberg, 1966). The fuel subsidy, which is an economic factor that affects the disposable income of employees, can have significant implications for motivation. When fuel subsidies are removed or reduced, employees feel the financial strain, which reduces their overall job satisfaction and motivation. For example, workers in urban areas, who depend on public transport, experience direct consequences from fuel price hikes, as they have to bear higher transportation costs.

In a study by Asogwa and Abubakar (2021), it was found that the removal of the fuel subsidy in Nigeria led to an increase in transportation costs, which negatively affected the motivation and job satisfaction of employees in the public sector. The researchers suggested that the financial stress caused by rising fuel prices forced employees to focus on their personal survival rather than their work duties, leading to decreased productivity.

Moreover, the perception of unfairness in the distribution of the benefits of the subsidy can lead to negative workplace attitudes. Workers who feel that they are not benefiting from the subsidy system or are directly disadvantaged by price hikes may develop feelings of frustration and resentment toward their employers or the government (Ojo & Nwachukwu, 2020). This can further erode their commitment to their jobs, reduce teamwork, and diminish organizational performance.

Fuel Subsidy Removal and Employee Productivity

Productivity is closely linked to the economic environment in which employees operate. Fuel subsidy policies have both direct and indirect impacts on organizational productivity in Nigeria. According to a report by the World Bank (2020), the allocation of funds to fuel subsidies rather than investing in sectors such as education, health, or infrastructure can lead to suboptimal economic conditions. These macroeconomic challenges affect employee performance by contributing to higher inflation rates, lower real wages, and poor public services.

Research by Onuoha and Akinola (2019) found that productivity in Nigeria's manufacturing and service sectors has been affected by the inefficiencies of the subsidy regime. As fuel prices increase, operational costs for businesses also rise, and companies may not be able to provide competitive wages, invest in staff training, or improve working conditions. These factors directly influence employee performance, as workers may feel that their efforts are not sufficiently rewarded.

Additionally, the indirect consequences of fuel subsidy policies, such as inflation and unemployment, also affect employee productivity. As inflation rises due to increased fuel costs, purchasing power is eroded, and workers find it more difficult to meet their basic needs. This economic hardship can lead to stress, disengagement, and burnout, all of which negatively impact

job performance (Sulaimon, 2018). Employees who are preoccupied with financial difficulties may be less focused on their work tasks and less willing to contribute to organizational goals.

Fuel Subsidy Removal and Job Satisfaction

The overall well-being of employees is closely related to their job satisfaction, which is influenced by external economic factors like fuel prices. A study by Adeyemi and Olalekan (2017) found that job satisfaction is significantly affected by the cost of living, which is in turn impacted by the price of essential commodities like fuel. As fuel prices increase, workers are forced to adjust their lifestyles, which often leads to dissatisfaction with their jobs. Employees may become disillusioned with their work environment if they feel that their compensation does not adequately reflect the increased cost of living.

Job satisfaction, in turn, affects the level of employee engagement and commitment to work. According to Koster and Ali (2021), workers who are dissatisfied with their job are less likely to go the extra mile in terms of performance, creativity, and innovation. The mental and emotional strain caused by fuel price hikes can make employees less likely to contribute to organizational goals or work collaboratively with colleagues.

Government Responses to Fuel Subsidy and Employee Performance

The Nigerian government has taken several measures to address the challenges posed by fuel subsidy policies, including periodic subsidy removals and adjustments. The government's response, however, often leads to further challenges for employees, as they are left to absorb the costs of price increases. For example, the 2021 fuel subsidy removal led to widespread protests and strikes, as workers in both the formal and informal sectors felt the negative impact of the policy on their livelihoods (Eze & Ogu, 2021).

While some scholars suggest that subsidy removal may ultimately benefit the economy by reducing fiscal deficits and promoting investment in other sectors (Aremu & Okoro, 2020), the short-term effects on employee performance are overwhelmingly negative. Employees experience financial strain, reduced job satisfaction, and lower productivity in response to fuel price hikes, which ultimately hinders the growth of organizations and the national economy.

Theoretical Underpinning (Human Capital Theory)

The study is established on the construct of human capital theory based on the connection with employees working in an organisattiuon. Human capital theory posits that investment in education, training, and employee well-being leads to improved productivity and performance (Becker, 1993). In the case of university staff, fuel subsidies could be seen as a form of indirect investment in human capital by alleviating financial burdens. For example, when staff members spend less on transportation, they may have more financial resources available to invest in personal development or attend academic conferences. These opportunities for professional growth could lead to improved teaching and research performance, which are crucial indicators of university staff productivity.

However, the human capital theory also highlights that the effectiveness of such policies depends on the quality of investments in education. If government spending on education and professional

development remains inadequate due to the fiscal burden of maintaining fuel subsidies, the benefits to staff performance may be limited. Therefore, while fuel subsidies might provide short-term relief to staff, they cannot replace the need for long-term investments in human capital through adequate salaries, research funding, and professional development (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2004).

Empirical Review

A study by Alabi (2020) investigates the relationship between fuel subsidies and staff motivation in Nigerian universities. The research finds that fuel subsidies have a significant effect on the economic well-being of university staff, particularly those who rely on personal transportation to commute. The study reveals that when fuel prices are subsidized, staff experience a reduction in commuting costs, leading to higher disposable income and improved job satisfaction. This enhanced satisfaction, in turn, boosts staff motivation, which positively influences their performance in teaching and research. However, the study also emphasizes that the long-term sustainability of subsidies is crucial; if subsidies are removed or reduced, staff performance may decline due to increased financial stress.

In a study conducted by Oladipo and Adebayo (2019), the impact of fuel subsidy removal on staff productivity in universities in Nigeria was analyzed. The authors found that when the government removed fuel subsidies, university staff experienced a sharp increase in transportation costs, which led to a significant reduction in their overall productivity. Increased financial strain caused stress and absenteeism, which negatively impacted both teaching quality and research output. The study concluded that fuel subsidy policies have a direct effect on university staff performance, as higher living costs reduce staff morale and hinder their ability to focus on academic responsibilities.

A study by Ekpo and Udo (2018) examined the role of fuel subsidies in shaping job satisfaction among public sector employees, particularly in universities. The research found a strong correlation between fuel subsidy programs and job satisfaction among university staff. When fuel subsidies were in place, staff reported lower levels of financial stress, which allowed them to focus more on their academic duties. The study also highlighted that job satisfaction positively influenced staff performance, with subsidized fuel prices leading to an improvement in the quality of teaching and research. However, the study warns that any sudden removal of subsidies could lead to dissatisfaction and decreased staff performance.

A quantitative study by Olamide and Tayo (2021) analyzed the relationship between macroeconomic policies, including fuel subsidies, and university staff performance. Using survey data from faculty members in public universities across Nigeria, the study concluded that fuel subsidies directly impact university staff performance by influencing their financial security and general well-being. The findings revealed that when fuel subsidies were high, staff performance in both teaching and research activities improved. However, the study also pointed out that reduced subsidies led to increased commuting costs, resulting in less time and energy for academic duties, which negatively affected their performance.

In a comparative study by Ibraheem and Ajayi (2017), the authors examined the effects of fuel subsidies on faculty performance in two countries: Nigeria and Ghana. The study found that in

both countries, fuel subsidies positively influenced faculty performance, albeit to different extents. Nigerian university staff benefitted significantly from fuel subsidies, with improved job satisfaction and reduced financial stress, leading to better teaching outcomes and higher research output. In contrast, Ghanaian staff, who received fewer benefits from fuel subsidies, reported lower job satisfaction and lower performance levels. The study concluded that fuel subsidies are an important factor influencing university staff performance, especially in countries with high transportation costs.

Methodology

Study Area

The study is conducted in Bayelsa State, a region characterized by its unique socio-economic and geographical challenges. The state's reliance on the public sector for employment and its relatively high cost of living make it an ideal context for examining the effects of subsidy removal on university staff. Data is collected from federal and state universities within the state, including Niger Delta University and Federal University Otuoke.

Research Design

The study adopts descriptive research designs. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the issue by capturing both measurable effects and deeper insights into the experiences of university staff.

Population of the Study

The population comprises academic and non-academic staff employed in universities (Niger Delta University and Federal University Otuoke) in Bayelsa State. These staff members were chosen because they are directly affected by the economic challenges resulting from subsidy removal. Academic staff includes lecturers across various faculties, while non-academic staff includes administrative and technical personnel who contribute to the day-to-day operations of the universities.

Sampling Techniques

A stratified random sampling technique is employed to ensure that diverse categories of university staff are represented. The population is stratified into two main groups: academic staff and non-academic staff. From each stratum, a random sample of participants is selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. A total of 200 respondents, comprising 100 academic staff and 100 non-academic staff, from the studied universities.

Data Collection Methods

The study employs both primary and secondary data collection methods. Questionnaires: Structured questionnaires are administered to the selected participants to capture quantitative data on how subsidy removal affects their job performance, financial stability, and overall morale. The questionnaires include both closed-ended and open-ended questions to allow for detailed responses. Secondary data is obtained from official reports, journal articles, and government publications on subsidy removal and its socio-economic implications. These sources provide a contextual framework for interpreting the findings of the study.

Validity and Reliability

A pilot study is conducted with 20 respondents to refine the questionnaire and interview guide. Expert reviews are sought from academics and professionals in the field to validate the content of the instruments Cronbach's alpha is used to test the reliability of the questionnaire, with a threshold of 0.7 considered acceptable.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the study is analyzed using both quantitative methods. Survey responses are coded and analyzed using statistical tools such as SPSS. Descriptive statistics (mean, percentages, and standard deviations) are used to summarize the data, while inferential statistics (Spearman rank Order Correlation Coefficient) are employed to test the relationships between subsidy removal and staff performance indicators.

Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to ethical research standards, ensuring that participants' rights and welfare are protected throughout the research process. Informed consent is obtained from all participants before data collection. Participants are assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Ethical approval is obtained from the university ethics committee overseeing research involving human subjects.

Analysis and Results

Table 1: Administration and Retrieval of Questionnaires

No of questionnaires administered	No of questionnaires returned	Percentage of success (%)
194	157	80.9%

Source: Survey Data, 2024.

Table 1 shows that one hundred and ninety-four questionnaire were distributed out of which one hundred and fifty-seven were returned and valid. This means eight percent (80.9%) of the questionnaires was retrieved and used in the research, which is above average of the total questionnaire distributed and it is considered valid for the research. The instrument is personally administered by the researcher consistently for three-weeks within the studied universities, and retrieval was initiated immediately to avoid misplacement by the respondents.

Table 2: Gender

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	58	36.9
Female	99	63.1
Total	157	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2024.

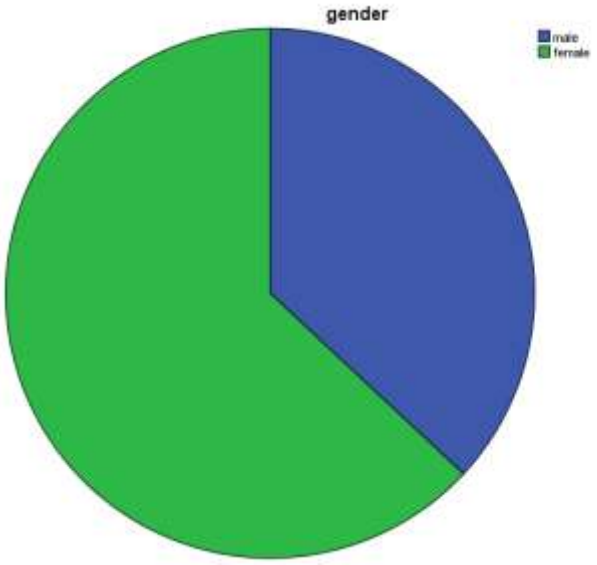

Table 2 and figure 1 showed the gender distribution of the respondents. From the table, it was shown that 36.9% of the respondents were male while 63.1% were female. The survey revealed that majority of the respondents are female as of the period of administration and retrieval of questionnaire.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics Outcome of Motivation

Question Items (code)	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev	Remark
High transport fare makes it hard for me to get to school	157	1.00	5.00	3.8726	1.02985	Agreed
My inability to meet my financial responsibilities affect my job commitment	157	1.00	5.00	3.9236	1.08923	Agreed
Job motivation has decreased since the removal of subsidy	157	1.00	5.00	3.8280	1.06926	Agreed
Subsidy removal has led to withdrawal behavior.	156	1.00	5.00	3.8974	1.12554	Agreed
Subsidy removal has resulted in an decrease work involvement.	157	1.00	5.00	3.9299	.98784	Agreed
Grand Mean				3.9094		
Valid N (listwise)	157					

Source: Survey Data (2024) *Mean Cut-off Point = 3.00*, which indicates the value for above average from the Likert scale of 1 to 5.

Table 3 provides a detailed overview of the descriptive statistics concerning respondents' views on motivation in universities in Bayelsa State. The grand mean of 3.9094, which was calculated from

the collected responses, signifies a general agreement among the respondents regarding the different aspects of fuel subsidy removal affecting employee motivation. This grand mean surpasses the threshold value of 3.00, indicating that the respondents generally have a positive perception of motivation to their job.

Table 4.4 Descriptive Statistics Outcome of Productivity

Question Items (code)	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
High cost of fuel and transportation discourages punctuality to work.	157	1.00	5.00	3.8217	1.12377	Agreed
Difficulty to be consistent at work affect job performance.	157	1.00	5.00	3.9427	1.16708	Agreed
Task accomplishment is very slow dues to only few workers present at work.	157	1.00	5.00	3.9554	1.13986	Agreed
Subsidy removal has led to slow operational processes.	157	1.00	5.00	4.0064	1.08307	Agreed
Subsidy removal has caused inefficiency and effectiveness.	157	1.00	5.00	3.8025	1.01552	Agreed
Grand Mean				3.8796		
Valid N (listwise)	157					

Source: Survey Data (2024) *Mean Cut-off Point = 3.00,* which indicates the value for above average from the Likert scale of 1 to 5.

Table 4 presents a comprehensive summary of the descriptive statistics concerning respondents' opinions on productivity in the universities in Bayelsa State. The grand mean, calculated to be 3.8796, suggests a general consensus among respondents in favor of the subsidy removal affecting productivity among employees. This value, which is notably higher than the threshold of 3.00, reflects a positive perception among the respondents. The results indicate that the majority of employees agree with the notion that fuel subsidy removal has hampered productivity in the university.

Table 4.5 Descriptive Statistics Outcome of Job satisfaction

Question Items (code)	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev	Remark
Employees are dissatisfied with the cost of transport expenses.	157	1.00	5.00	3.8854	1.07993	Agreed
Wages and salary is dissatisfactory because it can't meet up financial needs of employees.	157	1.00	5.00	4.1338	1.09834	Agreed
Employee attitude has not been positive due to cost fuel.	157	1.00	5.00	3.9427	1.19958	Agreed

Subsidy removal has led to workers dissatisfaction.	157	1.00	5.00	3.9682	1.04649	Agreed
Subsidy removal has caused workplace counter-productive behaviour	157	1.00	5.00	4.2293	.83107	Agreed
Grand Mean				4.0318		Agreed
Valid N (listwise)	157					

Source: Survey Data (2024) *Mean Cut-off Point = 3.00,* which indicates the value for above average from the Likert scale of 1 to 5.

The table above provides a detailed summary of the descriptive statistics concerning respondents' views on job satisfaction in the universities in Bayelsa State. The grand mean, calculated at 4.0318, indicates a generally agreed rating among respondents about the employee job satisfaction been altered by the sudden fuel subsidy removal. This mean, which surpasses the threshold value of 3.00, implies that the respondents agreed with the various statements regarding the job satisfaction has been affected by fuel subsidy removal.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics Outcome of Fuel Subsidy Removal

Question Items	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
Fuel subsidy removal increase transportation.	157	1.00	5.00	3.8280	1.10464	Agreed
Fuel subsidy removal sky-rocket the price of food.	157	1.00	5.00	3.9618	1.21890	Agreed
Fuel subsidy removal automatically increase family expenses.	157	1.00	5.00	3.6624	1.17427	Agreed
Fuel subsidy removal affect cost of housing and accommodation.	157	1.00	5.00	4.0510	1.06696	Agreed
Fuel subsidy removal has led to sudden increase in consumer price index.	157	1.00	5.00	3.9554	1.25751	Agreed
Grand Mean				3.89172		Agreed
Valid N (listwise)	157					

Source: Survey Data (2024) *Mean Cut-off Point = 3.00,* which indicates the value for above average from the Likert scale of 1 to 5.

The table above presents a detailed summary of the descriptive statistics regarding respondents' perceptions of fuel subsidy removal in the country. The grand mean, calculated at 3.89172, indicates a general agreement among respondents about the damaging effect of fuel subsidy removal. This mean, which exceeds the cut-off point of 3.00, suggests that the respondents concurred with the various statements concerning the detrimental effect of fuel subsidy removal.

Inferential Analysis

The hypotheses of the study were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient, which is a non-parametric statistical method designed to assess the strength and direction of the

association between two ranked or ordinal variables. Unlike parametric methods that assume normal distribution and interval-level data, Spearman's correlation is ideal for data that do not meet these assumptions, making it highly adaptable to various types of research data. The statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

Table 7: Correlation Result Between Fuel Subsidy Removal and Employee Motivation.

Correlations

			Motivation	Fuel subsidy removal
Spearman's rho	Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.783**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	157	157
	Fuel subsidy removal	Correlation Coefficient	.783**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	157	157

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

Table 7 presents the correlation results between fuel subsidy removal and employee motivation in the universities in Bayelsa State. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient is used to measure the strength and direction of the association between these two variables. The correlation coefficient between motivation and fuel subsidy removal is .783**, indicating a strong positive correlation. The p-value associated with this correlation coefficient is .000, which is below the conventional significance threshold of .05 (5%). This result indicates that the correlation is statistically significant. This result is similar to the outcome of Alabi (2020) who investigates the relationship between fuel subsidies and staff motivation in Nigerian universities. The study reveals that when fuel prices are subsidized, staff experience a reduction in commuting costs, leading to higher disposable income and improved job satisfaction. Based on these findings, the study reject the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between fuel subsidy removal and employee motivation in the universities in Bayelsa State, and accept the alternative hypothesis. Therefore, a significant and positive relationship exists between fuel subsidy removal and employee motivation in the universities in Bayelsa State.

Table 8: Correlation Result Between Fuel subsidy removal and Employee Productivity

Correlations

			Productivity	Fuel subsidy removal
Spearman's rho	Productivity	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.787**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	157	157
	Fuel subsidy removal	Correlation Coefficient	.787**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	157	157

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 8 presents the correlation results between fuel subsidy removal and employee productivity in the universities in Bayelsa State, analyzed using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. This coefficient assesses the strength and direction of the association between these variables. The correlation coefficient between productivity and fuel subsidy removal is .787**, indicating a strong positive correlation. This implies that as productivity improves or becomes more effective within these firms, the level of fuel subsidy removal also tends to increase significantly. The p-value associated with this correlation coefficient is .000, which is below the conventional significance threshold of .05 (5%). This indicates that the correlation is statistically significant. This result is similar to the study outcome of Olamide and Tayo (2021) they analyzed the relationship between macroeconomic policies, including fuel subsidies, and university staff performance. The findings revealed that when fuel subsidies were high, staff performance in both teaching and research activities improved. Based on these findings, the study reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between fuel subsidy removal and employee productivity in the universities in Bayelsa State, and accept the alternative hypothesis. Therefore, a significant and positive relationship exists between fuel subsidy removal and employee productivity in the universities in Bayelsa State.

Table 9: Correlation Result Between Fuel subsidy removal and Employee Job

Correlations

			Job satisfaction	Fuel subsidy removal
Spearman's rho	Job satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.776**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	157	157

Fuel subsidy removal	Correlation Coefficient	.776**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	157	157

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 9 presents the correlation results between subsidy removal and employee job satisfaction in the universities in Bayelsa State, analyzed using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The correlation coefficient between fuel subsidy removal and employee job satisfaction is .776**, indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that effective implementation of job satisfaction practices in these industry is associated with a significant increase in fuel subsidy removal among employees. The p-value associated with this correlation coefficient is .000, which is below the conventional significance threshold of .05 (5%). This confirms that the correlation is statistically significant. There is a comfirmation from the study of Ekpo and Udo (2018), of which they examined the role of fuel subsidies in shaping job satisfaction among public sector employees, particularly in universities. The research found a strong correlation between fuel subsidy programs and job satisfaction among university staff. The study also highlighted that job satisfaction positively influenced staff performance, with subsidized fuel prices leading to an improvement in the quality of teaching and research. Based on these findings, the study reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between subsidy removal and employee job satisfaction in the universities in Bayelsa State, and accept the alternative hypothesis. Therefore, a significant and positive relationship exists between fuel subsidy removal and employee job satisfaction in the universities in Bayelsa State.

Conclusion

The study examined the relationship between fuel subsidy removal and universities staff performance in Bayelsa State. By scientifically analyzing different aspects of which subsidy has affected staff performance such as motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction, the study found a significant and positive relationship between furl subsidy removal and the measures of staff performance which are, motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction. Based on these findings, the study concludes that there is a significant and positive relationship between fuel subsidy removal and universities staff performance in Bayelsa State**.**

Recommendations

Here are four recommendations based on the study findings:

1. Universities and policymakers should implement targeted welfare programs, such as transportation allowances or fuel subsidies for staff, to mitigate the financial burden caused by the removal of fuel subsidies and maintain high levels of motivation and productivity.
2. Universities should develop initiatives to strengthen job satisfaction among staff, such as professional development programs, workplace incentives, and improved working conditions, to sustain the positive impacts of fuel subsidy removal on performance.

3. Institutions should establish systems to regularly assess the effects of economic policies, like fuel subsidy removal, on staff performance to identify challenges and implement timely interventions.
4. Government and university management should collaborate to design policies that balance economic reforms with the need to maintain and improve staff performance, ensuring that productivity and job satisfaction remain priorities in the face of subsidy adjustments.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge by providing empirical evidence of the significant and positive relationship between fuel subsidy removal and university staff performance in Bayelsa State. It advances understanding of how policy changes, such as subsidy removal, influence key performance indicators like motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction. The findings offer insights that can guide policymakers and institutional leaders in designing strategies to mitigate the impact of subsidy removal on staff welfare while enhancing performance.

Suggestion for Future Research

Future research should explore the long-term implications of fuel subsidy removal on staff performance, focusing on sustainability and evolving trends in motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction over extended periods.

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