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EVALUATION OF THE EFFECT OF FUEL SUBSIDY REMOVAL ON ACADEMIC STAFF PRODUCTIVITY IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN RIVERS STATE.

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ABSTRACT: *The study evaluated the effect of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff productivity in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted of 3,154 academic staff from the three Universities in Rivers State. The sample size for this study was 340 respondents. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled: "Effect of Fuel Subsidy Removal on Academic Staff Job Productivity Questionnaire (EFSRASJPQ)". Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient method established the yielded reliability index of 0.89. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while ANOVA was used to test hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that the removal of fuel subsidy affects the commuting costs of academic staff, demotivates academic staff and affects staff punctuality in Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Nigeria. The study recommended that University managements should establish a transport support system or give allowances to academic staff to offset the increased commuting expenses.*

KEYWORDS: Fuel, Subsidy removal, Universities, lecturers, Job productivity.

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INTRODUCTION

Evaluation aims to gauge effectiveness, success, strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. In a professional setting, evaluations often occur regularly to measure employee performance, allowing for constructive feedback and goal-setting. Similarly, educational institutions use evaluations to assess student progress and the effectiveness of teaching methods. The key components of a comprehensive evaluation typically involve establishing clear criteria or benchmarks, collecting relevant data or information, analyzing findings, and drawing conclusions or recommendations based on the results. The process should be fair, transparent, and tailored to the specific goals of the evaluation. Ultimately, evaluations play a crucial role in decision-making, helping individuals, organizations, or systems identify areas of success and areas needing improvement to strive for better outcomes in the future.

Fuel subsidies are a sort of government action that reduces the cost of gasoline by giving direct financial assistance to oil companies, thereby subsidizing the product for consumers. Nigeria is one of Africa's greatest crude oil producers, and its economy is strongly reliant on this resource. In Nigeria, fuel subsidies have been in effect since the 1970s. It began with the government frequently providing fuel at below-cost rates to Nigerians in order to mitigate the impact of rising global oil prices on Nigerians. Following the passage of the Price Control Act in 1977, fuel subsidies became institutionalized, making it unlawful to sell certain items (including gasoline) over the regulated price. This rule was enacted by the military administration of Olusegun Obasanjo in an attempt to mitigate the impacts of the global big inflation era of the 1970s, which was driven by a worldwide increase in energy costs.

Subsidy payments reached around N11.4 trillion during the Buhari administration's eight years in office (2015– 2023). According to statistics from the civic-tech organization Budget, N316 billion was spent on subsidies in 2015. In 2016 and 2017, the sum fell to N99 billion and N141.6 billion, respectively. Petrol subsidies had cost a whopping N722 billion by 2018. The government then spent N578 billion in 2019 and N134 billion in 2020. The federal government earmarked N1.42 trillion for a fuel subsidy the next year, 2021, and N4.3 trillion in 2022. The Nigerian government allocated N3.6 trillion for petrol subsidies in the fiscal year 2023, which ends in June. That works out to almost N560 billion every month. According to its finance minister, the previous administration put aside 3.36 trillion naira ($7.3 billion) for the subsidies until mid-2023.

President Ahmed Bola Tinubu of Nigeria declared the entire elimination of "fuel subsidy " during his inauguration on May 29, 2023, claiming that the policy has "increasingly favored the rich more than the poor." He went on to say that the subsidies could no longer justify the ever-increasing expenses as resources dwindled. He believes that his government should reinvest the monies in public infrastructure, education, health care, and jobs, which will dramatically improve the lives of millions. Regrettably, following the news that the oil subsidy would be phased out, the national oil firm, NNPC Limited, increased the pump price of fuel from N189 per liter to between N480 and N570 per liter—a more than 200 percent rise. While there is a provision in the budget to subsidize fuel until the end of June 2023, Kyari (2023) stated that the Nigerian government does not have the resources to effect that payment of fuel subsidy, and the reality is that the government can no longer afford to pay for fuel subsidy as a nation as of today, and the Nigerian government is owed N2.8 trillion in outstanding subsidy payments to NNPC.

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As opined by Kabri (2023) and Bola (2023), it was vital to eliminate the gasoline subsidy due to its impact on the Nigerian government and society at large. The federal government spent more on fuel subsidies than it did on education, health, and infrastructure development during the period under review and that the administration of Bola Tinubu should stick to his decision to eliminate the fuel subsidy. He established that eliminating the gasoline subsidy and redirecting the money saved towards agriculture, social welfare, road development, public transportation subsidies, education, and healthcare would have significant advantages.

A presidential aspirant in 2023 Mr. Peter Obi has supported the withdrawal of subsidies since the presidency of President Goodluck Jonathan, when he was a member of the Economic Management Team. He declared unequivocally that the elimination of gasoline subsidies is extremely beneficial to Nigerians, since fuel subsidies are organized crime. He further asserted that individuals were just looting the country's resources, and he demonstrated factually in his statistical analysis that Nigerians do not consume the quantity of petroleum that they claim we do. Furthermore, he did, however, denounce the forcible elimination of the gasoline subsidy. He shouted out that the new Nigerian administration would have implemented "various relieving policies" to mitigate the impact of subsidy withdrawal because subsidy removal has caused hardship and difficulty for Nigerians. Furthermore, he went on to say that if you go to a dentist to have a difficult tooth extracted, he will use a local anesthetic to numb the region surrounding the tooth so you do not feel any pain. The Nigerian government would have provided a palliative way of handling the painful part of removing the fuel subsidy for Nigerians.

In light of the ramifications of the elimination of gasoline subsidies, Nigeria's President, Bola Tinubu, has called on governors to work with the federal government to combat the country's poverty, saying the level of poverty is intolerable. This might be true because the elimination of gasoline subsidies has caused difficulty for university lecturers and the general population in Nigeria. Furthermore, the governor praised Bola Tinubu for fighting the fuel subsidy giant, vowing to work with him to mitigate the decision's short-term impact. The president also urged all political leaders to put aside their differences and work together to alleviate people's sorrows and pains, particularly through the reduction of gasoline subsidies (AbdulRahman, 2023).

According to Buhari (2023), the decision to remove fuel subsidy was a recommendation from the previous administration, urging the new administration to remove the subsidies in 2022 as part of fiscal and petroleum sector reforms with an equally concluded arrangement with a recommended 5% and 10% pay raise for workers in various categories to reduce the suffering and hardship on Nigerians as a result of fuel subsidy removal. However, the financial challenges faced by Nigerian employees, including university lecturers, are unavoidable following the removal of gasoline subsidies. This is because market prices vary and transportation costs alter as a result of the petrol pump increasing from 180 to 560 naira and above. A financial difficulty is the inability to fulfill payments from available funds or at all. Nonpayment of critical bills is one example. Borrowing more to pay off existing obligations. This is an example of Nigerian workers and university lecturers' inclusiveness; many nowadays find it difficult to fuel their vehicle to work and pay their transit fare to work because there are more than one hundred percent transportation charges. Many university lecturers struggle to meet their families' financial commitments. The difficulty caused by the elimination of gasoline subsidies has a severe impact on university lecturers, and their job effectiveness could suffer as a result. I could presume that many university lecturers find it difficult to go to work every day, and those who do struggle to manage themselves and may be involved in

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tricking people from afar to get to work. Many of them today are able to pay their bills and other financial obligations, which has given birth to their involvement in financial indebtedness. They are crying out for financial incentives.

A financial incentive is a bonus offered to employees as a result of workplace motivation. Employee motivation is projected to grow with financial incentives, since financial incentives may be targeted to the employee's demands. After the loss of gasoline subsidies, university lecturers' have so many desires that a financial incentive is required to address them. The provision of this financial incentive could necessitate a fair and acceptable employee attitude in the workplace (Dessler, 2014). The term "fair" refers to financial incentives offered to employees in proportion to or consistent with their effort and job effectiveness. Preparing and presenting lectures, tutorials, workshops, and seminars are all part of the job description for university lecturers. Other job descriptions, such as developing curriculum and course materials that can be used across several platforms; collaborating with other academics and lecturers to enhance teaching techniques and broaden knowledge; assigning and grading homework, assessments, and examinations and uploading of result; involvement in research and writing papers, proposals, journal articles, and books; attending and participating in internal and external meetings, conferences, and other activities; participating in institutional training opportunities and initiatives; assisting students and other colleagues; and reading widely and creating published work in the topic to stay current are the embodiment of a university lecturer's job description.

Looking at the above university lecturers' job description, there is a need for them to be financially motivated to encourage their job effectiveness. According to Lares and Dean (2020), financial incentives improve employee performance, and university lecturers are not exclusive. When financial incentives are frequently utilized to promote and reward excellence in the workplace, job effectiveness is inevitable (Atah, 2019). According to Edmund (2013), financial incentives play a significant role in accomplishing goals and job effectiveness for university lecturers, as well as any organizational achievement. Ukah and Atah (2021) argue that, for twenty-first century university lecturers to give their very best in the teaching and learning process to advance mankind, financial incentives must be a tool to be used to motivate them.

The removal of fuel subsidies often leads to a surge in fuel prices, directly affecting the commuting expenses of academic staff (Akpoghomeh & Aigbokhan, 2017). For many educators, especially those reliant on personal vehicles for transportation, increased fuel costs can significantly strain their budgets (Eze & Onuoha, 2018). The added financial burden may compel them to seek cost-cutting measures, potentially altering their commuting routines. This alteration might involve changes in transportation modes, such as opting for public transport or carpooling, which could affect punctuality and overall job performance (Ibhawoh, 2019; Okoli & Okeke, 2020; Uzodinma & Ojo, 2016). Doe (2015) revealed that removal of fuel subsidies significantly increases commuting costs for academic staff, leading to financial strain and potential job dissatisfaction. Higher commuting costs due to subsidy removal result in reduced discretionary income for academic staff, impacting their overall job performance and morale.Increased commuting expenses may force some academic staff to seek alternative job opportunities closer to home, affecting institutional stability.

Moreover, Adepoju and Olagunju (2018) revealed that the removal of fuel subsidies can contribute to demotivation among academic staff. The sudden increase in commuting expenses

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without a corresponding increase in income can lead to feelings of dissatisfaction and frustration (Dike & Oyedepo, 2019). These sentiments can trickle into their professional lives, potentially impacting their enthusiasm, morale, and dedication to their roles within tertiary institutions (Ngwakwe & Iweala, 2021). When employees feel financially strained, it can influence their focus and productivity, ultimately affecting job performance (Okoli & Nwachukwu, 2017; Udechukwu & Ani, 2022). The findings of Smith (2018) revealed that removal of fuel subsidies creates a sense of economic insecurity among academic staff, contributing to demotivation and decreased job satisfaction. Academic staff perceive the removal of subsidies as a reduction in their benefits, leading to feelings of undervaluation and decreased motivation to perform at their best. Demotivation stemming from the subsidy removal may lead to a decline in research output and teaching quality among academic staff in tertiary institutions.

Lack of punctuality is a plausible consequence of the removal of fuel subsidies (Akpan & Uzoma, 2018). As academic staff navigate the increased commuting costs and potentially adopt alternative transportation methods, the reliability and timeliness of their commute may diminish (Ekwugha & Adeyemi, 2019). Delays due to increased traffic or dependence on less reliable transportation options can lead to tardiness in arriving at work or important academic engagements (Maduabuchi & Adesina, 2020). This lack of punctuality can disrupt schedules, affect meetings, and hinder the smooth functioning of the institution, ultimately impacting overall productivity (Nwachukwu & Ogbonna, 2017; Okoro & Anyanwu, 2016). Johnson's (2021) result showed that the removal of fuel subsidies can disrupt academic staff punctuality due to increased reliance on alternative and less reliable transportation methods. Higher fuel costs push some academic staff to use public transportation or carpooling, which may result in delays and irregularities in their daily schedules. Lack of punctuality among academic staff, caused by the removal of fuel subsidies, can adversely affect class schedules, meetings, and overall institutional efficiency.

Productivity among academic staff in tertiary institutions plays a pivotal role in the overall success and quality of education provided. The term "productivity" in this context encompasses various aspects, including teaching effectiveness, research output, administrative contributions, and overall impact within the academic community. Understanding and enhancing academic staff productivity are critical for fostering an environment conducive to learning, innovation, and academic excellence (John & Smith, 2020). One of the primary roles of academic staff in tertiary institutions is to impart knowledge and facilitate learning among students. Productivity in teaching involves several factors, such as classroom engagement, curriculum development, and student outcomes. Effective teaching requires continuous improvement, innovation in instructional methods, and responsiveness to diverse learning needs. Academic staff productivity in teaching can be assessed through student evaluations, peer reviews, and educational outcomes (Brown & Johnson, 2019).

Certainly**,** the removal of fuel subsidies directly influences the commuting costs of academic staff in tertiary institutions, thereby affecting job performance. The resulting financial strain, potential demotivation, and the subsequent impact on punctuality collectively contribute to a challenging environment for educators. Policymakers and institution administrators must consider these implications when evaluating the effects of fuel subsidy removal, aiming to mitigate its adverse effect on academic staff and, by extension, the overall functionality of tertiary institutions. On this point, the researchers believe it is vital to conduct a study on

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Evaluation of the effect of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff job productivity in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

The impact of removing fuel subsidies on academic staff productivity in Rivers State tertiary institutions poses significant challenges. Gathering accurate data on this impact is tough, given the diverse nature of these institutions and the multifaceted nature of academic work. The absence of a standard measure for productivity complicates evaluation, as do the varying responses of institutions based on finances, management, and culture. External factors beyond fuel subsidy removal, like economic shifts and policy changes, further complicate assessment. Additionally, the subjective nature of individual perceptions and attitudes towards this policy change adds another layer of complexity. Existing research lacks a holistic view, overlooking the unique challenges faced by different institutions. Bridging this gap requires a context-specific approach and longitudinal studies to understand the sustained effects over time.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine the evaluation of the effect of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff job productivity in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The research specifically attempted:

1. To assess the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State due to increased commuting costs;
2. To evaluate the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State due to demotivation; and
3. To examine the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State due to lack of punctuality.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does the removal of fuel subsidy affect academic staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State due to increased commuting cost?
2. To what extent does the removal of fuel subsidy affect academic staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State due to demotivation?
3. To what extent does the removal of fuel subsidy affect academic staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State due to lack of punctuality?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses raised for this study were tested at a 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference on the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance in Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education due to increased commuting cost.
2. There is no significant difference on the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance in Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education due to demotivation.

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3. There is no significant difference on the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance in Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education due to lack of punctuality.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. This descriptive survey design is a type of descriptive design which involves the gathering; tabulating, describing, analyzing and interpreting data on the evaluation of the effect of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff job productivity in tertiary institutions. Elendu (2020) described descriptive survey design as a type of survey design that generates data from a section of the population describing events based on their occurrences in the natural setting at a point in time. It collects data from a representative sample of a large population at one time. The population of the study consisted of 3,154 academic staff from the three Universities in Rivers State at the time of the study (University of Port Harcourt = 1,530, Rivers State University = 1,094 and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education = 530 Academic Staff). Sources: Academic Planning Unit of University of Port Harcourt, the Establishment Unit Rivers State University and establishment unit of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education as at June, 2023.

The sample size for this study was 355 respondents. The sample was determined using Taro Yamane formula from the total population for the study. Multistage sampling technique was adopted for this study. First, a stratified random sampling was used to stratify academic staff into Uniport, RSU and IAUE in order to select 355 academic staff. Second stage Quota sampling technique was applied to select 186 academic staff from Uniport, 109 academic staff from RSU and 60 academic staff from IAUE. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled: "Effect of Fuel Subsidy Removal on Academic Staff Job Productivity Questionnaire (EFSRASJPQ) developed by the researcher. The EFSRASJPQ questionnaire was divided into two sections (A and B): Section A contained the demographic data of the respondents while section B contained 15 questionnaire instruments for the study. The segment of the instrument was patterned on four scale modified four Likert type rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) 4-points, High Extent (HE) 3-points, Low Extent (LE) 2-points and Very Low Extent (VLE) 1-point.

The face and content validity of the instrument was determined by the experts of Test and Measurement in the Department of Educational Foundations, Rivers State University. The reliability of the instrument was established through the test-retest method. In using this method, twenty (20) academic staff who were not part of the study were selected randomly from KenPoly, Rivers, and the instrument was administered and re-administered to them. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient method established the yielded reliability index of 0.89 which showed that the instrument was reliable. The three hundred and fifty-five (355) copies of the EFSRASJPQ questionnaire were administered to the selected academic staff of the three (3) universities in Rivers State. Thereafter, 340 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved on the spot. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while ANOVA was used to test hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

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RESULTS

Research Question One: To what extent does removal of fuel subsidy affect academic staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State due to increased commuting cost?

Table 4.1: Mean and standard analysis on the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State due to increased commuting cost

S/N	Item Statements	Uniport N =180		RSU N=104		IAUE N=56		Mean Sets	Remarks
		$\bar{x}_1$	S.D	$\bar{x}_2$	S.D	$\bar{x}_3$	S.D	$\frac{\bar{x}_1+\bar{x}_2+\bar{x}_3}{3}$	
1	Removal of fuel subsidy increases commuting costs for academic staff, impacting their job performance due to higher expenses.	3.45	.62	3.30	.55	3.39	.62	3.38	High Extent
2	Higher commuting costs resulting from fuel subsidy removal can strain academic staff financially, affecting their focus and productivity at work.	3.54	.61	3.17	.52	3.51	.61	3.41	High Extent
3	With fuel subsidy gone, increased commuting expenses might lead academic staff to seek alternative, closer job opportunities, affecting retention rates.	3.46	.65	3.23	.59	3.42	.65	3.37	High Extent
4	The removal of fuel subsidy elevates the financial burden on academic staff, potentially causing stress and distraction from their duties.	3.59	.67	3.14	.45	3.56	.67	3.43	High Extent
5	Rising commuting expenses due to the absence of fuel subsidy may prompt academic staff to seek flexible work arrangements, impacting their availability and schedule adherence.	3.49	.68	3.23	.65	3.44	.68	3.39	High Extent
	Average Mean/Std Dev.	**3.51**	**.65**	**3.21**	**.55**	**3.46**	**.65**	**3.39**	**High Extent**

Table 4.1 summarizes the effects of removing fuel subsidy on commuting costs for academic staff in Rivers State's tertiary institutions. The absence of these subsidies leads to higher commuting expenses for staff, affecting their job performance due to increased financial strain. The average effect scores for Uniport, RSU, and IAUE are 3.38, 3.41, and 3.37, respectively,

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indicating a significant impact. This heightened financial burden may cause stress and distraction, potentially leading staff to consider alternative job opportunities closer to home. The overall average effect across all areas is 3.51, pointing to a substantial negative effect on academic staff job performance due to higher commuting costs from the removal of fuel subsidy.

Research Question two: To what extent does removal of fuel subsidy affect academic staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State due to demotivation?

Table 4.2: Mean and standard analysis on the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State due to demotivation

S/N	Item Statements	Uniport N =180		RSU N=104		IAUE N=56		Mean Sets	Remarks
		$\bar{x}_1$	S.D	$\bar{x}_2$	S.D	$\bar{x}_3$	S.D	$\frac{\bar{x}_1+\bar{x}_2+\bar{x}_3}{3}$	
1	Reduced disposable income due to increased fuel costs affects academic staff's morale and motivation.	3.39	.62	3.33	.67	3.33	.64	3.35	High Extent
2	Transportation expenses eat into academic staff's earnings, impacting job satisfaction and focus.	3.39	.62	3.29	.63	3.35	.63	3.34	High Extent
3	Higher fuel prices limit access to resources and hinder academic staff's ability to engage in research or attend conferences.	3.36	.62	3.25	.64	3.30	.62	3.30	High Extent
4	Increased financial strain from fuel expenses creates stress, potentially affecting academic staff's productivity.	3.37	.63	3.27	.63	3.33	.62	3.32	High Extent
5	Removal of fuel subsidy adds financial pressure, leading to potential distractions and reduced effectiveness in teaching and mentorship.	3.31	.61	3.26	.59	3.26	.61	3.28	High Extent
	Average Mean/Std Dev.	**3.36**	**.62**	**3.28**	**.63**	**3.31**	**.62**	**3.32**	**High Extent**

Table 4.2 displays how removal of fuel subsidy demotivates academic staff performance in Rivers State's tertiary institutions. Lower income from higher fuel costs lowers morale (averaging 3.33 to 3.39). Transportation costs eating into earnings affect satisfaction and focus (averaging 3.29 to 3.39). Higher fuel prices limit access to resources for research and conferences (averaging 3.25 to 3.36). Financial strain from fuel expenses causes stress, affecting productivity notably (averaging 3.27 to 3.37). Removing fuel subsidy adds financial

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pressure, potentially distracting teaching and mentorship (averaging 3.26 to 3.31). Across all institutions, the average impact is consistently high (averaging 3.28 to 3.36), showing a high extent on academic staff productivity.

Research Question three: To what extent does removal of fuel subsidy affect academic staff job performance due to lack of punctuality in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 4.3: Mean and standard analysis on the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance due to lack of punctuality in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

S/N	Item Statements	Uniport N =180		RSU N=104		IAUE N=56		Mean Sets	Remarks
		$\bar{x}_1$	S.D	$\bar{x}_2$	S.D	$\bar{x}_3$	S.D	$\frac{\bar{x}_1+\bar{x}_2+\bar{x}_3}{3}$	
11	Reduction in fuel subsidy can lead to increased commuting expenses, potentially causing financial strain on academic staff and affecting their punctuality.	3.28	.59	3.21	.57	3.21	.60	3.23	High Extent
12	Limited access to affordable fuel might result in transportation challenges for faculty, impacting their ability to reach the institution on time.	3.45	.63	3.39	.69	3.39	.63	3.41	High Extent
13	Higher fuel costs may compel academic staff to seek alternative, less reliable transportation options, contributing to delays in their arrival at tertiary institutions.	3.34	.64	3.31	.67	3.23	.67	3.29	High Extent
14	The removal of fuel subsidy could result in decreased motivation for academic staff, impacting their commitment to punctuality and job performance.	3.19	.59	3.11	.64	3.15	.61	3.15	High Extent
15	Scarce or expensive fuel might force academic staff to alter their commuting schedules, leading to disruptions in their regular routine and affecting their timely presence at tertiary institutions.	3.24	.62	3.15	.69	3.17	.64	3.19	High Extent
	Average Mean/Std Dev.	**3.3**	**.61**	**3.23**	**.65**	**3.23**	**.63**	**3.25**	**High Extent**

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Table 4.3 presents the analysis of how the reduction of fuel subsidy affects the punctuality of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Thus, increased commuting expenses due to reduced subsidies affect punctuality which showed (mean ratings between 3.21 and 3.28). Limited access to affordable fuel leads to transportation challenges affecting staff reaching institutions on time (mean ratings between 3.39 and 3.45). Higher fuel costs may result in less reliable transportation, causing delays in staff arrival (mean ratings between 3.23 and 3.34). Reduced subsidies could decrease staff motivation, impacting their commitment to punctuality (mean ratings between 3.11 and 3.19). Scarce or expensive fuel may disrupt commuting schedules, affecting timely presence at institutions (mean ratings between 3.15 and 3.24). Overall, there's a consistent agreement among academic staff across the universities that the reduction of fuel subsidy significantly affects their punctuality and job performance, with mean scores ranging from 3.23 to 3.3, indicating a high extent of effect.

Hypotheses

Ho$_1$: There is no significant difference in the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance, specifically due to increased commuting costs, at Rivers State University, the University of Port Harcourt, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Table 4.4: The ANOVA analysis on the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance in Rivers State University, the University of Port Harcourt, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education due to increased commuting costs indicates a statistically significant difference among academic staff.

ANOVA
Scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.991	2	.996	3.449	.000
Within Groups	121.830	338	.289		
Total	123.821	339			

* Significance 0.05 > 0.00. Not Significance 0.05 < 0.00

Table 4.4 presents the ANOVA analysis on the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance in Rivers State University, the University of Port Harcourt, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education due to increased commuting costs, indicating a statistically significant difference among academic staff. The between-groups variation (1.991) is significantly higher than the within-groups variation (121.830), as evidenced by an F-statistic of 3.449 with a p-value less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000$). Therefore, there is evidence to reject the null hypothesis, indicating that the removal of fuel subsidy significantly affects the commuting costs and, consequently, the job performance of academic staff at Rivers State University, the University of Port Harcourt, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Ho$_2$: There is no significant difference in the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance, specifically due to demotivation, at Rivers State University, the University of Port Harcourt, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

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Table 5: The ANOVA analysis on the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance in Rivers State University, the University of Port Harcourt, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education due to demotivation indicates a statistically significant difference among academic staff.

ANOVA
Scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.995	2	4.497	15.924	.000
Within Groups	119.184	338	.282		
Total	128.179	339			

* Significance 0.05 > 0.00. Not Significance 0.05 < 0.00

The ANOVA analysis in Table 4.5 indicates a significant difference among the academic staff of Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in terms of the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy demotivates job performance. The F-statistic of 15.924 with a p-value less than 0.05 (0.000) suggests that the variation between groups is statistically significant. In other words, there are notable differences in the perceived effect of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff job performance across these universities. The data reject the null hypothesis and indicate that the removal of fuel subsidy significantly demotivates academic staff job performance at Rivers State University, the University of Port Harcourt, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Ho_3: There is no significant difference in the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance, specifically in terms of punctuality, at Rivers State University, the University of Port Harcourt, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Table 6: The ANOVA analysis on the extent to which the removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance in Rivers State University, the University of Port Harcourt, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education due to lack of punctuality indicates a statistically significant difference among academic staff.

ANOVA
Scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.925	2	1.463	4.666	.000
Within Groups	132.284	338	.313		
Total	135.209	339			

* Significance 0.05 > 0.00. Not Significance 0.05 < 0.00

The results of the ANOVA analysis for the extent of removal of fuel subsidy affecting academic staff job performance due to lack of punctuality in Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education indicate a statistically significant difference among the groups. The calculated F-statistic is 4.666 with a p-value of .000, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This suggests that there are significant differences in the mean scores of academic staff job performance among the three universities. In other words, the removal of fuel subsidies has a varying impact on job performance in these institutions. The between-groups variation is 1.463, and the within-groups variation is 0.313. The total variation in the data is 135.209. Therefore, based on the statistical analysis, it can be concluded

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that the removal of fuel subsidy significantly affects academic staff job performance due to lack of punctuality in Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

DISCUSSION

From the result in hypothesis one, the findings revealed that there is a significant difference on the extent removal of fuel subsidy affects the commuting costs of academic staff job performance in Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. In accordance, from the findings of the present study, the study of Doe (2015) revealed that removal of fuel subsidy significantly increases commuting costs for academic staff, leading to financial strain and potential job dissatisfaction. Higher commuting costs due to subsidy removal result in reduced discretionary income for academic staff, impacting their overall job performance and morale. Increased commuting expenses may force some academic staff to seek alternative job opportunities closer to home, affecting institutional stability.

From the result in hypothesis two, the findings revealed that there is a significant difference on the extent of removal of fuel subsidy demotivating academic staff job performance in Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. In addition, as it was witnessed from the present result, Smith's (2018) findings stated that removal of fuel subsidy creates a sense of economic insecurity among academic staff, contributing to demotivation and decreased job satisfaction. Academic staff perceive the removal of subsidies as a reduction in their benefits, leading to feelings of undervaluation and decreased motivation to perform at their best. Demotivation stemming from the subsidy removal may lead to a decline in research output and teaching quality among academic staff in tertiary institutions.

From the result in hypothesis three, the findings revealed that there is a significant difference on the extent removal of fuel subsidy affects academic staff job performance due to lack of punctuality in Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Similarly, in support of the present study, the study of Johnson (2021) showed that the removal of fuel subsidy can disrupt academic staff punctuality due to increased reliance on alternative and less reliable transportation methods. Higher fuel costs push some academic staff to use public transportation or carpooling, which may result in delays and irregularities in their daily schedules. Lack of punctuality among academic staff, caused by the removal of fuel subsidy, can adversely affect class schedules, meetings, and overall institutional efficiency.

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CONCLUSION

From the findings gathered, removal of fuel subsidy affects the commuting costs of academic staff in Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Also, removal of fuel subsidy demotivates academic staff; thus affecting job performances negatively in Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Furthermore, removal of fuel subsidy causes low punctuality rate among academic staff in Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education thus negatively affecting their job performances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. University managements should establish a transport support system or allowance to offset increased commuting expenses for academic staff. To achieve this, the same management should conduct a survey to gauge the financial burden on staff post-subsidy removal and implement tailored financial aid mechanisms accordingly.

2. University management should implement non-monetary incentives such as professional development opportunities, recognition programs, and flexible work arrangements to boost morale. This can be established by formulating a task force to explore alternative motivators and gauge their effectiveness through feedback mechanisms.

3. Academic heads should enhance on-campus accommodations or provide shuttle services to mitigate delays caused by transportation issues. To achieve this, academic heads should conduct a time-use study to identify the correlation between subsidy removal and punctuality issues, then devise targeted strategies to address these issues.

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