



## Assessing the Implication of the Fuel Subsidy Removal on Academic Staff Productivity in Colleges of Education in Southeast Nigeria.

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### ABSTRACT

This study concentrated on the implications of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff productivity in colleges of education in Southeast Nigeria. Guided by three research questions and three research hypotheses, the study employed a descriptive research design. A structured questionnaire, tested for reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.85) and validity through a pilot study with 30 participants, was administered via Google Forms. The final sample included 103 respondents. Data analysis using SPSS version 27 involved tests of normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk), revealing non-normal distribution and necessitating the use of non-parametric methods. The Kruskal-Wallis Test was applied for hypothesis testing. Descriptive statistics summarized quantitative data, while thematic analysis was used for qualitative responses. Findings indicate that fuel subsidy removal has led to increased financial strain, impacting staff well-being and productivity. Increased commuting costs and financial pressures have negatively affected staff morale, motivation, and professional engagement. The removal of subsidies has also led to higher absenteeism and disrupted work-life balance. The study highlights the urgent need for policy interventions to mitigate the adverse effects on academic staff and suggests strategies to support their well-being and maintain productivity in the face of economic challenges.

**Keywords:** Fuel Subsidy Removal, Academic Staff, Productivity, Colleges of Education

### Introduction

The removal of fuel subsidies has far-reaching implications on various sectors of society, including education. For academic staff, the impact is most visible on their productivity, well-being and professional engagement. The sharp increase in fuel prices, resulting from the removal of subsidies, exacerbates existing economic challenges, forcing academics to navigate rising costs of living, which can adversely affect their psychological and physical well-being, engagement in academic activities, and overall productivity (Ikenga & Oluka, 2023). A fuel subsidy is a government financial aid program that lowers the cost of fuel for consumers by covering part of its production or importation costs. This intervention is aimed at stabilizing fuel prices, making energy more affordable for the public, and supporting economic activities that depend on fuel.

By keeping fuel prices artificially low, fuel subsidies can reduce inflationary pressure and help maintain social stability. However, such subsidies often lead to significant government spending, reducing funds available for other services, and can create market distortions that encourage over consumption and inefficiencies in the energy sector (Agiri et al, 2023). The removal of fuel subsidies directly impacts the cost of living, affecting academic staff's financial stability and well-being. The increased costs of transportation, utilities, and other essentials can lead to financial strain, particularly for academic staff in developing countries, where salaries may already be modest (Idris et al, 2024). Financial stress is a significant contributor to declining well-being, as it often leads to anxiety, depression, and burnout (Ogunode & Aregbesola, 2023). For academic professionals, these factors directly influence their capacity to perform their roles effectively, as mental and emotional well-being is closely tied to professional productivity.

According to Afunugo and Chukwukamma (2024), the removal of fuel subsidies has led to an increase in commuting costs for academic staff, especially those living in urban areas far from their institutions. The burden of daily commuting in the context of rising fuel prices contributes to fatigue, reducing the energy available for teaching, research, and administrative duties. Consequently, this strain is expected to lead to a decrease in overall job satisfaction and a higher turnover rate within academic institutions. Lower job satisfaction and well-being have also been linked to lower levels of innovation, research output, and teaching quality (Mohammed et al, 2020).

The removal of fuel subsidies not only affects the productivity of the academic staff but also has a direct impact on their professional engagement and financial well-being. Engaged employees are generally more productive, committed, and motivated. However, when financial pressure mounts, individuals may become disengaged from their work (Ani et al, 2021). In academic environments, professional disengagement can manifest as decreased participation in scholarly activities such as research, conference attendance, and collaboration with colleagues (Akanle et al, 2014). These activities are critical for career advancement and the overall reputation of academic institutions.

The rising cost of fuel and the subsequent increase in transport expenses may result in reduced physical presence on campuses, particularly among staff who cannot afford to commute regularly (Mohammed et al, 2024). This could translate to less interaction with students, fewer opportunities for mentorship, and diminished availability for departmental activities. Such changes weaken the academic environment, as student-staff engagement is a crucial factor in academic success and the intellectual development of students.

In addition, Sambo and Sule, B. (2024) suggests that academic staff who struggle to balance financial concerns with professional obligations may face difficulties in maintaining the quality of their research and publications. Limited access to resources, including attendance at international conferences or collaborative research opportunities, can impede academic growth and lower institutional competitiveness. This dynamic affects both individual academic trajectories and the broader standing of educational institutions within global and local networks of scholarly exchange.

The productivity of academic staff is vital for the advancement of educational institutions, particularly in research and the delivery of quality education. The implications of fuel subsidy removal on academic productivity, therefore, extend beyond individual well-being and professional engagement to the broader institutional level. Oduyemi et al, (2021) highlights that academic institutions rely on the consistent and active participation of staff in teaching, research, and governance. However, the increasing financial burden caused by rising transportation costs and inflation has led to lower attendance rates at faculty meetings and academic conferences, hindering institutional development. Furthermore, Oboro and Agbamu (2024) argue that when academic staff are preoccupied with financial challenges, their ability to innovate and contribute to the intellectual growth of their departments diminishes. Reduced research output, which is one of the primary metrics of academic productivity, not only affects individual career advancement but also has negative consequences for institutional ranking and funding opportunities. This is particularly true in countries where research grants and institutional budgets are closely tied to the scholarly output of faculty members (Umar & Nor, 2024).

Institutions may also face challenges in attracting and retaining top talent, as financial insecurity may push some academic professionals to pursue opportunities outside the academic field or even migrate to other countries with better working conditions (Gamette & Oteng, 2024). The brain drain phenomenon is particularly concerning for developing nations, where the loss of highly skilled academics can stunt the growth and development of higher education systems. The study on the implications of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff well-being and professional engagement productivity is urgent due to the growing concerns over how economic policies directly affect the education sector. In many developing nations, particularly Nigeria, the abrupt removal of subsidies has led to a spike in fuel prices, significantly impacting the cost of living (Edinoh et al, 2023). Academic staff, often already under financial strain, face exacerbated challenges in commuting, accessing essential services, and maintaining work-life balance. As Kasimu and Ogunode (2023) note, economic stress is a major contributor to job dissatisfaction and reduced professional engagement, which is critical in academic settings where productivity is driven by consistent research and teaching activities.

Moreover, despite widespread acknowledgment of the negative effects of fuel price hikes on the general population, limited studies have specifically examined how these changes influence the academic workforce, particularly in developing economies (Ogunode & Aregbesola, 2023; Adanna & Audu, 2023). This gap in the literature makes it essential to explore how financial pressures undermine academic productivity, innovation, and institutional development. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing policies and interventions that ensure academic staff remain engaged and productive in the face of economic adversity, safeguarding the quality of education in affected regions.

### ***Research Objectives***

1. Evaluate the impact of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff productivity in colleges of education in the Southeast Nigeria.
2. Investigate the impact of financial difficulties due to fuel subsidy removal on academic staff productivity in colleges of education in the Southeast Nigeria.
3. Examine the perception of academic staff towards effect of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff in colleges of education in Southeast Nigeria.

### ***Research Questions***

1. To what extent does fuel subsidy removal affect academic staff productivity in Southeast Nigeria?
2. To what extent does the financial difficulties due to fuel subsidy removal affect the academic staff productivity in colleges of education in Southeast Nigeria?
3. What is the perception of academic staff towards the effect of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff in colleges of education in Southeast Nigeria?

### ***Hypotheses***

1. Fuel subsidy removal has no significant impact on the productivity of academic staff of different rank in colleges of education in the Southeast Region.
2. There is no significant difference in the perception of academic staff of different rank regarding the impact of financial difficulties due to fuel subsidy removal on their productivity in colleges of education in the Southeast Region.

3. There is no significant difference in the perception of academic staff of different rank towards effect of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff well-being and professional engagement in colleges of education in Southeast region.

## Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design to assess the implications of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff productivity in colleges of education in Southeast Nigeria. The target population for this study comprises academic staff from colleges of education located in Southeast Nigeria. The primary research instrument used was a structured questionnaire designed to gather data on staff well-being and professional engagement. The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions to collect quantitative data following the Likert scale of 4 points. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which yielded a value of 0.85, indicating high internal consistency. A pilot study involving 30 academic staff members was conducted, and feedback was used to refine the questionnaire, ensuring its reliability and validity. The actual data collection for the study was then implemented via Google Forms to facilitate easy access and completion by the participants. The study's population included academic staff from four Colleges of Education in the Southeast Nigeria: Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu (263), Enugu State College of Education (Tech) (291), Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe (216), and Federal College of Education (Tech), Umunze (375), totaling 1,145, with 103 staff participating in the study, providing a substantial dataset for analysis. A total of 103 academic staff members responded.

Data analysis was performed using statistical software (SPSS version 27). Tests of normality were conducted to assess the distribution of the data. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests indicated that the data did not follow a normal distribution, which informed the use of non-parametric statistical methods for hypothesis testing. Consequently, the Kruskal-Wallis Test was employed for hypothesis testing, as it is suitable for comparing differences between more than two independent groups when the assumption of normality is not met. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, to summarize the responses. Inferential statistics, such as the Kruskal-Wallis Test, were used to examine relationships between variables and assess the impact of fuel subsidy removal on staff well-being and professional engagement. Qualitative responses were analyzed thematically to identify common patterns and insights.

## Results

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics based on Age Group**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25-34 years	6	5.8	5.8	5.8
	35-44 years	75	72.8	72.8	78.6
	45-54 years	22	21.4	21.4	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics based on age group. Among the participants, 6 individuals (5.8%) are between 25-34 years old, representing 5.8% of the total sample. The majority, 75 individuals (72.8%), fall within the 35-44 years age group, making up 72.8% of the sample. Additionally, 22 individuals (21.4%) are aged 45-54 years. The cumulative percentage shows that 78.6% of the participants are 44 years or younger, and all participants are accounted for by the 45-54 age group, reaching a cumulative total of 100%. The sample size is 103, with 100% valid responses.

**Table 2: Demographic characteristics based on Academic Rank**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lecturer III	21	20.4	20.4	20.4
	Lecturer II	60	58.3	58.3	78.6
	Lecturer I	16	15.5	15.5	94.2
	Principal lecturer	6	5.8	5.8	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 presents the demographic distribution of respondents based on academic rank. Out of 103 participants, the majority (60, or 58.3%) were Lecturer II. Lecturer III accounted for 21 respondents (20.4%), while Lecturer I represented 16 individuals (15.5%). Principal Lecturers constituted the smallest group, with 6 respondents (5.8%). The cumulative percentage shows that 94.2% of respondents were within the ranks of Lecturer III, Lecturer



Table 4 presents descriptive statistics on the impact of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff well-being and professional engagement productivity, based on six aspects. With 103 valid responses ( $N = 103$ ) and no missing data, the mean scores range from 3.06 to 3.74, indicating that academic staff generally agree that higher commuting expenses reduce their productivity. The highest mean (3.74) suggests a strong agreement that commuting expenses distract staff, while the lowest mean (3.06) reflects moderate agreement on financial strain affecting productivity. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.442 to 1.144, show varying degrees of consensus, with higher values indicating more diverse responses. Variances follow a similar trend (0.195 to 1.309). The negative skewness in most items implies a leaning toward agreement, with values like -1.098 and -1.112 reflecting strong negative skew. Kurtosis values, mostly negative (e.g., -0.811 and -1.949), suggest a flatter distribution than normal. Overall, the data indicate a perceived negative impact of subsidy removal on academic productivity.

Table 5.1: **Higher commuting expenses often distract academic staff, lowering their productivity**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	27	26.2	26.2	26.2
Strongly Agree	76	73.8	73.8	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.1 shows that 76 respondents (73.8%) strongly agree, and 27 (26.2%) agree that higher commuting expenses distract academic staff, reducing productivity. In total, 103 participants (100%) supported this view, indicating that the majority of academic staff feel that commuting costs negatively impact their work efficiency.

Table 5.2: **Increased travel costs from subsidy removal affects research efficiency**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	20	19.4	19.4	19.4
Agree	27	26.2	26.2	45.6
Strongly Agree	56	54.4	54.4	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.2 shows that the majority of respondents (54.4%,  $n=56$ ) strongly agree that increased travel costs from subsidy removal affect research efficiency, while 26.2% ( $n=27$ ) agree. Only 19.4% ( $n=20$ ) strongly disagree with this statement. The total number of respondents is 103, with all percentages being valid and cumulative, reaching 100% at the conclusion.

Table 5.3: **Academic staff productivity is in decline due to higher transportation expenses.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	59	57.3	57.3	57.3
Strongly Agree	44	42.7	42.7	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.3 indicates that a majority of respondents (57.3%,  $n=59$ ) agree that academic staff productivity is in decline due to higher transportation expenses, while 42.7% ( $n=44$ ) strongly agree. The total number of respondents is 103, with cumulative and valid percentages reaching 100%.

Table 5.4: **Staff productivity suffers as they handle increased commuting costs**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	20	19.4	19.4	19.4
Agree	37	35.9	35.9	55.3
Strongly Agree	46	44.7	44.7	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.4 reveals that 44.7% of respondents (n=46) strongly agree that staff productivity suffers due to increased commuting costs, while 35.9% (n=37) agree. Only 19.4% (n=20) strongly disagree with this statement. The total number of respondents is 103, with the percentages reaching 100% cumulatively.

Table 5.5: Financial strain from subsidy removal could lead to reduced academic productivity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	20	19.4	19.4	19.4
	Agree	56	54.4	54.4	73.8
	Strongly Agree	27	26.2	26.2	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.5 shows that 54.4% of respondents (n=56) agree that financial strain from subsidy removal could lead to reduced academic productivity, while 26.2% (n=27) strongly agree. Only 19.4% (n=20) disagree. The total number of respondents is 103, with cumulative percentages summing up to 100%.

Table 5.6: Increased travel expenses from subsidy removal disrupt staff work routines and productivity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	69	67.0	67.0	67.0
	Strongly Agree	34	33.0	33.0	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.6 indicates that 67.0% of respondents (n=69) agree that increased travel expenses from subsidy removal disrupt staff work routines and productivity, while 33.0% (n=34) strongly agree. The total number of respondents is 103, with cumulative percentages reaching 100%.

**Research question 2: The extent to which financial difficulties due to fuel subsidy removal affect the academic staff productivity**

Table 6: Descriptive statistics on extent to which financial difficulties due to fuel subsidy removal affect the academic staff productivity

		Financial difficulties due to fuel subsidy removal reduce academic staff productivity in colleges of education.	Financial stress affects staff focus, reducing their teaching effectiveness significantly.	Limited resources from financial issues hinders staff research productivity.	Financial pressures lead to increased absenteeism, affecting staff productivity.	Reduced funding might decrease staff motivation, impacting overall academic performance.	Financial instability often results in lower academic staff engagement and productivity.
N	Valid	103	103	103	103	103	103
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.50	3.32	3.28	3.24	3.07	3.41
Std. Deviation		.502	.782	.452	.822	.675	.798
Variance		.252	.612	.204	.676	.456	.636
Skewness		-.020	-.635	.986	-.480	-.082	-.874
Std. Error of Skewness		.238	.238	.238	.238	.238	.238
Kurtosis		-2.040	-1.080	-1.049	-1.356	-.772	-.860
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.472	.472	.472	.472	.472	.472

The descriptive statistics in Table 6 show that financial difficulties due to fuel subsidy removal significantly affect academic staff productivity. The highest mean (3.50) is observed for the statement that financial difficulties due to fuel subsidy removal reduce productivity, with low variation (standard deviation = 0.502). Financial stress impacting teaching effectiveness has a mean of 3.32, while limited resources hindering research productivity shows a mean of 3.28 with a lower variance (0.204). Financial pressures leading to absenteeism and reduced funding lowering staff

motivation have means of 3.24 and 3.07, respectively. Financial instability affecting engagement and productivity has a mean of 3.41 with a skewness of -0.874. Skewness values for most statements are negative, indicating a tendency toward agreement, while kurtosis values, which range from -2.040 to -0.772, suggest a relatively flat distribution.

Table 6.1: **Financial difficulties due to fuel subsidy removal reduce academic staff productivity in colleges of education.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	51	49.5	49.5	49.5
Strongly Agree	52	50.5	50.5	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.1 reveals that 50.5% of respondents (n=52) strongly agree that financial difficulties due to fuel subsidy removal reduce academic staff productivity in colleges of education, while 49.5% (n=51) agree. The total number of respondents is 103, with cumulative percentages summing up to 100%.

Table 6.2: **Financial stress affects staff focus, reducing their teaching effectiveness significantly**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	20	19.4	19.4	19.4
Agree	30	29.1	29.1	48.5
Strongly Agree	53	51.5	51.5	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.2 shows that 51.5% of respondents (n=53) strongly agree that financial stress affects staff focus, significantly reducing their teaching effectiveness, while 29.1% (n=30) agree. Only 19.4% (n=20) disagree. The total number of respondents is 103, with cumulative percentages reaching 100%.

Table 6.3: **Limited resources from financial issues hinders staff research productivity**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	74	71.8	71.8	71.8
Strongly Agree	29	28.2	28.2	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.3 indicates that 71.8% of respondents (n=74) agree that limited resources due to financial issues hinder staff research productivity, while 28.2% (n=29) strongly agree. The total number of respondents is 103, with cumulative percentages reaching 100%.

Table 6.4: **Financial pressures lead to increased absenteeism, affecting staff productivity**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	25	24.3	24.3	24.3
Agree	28	27.2	27.2	51.5
Strongly Agree	50	48.5	48.5	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.4 shows that 48.5% of respondents (n=50) strongly agree that financial pressures lead to increased absenteeism, affecting staff productivity, while 27.2% (n=28) agree. A smaller portion, 24.3% (n=25), disagree. The total number of respondents is 103, with cumulative percentages reaching 100%.

Table 6.5: Reduced funding might decrease staff motivation, impacting overall academic performance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	20	19.4	19.4	19.4
	Agree	56	54.4	54.4	73.8
	Strongly Agree	27	26.2	26.2	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.5 reveals that 54.4% of respondents (n=56) agree that reduced funding might decrease staff motivation, impacting overall academic performance, while 26.2% (n=27) strongly agree. Only 19.4% (n=20) disagree. The total number of respondents is 103, with cumulative percentages reaching 100%.

Table 6.6: Financial instability often results in lower academic staff engagement and productivity.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	20	19.4	19.4	19.4
	Agree	21	20.4	20.4	39.8
	Strongly Agree	62	60.2	60.2	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.6 shows that 60.2% of respondents (n=62) strongly agree that financial instability often results in lower academic staff engagement and productivity, while 20.4% (n=21) agree. Only 19.4% (n=20) disagree. The total number of respondents is 103, with cumulative percentages reaching 100%.

### Research question 3: The effect of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff well-being and professional engagement

Table 7: Descriptive statistics on effect of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff well-being and professional engagement

		Fuel subsidy removal increase financial strain on academic staff.	Academic staff face challenges in managing their personal budgets due to fuel subsidy removal.	Increased fuel expenses might limit academic staff's attendance at conferences.	Higher commuting costs might influence staff decisions on job retention.	Removal of subsidies could impact academic staff's work-life balance negatively.	Financial burdens from fuel costs might affect staff's morale and motivation.
N	Valid	103	103	103	103	103	103
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.75	3.65	3.39	3.07	3.28	3.41
Std. Deviation		.437	.479	.795	.402	.772	.798
Variance		.191	.230	.632	.162	.596	.636
Skewness		-1.157	-.641	-.819	.552	-.536	-.874
Std. Error of Skewness		.238	.238	.238	.238	.238	.238
Kurtosis		-.675	-1.622	-.924	3.075	-1.125	-.860
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.472	.472	.472	.472	.472	.472

The table presents descriptive statistics on the effects of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff well-being and professional engagement. All responses come from 103 valid participants, with no missing data. The highest mean score (3.75) is for financial strain on academic staff, followed by personal budget challenges (mean = 3.65). Increased fuel expenses limiting conference attendance has a mean of 3.39, while higher commuting costs affecting job retention scores lower (mean = 3.07). The lowest skewness (-1.157) occurs for financial strain, indicating strong agreement, while job retention



shows positive skewness (.552), reflecting some disagreement. Standard deviations range from .402 to .798, indicating varying response spread, with conference attendance showing the largest variation (std. dev. = .795). Kurtosis values show that most distributions are flatter than normal, except job retention, which has a peaked distribution (kurtosis = 3.075), indicating concentrated responses.

**Table 7.1: Fuel subsidy removal increase financial strain on academic staff.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	26	25.2	25.2	25.2
Strongly Agree	77	74.8	74.8	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

The table shows that 74.8% of respondents (n=77) strongly agree that fuel subsidy removal increases financial strain on academic staff, while 25.2% (n=26) agree. There were no responses for disagreement, and the total number of respondents is 103, with cumulative percentages reaching 100%. This indicates a strong consensus that subsidy removal significantly increases financial strain.

**Table 7.2: Academic staff face challenges in managing their personal budgets due to fuel subsidy removal.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	36	35.0	35.0	35.0
Strongly Agree	67	65.0	65.0	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

The table shows that 65.0% of respondents (n=67) strongly agree that academic staff face challenges in managing their personal budgets due to fuel subsidy removal, while 35.0% (n=36) agree. All 103 respondents participated, with cumulative percentages reaching 100%, indicating a unanimous perception that fuel subsidy removal has negatively affected academic staff's financial management.

**Table 7.3: Increased fuel expenses might limit academic staff's attendance at conferences.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	20	19.4	19.4	19.4
Agree	23	22.3	22.3	41.7
Strongly Agree	60	58.3	58.3	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

The table indicates that 58.3% of respondents (n=60) strongly agree that increased fuel expenses might limit academic staff's attendance at conferences, while 22.3% (n=23) agree. A smaller portion, 19.4% (n=20), disagree. All 103 respondents participated, with cumulative percentages reaching 100%, showing that a significant majority believe fuel costs could restrict conference attendance.

**Table 7.4: Higher commuting costs might influence staff decisions on job retention.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	5	4.9	4.9	4.9
Agree	86	83.5	83.5	88.3
Strongly Agree	12	11.7	11.7	100.0
Total	103	100.0	100.0	

The table reveals that 83.5% of respondents (n=86) agree that higher commuting costs might influence staff decisions on job retention, while 11.7% (n=12) strongly agree. Only 4.9% (n=5) disagree. The total number of respondents is 103, with cumulative percentages reaching 100%, indicating that the majority believe commuting costs significantly impact job retention decisions.

**Table 7.5: Removal of subsidies could impact academic staff's work-life balance negatively.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	20	19.4	19.4	19.4
	Agree	34	33.0	33.0	52.4
	Strongly Agree	49	47.6	47.6	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

The table shows that 47.6% of respondents (n=49) strongly agree that the removal of subsidies could negatively impact academic staff's work-life balance, while 33.0% (n=34) agree. A smaller portion, 19.4% (n=20), disagree. The total number of respondents is 103, with cumulative percentages summing to 100%, indicating a consensus that subsidy removal has a substantial negative effect on work-life balance.

**Table 7.6: Financial burdens from fuel costs might affect staff's morale and motivation.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	20	19.4	19.4	19.4
	Agree	21	20.4	20.4	39.8
	Strongly Agree	62	60.2	60.2	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

The table indicates that 60.2% of respondents (n=62) strongly agree that financial burdens from fuel costs might affect staff's morale and motivation, while 20.4% (n=21) agree. Only 19.4% (n=20) disagree. The total number of respondents is 103, with cumulative percentages reaching 100%, showing that a majority believe that fuel-related financial pressures significantly impact staff morale and motivation.

**Table 8: Tests of Normality**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Impact of fuel subsidy removal on the productivity of academic staff	.296	103	.000	.774	103	.000
Impact of financial difficulties due to fuel subsidy removal on productivity	.279	103	.000	.806	103	.000
Impact of low earning of college staff due to fuel subsidy removal	.260	103	.000	.791	103	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 8 presents results from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests of normality for three variables related to the impact of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff productivity. Both tests assess whether the data follows a normal distribution. For all variables in the table, the significance values (Sig.) for both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests are .000, which is below the conventional threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the null hypothesis of normal distribution is rejected for each variable. Therefore, the data for the "Impact of fuel subsidy removal on productivity," "Impact of financial difficulties due to fuel subsidy removal on productivity," and "Impact of low earnings of college staff due to fuel subsidy removal" do not follow a normal distribution.

Given that the data is not normally distributed, the Kruskal-Wallis test is justified for hypothesis testing. The Kruskal-Wallis test is a non-parametric alternative to the ANOVA and does not require the assumption of normality. It is suitable for comparing the medians of three or more independent groups, making it appropriate when data violates the normality assumption, as is the case here.

**Hypothesis 1:** Fuel subsidy removal has no significant impact on the productivity of academic staff of different rank in colleges of education in the Southeast Region.

**Table 9. Kruskal-Wallis Test**

	Academic Rank	N	Mean Rank
Impact of fuel subsidy removal on the productivity of academic staff	Lecturer III	21	36.95
	Lecturer II	60	48.67
	Lecturer I	16	66.06
	Total	97	

Chi-Square=10.507, df=2, Asymp. Sig.=.005

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the perception of academic staff of different rank regarding the impact of financial difficulties due to fuel subsidy removal on their productivity in colleges of education in the Southeast Region.

**Table 10. Kruskal-Wallis Test**

	Academic Rank	N	Mean Rank
Impact of financial difficulties due to fuel subsidy removal on productivity	Lecturer III	21	32.90
	Lecturer II	60	48.83
	Lecturer I	16	70.75
	Total	97	

Chi-Square=17.200, df=2, Asymp. Sig.=.000

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the perception of academic staff of different rank towards effect of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff well-being and professional engagement in colleges of education in Southeast region.

**Table 11. Kruskal-Wallis Test**

	Academic Rank	N	Mean Rank
Impact of low earning of college staff due to fuel subsidy removal	Lecturer III	21	42.71
	Lecturer II	60	48.65
	Lecturer I	16	58.56
	Total	97	

Chi-Square=3.057, df=2, Asymp. Sig.=.217

## Discussion

The removal of fuel subsidies has significantly impacted academic staff productivity, with increased commuting expenses being a major contributor. Higher travel costs have been shown to distract academic staff, leading to decreased productivity. For instance, studies have highlighted that the financial strain from fuel subsidy removal adversely affects research efficiency and overall work performance (Gamette & Oteng, 2024). In contrast, previous research by Oboro and Agbamu (2024) found that reduced financial pressure from subsidies could enhance productivity by alleviating financial stress. This finding aligns with the observation that increased transportation expenses disrupt staff work routines and productivity (Ogunode & Aregbesola, 2023). Furthermore, the decline in academic productivity due to higher commuting costs has been noted as a pressing issue. Staff members struggling with increased travel expenses are often preoccupied with financial concerns, which detracts from their academic responsibilities and research efforts. This is consistent with previous studies showing that financial strain can negatively impact work efficiency and output (Sambo & Sule, 2024). The evidence underscores a significant correlation between fuel subsidy removal and reduced academic staff productivity due to heightened commuting costs and financial burdens.

Financial difficulties stemming from the removal of fuel subsidies have notably diminished academic staff productivity in colleges of education. Financial stress caused by increased expenses reduces staff focus, significantly impacting teaching effectiveness. This observation is in contrast to earlier findings by Mohammed et al, (2024), which suggested that financial support could enhance staff productivity by alleviating stress. Limited resources due to these financial strains also hinder staff research productivity, as noted by Akanle et al, (2014), who found that financial constraints impede academic output. Furthermore, financial pressures often lead to increased absenteeism, further compromising staff productivity. In a related

study, Ani et al (2021) highlighted that reduced funding decreases staff motivation, negatively influencing overall academic performance. This finding agrees with the notion that financial instability results in lower engagement and diminished productivity among academic staff. The cumulative effect of these financial difficulties emphasizes the critical need for strategies to mitigate the impact of subsidy removal on staff effectiveness and institutional performance.

The removal of fuel subsidies has had a profound impact on academic staff well-being and professional engagement. Increased financial strain has led to difficulties in managing personal budgets, causing stress and dissatisfaction among staff. This financial burden directly affects staff morale and motivation, as observed by Audu et al, (2024), who found that financial instability negatively impacts professional enthusiasm and engagement. In contrast, earlier studies suggested that financial support, such as subsidies, was crucial for maintaining staff well-being and professional activity (Idris et al, 2024). Increased fuel expenses have also limited academic staff's ability to attend conferences, which is crucial for professional development and networking. This limitation on professional engagement further exacerbates the negative impact on staff well-being. Additionally, higher commuting costs have influenced staff decisions on job retention, as financial strain may prompt staff to consider alternative employment opportunities. This finding aligns with research by Afunugo and Chukwukamma (2024), who emphasized that financial constraints could affect job satisfaction and retention. The removal of fuel subsidies has led to decreased work-life balance and heightened financial pressures, severely affecting academic staff's professional engagement and overall well-being.

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## Conclusion

The study on assessing the implication of fuel subsidy removal on academic staff productivity in colleges of education in Southeast Nigeria reveals significant adverse effects. The removal of fuel subsidies has substantially increased financial strain on academic staff, leading to challenges in managing personal budgets and affecting their overall well-being. The heightened commuting costs have not only strained staff finances but also limited their professional activities, such as attending conferences and engaging in research, crucial for career development. Financial difficulties resulting from the subsidy removal have contributed to decreased staff morale, motivation, and productivity. The increased burden has led to higher absenteeism and reduced professional engagement, impacting the quality of education and institutional performance. Additionally, the study highlights that these financial pressures have influenced staff decisions regarding job retention, further compounding the challenges faced by educational institutions. The fuel subsidy removal has had a detrimental effect on academic staff's professional and personal lives, undermining their well-being and productivity. Addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions, including financial support mechanisms and policy adjustments, to mitigate the impact on staff and ensure the continued effectiveness of educational institutions in the region.

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