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Original Research

Prevailing Economic Conditions and Lecturers' Productivity, Job Satisfaction, and Job Performance in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how prevailing economic conditions relate to productivity, job satisfaction, and job performance of lecturers in public tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria. A correlational survey research design was adopted. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The population comprised 160 Economics educators from six public tertiary institutions. Four instruments were used to collect data for this study: the Prevailing Economic Condition Questionnaire, Lecturers' Productivity Questionnaire, Job Satisfaction Questionnaire, and Job Performance Questionnaire. Pearson correlation coefficient analyzed relationships, while p-values tested significance. Results revealed that economic conditions had a strongly significant negative relationship with lecturers' productivity ($r = -0.75$, $p < 0.05$). Economic conditions showed an insignificant negative weak relationship with job satisfaction ($r = -0.10$, $p > 0.05$) and a significant negative moderate relationship with job performance ($r = -0.62$, $p < 0.05$). Findings indicate that poor economic conditions significantly impair teaching effectiveness, research output, and instructional delivery. The study links productivity and performance to teaching quality outcomes, addressing implications for curriculum delivery and student learning.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, economic crises have affected education systems, influencing teaching quality and learning outcomes. Economic recession impacts national output and education budgets, creating challenges for tertiary institutions. The harsh effects include low income, unemployment, inflation, and reduced investment in education (Kose & Ohnsorege, 2020; Li et al., 2019). Recession reduces budgetary allocation to education, affecting teaching resources and learning environments (Jackson et al., 2021). These conditions may diminish lecturers' capacity to deliver quality instruction.

Academic staff in universities engage in teaching, research, supervision, and community service. Their productivity appears through publications, research outputs, and most critically, through effective teaching and curriculum delivery. Economic conditions affect not only research productivity but also teaching quality, lesson preparation, student supervision, and instructional effectiveness (Hanushek, 2011). When economic pressures reduce resources for teaching materials, professional development, and adequate compensation, lecturers face challenges in maintaining high instructional standards. In recessive economies,

poor budgetary allocation creates problems in tertiary institutions. Reduced funding leads to salary challenges, limited professional development opportunities, inadequate teaching resources, and deteriorating infrastructure. These conditions affect lecturers' ability to prepare quality lessons, provide timely feedback to students, supervise projects effectively, and deliver engaging instruction (Nagler er al., 2020). Observations show that lecturers in Imo State tertiary institutions face difficulties carrying out teaching duties effectively during economic downtime. This study investigates how prevailing economic conditions relate to lecturers' productivity, job satisfaction, and performance, with emphasis on implications for teaching quality and student learning outcomes in Imo State tertiary institutions.

Economic recession refers to a decline in economic activity lasting several months, visible in GDP, income, and employment (Kose & Ohnsorege, 2020). When economies experience a recession, workers may be psychologically stressed, leading to reduced productivity and creativity. The world economy experienced five global recessions between 1950 and 2020: in 1975, 1982, 1991, 2009, and 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified global economic challenges (Ozili, 2020). Nigeria entered recession in 2016 when GDP contracted by 1.51% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). This recession caused hardships, job losses, and business closures. Economic downturns disrupt every sector, including education. During a recession, funding for education suffers as governments divert resources to other sectors (Shafiq, 2010). Recession affects academic activities as institutions struggle to purchase teaching materials, sponsor professional development, and pay salaries consistently. Food inflation rose to 23.34% by 2023, creating upward pressure on transportation and essential services (NBS, 2023). Exchange rates deteriorated from 463 naira to a dollar in 2016 to over 900 naira per dollar in 2023. These conditions adversely affect lecturers' purchasing power and capacity to fulfill teaching responsibilities effectively.

Research shows that economic conditions significantly impact teaching effectiveness. Nagler et al. (2020) found that teachers entering the profession during recessions demonstrate higher effectiveness in raising student achievement. Their study of Florida public school teachers revealed that recession-era entrants showed 0.10 standard deviations higher math value-added compared to non-recession entrants. However, existing teachers facing economic hardship show different patterns. Economic stress can reduce teaching quality through multiple pathways. First, inadequate resources limit instructional effectiveness. When institutions lack funding for teaching materials, technology, and infrastructure, lecturers struggle to deliver engaging lessons (World Bank, 2022). Second, financial stress affects lesson preparation time. Lecturers facing economic challenges may seek additional employment, reducing time for curriculum planning and student feedback. Third, professional development opportunities decline during economic downturns, limiting pedagogical skill enhancement. Kraft and Lyon (2024) documented that real teacher wages in the United States declined to 1987 levels by 2022, coinciding with decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover. Their research revealed that economic pressures affect teaching quality through reduced morale and professional commitment. Similarly, Hanushek (2011) emphasized that teacher quality significantly influences student achievement, with economic value exceeding trillions of dollars in lifetime earnings.

Tertiary education contributes to national development through skilled workforce production (Esomonu et al, 2018; Tien et al., 2022). Tertiary institutions cannot be productive without effective teaching activities. Any negative influence on tertiary institutions affects overall national development, particularly through compromised teaching quality and reduced learning outcomes. Despite tertiary education's importance, Nigerian government allocations fall short of UNESCO's 26% recommendation (Adesina, 2021). This underfunding creates challenges, including employment freezes, reduced research grants, limited professional development, and incessant strikes. These factors reduce lecturers' capacity to deliver quality instruction, affecting curriculum coverage, student engagement, and learning outcomes. Nigerian universities show relatively poor ranking globally and regionally. The University of Nigeria ranked 8th nationally, while several southeastern universities ranked below 60th. This poor ranking reflects multiple challenges, including limited research output and potentially compromised teaching quality stemming from economic constraints (Times Higher Education, 2023).

Research productivity forms one parameter for measuring academic staff effectiveness. However, teaching productivity is equally critical. Teaching productivity includes curriculum delivery effectiveness, student learning outcomes, innovation in pedagogy, and student supervision quality (Chana et al, 2022). Publications such as books, journal articles, and conference papers demonstrate research productivity, but teaching outputs include course materials development, student project supervision, curriculum innovation, and instructional effectiveness. Universities worldwide compete in excellence across teaching, research, and service. Effective teaching directly influences student success, graduate quality, and institutional reputation. Economic challenges that reduce productivity also compromise teaching quality, affecting lesson preparation, instructional innovation, and student support (Oderinde et al., 2024).

Job satisfaction refers to positive feelings workers derive from their jobs (Issa Gazi et al., 2022; Lawal et al., 2025). Job satisfaction comprises affective states regarding multiple job facets. These feelings

include judgments about job security, workload, recognition, and working conditions. Job satisfaction relates to intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic satisfaction involves internal motivational factors that drive interest in work. Factors influencing intrinsic satisfaction include autonomy, recognition, achievement, and meaningful work. Extrinsic satisfaction stems from external factors, including salary, promotion, working conditions, and institutional support (Koninga & Dorasamy, 2025). Research in African universities reveals complex patterns. Studies in Uganda found that co-worker relationships and intrinsic teaching aspects predict satisfaction, while extrinsic factors like remuneration and working environment create dissatisfaction (Ssesanga & Garrett, 2005). Similarly, South African research identified workload, economic struggles of students, and administrative burdens as significant job demands affecting satisfaction (Bezuidenhout, 2021). When a recession reduces job satisfaction, teaching and learning activities suffer. This affects nation-building through reduced graduate quality. Increased satisfaction could enhance job performance, improving teaching effectiveness and student outcomes.

Job performance consists of observable behaviors relevant to organizational goals (Motowidlo & Harrison, 2012). For lecturers, job performance includes teaching effectiveness, research output, student supervision, and service activities. Teaching performance specifically encompasses lesson delivery quality, student engagement, assessment practices, feedback provision, and curriculum coverage. Job performance is critical as it influences institutional productivity and student learning outcomes (Hunter & Hunter, 1984). When lecturers are ill-motivated due to economic conditions, job performance declines. This manifests in reduced teaching quality, limited student interaction, delayed feedback, and minimal instructional innovation. Economic hardship may cause lecturers to show carefree attitudes toward teaching, affecting lesson preparation and classroom engagement. Recent African studies reveal that working conditions significantly affect performance. Research in Tanzania, Ghana, and Nigeria consistently shows that salary inadequacy, poor working environments, and limited career advancement opportunities reduce job performance and increase turnover intentions (Mgaiwa, 2021; Lawal et al., 2025). These performance challenges directly compromise teaching quality and student learning experiences. This study investigates whether the economic crisis in Nigeria relates to lecturers' productivity, job satisfaction, and job performance, with specific attention to implications for teaching effectiveness and student learning in Imo State tertiary institutions. This study aims to answer the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1: What is the relationship between prevailing economic conditions and lecturers' productivity in tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria

RQ2: What is the relationship between prevailing economic conditions and lecturers' job satisfaction in tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria

RQ3: What is the relationship between prevailing economic conditions and lecturers' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria

2. THEORETICAL SIGNIFICANCE

This study is anchored on Friedman's (1968) monetarist theory and Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory. These theories provide complementary lenses for understanding how economic conditions influence lecturer productivity, satisfaction, and performance.

Friedman's monetarist theory states that money supply primarily determines inflation and deflation. Nominal income largely depends on the money supply. This theory guides government monetary and fiscal policies for economic regulation. During a recession, governments may adjust spending and taxation to control money flow. For education, monetarist principles explain funding patterns during economic crises. When governments face reduced revenue, education budgets suffer. Reduced funding limits resources for teaching materials, infrastructure maintenance, and salary adequacy. These funding constraints directly affect lecturers' working conditions and capacity to deliver quality instruction. The theory helps explain why economic recession correlates with reduced educational investment, subsequently affecting teaching quality and productivity.

Maslow's theory states that humans fulfill needs hierarchically: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. This theory explains lecturer motivation and performance patterns during economic hardship (Berkovich et al., 2025). Lecturers facing economic challenges struggle to meet basic physiological needs (adequate food, housing) and safety needs (job security, financial stability). When basic needs remain unmet, lecturers cannot focus on higher-order needs like professional esteem and self-actualization through teaching excellence. Economic hardship prevents lecturers from achieving their potential in teaching effectiveness and research productivity. The theory suggests that governments, as employers, should provide adequate salaries, promotion opportunities, comfortable working conditions, and recognition to enable lecturers to progress toward self-actualization in their teaching roles.

These theories directly connect to the study variables. Monetarist theory explains the relationship between economic conditions and institutional resources available for teaching and research. When the

money supply contracts during a recession, educational funding decreases, reducing lecturers' resources and productivity. Poor resource availability compromises teaching quality and research output. Maslow's theory explains relationships between economic conditions and job satisfaction. When economic hardship prevents meeting physiological and safety needs, job satisfaction declines. Dissatisfaction manifests in reduced teaching motivation, limited classroom engagement, and decreased commitment to student learning. However, lecturers with intrinsic teaching motivation may maintain satisfaction despite economic challenges, explaining weak relationships sometimes observed between economic conditions and satisfaction. The theories also explain job performance patterns. According to Maslow, unmet lower-order needs prevent optimal performance. Lecturers struggling financially cannot focus fully on teaching excellence, lesson preparation, or student mentorship. This explains moderate to strong negative relationships between economic hardship and teaching performance. Study findings showing negative correlations between economic conditions and productivity and performance align with both theories' predictions.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design and context

This study adopted a correlation survey research design. According to Cohen et al. (2018), correlational survey research design seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variables. Usually, such studies indicate the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables. This design is considered appropriate for the study because it helped the researcher to correlate economic recession and lecturers' productivity, job satisfaction, and job performance, and to draw inferences based on the data collected from the sample. This study was conducted in Imo State. It is one of the thirty-six (36) states in Nigeria. Imo State is located in the South-East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. Its capital is Owerri, and it has twenty-seven (27) local government areas. The state has a total landmass of 5,067.2 square kilometres. The study is of interest to the researcher in this area because observation done by the researcher showed that some of the Educators in tertiary institutions in Nigeria seem to have difficulties in getting sponsorships for conferences, workshops, seminars, and receiving regular salaries due to the economic crisis experienced in the country. Some Educators were inattentive to their duty post due to a hike in every aspect of commodities that sustain life. Finally, a study of this nature has never been carried out within the confines of the state based on the available information and materials assessed.

3.2. Population

The population consisted of 160 Economics Education lecturers from six public tertiary institutions in Imo State. Economics education lecturers were specifically selected because they possess a deep understanding of economic concepts, enabling them to accurately assess economic conditions in their work. Their training in economic analysis makes them particularly suitable for evaluating relationships between economic variables and workplace outcomes.

All 160 lecturers participated in the study using census sampling, as the population was manageable. This approach ensured comprehensive coverage of Economics education lecturers across Imo State's public tertiary institutions.

3.3. Instrumentation

Four instruments were used for data collection: Prevailing Economic Condition Questionnaire (PECQ), Lecturers' Productivity Questionnaire (LPQ), Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (JSQ), and Job Performance Questionnaire (JPQ). PECQ was developed by the researcher in a Likert scale with affirmative options Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD), and with a corresponding weight of 4,3,2, and 1points respectively. LPQ was developed by the researcher The respondents were expected to respond to a list item in the direction option of modified Likert four-point scale of 11-22 to be rated as Very High Productivity (VHP: 4 points), 10 – 6 rated as High Productivity (HP: 3 points), 5 – 1 rated as Low Productivity (LP: 2 points) and 0 rated as Vey Low Productivity (VLP: 1 point). JSQ has twenty-six (26) items with four-point rating responses of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree(A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) and assigned weights of 4, 3, 2, and 1points respectively, which were adapted from the Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement Scale developed by Society for Human Resource and Management (2016). All the 26 items were skewed in positive and negative form. JPQ contains twenty-nine (29) items with a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), and assigned values of 4,3,2, and 1 points, respectively. All the items were adapted and skewed in positive and negative form from the Assessing Job Performance scale constructed by Ramos-Villagrasa et al. (2019). The instruments were face-validated by three experts within the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Two of the experts are from the Department of Social Science Education (Economics unit), while one is from the Department of Science Education (Measurement and

Evaluation unit). The instruments were trial tested on 20 Economics Educators from the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu State that was not selected for the study within Imo State. Both states (Imo State and Enugu State) belong to the same South–East Geo-political zone in Nigeria. Economics Educators in the University of Nigeria Nsukka are familiar with the impact of economic recession in the country and as well share the same characteristics and experience with those of Economics Educators in the public tertiary institutions selected in Imo State. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument, and the result gave the alpha co-efficient values of 0.81, 0.853, 0.847 and 0.717 for PECQ, LPQ, JSQ and JPQ respectively. The choice for using Cronbach Alpha statistics was based on the fact that it is best suitable for analyzing items that are polychotomously scored.

3.4. Data collection procedure

This study used a direct delivery and retrieval method. The instruments were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the aid of two research assistants. The two research assistants were adequately briefed and instructed on the method of administering and retrieving of the instrument after some interval. All 160 instruments were returned and used for analysis.

3.5. Data analysis procedure

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to answer the research questions, while the p-value associated with the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Correlation coefficients of 0.00-0.349, 0.35-0.69, and 0.7-1 were considered weak, moderate, and strong, respectively. Null hypotheses were rejected when the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05.

3.6. Ethical considerations

The study followed ethical research protocols. Institutional approval was obtained from relevant institutional ethics committees in participating institutions. Participants received information about the study's purpose and voluntary nature. Written informed consent was secured before data collection. Anonymity was maintained throughout data collection and analysis. Participants were informed they could withdraw without consequences. Data were stored securely and used solely for research purposes. These procedures ensured ethical standards and participant protection throughout the study.

4. RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between prevailing economic conditions and lecturers' productivity in tertiary institutions in Imo State?

Table 1. Pearson Product Coefficient on The Relationship Between Prevailing Economic Conditions and Lecturers' Productivity in Tertiary Institutions in Imo State

		PEC	LP
PEC	Pearson Correlation	1	**-0.75**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.00
	N	160	160
LP	Pearson Correlation	**-0.75**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	
	N	160	160

Note: PEC= Prevailing Economic Conditions, LP= Lecturers' Productivity

Table 1 contains the Pearson product-moment coefficient for the relationship between prevailing economic conditions and lecturers' productivity in tertiary institutions in Imo State. The relationship between prevailing economic conditions and lecturers' productivity is represented by the coefficient (r) -0.75. This indicates that prevailing economic condition which are characterized by economic recession has a strong negative relationship with lecturers' productivity in Imo State tertiary institutions. This implies that as economic recession increases, lecturers productivity is likely to decline to a large extent. From the results in the table above, the correlation coefficient of -0.75 is significant at 0.00. The significance value of 0.00 is less than the 0.05 level of significance benchmark at which the hypothesis is being tested. Therefore, prevailing economic conditions have a significant relationship with lecturers' productivity in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between prevailing economic conditions and job satisfaction of lecturers in tertiary institutions in Imo State?

Table 2. Pearson Product Coefficient for The Relationship Between Prevailing Economic Conditions and Job Satisfaction of Lecturers in Tertiary Institutions in Imo State

		PEC	JS
PEC	Pearson Correlation	1	**-0.10**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.20
	N	160	160
JS	Pearson Correlation	**-0.10**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.20	

Note: PEC= Prevailing Economic Conditions, JS= Job Satisfaction

Table 2 contains the Pearson product-moment coefficient for the relationship between prevailing economic conditions and lecturers' job satisfaction in tertiary institutions in Imo State. The relationship between prevailing economic conditions and lecturers' job satisfaction is represented by the coefficient (*r*) -0.10. This indicates that prevailing economic condition which is characterized by economic recession has a weak negative relationship with lecturers' job satisfaction in tertiary institutions in Imo State. This implies that as economic recession increases, lecturers job satisfaction is likely to decline slightly. From the results in the table two above, the correlation coefficient of -0.10 is significant at 0.20. The significance value of 0.20 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance benchmark at which the hypothesis is being tested. Therefore, prevailing economic conditions have no significant relationship with lecturers' job satisfaction in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between prevailing economic conditions and job performance of lecturers in tertiary institutions in Imo State?

Table 3. Pearson Product Coefficient for the Relationship between Prevailing Economic Conditions and Job Performance of Lecturers in Tertiary Institutions in Imo State

		PEC	JP
PEC	Pearson Correlation	1	**-0.62**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.01
	N	160	160
JP	Pearson Correlation	**-0.62**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.01	
	N	160	160

Note: PEC= Prevailing Economic Conditions, JP= Job Performance

Table 3 contains the Pearson product-moment coefficient for the relationship between prevailing economic conditions and lecturers' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State. The relationship between prevailing economic conditions and lecturers' job performance is represented by the coefficient (*r*) -0.62. This indicates that prevailing economic condition which is characterized by economic recession has a moderate negative relationship with lecturers' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State. This implies that as economic recession increases, lecturers job performance is likely to reduce but moderately. From the results in the table three above, the correlation coefficient of -0.62 is significant at 0.01. The significance value of 0.01 is less than the 0.05 level of significance benchmark at which the hypothesis is being tested. Therefore, prevailing economic conditions has a significant relationship with lecturers' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

4. DISCUSSION

Results revealed a strongly significant negative relationship between economic conditions and lecturers' productivity. This finding aligns with research showing that economic challenges reduce academic productivity. Dahuwa et al. (2020) found that economic recession was negatively related to productivity as economic challenges hindered certificate acquisition. Esomonu et al. (2018) reported similar findings regarding the economic recession's negative impact on tertiary education productivity. The strong negative relationship appears for several reasons. First, economic downturns reduce institutional funding, limiting resources for teaching and research. Lecturers lack adequate teaching materials, modern technology, library resources, and laboratory equipment. This resource inadequacy compromises both teaching effectiveness and research productivity. Without proper resources, lecturers cannot deliver innovative lessons or conduct quality research. Reduced productivity directly affects teaching quality and student learning. When lecturers cannot access current textbooks, online resources, or teaching technologies, lesson quality suffers. Students

receive outdated information and limited learning experiences. Lecturers cannot demonstrate concepts effectively without proper teaching aids, reducing student comprehension and engagement. Second, economic hardships cause financial stress for lecturers. Financial difficulties increase anxiety and distraction from work. Lecturers may seek additional employment to meet basic needs, reducing time for lesson preparation, research, and student consultation. Hanushek (2011) demonstrated that teacher quality significantly impacts student achievement, with economic value reaching trillions in lifetime earnings. When economic stress reduces lecturer productivity, this directly diminishes teaching effectiveness and compromises student learning outcomes. Furthermore, economic conditions influence professional development opportunities. During economic downturns, institutions cannot sponsor conference attendance, workshop participation, or further education. Limited professional development prevents lecturers from acquiring new pedagogical skills, teaching methodologies, and content knowledge. This stagnation reduces teaching innovation and instructional effectiveness, ultimately affecting student learning quality. Economic constraints also increase workloads. Institutions facing financial pressures may freeze hiring, forcing existing lecturers to shoulder additional teaching responsibilities. Increased workloads reduce time for individual student support, detailed feedback on assignments, and curriculum innovation. Oderinde et al. (2024) found that work overload significantly impacts lecturer well-being and effectiveness in Nigerian universities. The productivity decline affects multiple teaching dimensions. Lecturers produce fewer course materials, reducing curriculum coverage. Limited research activity means students miss exposure to current knowledge and research methods. Reduced supervision quality affects student project outcomes and graduate preparedness. These factors collectively diminish educational quality and graduate competitiveness in labor markets.

This strong negative relationship validates both theoretical frameworks used in this study. From the monetarist perspective, Friedman's (1968) theory explains that monetary contraction during recession reduces government revenue and subsequently educational funding, directly limiting resources necessary for research productivity such as conference sponsorship, research grants, and publication support. From Maslow's (1943) hierarchical needs perspective, economic hardship threatens lecturers' basic physiological and safety needs, preventing them from pursuing self-actualization through research and scholarly productivity. When lecturers struggle with inadequate salaries and financial insecurity, they cannot focus on higher-order activities like research and publication, which represent self-actualization at the top of Maslow's hierarchy. The strong correlation reflects how both resource constraints and psychological burden simultaneously impair productivity, with teaching quality suffering as lecturers lack current knowledge and research engagement to inform instruction.

Results showed a weak insignificant negative relationship between economic conditions and lecturers' job satisfaction. This finding aligns with Yashodara and Indunil (2023), who found that financial crisis in Sri Lanka had no substantial relationship with job satisfaction among banking employees. The weak relationship suggests that economic conditions minimally influence lecturers' overall job satisfaction. This finding appears for several reasons. First, job satisfaction is multifaceted, influenced by factors beyond economic conditions. Intrinsic factors like professional autonomy, teaching meaningfulness, student relationships, and intellectual fulfillment may buffer against economic challenges. Research in African universities shows that co-worker relationships, supervision quality, and teaching's intrinsic rewards significantly predict satisfaction despite poor economic conditions (Ssesanga & Garrett, 2005). Also, lecturers may maintain professional commitment despite economic adversity. Their dedication to teaching and student development provides intrinsic satisfaction that economic hardship cannot easily diminish. Teaching itself, seeing student growth, and contributing to knowledge development offer rewards that transcend financial considerations. This professional dedication helps maintain satisfaction levels despite economic challenges. While satisfaction shows weak correlation with economic conditions, this does not mean economic challenges lack impact on teaching. Lecturers may report satisfaction with teaching itself while facing challenges in teaching effectiveness due to resource constraints. Satisfaction with the profession differs from capacity to deliver quality instruction. Alternatively, lecturers might normalize poor conditions, lowering expectations rather than truly maintaining satisfaction.

Results revealed a moderate significant negative relationship between economic conditions and lecturers' job performance. This finding aligns with Akpomi et al. (2018), showing that economic recession negatively relates to job performance in higher institutions. Tijani and Abdullahi (2021) reported that economic crisis reduced teachers' job performance levels. The moderate negative relationship appears for multiple reasons. First, economic recession reduces institutional funding, limiting teaching resources. Without adequate resources, lecturers cannot deliver lessons effectively. Outdated textbooks, broken equipment, inadequate technology, and poor classroom conditions directly impair teaching performance. Students receive substandard instruction, affecting their learning outcomes. Performance decline manifests in multiple teaching dimensions. Economic stress reduces lesson preparation time and quality. Lecturers facing

financial pressures may rush lesson planning, resulting in less engaging, less organized instruction. Feedback on student work becomes delayed or superficial as lecturers manage increased workloads with fewer resources. Student supervision quality suffers as lecturers balance teaching loads with survival needs. Second, financial difficulties cause psychological stress and anxiety. This stress distracts lecturers from teaching responsibilities and reduces motivation. Stressed lecturers show reduced enthusiasm in classrooms, affecting student engagement and learning motivation. Chana et al. (2022) found that work-life balance significantly affects job performance and satisfaction among teachers in Nigerian institutions.

Moreso, economic pressures affect assessment practices. Lecturers may simplify assessments to reduce grading time, providing less rigorous evaluation of student learning. Detailed feedback, critical for student development, becomes minimal. Project supervision suffers as lecturers lack time for thorough guidance. These compromises directly affect student learning quality and graduate preparedness. Economic recession increases workloads. Institutions reduce staff due to financial constraints, forcing remaining lecturers to teach more courses with larger classes. Increased workloads lead to burnout, reducing teaching effectiveness. Lecturers cannot provide individual student attention, timely feedback, or innovative teaching methods when overwhelmed with excessive responsibilities. Heavy workloads force lecturers to prioritize coverage over depth. Important topics receive superficial treatment. Practical applications and critical thinking exercises are replaced with lectures to save time. Student engagement activities decline. These changes reduce learning quality despite curriculum completion. Also, economic challenges reduce morale and professional commitment. When lecturers feel undervalued through poor compensation and working conditions, performance suffers. Demoralization affects teaching enthusiasm, classroom energy, and commitment to student success. Research in South African universities shows that economic struggles affect teaching quality, with lecturers citing students' economic challenges and inadequate resources as major performance barriers (Bezuidenhout, 2021). Performance decline has serious implications for educational quality and national development. Poor teaching produces graduates with inadequate skills and knowledge. These graduates struggle in labor markets, affecting economic productivity. The cycle perpetuates as economic challenges reduce education quality, which further compromises economic development through less skilled workforce production.

5. IMPLICATIONS

This study highlights critical needs for institutions and policymakers to develop effective strategies to mitigate economic recession for lecturers.

5.1. For institutions

First, institutions should prioritize resource allocation for essential teaching needs even during economic constraints. Core instructional resources—textbooks, teaching technology, and classroom maintenance—should receive protected funding. Strategic resource sharing across departments can maximize limited resources. Institutions should seek alternative funding through partnerships, grants, and alumni engagement to supplement government allocations.

Second, institutions should implement lecturer support programs addressing economic hardship impacts. Workload management policies should prevent excessive teaching burdens during staff shortages. Stress management programs and counselling services can help lecturers cope with economic pressures. Peer support networks and professional learning communities provide emotional support and resource sharing.

Third, institutions should maintain professional development opportunities despite budget constraints. Low-cost alternatives include internal workshops, peer teaching observations, and online professional development. Maintaining pedagogical skill development ensures teaching quality persists despite economic challenges. Supporting teaching innovation helps lecturers maximize impact with limited resources.

Fourth, institutions should implement performance support systems. Mentoring programs pair experienced lecturers with those struggling under economic pressures. Teaching resource centres can provide shared materials and instructional support. Recognition programs acknowledging teaching excellence despite challenges can maintain morale and motivation.

5.2. For policymakers

First, policymakers should protect education budgets during economic downturns. Economic recession makes education investment more critical, not less. Maintaining education funding during a crisis prevents long-term human capital damage. Education represents a foundational investment in economic recovery and future growth.

Second, governments should implement lecturer welfare programs. Adequate compensation that maintains purchasing power during inflation is essential. Housing support, transportation subsidies, and other

benefits can offset economic hardship effects. Professional development funding should continue to enable skill enhancement despite economic constraints.

Third, policymakers should promote innovative funding mechanisms. Public-private partnerships can supplement government funding. Tax incentives for educational philanthropy can mobilize additional resources. Student loan programs with favorable terms can maintain enrollment without excessive institutional burden.

Fourth, governments should implement evidence-based policies supporting teaching quality. Reducing class sizes, providing teaching resources, and supporting professional development directly enhance educational outcomes. Policies should focus on maintaining teaching quality as economic priority, recognizing education's role in economic recovery.

6. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that economic conditions significantly impact lecturer productivity and performance while showing minimal relationship with job satisfaction in Imo State tertiary institutions. The strong negative correlation between economic conditions and productivity indicates that economic recession substantially impairs lecturers' research output and teaching effectiveness. The moderate negative correlation with performance suggests economic challenges notably affect teaching quality, curriculum delivery, and student learning outcomes.

These findings emphasize the critical need for protecting education investment and lecturer welfare during economic challenges. Quality education requires adequate resources, supportive working conditions, and motivated educators. Economic policies should recognize education as a foundational investment, not an expendable budget item during a crisis. Institutions and policymakers must develop comprehensive strategies to maintain teaching quality despite economic adversity. Hence, lecturer well-being and educational quality are intertwined with national development. Protecting teaching effectiveness during economic hardship represents a strategic investment in human capital development and future economic prosperity. Stakeholders must prioritize lecturer welfare and working conditions to ensure the continuous delivery of high-quality education regardless of economic challenges.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

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ETHICAL STATEMENT

Ethical acceptance for the study was sought and obtained from the Department of Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, Research Ethics and Publication Committee of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

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