



Poverty and its Intractability in Nigeria: Causes and Consequences

¹ Sule Magaji

(sulemagaji@uniabuja.edu.ng)

² Oku Abdul-Maliq Yakeen

(yakeen.abdulmaliq@uniabuja.edu.ng)

¹ Chukwuemeka Ifegwu Eke

(chukwuemeka.eke@uniabuja.edu.ng)

¹ Ibrahim Musa

(Ibrahim.musa@uniabuja.edu.ng)

¹Department of Economics, University of Abuja, Nigeria

²Department of Banking and Finance, University of Abuja, Nigeria

Abstract

Poverty is a disease that has continue to negatively influence insecurity and other forms of social-vices in Nigeria. It has also affected the growth and development of the country. This study however examines poverty and its intractability in Nigeria: causes and consequences. The study uses Ordinary least square techniques to analyze the data collected. The data were obtained from Federal Reserve Economic Data and National Bureau of Statistics. The result shows that a percentage increase in unemployment and population will lead to increase in poverty rate by 0.035375 and 2.564296 respectively. Furthermore, the result shows that a unit increase in HDI will lead to -4.347621 decrease in poverty rate in Nigeria. The framework affirms that poverty is intractable in Nigeria. The study therefore recommends that Government, Non-governmental organization and private individuals should prioritize investing on human development.

Keywords: Inflation, Intractability, Poverty, Unemployment

1. Introduction

Poverty amidst other challenges is the world's greatest challenge and is expected to be fought with passion and professionalism by all nations (Sule & Sambo, 2020). Billions of people across the globe live in dehumanizing unclean conditions enriched with hunger, disease, desperation, and degradation (Aderounmu, Azuh, Onanuga, Oluwatomisin, Ebenezer & Azuh, 2021). According to World Bank (2020), the most affected region in the world by poverty incidence is Sub-Saharan Africa. The pervasive and chronic nature of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa created a wider vacuum for infrastructure and human development projects (Estache & Wodon, 2014). World Bank (2020) estimates shows that 88 – 115 million people are extremely poor, with at least half of this number residing in Sub-Sahara Africa alone. It is also projected that an astonishing 87 per cent of the world's poorest people will reside in SSA by 2030 if current economic challenges are not tackled.

Nigeria is one of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa which is paradoxically poor despite being endowed with abundant natural mineral resources and human resources (Sule & Sambo, 2020). In recent times, based on the poverty line of \$1.90 per day, 46.5% of Nigerians are extremely poor, with the World Poverty Clock naming Nigeria, 'the poverty



capital of the world'. According to the World Poverty Clock (2019) as cited in Iheonu & Urama (2019), extreme poverty in Nigeria is increasing by almost six persons per minute. According to the official figures published by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the incidence of poverty in Nigeria between 1980 and 2010 rose from 27.2 percent to 69.0 percent. Recently, NBS (2019), reported that 40 percent of people in Nigeria lived below its poverty line of 137,430 naira (\$381.75) per annum and this represents 82.9 million people. The World Bank (2018), revealed that almost half of the Nigerian population is living below the international poverty line of (\$2 per day) while unemployment peaked at 23.1% (Abiodun, Amao, Oluwatusin & Farayola, 2020).

Africa has the highest proportion of people living in extreme poverty, comprising about 413.3 million in 2015 (Beegle, Christiaensen, Dabalén, & Gaddis, 2016). The high population growth rate has resulted in an increased level of unemployment. Unemployment is believed to be one of the major causes of poverty. For Nigeria, about 86.9 million people are living in absolute poverty, which represent almost 60% of its estimate of over 200 million populations (Kazeem, 2021). Nigeria is experiencing a huge population increase, and it is projected to be the world's third-largest country by 2050 (Osabohien, et al., 2021). Unfortunately, while the population of extremely poor people has reduced at the global level, it remains regionally uneven and on the increase in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2020) with Nigeria being the worst hit (Sulaimon, 2020). According to UNICEF, one in every five out-of-school children in the world is in Nigeria, with the situation looking more severe in the Northern part of Nigeria. This invariably creates the poverty problem together with lack of human capital development (Iheonu and Urama, 2019). However, the study seeks to investigate poverty and its intractability in Nigeria: Causes and consequences.

In the light of the above, this study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions: Does unemployment cause poverty rate to increase in Nigeria? What is the impact of human development index on poverty rate in Nigeria? Does increase in population influence poverty rate in Nigeria? Earlier works such as Obadan(1997) and Adepoju (2018), focus on the multi-dimensionality: lack of purchasing power, exposure to risk, malnutrition, high mortality rate, low life expectancy, and insufficient access to social and economic services. they however gloss over the population variables. The main objective is therefore to analyze poverty and its intractability in Nigeria: Causes and consequences, while the specific objectives are to: Examine whether unemployment cause poverty rate to increase or decrease in Nigeria; investigate the impact of human development index on poverty rate in Nigeria and examine if population is a factor influencing poverty rate in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

Concept of poverty

Poverty is defined by many scholars in different ways, because what is observed as poverty in one society may not be poverty in another society. According to the World Bank (1990,



2014), poverty is the inability to attain the minimum standards of living. Magaji and Aliyu (2007) defines poverty as lack of employment. According to Obadan(1997), poverty is multi-dimensional; it is characterized by lack of purchasing power, exposure to risk, malnutrition, high mortality rate, low life expectancy, insufficient access to social and economic services, etc. Poverty has various manifestations which include among others: lack of income and productive resources sufficient enough to ensure sustainable livelihood, hunger and malnutrition, ill health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, increased morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate, unsafe and degraded environment and social discrimination and exclusion (Shaba, Obansa, Magaji &Yelwa, 2018).

Poverty is seen as a constraint that leads to deterioration in peoples' purchasing power and living conditions resulting mainly from: a lack of economic growth; permanent structural imbalances; weak growth of GDP and high growth rate of population; underdevelopment of sectors and factors of production; degradation of natural resources; barriers to rural development as the engine of the economy; limited access to basic social services for the majority of the population; weak human institutions and governance capacity (Aluko & Magaji, 2020). Chen *et al.* (2019) perceived poverty as a set of interrelated forces which are limited resources, need, pattern of deprivation, lack of entitlement and basic security, exclusion, dependency, social class, inequality, economic position and unacceptable hardship (Magaji & Adamu, 2010), poverty refers to a noticeable deprivation in well-being: the lack of basic capacity, resources, access, and security to participate effectively in society.

Causes and Consequences of Poverty

Literature shows that causes of poverty are the consequences of poverty, this is evidence in the study carried out by Yahie (1993) who reiterates that the factors that cause poverty include: (i) structural causes which are more permanent and depend on a host of exogenous factors such as limited resources, lack of skills, locational disadvantage and other factors that are inherent in the social and political set-up; and (ii) the transitional causes that are mainly due to structural adjustment reforms and changes in domestic economic policies which may result in price changes and unemployment. Obadan (1997) identifies some factors that causes poverty such as; inadequate access to employment opportunities, inadequate physical assets, inadequate access to markets, destruction of natural resources, lack of power to participate in design of development programs and inadequate access to assistance for those living at the margin. De Haan (2000), notes that poverty could also be caused by general exclusion of the people from social life. Education is regarded as one of the central components of human development and is built into the computation of the UNDP human development index as well as the multidimensional poverty index. The lack of education has been strongly associated with poverty and seems to be one of the causes and consequences of poverty which tends to further entrench the cycle of poverty (Kambon& Busby, 2000).



On the consequences of poverty, Aku et al. (1997) opines that there is general loss of confidence in a society stricken by poverty and this renders government policies ineffective. Poverty also results in increasing the fragility and vulnerability of members of society to external influences. Furthermore, poverty makes production remain largely subsistence due to lack of capital needed for expansion. Labor becomes intensive and marginal productivity remains low. According to Adepaju (2018) one of the consequences of poverty is that it increases insecurity. In his words, Unemployment-induced poverty tends to increase the crime rate and violence in the country. Most unemployed youths resort to crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, internet fraud and other forms of fraudulent activities. The reservation wage they get from these activities is typically barely enough to take care of their basic necessities. The consequences of poverty can also lead to increase in crime rate; increase in famine, increase in child labour; increase in child trafficking and other forms of socio vices which will in turn hinder the growth and development of the country.

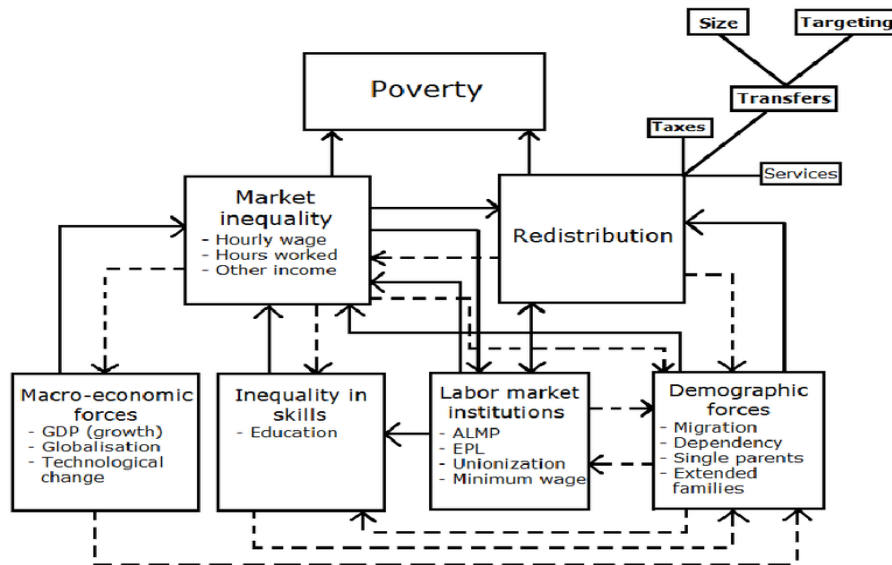


Figure 1 Poverty and its intractability
Source: Kambon, A., & Busby, L. (2000)

The above chart shows that consequences reinforce the causes of poverty in Nigeria. Hence there is poverty interactivity. Poverty is not restricted to any particular sector of the economy. It is a major development problem; and to the extent that it has economy wide



causes and consequences, it cannot be eradicated through hastily implemented ad hoc programmes.

Empirical Review

Adepoju (2018) examines the determinant of multidimensional poverty transitions in rural Nigeria, employing the Alkire and Foster Measure of Multidimensional Poverty, Markov Model of Poverty Transitions and the Multinomial Logistic Regression Model for analysis. Results showed that multidimensional poverty among rural households in Nigeria is mainly chronic (46.5%) while education and assets dimensions contributed mostly to the incidence and severity of multidimensional poverty among the households. Educational status, household size, number of assets owned, ownership of land influenced transient poverty while marital status, household size, land ownership and number of assets owned influenced chronic poverty. The study recommends the enactment and implementation of relevant laws against marginalization of rural women in ownership of assets and intensification of efforts and incentives aimed at encouraging human capital development in the rural areas. Evans & Kelikume (2019) examine the impact of poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption and poor governance on Niger Delta militancy, Boko Haram terrorism and Fulani herdsmen attacks in Nigeria. Using annual data over the period of 1980-2017, this study applied fully modified OLS (FMOLS) method of estimation. The outcome of the estimations showed that poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption and poor governance were significant causes of Niger Delta militancy, Boko Haram terrorism and Fulani herdsmen attacks in Nigeria. In line with the theories of deprivation, the study found that the various deprivations in the country led to violence and conflicts in the form of Niger Delta militancy, Boko Haram terrorism and Fulani herdsmen attacks. Thus, violence was as a result of the prevailing unpleasant socio-material conditions pertaining to survival, economic deprivation, structural inequities, environmental degradation and governance deficits. Osabohien *et al.*, (2021) examine the impact of youth participation in agriculture as a primary occupation on income and poverty in Nigeria. With data from 683 systematically selected households, the study employed the Heckman two-stage model and the propensity score matching method (PSM). The results indicate that the gender of the youth and their determination to stay in agriculture significantly increases the probability that youth will participate in agriculture as a primary occupation. In addition, youth participation in agriculture as a main occupation contributes significantly to per capita household income and has the likelihood to reduce poverty by 17%. The daily wage rate of hired labor and the total farmland owned are the variables that positively explained the per capita income. Poverty was reduced by market access, having agriculture as a primary occupation, income from agricultural production, the total monetary value of all the household assets, determination to remain in agriculture, and the square of the respondents' age. These results imply that creating employment for youth by engaging them in agriculture as a full-time occupation can increase their income and reduce poverty.



Aderounmu *et al.*, (2021) used data from World Development Indicators (WDI) from 1992–2016 to examine the key principles influencing poverty rate in Nigeria and their implications on policy interventions. The study used Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model to analyze the data. The result showed that unemployment increases poverty by approximately 1.4, 1.5 and 3.3 percent in the short run while inflation reduces poverty by approximately 0.08 percent in the short run. Nwosa and Ehinomen (2020) examine the relationship among income inequality, poverty and economic growth in Nigeria over the period 1981 to 2018. The study used the autoregressive distributed lag technique. The findings revealed that the inequality had positive and significant impact on economic growth while poverty had an insignificant impact on economic growth. More so, it shows that poverty is insignificant in the relationship between income inequality and economic growth while income inequality played a significant role in the relationship between poverty and economic growth. Sule and Sambo (2020) examine the issues and perspectives of poverty in Gombe State particularly the causes, manifestations and strategies of reduction. The study used primary and secondary sources of data. The data obtained were presented and analyzed using statistical tools such as tables and charts where applicable. The study found out that poverty is caused mainly due to poor government's macro and micro economic policies and that poverty level in Gombe State has reached an unbearable index of 74.6 %. Abiodun *et al.*, (2020) analyze the poverty status among small holder arable farm household in southwestern Nigeria. The study used well-structured questionnaire to elicit information from 120 selected farm household heads through a multi-stage sampling procedure. The data were analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics and Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) indices. The result is indicative of the failure of government at all levels to decisively root out poverty from the country. Sulaimon (2020) evaluates the determinants of multidimensional poverty in Nigeria using 2016 cross-sectional data. Multidimensional poverty is proxied with Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). The data were analysed using analysis of variance (ANOVA), Tukey's test and ordinary least squares (OLS). The ANOVA results show significant variations in multidimensional poverty between geopolitical regions. The Tukey's test reveals significant variations in multidimensional poverty between regions in the south and the north and most sub-regions in the north. There are no significant variations in multidimensional poverty between sub-regions in the south.

Theoretical framework

This study premises its framework on Human Capital Theory of Poverty. The theory of human capital is rooted from the field of macroeconomic development theory (Schultz, 1993). Becker's (1993) classic book, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis with special reference to education*, illustrates this domain. Human capital refers to the knowledge, expertise, and skill one accumulates through education and training. Emphasizing the social and economic importance of human capital theory, Becker (1993) noted the most valuable of all capital is that investment in human being. Becker distinguishes firm-specific human capitals from general-purpose human capital. Human



capital is knowledge gained through education and training in areas of value to a variety of firms such as generic skills in human resource development. Regardless of the application, Becker considers education and training to be the most important investment in human capital. This study is linked to the human capital theory of poverty

3. Methodology

In order to analyze poverty and its intractability in Nigeria. This study used annual data obtained from CBN and NBS from 1990 to 2020. The variable of the study include Poverty which is referred to severe lack of physical and mental well-being, closely associated with inadequate economic resources and consumption (Baratz & Grigsby, 1971); it is considered as per capital consumption below one US dollar per day. Muhammad & David (2019) define unemployment as a causal factor of poverty. This study equally defines unemployment as such. Scott and Marshall (2005) see population in its most general sense, comprises of the totality of the people living in a particular territory, but it has a more specific meaning in statistics. In statistical terms, a population refers to the aggregate of the individuals or units from which a sample is drawn, and to which the results of any analysis are to apply. This definition is applied in this study. Joko & Didit (2019) define Human Capital Development Index (HCDI) is a number that shows the ability of the population to access the results of development in obtaining income, health, and education. The HCDI value reflected the level of human capital in an area and state in unit point. The same definition is retained in this study.

A multiple regression model was built and the study adapted the work of Aderounmu *et al.*, (2021) with modification. Their model was given as:

$$POVT = f (UNEMT, INFT, LNPRAP) \dots\dots\dots 1$$

The functional model for this study is written as:

$$POV= f (UMP, POP, HDI) \dots\dots\dots 2$$

The econometrics model is written as:

$$POV=\beta_0 + \beta_1UMP + \beta_2POP+ \beta_3HDI + U_t \dots\dots\dots 3$$

Where POV = Poverty Rate: where per capital consumption is below one US dollar per day, UMP= Unemployment Rate: number of unemployed persons divide by the number of persons in the labour force and multiplied by 100. POP= Population: number of people in the country. And HCD= Human Capital Development Index: number that shows the ability of the population to access the results of development in obtaining income, health, and education β_0 = Constant term, $\beta_1 - \beta_3$ = Set of parameters to be estimated and U_t = Error term. Economic a-priori which is used to explain the sign and size of the parameters in the model and as well as explaining the movement of variables (independent and dependent variable) in the models will be check whether they conform to economic theory. The a-prior expectations are: $\beta_1 < 0$; $\beta_2 < 0$; $\beta_3 > 0$



4. Results

Descriptive Statistics

The result of the descriptive statistics indicated that the mean of POV for the period under study is 57.49913 while the mean value of HDI is 1.6616. It also indicates that the mean values of UMP and POP for the period under study are 10.0287 and 1.49E+08 respectively. The result of Skewness shows that the variables in the model are positively skewed. The result also showed that all the variables have a value greater than one for Kurtosis.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Result

Statistics	POV	UMP	HDI	POP
Mean	57.49913	10.0287	1.6616	1.49E+08
Median	55.21	9.61	1.674091	1.46E+08
Maximum	66.9	15.8	1.949075	1.96E+08
Minimum	52.99	7.81	1.359634	1.11E+08
Std. Dev.	4.696633	1.735819	0.186863	26341545
Skewness	0.719582	2.200457	-0.092135	0.233813
Kurtosis	1.972625	7.356206	1.713977	1.839907
Jarque-Bera	2.996411	36.74688	1.617486	1.499304
Probability	0.223531	0	0.445418	0.472531
Sum	1322.48	230.66	38.21681	3.43E+09
Sum Sq. Dev.	485.284	66.28746	0.76819	1.53E+16
Observations	23	23	23	23

Source: Authors' computation, 2021

On the other hand, the result of the descriptive statistics indicates that POP has the highest variability among other variables given the value of standard deviation of 26341545 which is larger than the standard deviation of the rest variables included in the model. The result of the Jarque-Bera test indicates that all the variables included in the model are normally distributed.

Table 2: Regression Estimate

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	41.90894	14.05671	2.98142	0.0077
UMP	0.035375	0.097788	0.361749	0.7215
HDI	-4.347621	1.193476	-3.642821	0.0017
POP	2.564296	0.785964	3.262613	0.0041
R-squared	0.614261			
Adjusted R-squared	0.553355			
F-statistic	10.08536			
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000342		Durbin-Watson stat	
			1.787088	

Source: Authors' computation, 2021



The above result in Table 2 shows that the coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) shows that about 61% of the variation in the dependent variable (POV) was explained by the change in the explanatory variables of the estimated model. This implies that the estimated model has a good fit. The adjusted coefficient of determination (R^2) also shows that after taken into account the loss in the degree of freedom given additional entry of explanatory variables in the model, the estimated model has a good fit (that is: adjusted $R^2 = 55\%$). The high values of the F-statistic (that is: $F = 10.08536$) indicate that the parameters of estimated model are jointly or simultaneously statistically significant. This implies that the estimated model is good for forecasting, predicting, policy formulation and analysis purposes. The values of the Durbin-Watson (d) statistic (i.e. $d = 2$), suggest the presence of autocorrelation in the estimated model. This is based on the decision rule which states that Durbin-Watson value close to 2 or 2 indicates the absence of autocorrelation. The forecasting power of the estimated model is more reliable in the absence of autocorrelation supported by the good explanatory power of the explanatory variables as evidenced by the high value of the adjusted R^2 . The result also shows that a unit increase in unemployment (UMP) rate will bring about 0.035375 increase in poverty rate in Nigeria, thus the probability value shows that UMP have significant impact on poverty rate in Nigeria. Similarly, a unit increase in population will lead to 2.564296 increase in poverty rate; the probability value shows that POP have significant impact on poverty rate in Nigeria. However, the result shows that a unit increase in human development index will bring about -4.347621 decrease in poverty rate; the probability value shows that HDI have significant impact on poverty rate in Nigeria.

The implication of the above result is that increase in population and unemployment have huge impact on poverty rate. However, reverse is the case for HDI, an increase in human development will reduce poverty rate. The above result affirm that population growth and unemployment are major causes of poverty rate in Nigeria. Also, negligence from the part of government for not adequately investing in human development contribute to the increase in poverty rate in Nigeria.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The objectives of the study were to examine whether unemployment cause poverty rate to increase in Nigeria; to investigate the impact of human development index on poverty rate in Nigeria and to examine if population is a factor influencing poverty rate in Nigeria. In order to achieve these set objectives, the study estimated the variables underpinning poverty rate in Nigeria with the use of OLS multiple regression. The finding shows that population and unemployment have significant impact on poverty rate in Nigeria. The study affirms that causes and consequences of poverty in Nigeria are intractably. From the empirical results, the study concludes that a significant relationship between poverty and unemployment exist. An increase in unemployment rate brings about an increase in poverty level. An increase in population, will lead to 2.56 increase in poverty rate in Nigeria. This is to state that increase in population brings about increase in poverty level. Regarding



human development index (HDI), it is found that a unit increase in HDI will bring about decrease in poverty rate. This is because HDI have significant impact on poverty level in Nigeria. Here the study can therefore conclude that population and unemployment have significant impact on poverty level in Nigeria. While HDI value brings about decrease in poverty level in Nigeria. This supports the finding of Aderounmu et al., (2021) linking poverty to unemployment.

Based on findings, the study recommends that government, Non-governmental organization and private individuals should prioritize investing on human development this will in turn help to reduce poverty in the country. Nigerian Government should adopt policies of China in utilizing their population growth to increase productivity growth of the country. Government should adopt a good expansionary policy in order to boost productivity there by reducing unemployment rate in Nigeria.

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