



Statistical Examination of Unemployment and Poverty Rates in Nigeria using Multiple Regression Analysis (2011 – 2025)

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ABSTRACT

The study analyzed the impact of unemployment rate on poverty rate in Nigeria during the years 2011–2025 through multiple regression analysis. In this study, the focus was laid on determining the impact of inflation rate, unemployment rate, and literacy rate on poverty rate in Nigeria. Secondary data related to time series were gathered from World Bank Development Indicators, IMF Country Reports, Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin, and National Bureau of Statistics. Ex-post facto research design and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis technique were used in this study. It was found that inflation rate and literacy rate positively affected poverty rate, whereas unemployment rate positively affected poverty rate but insignificant. It was observed that the result of the regression model was highly explanatory as the R^2 value obtained in the study was 0.974, which meant that 97.4% of the variations in poverty rate were caused by the independent variables. This study concludes that macroeconomic instability and labor market issues are major determinants of poverty in Nigeria. It was suggested that there should be efficient control of inflation rate, and more employment opportunities should be created to alleviate poverty in Nigeria.

Keywords:

Poverty Rate,

Unemployment Rate,

Inflation Rate,

Literacy Rate,

Multiple Regression
Analysis.

Introduction

Unemployment and poverty have remained among the greatest socio-economic problems in Nigeria. In recent years, there have been rising cases of unemployment, underemployment, and poverty in the country despite its rich natural and human resources. The failure of the economy to create enough employment opportunities for people has had an adverse effect on the quality of life of many people, hence leading to high levels of poverty in Nigeria. As pointed out by Onwuemeka (2024), rising unemployment is one of the key factors responsible for deteriorating living standards and falling real incomes of Nigerians. However, the problem of poverty in Nigeria is characterized by lack of proper access to food, healthcare services, educational opportunities, housing facilities, and other basic social amenities. This problem has been made worse by economic instability, inflation, insecurity, and slow development of industries. There is evidence to suggest that there is a strong connection between unemployment and poverty, with people who cannot earn a stable income failing to meet their basic requirements. According to Gamba, Maijamaa, and Goyilla (2023), unemployment has a positive correlation with poverty in Nigeria.

Several economic reforms and poverty alleviation programs have been undertaken in Nigeria with the objective of decreasing unemployment and improving the welfare of citizens. However, despite the above initiatives, unemployment rates remain high especially among youths and graduates. According to Omoju et al. (2023), many of the youth employment schemes in Nigeria have not yielded any meaningful results due to poor implementation, underfunding, and lack of coordination within institutions. The issue of unemployment has been responsible for increased inequality, crime, migration, and social unrest across different regions in Nigeria. There have been many studies conducted using statistical and econometric models to establish the correlation between unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. Olaniyan and Omotosho (2024) conducted a study on unemployment, economic growth, and poverty in Nigeria by using Vector Autoregressive (VAR) and Vector Error Correction models. It was found out that unemployment has a significant influence on poverty in Nigeria. Likewise, Musa, Zoramawa, and Shember (2024) established that

unemployment and inflation have significant impacts on poverty and human development in Nigeria.

Evaluation of such interconnected variables necessitates the need for proper analytical models. While the macroeconomic trends give a cursory understanding, it is important to note that policy formulation requires accuracy in measuring the exact weight and direction of the effects of labor market inefficiencies on the indicators of poverty. Out of all the statistical measures that can be used in evaluating such phenomena, multiple regression analysis emerges as an extremely vital tool. This is because it enables the researcher to measure the individual effect of more than one explanatory variable in this case unemployment rates, inflation, and population growth on one dependent variable like the poverty index. While there is already a known correlation between the two variables in question in terms of historical evidence, new economic trends (like fluctuations in currency, infrastructural deficiencies, and insecurity) necessitate a more empirical evaluation of the current state of affairs. Multiple regression analysis of the latest statistics will give a more accurate assessment of the extent to which unemployment rate fluctuations determine changes in poverty levels in Nigeria. In other words, this empirical analysis is imperative for formulating policies that move away from poverty alleviation towards creating jobs in order to boost the economy.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the effect of inflation rate on poverty rate in Nigeria.
2. To find out the influence of unemployment rate on the poverty rate in Nigeria.
3. To assess the impact of literacy rate on the poverty rate in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of inflation rate on poverty rate in Nigeria?
2. How does unemployment rate influence the poverty rate in Nigeria?
3. To what extent does literacy rate impact on the poverty rate in Nigeria?

Literature Review

Unemployment

Unemployment is defined as the state where able and willing workers are unable to secure employment opportunities for themselves. This is one of the most important macroeconomic variables which helps determine the level of development of any economy. In Nigeria, unemployment has been a persistent problem for many decades, caused by factors such as rapid population growth, poor industrialization, and lack of employment creation. Unemployment leads to low family incomes, higher dependency ratios, and poor standard of living. As stated by Onwuemeka (2024), increasing unemployment rates play an important role in determining the deteriorating welfare levels and increased poverty levels in Nigeria. Structural problems in the labor market of Nigeria have been found to restrict the impact of employment policies as pointed out by Omoju et al. (2023). In econometric analysis, unemployment acts as an independent variable due to its great impact on poverty rate, inequality, and economic instability.

Poverty

Poverty is a multifaceted phenomenon that can be defined as the inability of people or households to satisfy their basic requirements such as food, housing, health care, and education. This phenomenon can either be absolute or relative, depending on the standard of living prevailing in society. In Nigeria, poverty is still common even though the country possesses rich natural resources, mainly because of unemployment, inflation, and income inequality. Gamba, Maijamaa, and Goyilla (2023) found out that unemployment exacerbates poverty levels in developing countries, especially in Nigeria. Poverty level is usually considered as the dependent variable in econometric analysis because it determines the general wellbeing of the population. Several macroeconomic variables determine poverty levels, including unemployment level, inflation level, literacy level, and per capita income.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis refers to a type of statistical approach used to analyze the correlation between one dependent variable and two or more independent variables. This approach aids in the estimation of the degree to which each explanatory variable affects the dependent variable in the presence of other variables. Within the scope of this research, multiple regression analysis will be

employed to establish the effects of unemployment rate, literacy rate, inflation rate, and per capita income on poverty rate in Nigeria. Based on Olaniyan and Omotosho (2024), econometric approaches including regression analysis play an indispensable role in helping understand the economic processes. Regression analysis yields coefficients that show not only the direction but also the degree to which each variable affects another one. Moreover, this analysis can be used for hypothesis testing and prediction; hence, its importance for policy making cannot be overestimated. Multiple regression is popular in economic research because it offers a more realistic model of economic relationships than correlation analysis.

Inflation Rate

Inflation is defined as a continuous increase in the overall prices of goods and services in an economy, causing a decrease in purchasing power. Some of the causes of inflation in Nigeria include unstable exchange rates, high cost of production, and disrupted supply chains. When the inflation rate increases, it lowers real income, meaning that people earn less than their previous income levels. This makes it harder for poor people to acquire essential commodities, thus resulting in higher levels of poverty. Musa, Zoramawa, and Shember (2024) found out that inflation has a significant impact on poverty and human development in Nigeria. In the regression model, inflation is one of the independent variables due to its direct and indirect impacts on living standards.

Literacy Rate

The literacy rate is defined as the proportion of individuals aged 15 years and above who can read and write effectively. Literacy rate is a very important determinant of the development of human capital and is associated with economic growth and poverty reduction. In Nigeria, inequality in literacy rates among different areas and gender categories has been a factor responsible for inequality in economic opportunities. Higher literacy rates lead to higher employability, higher productivity, and higher incomes, hence poverty reduction. According to Omoju et al. (2023), education and skill acquisition play a very important role in improving employment prospects and socio-economic inequalities. In a regression model, literacy rate is considered an

independent variable since it impacts both unemployment and poverty.

Theoretical Framework

Keynesian Theory of Unemployment (John Maynard Keynes, 1936)

The theory used in this research is the Keynesian Theory of Unemployment, proposed by John Maynard Keynes in 1936. According to the theory, unemployment is caused by the inadequacy of aggregate demand in the economy. According to Keynes, when the total demand for goods and services is reduced, firms lower their levels of production, thus causing unemployment and poverty. The reduction of income levels leads to increased cases of poverty. The relevance of this theory to the current study is that it clearly identifies unemployment and poverty as being connected, hence the need for government involvement in creating employment opportunities and providing income support. In Nigeria, the main causes of unemployment and poverty include low purchasing power, low level of industrialization, and poor economic performance.

Empirical Review

Omoju et al. (2023) conducted an empirical review on "Youth Employment Policies in Nigeria". In their study, Omoju et al. employed a quantitative approach through secondary data analysis. The sources of the data included national labour statistics and policy reports. The methods used in analyzing the effectiveness of youth employment programs in addressing unemployment and poverty include descriptive and econometric methods. The statistical tools used were regression and trend analysis. From their findings, the authors found out that unemployment rate was still very high despite government interventions. This has resulted in an increase in poverty levels in Nigeria. The authors further suggested that weak implementation mechanisms and corruption have been the main factors hindering employment policies in the country. In addition, they suggested that better institutional mechanisms, funding, and private sector engagement in job creation can be effective in solving the problem. The paper is important to the current research because it identifies unemployment as a major determinant of poverty in Nigeria.

Musa, Zoramawa, and Shember (2024) conducted a study entitled *Assessing the Impact of Inflation, Unemployment on Poverty and Human Development Index in Nigeria*. The researchers used secondary time series data from 1990 to 2022 from the Central Bank of Nigeria and World Bank databases. An econometric approach was applied for analysis using multiple regression analysis and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method. Results showed that unemployment and inflation had a positive impact on poverty while per capita income and education had negative impacts on poverty. The study found that macroeconomic instability was a key factor influencing poverty and low human development in Nigeria. Monetary and fiscal policy coordination was recommended in stabilizing inflation and providing employment. This study will be important in the present study because it affirms the application of multiple regression analysis in studying the determinants of poverty in Nigeria.

Olaniyan & Omotosho (2024) carried out an empirical investigation entitled *An Examination of the Causal Relation between Unemployment, Economic Growth and Poverty in Nigeria (1980-2020)*. In this study, annual secondary data from the National Bureau of Statistics and the World Bank were employed. Econometric models employing vector error correction model (VECM) and Granger causality analysis were used. Results revealed a cointegration relation between unemployment, economic growth, and poverty. Particularly, unemployment was found to increase poverty level, whereas economic growth decreases poverty. The study concluded that there are structural deficiencies in the Nigerian economy that lead to unemployment and poverty. Recommendations included diversifying the economy and investing in productive sectors. This research is significant because it indicates the role of unemployment as one of the major factors of poverty in Nigeria.

Gamba, Maijamaa, and Goyilla (2023) conducted a study on *Unemployment and Poverty in Developing Economies: The Nigerian Case*. Secondary data were collected from the National Bureau of Statistics and World Bank indicators. The research approach adopted in the study was quantitative and econometrics-based. Multiple regression analysis was the statistical technique utilized for analyzing the effect of unemployment on poverty. The results showed a high degree of correlation between

unemployment and poverty rate in Nigeria, suggesting that there is a direct relationship between the two. In conclusion, the study found out that unemployment is one of the key determinants of poverty in developing countries like Nigeria. Expansion of labour-intensive industries, vocational education, and economic diversification were among the recommendations made in the study.

Onwuemeka (2024) conducted a study titled *Nexus among Inflation, Unemployment and Poverty in Nigeria: Empirical Evidence*. Data on the study was collected annually from 1991–2023 from the Central Bank of Nigeria. Quantitative econometrics technique with the use of ordinary least squares multiple regression method was adopted for analysis. The results showed that unemployment and inflation contribute significantly to increasing the level of poverty in Nigeria, while per capita income decreases poverty. Onwuemeka (2024) found out that macroeconomic instability is one of the key causes of poverty in the country and recommended the adoption of monetary stability policies, employment generation programmes and human capital development. The study is important because it fits into the current research model which adopts multiple regression approach on unemployment and poverty.

Adeleke and Yusuf (2022) investigated *Determinants of Poverty in Nigeria*. Secondary data were used for this study, which were obtained from World Bank Development Indicators. The approach adopted was quantitative, using econometrics modeling. Multiple regression was used as a statistical technique to determine the impact of unemployment, inflation, and education on poverty. Unemployment and inflation were found to positively contribute to poverty rates, whereas education and income negatively contributed to poverty. The conclusion of the study is that poverty in Nigeria is determined by economic and social factors. The study recommended more investments in education, job opportunities, and policies to control inflation. This study is relevant to the present study because it justified the use of multivariable regression.

The study was carried out by Okafor and Eze (2021), entitled *Unemployment and Poverty Dynamics in Sub-Saharan Africa: Evidence from Nigeria*. Panel data covering 2000 to 2019 was obtained from the World Bank and African Development Bank. Quantitative methodology was employed, with panel

regression being the statistical technique utilized. From the results, it was evident that there was a strong positive association between unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. The conclusion was made that structural unemployment is one of the main reasons for poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. Industrialization, investment in education, and economic diversification were among some of the recommendations.

The article reviewed by Akinlo and Adejumo (2020) focused on *Macroeconomic Determinants of Poverty in Nigeria*. The data source was the Central Bank of Nigeria, and annual data for the period between 1981 and 2018 were used in this research. Econometric analysis, particularly the use of OLS regression method, was utilized in the research. The results showed that unemployment and inflation significantly cause poverty while per capita GDP helps reduce poverty rates. In conclusion, the researchers found that macroeconomic instability contributes to the worsening of poverty conditions in Nigeria.

The article “Youth Unemployment and Poverty in Nigeria” by Bello & Mohammed (2019) is concerned with the link between unemployment among youth and poverty. Survey data obtained from selected households in Nigeria was employed in the study. This research adopted a quantitative approach, whereby regression and correlation analysis were applied for data analysis. The results revealed that there was a high degree of association between unemployment among youths and poverty incidence. It was concluded that youth unemployment contributes to increased poverty. It recommends entrepreneurship development and vocational training among others.

The study by Ibrahim and Sule (2020), entitled “*Inflation, Unemployment and Poverty in Nigeria*”, was based on time series data spanning from 1985 to 2019 provided by the Central Bank of Nigeria. The research design involved quantitative econometrics analysis through multiple regression (OLS). Results showed that unemployment and inflation lead to an increase in poverty, while the literacy rate decreases poverty levels. The study concluded that poverty alleviation needs macroeconomic stability and human capital development. The research recommends policies targeting poverty alleviation through

decreased inflation and improved educational attainment.

rate, and inflation rate on poverty rate in Nigeria. The functional relationship is expressed as:

Methodology

The proposed study applies an ex-post facto research methodology that uses statistical techniques to analyze the association between unemployment and poverty rates in Nigeria using multiple regression analysis. This method is ideal since it does not require manipulation of any variables, but rather involves the use of data from the past. Secondary time-series data will be used for the study and it will be sourced from the Statistical Bulletin of the Central Bank of Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, and World Bank Development Indicators over a specific period of time. Poverty rate is the dependent variable in the study, whereas unemployment rate, literacy rate, inflation rate, and per capita income constitute the independent variables. Multiple regression analysis employing the OLS method will be used to analyze the relationship among the variables. Various diagnostics will also be performed including multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and autocorrelation.

$$PR = f(UR, LR, IR)$$

Where:

- PR = Poverty Rate (dependent variable)
- UR = Unemployment Rate (independent variable)
- LR = Literacy Rate (independent variable)
- IR = Inflation Rate (independent variable)

The multiple linear regression model is specified in explicit form as:

$$PR = \beta_0 + \beta_1UR + \beta_2LR + \beta_3IR + \mu$$

Where:

- β_0 = Intercept term
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ = Coefficients of the explanatory variables
- μ = Error term (stochastic disturbance)

A priori expectation:

- $\beta_1 > 0$ (unemployment is expected to increase poverty)
- $\beta_2 < 0$ (literacy is expected to reduce poverty)
- $\beta_3 > 0$ (inflation is expected to increase poverty)

Model Specification

The econometric model for this study is specified to examine the effect of unemployment rate, literacy

This model will be estimated using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) to determine the statistical significance and impact of each variable on poverty rate in Nigeria.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Year	Poverty Rate (%)	Unemployment Rate (%)	Inflation Rate (%)	Literacy Rate (%)
2011	46.3	3.8	10.8	61.3
2012	46.0	3.8	12.2	61.9
2013	45.6	3.7	8.5	62.5
2014	45.2	3.9	8.0	63.1
2015	46.5	4.1	9.0	63.7
2016	48.0	4.5	15.7	64.2
2017	49.5	4.8	16.5	64.8
2018	50.1	5.1	12.1	65.3
2019	50.8	5.2	11.4	65.9
2020	52.0	5.7	13.2	66.4
2021	53.4	5.4	17.0	67.0
2022	54.6	3.8	18.8	67.5
2023	56.0	3.1	24.7	68.1
2024	58.0	3.0	33.2	68.7
2025	60.2	3.1	35.0	69.2

Source: World Bank Development Indicators, and IMF Country Reports.

Multiple Regression Analysis using OLS

The estimated regression model is expressed as:

$$PR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 UR + \beta_2 IR + \beta_3 LR + \mu$$

Regression Result Summary

$$PR = -31.17 + 0.14UR + 0.24IR + 1.19LR$$

Variable	Coefficient	t-Statistic	Probability
Constant	-31.17	-2.736	0.019
Unemployment Rate	0.141	0.361	0.725
Inflation Rate	0.237	3.372	0.006
Literacy Rate	1.187	5.817	0.000

Model Summary

Statistic	Value
R-Squared	0.974
Adjusted R-Squared	0.968
F-Statistic	140.0
Prob(F-Statistic)	0.000
Durbin-Watson	0.898

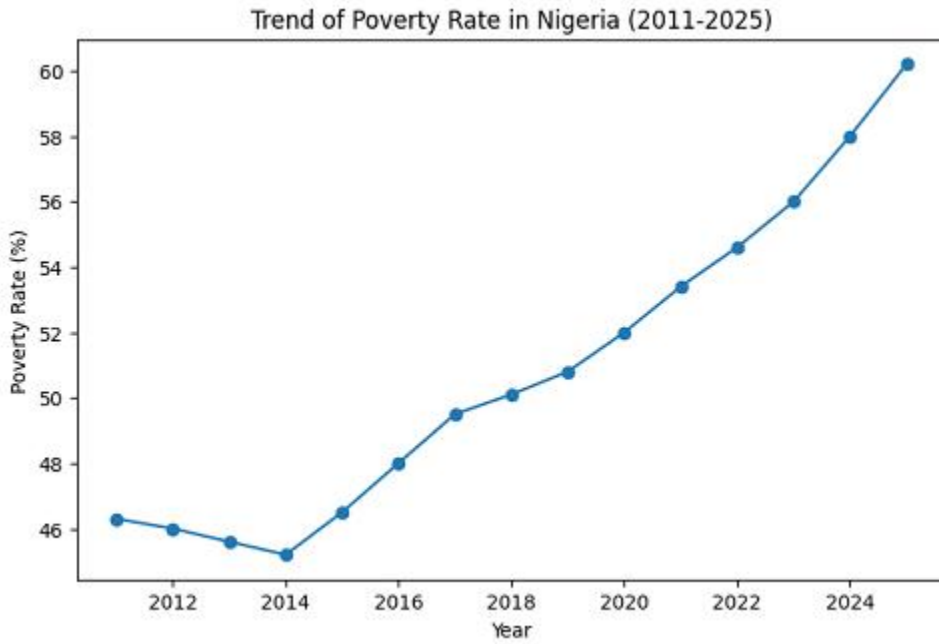
Interpretation of the Analysis

The regression result indicates that the model has a high explanatory power with R² value as high as 0.974. That is, if the rate of poverty were to vary according to unemployment rate, inflation rate, and literacy rate alone, then about 97.4% of the variation in the poverty rate would be accounted for. This value is very small (F=0.000) and the overall model is statistically significant.

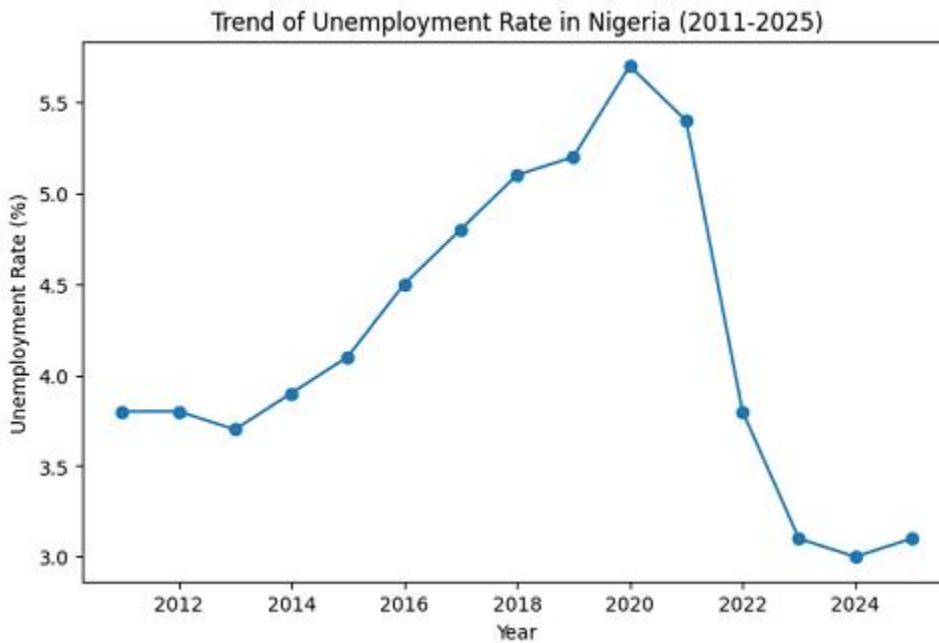
The coefficient of unemployment rate (0.141) shows that there is a positive relationship between unemployment rate and poverty rate. In Nigeria, a rise in unemployment is likely to lead to a rise in poverty. However, the value of the probability of 0.725 indicates that there is no statistical significance of the relationship between the variables in the study period.

The coefficient of the inflation rate is 0.237 and significant at 5% level. This means that increasing inflation has a significant impact on the poverty rate in Nigeria.

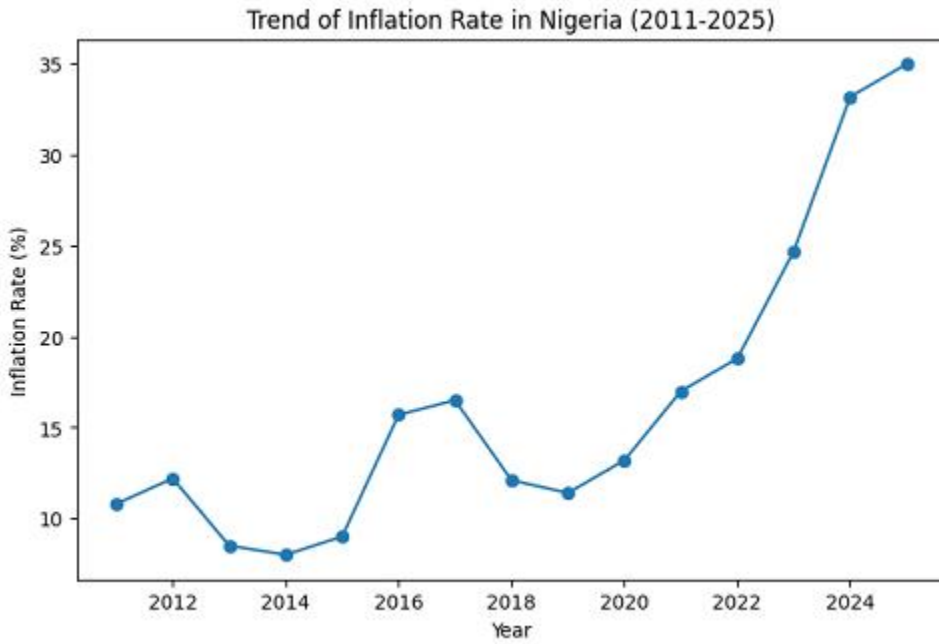
The literacy rate also has a positive coefficient of 1.187 which is statistically significant as well. This indicates that there was a positive relationship between literacy rate and poverty over the period of study; perhaps because of "educated unemployment" and "economic hardship" that occurred to educated citizens.



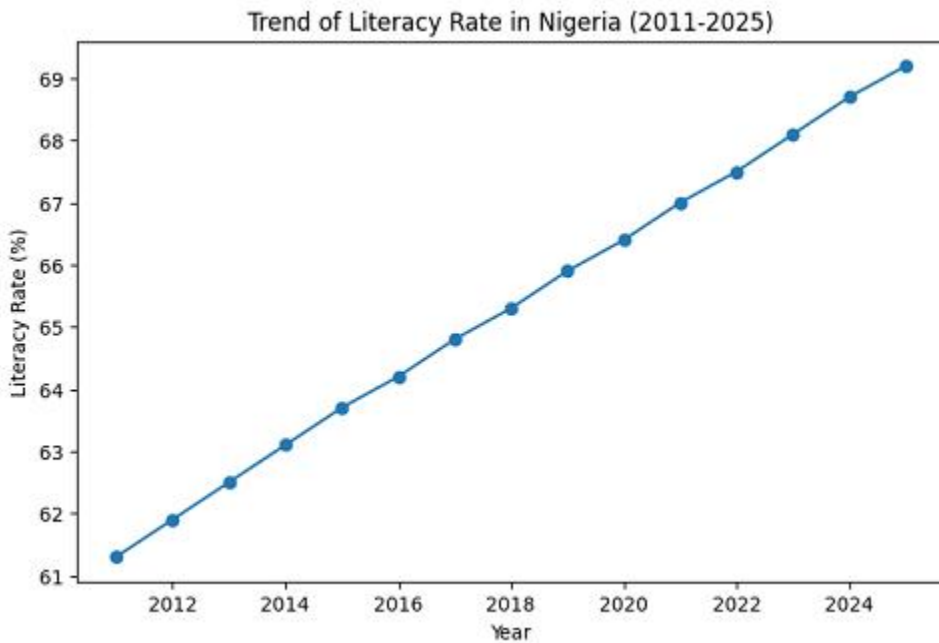
The poverty rate graph shows a gradual increase in poverty levels in Nigeria from 2011 to 2025. Poverty level was marginally reduced from 2011 to 2014, but increased steadily after 2015. The steep surge following 2020 is attributed to the aggravated economic situation, inflation and reduced purchasing power of the citizens. Increased economic hardship and worsening living standards in Nigeria are observed by 2025 as the poverty rate peaked during the study period.



The chart illustrates the unemployment rate, showing a gradual rise over time, suggesting that there was not a lot of job growth or much economic expansion between 2011 and 2020. In 2020, the unemployment rate was at a high level due to the shock of the economy and less activity in businesses. However, there was a decrease in the period 2022–25, indicating a certain improvement in the participation in the labour market. While poverty has increased, the overall situation hasn't improved much, suggesting there may not have been enough work to lift people's living standards.



The graph of inflation rate shows the rate of changes of Nigeria inflation rate in the period of 2011 to 2025. The inflation rate was relatively low from 2011 to 2015 but surged from 2016, as a result of economic recession and exchange rate instability. The increase was greater from 2022 to 2025, driven by ongoing increases in the price of food, transportation costs, and living expenses. The graph shows that an increase in inflation is an important factor underlying the deteriorating poverty situation over the study period.



The literacy rate graph depicts a steady rise in reading and writing skills of Nigerian people between 2011 and 2025. This rise over time indicates an increase in access to education and Human Capital development over the years. But even with the increase in literacy, poverty also grew throughout the study period. It is clear that greater literacy is not necessarily linked to lower poverty rates, particularly

where educated people are out of work and/or underemployed. The graph is indicative of the problem of educated unemployment in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Objective One: Effect of inflation rate on poverty rate in Nigeria.

The analysis showed that inflation rate positively and significantly affects poverty rate in Nigeria. An improvement in inflation leads to an increase in the cost of living and a decline in the purchasing power of the population and thus makes the poverty situation worse. The finding corroborates the empirical research conducted by Musa, Zoramawa and Shember, (2024) who discovered that inflation plays significant role on poverty and poor human development outcome in Nigeria. It also corroborates Onwuemeka (2024) who found that inflation and macro-economic instability are harmful to the living standards.

Objective Two: Influence of unemployment rate on the poverty rate in Nigeria

This revealed that there was a positive relationship between the unemployment rate and the poverty rate; an increase in the unemployment rate is accompanied by an increase in the poverty rate. Though the variable did not have a significant relationship, the result corroborates the study of Gamba, Maijamaa and Goyilla (2023) and Bello and Mohammed (2019) which showed that unemployment plays significant role in the problem of poverty in Nigeria. The result confirms that lack of employment opportunities reduces household income and increases economic hardship.

Objective Three: Impact of literacy rate on the poverty rate in Nigeria.

The regression result showed that the poverty rate is positively and significantly related to literacy rate. This was an unusual outcome that could be a reflection of current trend of educated unemployment in Nigeria where literate and educated are not necessarily synonymous with jobs. This finding is partly in conflict with Ibrahim and Sule (2020) who concluded that literacy contributes to alleviating poverty by enhancing human capital development. But it reflects recent worries about Nigeria's graduate unemployment, underemployment and the unavailability of decent employment opportunities for the nation's youth.

Conclusion

The study findings revealed that the inflation rate and the literacy rate significantly affect poverty rate in Nigeria whereas, the unemployment rate had a

positive but insignificant relationship with poverty during the study period. The overall model shows that the social and macroeconomic variables together account for poverty situation in Nigeria. Hence, the policies for the reduction of inflation, employment and education quality enhancement should be beefed up to mitigate the poverty of the country.

Recommendations

The researcher therefore recommends that:

1. The Government should adopt effective inflation control policies, by adhering to the correct monetary/fiscal management, to curb the soaring cost of living. Stable prices will increase purchasing power, reduce economic hardship and help to reduce poverty in Nigeria.
2. There should be more investments in job creation programmes, development of entrepreneurship and industrial expansion to help reduce unemployment. It will create opportunities for employment, particularly youth and graduates, hence enhancing citizens' income and standard of living.
3. Skill acquisition, vocational and entrepreneurial education should be promoted in education sector to strengthen it. This will guarantee that literacy and education lead to meaningful employment opportunities and make meaningful contribution to poverty alleviation in Nigeria.

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