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Economics Education and Counselling in Addressing Naira Notes Scarcity: Impacts on Point-of-Sale Businesses in Abuja

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Abstract

The study examined economic education and counselling in addressing naira notes scarcity: Impacts on Point-of-Sale businesses in Abuja. The scarcity of naira notes, exacerbated by recent monetary policies and economic disruptions, has significantly affected small and medium-sized businesses relying on POS services for cash-based transactions. This study investigates how economics education can empower people and businesses with financial literacy, adaptive strategies, and innovative solutions to mitigate the adverse effects of currency scarcity. Counselling interventions are also examined as a means to support business owners and individuals in managing stress, navigating financial uncertainty, and adopting alternative payment methods. The study revealed that POS businesses experienced a sharp decline in transaction volumes as customers struggled to access cash. To cope with the scarcity, many POS operators raised transaction fees, leading to customer dissatisfaction and reduced patronage. The scarcity of cash led to increased queues, delayed transactions, and frustration among customers and operators. There was a notable increase in the use of digital payment methods, such as bank transfers and mobile money, as an alternative to cash transactions, and economic education provided insights into monetary policies and their implications, enabling businesses to adapt more effectively to the scarcity. The study recommended that capacity-building programs in collaboration with financial institutions, fintech companies, and government agencies organise and train operators on integrating these technologies into daily operations for seamless service delivery, among several others.

Keywords: Cash Scarcity, Digital Payment, Economics Education, Naira Redesign Policy, Point of Sale.

Introduction

As the Central Bank of Nigeria's Naira redesign policy bites harder, the scarcity of new notes continues to disrupt business activities in markets, restaurants, banks, and major sales outlets throughout Nigeria. In the midst of the operational challenges that small businesses, especially in rural areas, are facing, Akerejola (2017) noted that Point of Sale (PoS) transaction charges increased by 40% in most cities across the country last week.

The impact of the CBN policy and its attendant chaos has frustrated the efforts of many Nigerians operating in the nation's cash-dependent informal economy to do business, make payments, and enjoy certain services.

Anyanwu and Anumaka (2021) submitted that, although the poor circulation of the new notes stifles economic activities, the PoS operators have also had a hard time getting both the old and new notes from the banks. Furthermore, some PoS agents' inability to access cash has stalled their operations, while operators who struggled to get cash blamed the hurdles they encountered in the banks for the increase in transaction fees. At some of the mobile money cash points in Lagos, Abuja, and other major cities, it was observed that charges on transactions have skyrocketed by over 400%.

This study adopted the technological acceptance model. This theory offers a powerful explanation for user acceptance and usage behaviour of information technology. TAM theorises that an individual's behavioural intention to adopt a system is determined by two beliefs, perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). Davis (2019) noted that this model helps to understand how the effects of these determinants change with increasing user experience over time with the target system. TAM incorporates additional theoretical constructs spanning social influence processes and cognitive instrumental processes and explains that the additional constructs, social influence processes (subjective norm, voluntariness, and image) and cognitive instrumental processes (job relevance, output quality, and result demonstrability), significantly influenced user acceptance. The level of acceptance will influence the operational efficiency of any organisation. Technology is a major driving force of organisational efficiency, hence performance.

In other places, PoS outlets were shut as operators complained of a scarcity of both the old and new notes. All these together are causing significant hardship in both rural and urban areas, a hardship that many see as unnecessary. Cash scarcity has negatively affected every aspect of Nigerians lives, but the most heart-wrenching is the reported deaths as a result of it, which are avoidable if the Naira redesign policy was better handled (Anyanwu and Anumaka, 2020). Additionally, there are widespread reports in the media that patients are increasingly denied access to care at health facilities as many of the facilities operate mainly cash-only systems or have poor e-payment systems. These facilities reject transfers, insisting on cash payments before treating patients. There were reports of a pregnant woman in Kaduna State who lost her pregnancy because her husband couldn't pay her due to naira scarcity. To mitigate the present challenges, the Kaduna State Government, through the Internal Revenue Service (KADIRS), directed all public hospitals to accept electronic transfer for all payments (Ayo and Babajide, 2019).

In view of the controversies surrounding the scarcity of redesigned Naira notes, a joint team of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and Independent Corrupt Practices (ICPC) has started the monitoring of circulation of the new notes in Abuja, visiting fuel stations, supermarkets, and Point of Sale (PoS) operators in the FCT. The aim is to curb the hoarding of currency notes, a situation that has largely caused the scarcity of the banknotes in Abuja. There had been reports that most fuel stations were selling the redesigned banknotes—N200, N500, and N1000—to PoS operators, resulting in exorbitant charges by the agent banker (Ayo, 2019). It became necessary for the apex bank to conduct the monitoring exercise based on complaints from banks that most of their customers were not making cash deposits anymore, pointing to the fact that their biggest customers are oil service stations and supermarkets.

Lawi, Richard, John, and Njenga (2019) noted that amid the chaos caused by the scarcity of the new notes, the CBN extended the deadline for the phasing out of the old notes from the 31 January deadline to 10 February. Despite the extension, many Nigerians working in the informal sector of the economy have had to scramble for the new notes, while others lamented their inability to withdraw their hard-earned money from their bank accounts via PoS or ATM. There have also been allegations of hoarding on the part of the deposit money banks, while some mobile cash point vendors are said to be exploiting the situation by dispensing the new notes to customers at skyrocketed prices. As Nigerians besieged commercial banks and PoS nationwide to access cash, several reports have surfaced online showing frustrated customers vandalising bank properties due to their inability to get cash from banks' ATMs and PoS.In the midst of the melee, anti-graft agencies and the State Security Services (SSS) have equally arrested a number of citizens caught hawking naira notes (Davis, 2019).

Despite the government's repeated claims that the nation has enough electricity, scarcity has persisted amid a poor supply of electricity across the country. In addition to massive disruption in economic activities, the crisis has led to an unprecedented increase in the cost of essential goods and transportation services across states in the country. In light of the aforementioned, this research intends to ascertain the impact of the scarcity of new naira notes on the performance of Point-of-Sale (PoS) business in Abuja, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

As both the new and old naira notes remain scarce around the country, operators of Point of Sale, popularly known as POS, have become the new lords in Abuja. This is because, while many people queue endlessly before bank Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) and even fight themselves, even with no hope of getting cash, POS operators disburse cash to their customers effortlessly, so long as they agree to their charges. Before the redesigning of N200, N500, and N1,000 banknotes by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), POS operators had a standard charge for the disbursement of various amounts of cash to customers (Ayodele, 2015).

Ifeakandu (2011) argued that times have, however, changed, and the previous regulation and leniency, which users of the POS enjoyed, have been demolished. This is because there is no longer any standard charge for using POS, as what matters more is the availability of cash. Currently, there is no fixed charge for the withdrawal of cash from the POS. Customers simply agree to any amount charged as a commission by the operators, depending on the availability of cash.Meanwhile, Mafimisebi, Akinbobola, Mafimisebi, Ugbedeojo, and Olarinde (2019) noted that the cash being disbursed by POS operators is also not easy to get, as many of them go through unconventional means to get the money. Many of the POS operators, according to the investigation, get money from various sources, just to serve their customers and also remain in business. Checks also showed that some of the POS operators also make arrangements with fuel stations, where they meet them after a day of sales to pick up their cash, instead of allowing them to take them to the bank.

In Nigeria's capital city, some PoS outlets were under lock and key, while some that were open jerked up their charges for cash withdrawals and transfers. The chaos caused by the cash crunch has been worsened by the hardship inflicted on Nigerians due to a lingering crisis (David, 2012). Digital payments run by banks are often unreliable, leaving businesses struggling as growing numbers of customers have been unable to find the cash from either PoS or banks to pay for goods and services. The situation has created a parallel market for people to illegally sell the new banknotes. The cash supply crisis has disrupted businesses across the country, forcing a good number of businesses to close. The two critical sectors of the economy, trade and commerce, as well as agriculture, have been very badly affected because their transactions are mainly in cash, especially in rural areas. This policy has brought rural economic activities to a halt (CBN, 2011). To make matters worse, the supply of new notes is extremely limited, which has adversely affected economic activities! This has practically crippled many small businesses, as shop owners now spend more time at banks than in their business premises (Khan, Olanrewaju, Baba, Langoo, and Assad, 2022). Despite alleviating the stress of the average Nigerian, these POS operators have a few disadvantages, as submitted by Ayo and Ukper (2019), such as network issues, an increase in fraud, the cost of the machine, delay in funds reversal, robbery, absence of regulation, and difficult customers.

There are widespread reports in the media that patients are increasingly denied access to care in health facilities as many of the facilities operate mainly cash-only systems or have poor e-payment systems (Adeoti, 2013). These facilities reject transfers, insisting on cash payments before treating patients. There were reports of a pregnant woman in Kaduna State who lost her pregnancy because her husband couldn't pay her due to naira scarcity. To mitigate the current challenges, the Kaduna State Government, through the Internal Revenue Service (KADIRS), directed all public hospitals to accept electronic transfers for all payments (The Punch, 2023).

Despite the best efforts thus far, the scarcity of naira has worsened the hardship facing Nigerian businesses in major cities and rural communities. POS is not helping matters. Businessmen, entrepreneurs, and business organisations are stranded as no money is in sight for business operations. Since this is a new topic with few materials to support this research, the researcher intends to examine the effect of the scarcity of new naira notes on the performance of Point of Sale (POS) businesses in Abuja, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine the effect of Naira scarcity on the performance of Point of Sale (POS) operators in Abuja, Nigeria.

Research Question

What are the effects of the scarcity of new naira notes on performance of Point of Sale (POS) operators in Abuja, Nigeria?

Review of the Literature

Concept of New Naira Notes

A new naira note means currency expressed in Kwacha and tambala according to the decimal currency system (Achebe, 2018). No assurance can be given as to whether, taking into account relative exchange rate and interest rate fluctuations between the original currency and the new currency, a quanto feature in a security would at any time enhance the return on the security over a level of a similar security issued without such a quanto feature. If the customer opts to pay the price in the new currency, the conversion rate to be applied to the price shall be the official rate of exchange applied by the National Central Bank of the supplier's country on the conversion date (Adeoti, 2020).
According to Adeoti (2013), new currency means an uncirculated note received from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) and paid into circulation. The cost to the issuer of maintaining such a fixing between the original currency and the New Currency will have an implication on the value of the securities. In a development, Yakubu (2021). The new Naira note means any single or unified European lawful currency (whether known as the Euro or otherwise, and whether for the whole European Community or for only several member states).

Point of Sale (POS)

POS, an acronym that stands for point of sale, can be defined as a place where a transaction takes place between a merchant and a customer (Fajana, 2010). At the point of sale, the merchant calculates how much the customer owes, and the customer makes the payment. Additionally, a POS transaction is the moment when a customer makes a payment in exchange for their goods or services. A POS transaction can take place in person at retail locations or online through payment processors. As technology advances, cloud-based POS systems are growing in popularity among merchants. On the other hand, a POS system is the actual software and hardware used to process transactions. Therefore, a POS system is ultimately the central hub for businesses since it helps process sales and manage inventory (Fajana, 2010).
The point of sale (POS) or point of purchase (POP) is the time and place at which a retail transaction is completed. At the point of sale, the merchant calculates the amount owed by the customer, indicates that amount, may prepare an invoice for the customer (which may be a cash register printout), and indicates the options for the customer to make payment.

It is also the point at which a customer makes a payment to the merchant in exchange for goods or after providing a service. After receiving payment, the merchant may issue a receipt for the transaction, which is usually printed but can also be dispensed with or sent electronically (Okoye,2018). To calculate the amount owed by a customer, the merchant may use various devices such as weighing scales, barcode scanners, and cash registers (or the more advanced "POS cash registers," which are sometimes also called "POS systems). To make a payment, payment terminals, touch screens, and other hardware and software options are available.

The point of sale is often referred to as the point of service because it is not just a point of sale, but also a point of return or customer order. POS terminal software may also include features for additional functionality, such as inventory management, CRM financials, or warehousing (Olugbade and Kehinde, 2012). Businesses are increasingly adopting POS systems, and one of the most obvious and compelling reasons is that a POS system eliminates the need for price tags. Selling prices are linked to the product code of an item when adding stock, so the cashier merely scans this code to process a sale. If there is a price change, this can also be easily done through the inventory window. Other advantages include the ability to implement various types of discounts, a loyalty scheme for customers, and more efficient stock control. These features are typical of almost all modern ePOS systems.

Effects of Scarcity of New Naira Notes on POS Operators

The introduction of the new Naira note was one of the most controversial and most discussed decisions taken by the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2022. However, the full impact of this decision was not felt until 2023. From the scarcity of new naira notes in early January 2023 to the scarcity of both old and new naira notes (Yakubu, 2021). Nevertheless, there still seems to be no actual end to this shortage of naira notes. Hence, the need to look beyond the needs of the citizens, businessmen, and entrepreneurs and discuss the impacts of this scarcity on the economy.

Effect on the Cashless Policy

The scarcity of naira notes has led to a greater prevalence of POS usage and the purchase of naira notes. Nigerians currently pay as much as 300 naira on each 1000 naira note they collect. These 'sale' or naira notes have discouraged people from making cash transactions and encouraged them to make cashless transactions. While the benefits of a cashless policy include reduction in robberies, increase in employment, attraction of foreign investors, and reduction in illegal cash transfer, forcing a cashless policy down the throats of citizens might not be the way to achieve maximum economic benefits (Lawi, Richard, John, and Njenga, 2019). However, the scarcity of naira notes has promoted the purchase of goods and services in the open markets through bank transfers and will likely remain the same if the scarcity persists.

Effect on Cost of Items

Although some people now accept cashless payments, many do not. So, what impact does this have on the cost of items? It can lead to inflation. If Mr. A buys an item for 1000 naira but has to make the purchase using cash that he paid 200 naira to get, his total cost price would be 1200 naira. This has increased the cost of the item and will subsequently increase his selling price. If Mr. A sells the item to Mr. B, a retailer, for 1400 naira, but Mr. B also buys with cash, which he paid 300 naira to get, Mr. B will calculate his cost price as 1700 naira and then sell to the final consumer at 2000 naira (Mafimisebi, Akinbobola, Mafimisebi, Ugbedeojo, and Olarinde, 2019).
Through the line of distribution between the producer and final consumer, a penny here and a Kobo there added to the cost of items. As a result, the long-term scarcity of naira notes will end up causing inflation.

Impact on Sales

Business Day reports that during the few days of naira note scarcity, there has been a 20% drop in sales for consumer goods and a 30% drop for cement manufacturers. This is because resources have different alternative uses. As a result, the scarcer a resource is, the more likely people are to place its usage on a scale of preference. Consequently, people are now more on essential goods and services. Purchases are now well thought through to ensure that the available naira notes are used well. This has led to a drop in sales of nonessential goods and services (Omotayo, 2015).
There are various things that can occur as a result of the scarcity of naira notes. Some are as a consequence of the scarcity, and others are as a result of other factors. However, acceptance of cashless policy can help reduce the negative impacts. However, that depends on the acceptance of the people.

Benefits of POS Business amid Scarcity of New Naira Notes

The role of POS terminals in facilitating transactions throughout the country cannot be overemphasised. With ATMs always having problems and bank branches miles away, accessing cash and making payments has become a herculean task. As a result, POS terminals serve to provide useful support in closing the widening transactional chasm. Needless to say, this channel is convenient, time-saving, and life-saving. Data curled from NIBSS (2012) indicates that those terminals successfully processed N4.6 trillion ($7.6 billion) in the first seven months of 2022 as opposed to N3.56 trillion ($5.93 billion) recorded in the same months in 2021. This represents about a 30% increase in the total number of transactions processed by the channels.
In addition, POS enterprises create jobs for hundreds of thousands of Nigerians in the country. In the face of worsening employment woes, the federal government trained 1850 youth in POS business in October 2021. The government added the new number to existing agents as a way of creating jobs for thousands of unemployed Nigerians. For a country being deviled with a 40% unemployment rate (Source: African Development Bank), all

efforts must be geared towards creating jobs, an economic challenge the government is already addressing using POS enterprises (Wikipedia, 2010).

The POS business is also crucial to improving financial inclusion figures. For example, EFINA stated that Nigeria's financial inclusion statistics increased from 63.2% in 2018 to 64.1% in 2020. With more and more POS terminals making their way into the streets and markets across the country, this will boost financial inclusion statistics (Okoye, 2018). This is primarily because POS terminals can be located in rural areas where traditional banks are not available. No doubt, financial experts have also shown that financial inclusion helps reduce abject penury.

According to Olugbade et al. (2012). Here are other fantastic benefits of operating a PoS business in Abuja:

i. Friendly customer service: POS services are very customer-friendly because of how quick and efficient it is to perform seemingly difficult money transactions. Hence, as an agent, it is likely that your customers will enjoy your services.

ii. Team Management Made Simple: Some advanced POS systems make it easy for agents to track their work progress. Basically, you can track employee-related data, like sales per employee and the number of hours you worked in some POS systems (Olugbade et al., 2012). This gives you a clear picture of how well your business is doing and how much it is making to better enable you to plan to make more profit.

iii. Saves time: Making use of a POS system saves a lot of time since the machine is loaded with amazing features that help to make transactions fast. Hence, this reduces the amount of time you will spend on transactions or other mundane activities. Also, you can manage your inventory, reports, orders, purchasing, customer support, and many more with just POS systems.

iv. Multi-location systems: If you have more than one business, you can easily manage them with a POS system. Basically, this means that all your businesses will be able to provide customers with the same quality of service, ease, efficiency, and convenience. Each business site should have its own inventory; then you can connect and manage them all using a POS system that cuts across all locations (Omotayo, 2015).

Challenges of POS Business in the Scarcity of New Naira Notes

The POS business is rapidly expanding in Nigeria. More private individuals, entrepreneurs, businessmen, and business organisations are beginning to invest in this business, making the POS operators increase. Despite alleviating the stress of the average Nigerian, this business has a few disadvantages as submitted by Ayo and Ukper (2019).

i. Network issues: This is probably the most common challenge experienced by both operators and customers of POS businesses. Many times the network is so bad, especially in rural areas, that people have to wait several minutes before a transaction is processed. It is even worse when the customer makes a transfer to the operator's account. When this incident occurs, it can cause frustration for both parties (Achebe, 2018). In addition to this, many operators lose customers as they are not aware that it is a network problem, not the vendor's fault.

ii. Increase in fraud: Many POS operators will tell you that they have experienced some level of fraud while running this business. The same applies to customers who have patronised POS operators. For the operators, some of them have received counterfeit cash or incomplete funds for transfer or deposit purposes. In the end, they have to make up for the loss of their capital, which can ruin the business. Customers, some of them have experienced more withdrawals from their accounts than they authorised. In some cases, POS operators configure their machines to save the customer's PIN. After the customer leaves, they now withdraw from the account. Several POS customers have been swindled in this manner and have lost their money (Nzaro and Magid, 2020).

iii. Cost of the machine: Another very common disadvantage of the POS business in Nigeria is the cost of the POS machine. Many people who enter this business consider the cost of first acquiring the machine. Most high-quality POSs cost N70,000 or more. When you tell prospective operators about this price, they run away. The problem with cheaper machines is that most of them are not fully efficient. They experience several issues, including poor network reception, weak batteries, and difficulty in use. If you can, you should consider purchasing expensive, high-quality machines.

iv. Delay in funds reversal: Tijani and Illugbem (2015) noted that this problem is related to the network issue discussed earlier. Many times, customers try to make withdrawals, and because of network issues, they get debited without the transactions going through. Typically, such funds should be reversed immediately or at least within 24 hours. However, some customers do not even get their funds refunded even after complaining to the operator or their banks. Again, this issue can cause customers to lose faith in a POS operator that they frequently patronise if this issue is recurrent. Customers and operators make several complaints without positive responses from their banks.

v. Robbery: The POS business, as with any other business in Nigeria, is prone to attack from hoodlums. You will notice that most POS businesses shut down operations once it is sunset. The reason for this is that most of them are scared of being robbed. Every prospective POS operator should consider hiring a security agent if they can afford to. Alternatively, you can consider locating their business in open and highly secure areas.

vi. Absence of regulation: It is no secret that you will find a POS operator on almost every street, especially in urban areas. This is evidence that there are hardly any regulations to enter and run this business. Once you can afford the capital for the business, you can apply for the machine and resume work. Because of this, you will notice that there are no specific charges on transactions (Adeoti, 2020). Different operators fix their prices depending on their location and the customer who patronises them. You will also notice that POS operators are crowded in some locations and almost non-existent in others. They would have been evenly distributed if there were a body to regulate the operations of POS businesses.

vii. Difficult customers: We all know how difficult some customers can be. Many POS operators have to face uncomfortable encounters with such customers every day. Some of these customers have expired or malfunctioning cards and expect you to carry out a transaction. It even gets worse when the customer is debited and the transaction is declined (Okeke, Nwat, and Ezeh, 2017).

The Prospects of POS Business in the Face of New Naira Scarcity in Abuja, Nigeria

No business is outright on the negative side; if it is all negative, it would be a business. Beyond the problems facing the POS business in Nigeria, which can be fixed by the appropriate bodies/authorities, the business is worthwhile, and as such, the future is bright as far as the Nigerian economy is concerned. According to Achebe (2018), some of the pros are:

i. Fast withdrawal: Nigerians are not very patient, so the POS business works for many. Instead of queuing in ATM galleries and points, people quickly make do with the POS terminal. There is not much crowd associated with making transactions with POS terminals.

ii. Insufficient funds: You can withdraw as low as N500 using POS terminals. This works for students who are always running out of cash. This can also work for petty traders who are stranded.

iii. It supports a cashless society: With the use of POSs in stores, mini-marts, supermarkets, and other places, people no longer carry a large amount of money in their wallets or bags.

iv. It creates entrepreneurial opportunities: The introduction of the POS in the Nigerian economy has created jobs for some youth and also second streams of income for working-class people. And this has also contributed to the internal revenue of the nation.

POS Goldmine in Abuja, Nigeria

Without mincing words, it is crystal clear that the POS business has become a goldmine among many Nigerian youth struggling with unemployment. To sustain the growth in the burgeoning sub-industry, a need exists for relevant security agencies to protect the users as POS-related frauds are increasingly threatening the business. A flip through the crime section of Nigerian dailies shows that there are several reports of customers falling prey to criminal elements who extract users' account details to perpetuate financial frauds on their accounts (Ifeakandu, 2011). The results show that some fraudulent POS agents installed chips that read and copy user account information and use them to gain unauthorised access to their accounts. To avert this, WayaPos has a QR code scanning feature that saves users the stress of having to exchange cash. Customers must also hide their card verification number (CVV), permanent account number (PAN), and card expiration date from POS agents. Also, users should only patronise known agents in their neighbourhood, not constantly moving operators.

Furthermore, POS regulation is poor as there are no visible regulatory frameworks to govern how the enterprise should operate in the country. WayaBank would take responsibility by doing its due diligence and background checks on prospective agents before releasing such sensitive devices to them (Venkates, Morris, Davis, and Davis, 2013). This way, they will not jeopardise this promising business that has created jobs for many Nigerians. However, the government can step in to stiffen the penalties of POS frauds to discourage such thefts and protect unsuspecting customers.

Role of Economics Education

Economics education provides POS operators with the knowledge and tools to understand and adapt to macroeconomic and policy-driven changes. Key areas include

A. Financial literacy, which will enhance operators' ability to manage cash flow, maintain liquidity, and make informed decisions during cash scarcity.

This could be through teaching budgeting techniques to optimise cash distribution and educating operators about alternative income streams, such as offering additional services such as bill payments or mobile banking.

B. Digital Financial Education: Reduces the dependence on cash transactions by promoting the use of digital payment systems. Through training POS operators on mobile banking, USSD platforms, and POS machines with digital payment capabilities and providing cybersecurity knowledge to build trust in digital payments among customers.

C. Business Economics: Helps operators understand the broader economic context of currency scarcity and its implications. This could be through explaining the policy rationale behind the Naira redesign and its potential economic benefits and equipping operators to adjust transaction fees and service offerings based on market demand and supply constraints.

Role of Performance Counselling

Performance counselling addresses the operational, psychological, and strategic challenges faced by POS operators, promoting resilience and adaptability.

A. Operational efficiency: Counselling on effective cash allocation to high-demand locations and advising on customer segmentation to prioritise essential services for key clientele.

B. Stress management: Supporting operators in handling the psychological stress associated with economic instability. By providing coping mechanisms to deal with customer frustrations and high-pressure situations and training on conflict resolution and maintaining professionalism during disputes.

C. Customer relationship management: Building and maintaining trust and loyalty with customers. By encouraging transparency about challenges and promoting alternative solutions, such as e-transfers or credit systems, and advising operators on communication techniques to manage customer expectations.

Benefits of Economics Education and Counselling

Integrating economics education and performance counselling into the support structure for POS operators offers multiple benefits.

- Improved resilience: Operators can quickly adapt to currency shortages and policy changes.
- Enhanced Financial Inclusion: By embracing digital solutions, operators contribute to a cashless economy, reducing reliance on physical cash.
- Sustained Profitability: Counselling helps operators manage costs and explore innovative revenue streams.
- Stronger Customer Loyalty: Transparent communication and efficient services foster trust and repeat business.

Theoretical Framework

In order to explore the effect of electronic point of sale systems on operational performance, the study adopts two theories: the Technology Acceptance Model, Synergy Theory, and Convention Economic Efficiency Theory.

Technological Acceptance Theory

This study adopted the Technological Acceptance Model. This theory offers a powerful explanation for user acceptance and usage behaviour of information technology. TAM theorises that an individual's behavioural intention to adopt a system is determined by two beliefs, perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). Davis (2019) noted that this model helps to understand how the effects of these determinants change with increasing user experience over time with the target system. TAM incorporates additional theoretical constructs spanning social influence processes and cognitive instrumental processes and explains that the additional constructs, social influence processes (subjective norm, voluntariness, and image) and cognitive instrumental processes (job relevance, output quality, and result demonstrability), significantly influenced user acceptance. The level of acceptance will influence the operational efficiency of any organisation. Technology is a major driving force of organisational efficiency, hence performance. The use of modern ICT technologies significantly improves the efficiency and effectiveness, which in the long run reduces operational costs, which attracts new clients and therefore affects operational efficiency.

The Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) provides a theoretical foundation to understand how POS operators and customers in Abuja can embrace digital payment systems in response to the scarcity of naira notes. By leveraging economic education to improve awareness and skillsets and counselling to build confidence and reduce resistance, the principles of TAM can be effectively applied to ensure the successful adoption of alternative payment technologies, mitigating the economic and psychological impacts of the crisis.

Empirical Review

Okoye. (2018) examined the effect of cashless banking on the unemployment rate in Nigeria, focusing on the aggregate data of all banks operating in the country from 2012 to 2016, as documented in the CBN annual report. An ex post facto research design was adopted for the study, and a secondary source of data collection was used. The cashless banking system as the independent variable of this study was measured with TATM, TPOS, TMPS, and TIB, while the dependent variable was the Nigerian unemployment rate (UR). The data collected were presented in tables and analysed using the multiple regression technique (ordinary least squares regression) for model estimation. To determine the overall significance of the model, the student's T-significance test was observed in the model and was used to test the hypothesis formulated. The results show that there is a negative and insignificant effect of the cashless banking system on the unemployment rate in Nigeria ($\beta = -0.790$, $R^2 = 0.624$, $t = 2.233$, $p = 0.112$). This means that the cashless banking system in Nigeria does not contribute to the higher rate of Nigeria's unemployment as many people. Instead, more jobs are created for people who are experts in operating the machines (ATMs, POS, Internet, and mobile phones) used in the cashless banking system. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the government and CBN should raise awareness on the benefits derivable from shifting to the cashless (cash-light) banking system in Nigeria, more especially on the fact that machines are not used to replace the workforce in a cashless banking system.

Omotayo (2015) investigated the factors that affect the adoption of POS by organisations in Lagos and the Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria, using the Technology Acceptance Model as the theoretical framework. The study adopted the survey design by sampling 200 organisations that have adopted POS in Lagos and Ibadan using a questionnaire as the research instrument. The results reveal that subjective norms and perceived ease of use have a significant relationship with the adoption of the POS machine by organisations. However, the characteristics of the organisations, image, and perceived usefulness do not have a significant relationship with the adoption of POS. The study provides a guide for banks on the factors that they need to consider when deploying POS machines. The study has some limitations, one of which is that the population was limited to only two states; therefore, the findings may not be generalised to the entire country.

Anyanwu and. Anumaka (2020). examined the impact of Point of Sale (POS) on cashless policy, issues, and prospects in the Nigerian economy; research questions were formulated and distributed to the sample population of 500 drawn from various POS operating centres in line with the objectives of the study. Four hundred and fifty responses were returned while fifty copies were not returned; the responses were categorised according to strongly agreed, agreed, strongly disagreed, disagreed, and neutral, with weights of (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) assigned to each category, respectively, to generate acceptable raw data for econometric analysis. The raw data were analysed using cointegrated ordinary least squares, autoregressive distributed lag, unit root, and Granger causality; the result shows that POS has a significant and positive impact on cashless policy in Nigeria. The study recommends that POS should be deployed to various areas to facilitate exchange transactions and ultimately reduce cash-based-related transactions in the economy.

Lawi, Richard, John, and Njenga (2019) determined the effect of the Electronic Point of Sale System on the operational efficiency of hotels within Nakuru County. The correlation results showed that there was a strong, positive, significant relationship between EPoS data processing speed and operational efficiency of hotels in Nakuru County ($r = 0.528$; $p < 0.05$). This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis and subsequently the adoption of the view that the speed of EPOS data processing was instrumental in ensuring effective operational efficiency of hotels in Nakuru County. A correlation analysis was also carried out to determine the effect of EPOS transaction tracking speed on the operational efficiency of hotels in Nakuru County. The results showed a significant difference.

Anyanwu and. Anumaka (2021) examined the impact of point-of-sale (POS) on cashless policy, issues, and prospects in the Nigerian economy; research questions were formulated and distributed to the sample population of 500 drawn from various POS operating centres in line with the objectives of the study. Four hundred and fifty responses were returned while fifty copies were not returned; the responses were categorised according to strongly agreed, agreed, strongly disagreed, disagreed, and neutral, with weights of (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) assigned to each category, respectively, to generate acceptable raw data for econometric analysis. The raw data were analysed using co-integrated ordinary least squares, autoregressive distributed lag, unit root, and Granger causality; the result shows that POS has a significant and positive impact on cashless policy in Nigeria. We therefore recommend that POS should be deployed to various areas to facilitate exchange transactions and ultimately reduce cash-based-related transactions in the economy.

Mafimisebi, Akinbobola, Mafimisebi, Ugbedeojo, and Olarinde (2019) determined the effect of point of sale (POS) utilisation on effective demand for agricultural commodities in stores and supermarkets in Akure Metropolis. A multistage sampling procedure was used in selecting one hundred sixty (160) consumers paying for agro-commodities through POS for the study. Data were collected using a structured interview schedule and analysed using descriptive statistics and regression. The study identified convenience as the main reason for utilising POS and also found sex, age, household size, monthly income, and the effect of POS as factors influencing the effective demand of agro-commodities using the POS. However, the study concludes that the use of POS increases the demand for agro-commodities.

Conclusion

With the planned redesign of the Naira by the CBN, with the claim that money hoarding, inflation, and counterfeiting are the main reasons for its unusual decisions. New naira notes were scarce across the country, causing significant hardship in both rural and urban areas, a hardship that many see as unnecessary. PoS outlets were closed as operators complained of the scarcity of old and new notes.The cash scarcity has negatively affected every facet of Nigerian life, but the most heart-wrenching is the reported deaths as a result of it. In all, if the Naira redesign policy were better handled, new Naira notes would be released to banks and PoS operators, and significant hardship in both rural and urban areas should be under control.

Recommendations

1. Organise capacity-building programs in collaboration with financial institutions, fintech companies, and government agencies.
2. Establish support groups where operators can access professional counselling and share best practices.
3. Implement feedback mechanisms to assess the impact of education and counselling on POS business performance.
4. Foster partnerships with local banks and fintech companies for smoother cash access and technical assistance.
5. Train operators on integrating these technologies into daily operations for seamless service delivery.

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