

Alternative Sources of Funding University Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to determine how parents, lecturers and university students view some alternative sources of funding university education in Nigeria. Two research questions were raised and stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting 677 parents, 679 students and 309 lecturers for the study. Researcher made questionnaire was used for data collection, which were analysed using percentage and analysis of variance. The results showed that they accepted scholarship, scientific break-through, staff exchange programme, checking fraudulent practices, and loans but rejected commercializing accommodation, payment of tuition fees, graduate tax, tax-relief and commercializing activities on campuses as alternative sources of funding university education. It was recommended that the general economy of the society need to be improved if the society may be at ease to assist in funding university education.

Introduction

In Nigeria, the national policy on education (2004 article 64) stipulated that university education shall make optimum contribution to national development by intensifying as well as diversifying its programme for the development of higher level manpower in the context of the needs of the nation vis-à-vis making professional course content to reflect the national requirement. These laudable objectives can hardly be accomplished if university education is not adequately funded.

Currently, university education is underfunded (Imbrabekhov & Tonwe, 2001). Inadequate funding put the university management under stress and strains hence they, are incapacitated in providing

essential services. This has led to rampant crisis in the system resulting in strikes by academic and non-academic staff, dearth of equipment and facilities, indiscipline among staff and students, upsurge in the activities of secret cults among others (Arikewuyo, 2001). Furthermore, Nigeria as signatory to the United Nation Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) programme is still unable to meet the statutory requirement of the international body which required that 15% of their total yearly budgets be devoted to education sector (Olupona, 2001).

Nigeria as a developing nation is currently witnessing increased enrolment of university students. This increase in enrolment demands corresponding increase in funding which is not the case in Nigeria. Fund allocation does not increase to meet the demand of funds occasioned by the enrolment increase. Imhabekhai & Tonwe (2001) have shown that government had never met the amount required by the universities.

The provision of university education is very expensive since it is both capital and labour intensive. The burden of providing university education in Nigeria is too much hence the federal government through the minister of education had call on society to get involved in the provision of university education. Imhabekhai and Tonwe (2001) reported that government provides over 80% of fund needed for recurrent and capital expenditure in Nigeria Universities and this is contrary to what is happening in some developed countries like United State of America where tuition fee is a major source of fund in the universities.

In order to lessen the burden of funding university education almost alone by the government, several suggestions had been made. These include payment of tuition fees (currently in Nigeria, university owned by government is tuition free), graduate tax, checking fraudulent practices, commercial activities on campuses, commercializing accommodation, endowment funds, scientific breakthrough, consultancy, part-time programmes, staff exchange

programme, loans, scholarship, tax-relief; vacation and part-time job (Imhabekhai & Tonwe, 2001; Arikewuyo, 2001 & Oluppna, 2001). Government effort to carryout some of these suggestions had been met stiff opposition particularly by parents, lecturers and students, which sometimes lead to closure of some universities in recent time. It is therefore the problem of the study to determine how parents, lecturers and students perceive alternative sources of funding university education with view of making appropriate suggestion.

Research Questions

Two research questions were raised:

1. How do parents/guardian of university students, lecturers and students view some alternative sources of funding university education in Nigeria?
2. Do parents, lecturers and students differ in their views of some alternative sources of funding university education in Nigeria ?

Method

This was a survey study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 700 parents, 700 students and 325 lecturers from two universities owned by federal government. However, 679 parents, 679 students and 309 lecturers returned complete questionnaire called Parents, Lecturers and Students View in Alternative Sources of Funding University Education Questionnaire (PLSVASFUQ). The questionnaire centred on eliciting information on the 15 earlier stated alternate sources of funding university education in Nigeria . These sources are stated on Table 1. Experts in the area of educational evaluation validated the instrument. It was also pretested using 100 parents, 100 students and 80 lecturers. The pretest results showed no ambiguities in the instrument and produce test-retest (two week interval) reliability Index of .89. The questionnaire had two options (accept and reject). The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researcher and 10 assistants who were properly

trained on how to handle the administration of the questionnaire. The administration of the questionnaire was done on April, May and June 2006. Percentage and analysis of variance were used for data analysis.

Results

The results are presented by answering each question earlier raised.

Question One:

How do parents/guardian of university students, lecturers and students view some alternative sources of funding university education in Nigeria?

To answer this question, the assessment of parents, lecturers and students on alternative sources of funding university education were shown in Table 1. Specifically their percentage responses and rank were shown in the Table. Table 1 shows the percentage of parents, lecturers and students accepting or rejecting the alternative sources of funding university education as well as their means and rank. The rank of the 15 sources of funding university education showed that the best five sources in which parents, lecturers and students would accept in the order of their rank (1-5) were scholarship, scientific breakthrough, staff-exchange programme, checking fraudulent practices and loans. Conversely five sources they did not accept as alternative sources of funding university education in Nigeria (rank 1-5 for rejecting) were commercializing accommodation, payment of tuition fees, graduate tax, tax-relief and commercializing activities on campuses.

Question Two

Do parents, lecturers and students differ in their views on some alternative sources of funding university education in Nigeria?

In order to answer this question properly, a null hypothesis was formulated from this research question thus – parents, lecturers and students do not differ significantly on their views regarding some alternative sources of funding university education in Nigeria.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used in testing this hypothesis and summary data shown in Table 2. The F-ratio observed (2.01) was not significant ($F_{c2,1664} = 3.84$ at .05 level of significance). Thus, parents, lecturers and students do not differ in their views regarding alternative sources of funding university education.

Discussion

Findings from this study showed that parents, lecturers and students accepted scholarship, scientific breakthrough, staff-exchange programme, checking fraudulent practices and giving of loans as alternative sources of funding university education. This finding corroborate that of Orikewuyo (2001) who showed that the society is still feeling that education of the citizen at the university level is government responsibility and showed very low participation. The implication of these finding is that parents, lecturers and students are viewing funding university education as that of government and the university administration. This is because in Nigeria, scholarship, checking fraudulent practices and loans are issues, which have to be handled by government while staff-exchange programme and scientific break-through could be firmly tackled by government and university administration.

The findings that parents, lecturers and students reject commercializing accommodation, payment of tuition fees, graduates tax, tax-relief and commercializing activities on campuses corroborate that of UNESCO (2003) and still indicate that parents, lecturers and students view afunding of university education as the responsibility of government. A Closer look at the results indicated that parents, lecturers and students do not want any alternative sources of funding which will make them spent more. UNESCO (2003) noted that since the abolition of tuition fees in the university in 1976 by the federal government, the universities stated being underfunded to date.

In the United States of America , a developed and prominent country of the world, tuition fees constitute a major source of funds for higher education. Imhabekhai and Tonwe (2001) found that in 1983/84

school year in America, tuition and other fees constituted 23.4% of total recurrent revenue. Several attempts by government to reintroduce tuition fee in the universities is always met with stiff opposition over the years. For instance, Olupona (2001) reported that in 1991, during the mass rally organized by the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) being the parent body for all students' union of higher institutions in Nigeria held in a town called Ilorin in Nigeria in 1999 titled "Disobedience for a better tomorrow", the president of the association announced to the students to resist by all means the possible re-introduction of tuition fees in the higher institutions. To date, the government has not overcome this threat.

Government has to be cautious in reintroducing tuition fees in the universities to avoid strike by students, which occasioned closure of some universities in recent years. Rejecting tax-relief as alternative source of funding university education might be as a resultant of lack of trust in government policy on the issue.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study showed that parents, lecturers and students do not differ in their views regarding the alternative sources of funding university education hence the views expressed in this study need to be taken seriously. Nigerian government need to improve upon the economy of the society so that, they could be at ease to support the provision of education at the university level. In society where the citizens are struggling for basic needs like food and housing, to talk about supporting university education may be a great burden.

References

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Table 1: Percentage and rank for the sample on accepting or rejecting alternatives sources of funding university education

| | Parents' % | | lecturers' % | | students' % | | mean % for | | rank for | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | <i>reject</i> | <i>accept</i> | <i>reject</i> | <i>accept</i> | <i>reject</i> | <i>accept</i> | <i>accept</i> | <i>reject</i> | <i>reject</i> | <i>accept</i> |
| 1. Payment of tuition fees | 16 | 84 | 43 | 37 | 21 | 79 | 26.67 | 14 | 69.00 | 2.5 |
| 2. Graduate tax | 29 | 71 | 34 | 66 | 30 | 70 | 31.00 | 13 | 69.00 | 2.5 |
| 3. Checking fraudulence practice | 98 | 02 | 96 | 04 | 82 | 18 | 92.00 | 4 | 08.00 | 12 |
| 4. Commercial activities on campuses | 71 | 29 | 56 | 44 | 73 | 27 | 66.67 | 11 | 33.33 | 5 |
| 5. Commercializing accommodation | 15 | 85 | 38 | 72 | 6 | 94 | 19.67 | 15 | 83.67 | 1 |
| 6. Endowment funds | 96 | 04 | 84 | 16 | 86 | 14 | 88.67 | 6 | 11.33 | 10 |
| 7. Scientific break through | 96 | 04 | 90 | 10 | 93 | 07 | 93.00 | 2 | 07.00 | 14 |
| 8. Consultancy | 56 | 44 | 94 | 6 | 80 | 20 | 76.67 | 9 | 26.67 | 7 |
| 9. Part-time programmes | 90 | 10 | 61 | 39 | 83 | 17 | 78.00 | 7 | 22.00 | 9 |
| 10. Staff exchange programme | 93 | 07 | 91 | 09 | 93 | 07 | 92.33 | 3 | 07.67 | 13 |
| 11. Loans | 80 | 20 | 96 | 04 | 94 | 06 | 90.00 | 5 | 10.00 | 11 |
| 12. Scholarship | 94 | 06 | 98 | 02 | 96 | 04 | 96.00 | 1 | 04.00 | 15 |
| 13. Tax relief | 33 | 77 | 46 | 54 | 62 | 38 | 47.00 | 12 | 56.33 | 4 |
| 14. Vacation | 74 | 26 | 73 | 27 | 84 | 16 | 77.00 | 8 | 23.00 | 8 |
| 15. Part-time job | 80 | 20 | 86 | 14 | 53 | 47 | 73.00 | 10 | 27.00 | 6 |

Table 2: ANOVA data for testing different views of parents, lecturers and students

| | N | X | S |
|-----------|-----|-------|------|
| Parent | 679 | 12.32 | 1.17 |
| Lecturers | 309 | 13.67 | 1.43 |
| Students | 679 | 12.32 | 1.01 |

| Source | df | SS | MS | F |
|------------|------|--------|---------|-------|
| Regression | 2 | 13708 | 6854.00 | 2.01* |
| Residual | 1664 | 567363 | 3409.15 | |

**Not significant $p > .05$*