



## **THE IMPERATIVENESS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN FUNDING UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

This research paper examined the imperativeness of entrepreneurship in funding university education in Nigeria, with the challenges of funding university education which include inadequate government funding, leading to a lack of resources for infrastructure, research, and quality faculty. Entrepreneurial initiatives present a viable solution to augment university funding, offering opportunities for income generation beyond traditional channels. Entrepreneurship positively influences curriculum development and innovation within Nigerian universities. Integrating entrepreneurial principles into curricula fosters a mindset of creativity and problem-solving. This dynamic approach enhances students' adaptability and prepares them for the rapidly changing job market. It was concluded and suggested that the entrepreneurship development centers require better coordination and networking. Collaboration with successful entrepreneurs, industry experts, and relevant stakeholders will strengthen the centers' ability to provide quality resources and mentorship programs.

### **Introduction**

The imperativeness of entrepreneurship in funding university education in Nigeria stems from the pressing need to address financial constraints and enhance educational quality. Given the challenges of insufficient government funding and growing demand for higher education, entrepreneurship becomes a crucial avenue for sustainable financial support. Funding higher education in Nigeria faces several challenges. One major issue is inadequate government funding, leading to a lack of resources for infrastructure, research, and quality faculty. Additionally, economic

instability and inflation contribute to the devaluation of funds allocated to education. Limited access to loans and scholarships further hinders students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Corruption within the educational system also poses a challenge, diverting funds away from their intended purpose. These factors collectively impede the development and sustainability of higher education in Nigeria.

### **Financial Strain on Universities**

Universities in Nigeria often face financial challenges, leading to inadequate infrastructure, outdated resources, and limited faculty development. The reliance on government funding alone is



unsustainable, necessitating alternative sources to ensure the continued growth and quality of higher education. There are many challenges facing higher education in Nigerian. This paper will consider the following: inadequate funding, corruption, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of academic staff, Strike actions, Brain-drain, poor research, weak administrators and insecurity.

### **Inadequate Funding**

Udida, Bassey, Udofia, & Egbona, (2009) submitted that the major issue in educational development is shortage of funds. One of the most serious problems threatening the survival of the educational systems is that of dwindling level of public funding in the face of rising demands and hence rising cost of higher education. This shortage of funds affects job performance and the growth of the institution. Higher educational institutions cannot perform optimally without funding. This situation calls for increased fund initiative from both the government and educational stakeholders so as to sustain the tempo and growth of education industry. The inability of the Nigerian government to objectively accept and implement the 26% funding formula for education recommended by the UNESCO impact negatively on the performance and sustainability of higher education. Thus, it has become obvious that Nigeria's neglect of the funding formula is detrimental to higher educational institution performance and development aspiration as quality performance is the veritable instrument for sustenance of education system. This neglect has further precipitated crises in the entire higher educational systems as effective teaching,

research and service are no longer taking place seriously. Akinola (2020) was worried about the funding situation and commented thus: "Our higher institution education systems are in dire need of money to cater for both their capital and recurrent needs. For a few years' past, the budget has been cut back from year to year by the federal government. This cut back has affected both capital and recurrent expenditures. In many higher institutions capital projects embarked upon are few years ago, are yet to be completed due to lack of adequate funds". Many factors are responsible for shortage of funds in the Nigerian higher education and they include poor financial planning, lack of political will to fund higher education, corruption and drop in national revenue. The education sector in Nigeria is known to be one of the few areas that do not get the right budget allocation. Asides of funds for infrastructure, equipment and other necessities, the salaries of staff are nothing to write home about.

### **Corruption**

Ogunode (2020) submitted that corruption in the public universities in Nigeria is another problem preventing effective administration of public universities in Nigeria. The high rate of corruption in the Nigerian public universities has hindered effective administration of the universities. Many public universities are in the present condition because of the corruption in the system. Funds provided for implementation of programme, provision of infrastructural facilities, employment of staff and programme development ended up been looted or diverted into private account.



Punch (2020) submitted that much of the little funds that go into the universities are stolen. In the course of the face-off, the government claimed “the fraud in the universities is amazing and you will be shocked. ICPC did a system check recently, and it was so shocking. In fact, the worst two organizations they mentioned are the Teaching Hospitals and our universities.” In 2018, the Socio- Economic Rights and Accountability Project claimed that there were allegations of corruption in several federal universities relating to the unfair allocation of grades; contract inflation; truncation of staff’s salary on the payroll; employment of unqualified staff; certificate scandal; examination malpractice; sexual harassment; and issuance of results for expelled students to graduate.

#### **Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities**

Udida, Bassey, Udofia, & Egbona, (2009) observed that the lack of adequate infrastructures in our higher education has posed serious setback in the achievement of higher education goals. In institution where there are no adequate classrooms, resource rooms, staff rooms, lack of laboratory facilities, computers and the like; proper teaching and learning cannot be effective and efficient in the system. Ogunode (2020) submitted that inadequate infrastructural facilities is a very big problem facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. Many public universities in Nigeria do not have adequate infrastructural facilities. Infrastructural facilities refers to facilities aiding delivery of academic and non-academic services in educational institutions. Infrastructural facilities include; libraries, laboratories, halls, offices, administrative blocks, hostels,

roads facilities, water, electricity, internet etc.

The availability of the infrastructural facilities in adequate quantities will support effective administration of educational institutions and the inadequacies will prevent effective administration of educational institutions. Many public universities in Nigeria do not have adequate lectures halls, laboratories and offices for both students and academic staff. Many academic and non- academic staff do not have offices and para-venture they have one is been shared by five to six lecturers. The offices of the deans and heads of departments are not something to write home about. The Students do not have adequate lecture halls and hostels accommodations (Ogunode, 2020). Salisu (2021) in her study of influence of school physical resources on students’ academic performance concludes that, there is significant difference in the academic performance of students in institutions with adequate facilities and those with inadequate facilities. The lack of good buildings or funds to rehabilitate collapsed structures poses threat to the system performance and its sustainability hence education to some extent is falling due to low standard. Poor infrastructural facilities planning, corruption, poor maintenance culture and inadequate funding are factor responsible for inadequate infrastructural facilities in Nigerian higher institutions. A survey by the National university commission in Ogunode (2020) showed that only about 30 percent of Nigeria student population have adequate access to classroom, lecture theatres, laboratories and



libraries. The figure indicates the state and a very state of Nigeria universities affairs.

### **Shortage of Academic Staff**

Ahaotu and Ogunode (2021) opined that another major challenge facing the administrators of higher institutions in Nigeria is the problem of shortage of academic and non-academic staff which revealed wide disparities between Nigerian universities and their counterparts in other parts of the world. For instance, the staff-to-student ratio in Harvard University is 1:4, Massachusetts Institute of Technology has 1:9 ratio and the University of Cambridge has 1:3. Musa, (2020), NEEDS, (2014) noted that inadequate lecturers is a serious problem facing all the higher institutions in Nigeria. Many higher institutions do not have adequate lecturers to deploy for teaching in the various institutions. The shortage of lecturer is responsible for the poor quality of teaching and learning in most Nigerian higher institutions. The problem of inadequate manpower in the higher institutions in Nigeria is caused by poor manpower planning, inadequate funding, corruption and inadequate teachers' institutions.

### **Strike Actions**

Okoli, Ogbondah and Ewor, (2016) observed that it has become a known fact that students across various universities in Nigeria are constantly faced with industrial actions embarked upon by the Academic and Non-Academic Staff Unions of various institutions. The disagreement or lack of understanding between government and unions arising from non-implementation of agreement reached, often results in deadlock that usually disrupts academic calendar. As academic activities are

suspended for a long period, the students reading abilities fell. Even the previous knowledge acquired is even forgotten by some students. This mostly turns some students into certificates seekers than knowledge seekers. Poor implementation of agreement, inadequate funding, poor and negotiating skills are factors responsible for various strike action in the higher institutions in Nigeria. More so, students riot and other issues contribute to strike action or temporary shut-down of universities which threaten the stability of institutions as well as affect the overall performance of students and the staff in general.

### **Brain-Drain**

Ogunode (2020) opined that another problem preventing effective administration of public universities in Nigeria is the challenge of brain-drain problem. Brain-drain refers to the movement of professionals from developing countries to developed countries for a better job offers. Brain-drain is a situation whereby professional individuals are migrating from their countries to another country to seek greener pasture. Many lecturers and researchers are leaving public universities in Nigeria to other part of African countries and Europe for a better job offer and conducive working environment. Tribuneonline, (2020) reported that the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has warned the Federal Government against encouraging brain drain with a lingering strike and nonchalant attitude towards the yearnings of ASUU. Ogunode (2020) said Ethiopia has already recruited 200 professors from Nigeria while South Africa, Ghana, Egypt, etc have a





sizeable number of Nigerian professors. In 2016, Ethiopia engaged the services of 600 professors, according to Musa (2020) the former Nigeria's Ambassador to Ethiopia. Akinsanya (2021) added that over 3,000 Nigerians were living in Ethiopia and that most of them were professionals who were doing very well in their chosen career. A few months ago, Ethiopia came to recruit 200 professors from Nigeria. "I don't want to talk of South Africa. Go to Ghana, Egypt, you will see them there. We treat our scholars with discontent. Each time they step out, they are highly valued and highly-priced. Ogunode (2020) argued that the mass movement of academicians from the Nigerian public universities is affecting the administration of the universities because academic staff are very important for the implementation of universities' programme. Factors responsible for Brain-drain in the Nigerian public universities include; poor motivation, unconducive working environment, insecurity, underfunding and political interferences. The implication of brain-drain in the Nigerian public universities include; shortage of lecturers, poor quality of education and high student-teacher ratio. More so, the brain drain appear as a normal occurrence in Nigeria as universities loses talents in academia to other field for economic or political reasons.

### **Poor Research**

Okoli., Ogbondah, and Ewor, (2016) observed that it is important to make research the hub of university education considering the problems Nigerian universities now face. Research in the higher institutions contributes to the acquisition, development and inculcation of

the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and society. Today, this function is saddled with poor attitude of governments towards research and inadequate funding of research programmes. Okafor (2021) argued along the same line when he stated that lack of funds is affecting research in the universities and that there is no indication that this problem will not continue in the future. The universities are supposed to engage in research, not only to push out the frontiers of knowledge, but to solve the problems of the society. Ogunode, Jegede, Adah, Audu&Ajape (2020) opined that research programme is one of the major programme of the universities. It is a key to the university's development. Research programme of the universities is one of the key indicators used to measure the performance of the universities. The administration of research programme in Nigerian public universities faces many problems such as; inadequate research funding, unstable academic calendar/strike Actions, inadequate infrastructural facilities, brain-drain, insecurity, corruption, poor technological advancement/poor ICT literacy. Others are poor participation of private sector in research development and lack of conducive working (research) environment as problems facing the administration of research programme. Poor research programme for the development of research in higher institutions, inadequate funding, corruption and inadequate infrastructural facilities are factors responsible for poor research programme in Nigerian higher institutions.

### **Weak Administrators**



Ogunode (2020) opined that the appointment of weak administrators in the Nigerian public universities is another big challenge facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. Many universities' administrators appointed to head the public universities are not qualified and less exposed to handle the administration and management of universities in Nigeria. Udida, Bassey, Udofia, & Egbona (2009) submitted that some individuals appointed as vice chancellors of some university are weak, not competent and lack administrative potentials; such appointees must possess administrative qualities and must lead by example. The leader must have integrity, must be knowledgeable, and practice modern types of management leadership styles. He or she must be visionary and ready to adjust to situations in the system. The performance of the administrator should be sustained through the proper utilization of material and human resources in the achievement of the institutional goals and objectives. A lot of higher education system managers do not pose the charisma, or good human relations needed for effective and efficient leadership. As a result of the poor leadership and ineffective style of administration, a lot of programme of activities are not carried out in such institutions such as provision of grant for research and publications, staff welfare is neglected, no adequate control of staff and students, no vision for the university. Such leaders also do not have the zeal for supervision and monitoring of institutional activities. This can affect the system's performance in that, workers can result to a nonchalant attitude toward work and hence

no sustainability or continuity of good track records of performance in the system.

### **Insecurity**

Ogunode (2020) observed that insecurity is another problem facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. Nigeria is facing insecurity challenge and this is affecting the entire educational institutions in the country. The Islamic sect called Boko haram meaning western education is forbidden is attacking educational institutions in the Northern part of Nigeria. Many public universities located in the Northern Nigeria have been victims of continuous attacks. Many students, lecturers and administrators have been killed while others kidnapped. The various attacks on the universities have resulted to school closure leading to unstable academic programme. Ahaotu & Ogunode (2021) Nigerian higher institutions administrators are also battling with the challenges of insecurity in their various institutions. Nigeria is facing numerous securities challenges since the return of democracy in 1999. These securities challenges are directly or indirectly affecting the administration of higher education in the country. For instance, many students and academic staff of higher institutions have been attacked at different times resulting into their death within the campus. The higher institutions environment is not safe for students and lectures.

### **Entrepreneurship as a Financial Solution**

Ogunode (2020) opined that entrepreneurial initiatives present a viable solution to augment university funding, offering opportunities for income generation beyond traditional channels. By encouraging entrepreneurship within and



around universities, diverse revenue streams can be created to support various aspects of academic and operational needs. Entrepreneurship can serve as a viable financial solution for funding higher education in Nigeria. By fostering an entrepreneurial culture, individuals can create their own income streams and contribute to the funding of their education. Start-ups and small businesses have the potential to generate revenue, offering students a means to finance their studies independently. Moreover, entrepreneurship can stimulate economic growth, providing opportunities for job creation and tax revenue that could be directed towards supporting higher education. However, challenges such as access to capital, business skills, and a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem need to be addressed to maximize the effectiveness of entrepreneurship as a financial solution.

University education makes prime contribution to national development by making entrepreneurial skills acquisition a requirement for all Nigerian universities (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). Entrepreneurship contributes to national development in terms of creation of new technologies through research and development and provision of products and services. Entrepreneurial development promotes creativity. Many innovations have been made possible through entrepreneurship development. Smartphone was innovated by Andy Rubin in 2003 and Joseph Carl Robnett Licklider developed concepts which flourished into cloud computing. Entrepreneurship education through income generation enhances the level of per capita income which increases

the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Entrepreneurs create employment opportunities by setting up firms to supply goods and services. These goods and services may not be available in the society or are not in sufficient quantities for which the entrepreneur evolves ways to ensure such goods and services are produced and commercialized. Entrepreneurial endeavors stimulate economic activities and increases government revenue through taxation and provision of infrastructural facilities. Furthermore, individuals generate income from their employment for consumption, investments and savings. Generally, entrepreneurship creates wealth for individuals and nations.

Entrepreneurs through establishment of organizations with entrepreneurial expertise effectively utilize the available human and natural resource resources with which Nigeria is richly endowed with. Examples include land and mineral resources. Onwugbuta (2017) asserted that entrepreneurial competence is able to assist in the effective use of local resources in the production of goods and services leading to reduction of overly dependence on imports which enhances the country's balance of payments. Consequently, increased in productivity is achieved through the management expertise of the entrepreneurs which impacts on the development of the nation. Entrepreneurship has significant potential to generate additional funds for universities in Nigeria. Through entrepreneurial activities such as research commercialization, partnerships with industries, and incubating student-led startups, universities can diversify their



revenue streams. This not only fosters innovation but also creates opportunities for students to gain practical skills, contributing to economic growth in the long run.

### **Impact of Entrepreneurship on Curriculum Development and Innovation**

Entrepreneurship positively influences curriculum development and innovation within Nigerian universities. Integrating entrepreneurial principles into curricula fosters a mindset of creativity and problem-solving. This dynamic approach enhances students' adaptability and prepares them for the rapidly changing job market. Additionally, it encourages collaboration between academia and industry, promoting research that addresses real-world challenges and facilitates technology transfer, ultimately contributing to national development and economic growth.

In recent years, innovation and entrepreneurship education (IEE) has been a hot topic in the academic community. Since 2016, innovation and entrepreneurship as the core qualities of talent development have grown up. The concept of IEE originated from Harvard Business School, and later, a course on entrepreneurship was opened in Harvard Business School in 1947. After that, IEE in universities was rapidly popularized all over the world (Nabi, 2017). The purpose of IEE is to cultivate innovative talents, namely, students who will be able to challenge the status quo with a pioneering spirit, adventure, and a sense of independence and to solve problems creatively to meet demands of the society (Fayolle, 2013). Ferreira and other scholars

emphasize the important role of entrepreneurship education in promoting entrepreneurship intention and entrepreneurial behavior (Ferreira & Pinheiro, 2018).

### **Enhancing Educational Quality through Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurial activities bring innovation and real-world application to the educational landscape, enriching the learning experience for students. Incorporating entrepreneurial principles into the academic curriculum fosters a dynamic and practical approach, Onuma (2016) reiterated that a review by Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU) in 2007 affirmed the need to reposition education in Nigeria especially in Universities and other tertiary sector towards entrepreneurial drive for job creation, global competitiveness of Nigerian graduates. Entrepreneurship programmes are carried out in universities in Rivers States namely Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University at the undergraduate level and graduate level (Masters Level). Under the entrepreneurship programme, students are expected to acquire entrepreneurial training which focuses on knowledge and skills with practical sessions which tend to encourage students to start and succeed in a variety of settings at graduation. In universities in Rivers State of Nigeria, students are exposed to skills which include paint making, fashion designing, baking, hair dressing and barbing. Skills for which training is provided for also include crops farming, fish farming poultry farming and snail farming among others. For those





intending to go into production, samples are presented during practical sessions. In the three (3) universities in Rivers State, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University, students under the entrepreneurship education are expected to prepare a feasibility report or study for a prospective business for which they intend to start up after graduation. The entrepreneurship education programmes acquaint the students with the knowledge and skills to write feasibility studies. The feasibility study helps the student to thoroughly understand all aspects of the intended business endeavour and the potential problems associated with the implementation of the entrepreneurial project. It is also aimed at providing information for marketing strategies to convince investors, banks or government agencies in investing in a particular business the student may opt for on graduation.

### **Conclusion**

While the Nigerian government's efforts to promote entrepreneurship education are commendable, there are some areas that require improvement to enhance the effectiveness of these initiatives. Firstly, the integration of entrepreneurship education in the school curriculum needs to be more comprehensive. The current approach often focuses on theoretical aspects, and there is a lack of practical training and experiential learning opportunities.

Emphasizing hands-on experiences and mentorship programs can better prepare students for real-world entrepreneurial challenges. Secondly, the accessibility of

funding and loans provided by government-initiated funds needs improvement. The application process is often bureaucratic and time-consuming, deterring many potential entrepreneurs. Simplifying the procedures and ensuring transparency in the allocation of funds would encourage more individuals to access financial support. Lastly, the entrepreneurship development centers require better coordination and networking. Collaboration with successful entrepreneurs, industry experts, and relevant stakeholders will strengthen the centers' ability to provide quality resources and mentorship programs. Regular training workshops and seminars should also be organized to keep entrepreneurs updated with the latest business trends.

### **Suggestions**

It is suggested that for the realization of the goals of entrepreneurship education programme in funding University education in Nigeria, the following can be considered. Entrepreneurship education curriculum should be enriched to develop and motivate technological innovations in students. This will nurture creativity in students and technological advancement for the nation. The university authority and lecturers should partner with guest industry lecturers to carry out excursions in order to expose students as well as lecturers to successful practicing entrepreneurs to share their experiences. Universities assisted by the appropriate authorities and agencies should be funded for teacher's education entrepreneurship. This is necessary to provide the appropriate equipment and lecturers needed for the success of the programme. Training and retraining of the lecturers used in facilitating



entrepreneurship education is required in order to ensure that the beneficiaries of the programme acquire the required knowledge and skills for practice upon graduation. Retraining of the lecturers at regular basis is necessary for them to be abreast the progress in entrepreneurial development.

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