



PATHWAYS TO EDUCATIONAL FINANCING IN THE NIGERIA CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

The research examine pathways to educational financing in Nigerian context and drew out various ways with which education can be finance outside government funding, which include, private contribution, corporate social responsibility, alumni association, students loan scheme and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The challenges of funding education in Nigeria and it was concluded by saying that education should not be left in the hands of government alone, rather all stakeholders in education should jointly contribute in funding education in Nigeria.

Keyword: Pathways, Educational Financing in the Nigeria Context



Introduction

The importance of education in the development of any society can never be overestimated. Economists have confirmed the importance of education to economic growth and development. Education also provides an avenue to increase productivity, reduce poverty and enhance social development. To achieve this, education must be sufficiently qualitative to have a meaningful impact on the populace and it is also important to state that political interest plays a vital role in virtually all sector of human endeavors such as education, health, and infrastructure (Nwoko, 2015). Hereby making the political actors key players in the provision of qualitative education. The central role played by the state in regulation, provision and financing education in any country reflects the belief that education is essential for societal and personal wellbeing. The economic organization of education depends largely on the political will of actors in the political system as well as market mechanism, (Ojeleye, 2020). Also, Rent-seeking and patronage politics in the political economy of education in Nigeria and how politicians instead of using education as a piece of development have turned around to use education as a means of settling political patronage especially with regards to

teachers employment, procurement, contracts for infrastructural development. All these issues above had continually affected Nigerian education sector in particular with the issue of funding which has been on the decline.

Considering the important role of education in national development and improvement of the standard of living and wellbeing of individuals there is a need for Nigeria government and other stakeholders in education to join hands in funding education sector in Nigeria. This paper therefore, accessed education in the light of political economy in other climes in relations to Nigeria education system and also to look at pathways to education financing in Nigeria. With this, one can determine whether the education sector in Nigeria has been properly financed in order to serve as a catalyst for national development as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (NPE). In recent years, the trend in the world is towards a restructuring of school management along the line of decentralization in which quality promotion is based on prevention of wastage (Rust, 2022).

Nigeria is currently witnessing proliferation of schools, at federal, state and local governments levels, private



individuals and organizations are exercising their constitutional rights in the establishment of schools. While the enrolment into various schools has rapidly increased, the volume of funds provided has not expanded to meet the enrolment demands. The result is an acute shortage of staff, funds, physical facilities and equipment. Other indicators for declining quality in education are high drop-out rate, examination malpractices, cultism, hooliganism, drug abuse, sexual harassment and general lawlessness. The fact that the various governments of the federation cannot adequately fund education implies that the institutions must look for other sources of revenue to finance their programmes. To varying degrees, education in Nigeria faces the problems of increasing students' enrolment, unsuitable patterns of education expenditure, declining quality of education, unequal access to education, over-reliance on government for funding, inflationary trends, politicization of education, mismanagement of the resources of the nation and escalation of cost of educational material, (Offorman, 2019) . Funding has been a major challenge to Nigerian educational system, scholars in different academic fora opined that for proper funding of education in Nigeria it should not be left in the hands of

government alone, rather all stakeholders in education should get involved, it is against this background that this paper seeks to determine pathways to educational financing in Nigerian context.

Pathways to Educational Financing in the Nigerian Context

Pathways to educational financing refer to the various ways in which government or individuals can obtain funding for their education. It also refers to the various avenues or routes that individuals can secure funding for their education. It encompasses the different options and strategies available for financing educational pursuits. These pathways can include private contribution, corporate social responsibility, alumni association, students' loan scheme and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

PRIVATE CONTRIBUTION

Private contribution: Private individuals and organizations can provide funding for education in Nigeria. This can be through donations, endowments, or scholarships. Private funding can be helpful in filling the gaps left by government funding, but it is not always reliable or consistent. Offorman (2019) opined that in Nigeria, private funding of education is



becoming increasingly popular due to a variety of reasons. Private funding of education refers to the use of private resources, such as personal savings, loans, or donations from individuals or organizations, to finance education.

One of the main reasons for the rise in private funding of education in Nigeria is the inadequate funding of public schools by the government. This has resulted in poor infrastructure, low teacher salaries, and inadequate educational materials in public schools, which has led to a decline in the quality of education. As a result, many parents and guardians have turned to private schools as a better alternative. Private schools in Nigeria are often better equipped and offer better quality education, but they are also more expensive than public schools. The cost of private schools varies widely depending on the location and quality of the school. Private schools are generally attended by children from wealthier families who can afford the fees.

In addition, Ogunode (2019) asserted that government's policy of encouraging private sector investment in education has also contributed to the increase in private funding of education in Nigeria. The government has implemented policies to attract private investors into the

education sector, policies such as, tax breaks and other incentives. Private funding of education in Nigeria has its advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it helps to improve the quality of education by providing better facilities, more qualified teachers, and access to modern technology. On the other hand, it widens the gap between the rich and the poor, as only those who can afford to pay the high fees can attend private schools.

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

SOCIAL

Corporate social responsibility, Companies can provide funding for education through their corporate social responsibility initiatives. This can involve funding scholarships, building schools, or providing educational resources to students and schools. for example, some banks, telecommunication giant, oil companies, and multinational corporations provide such funding for education.

According to Pooja (2017) corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns into their business operations and interactions with stakeholders. One way in which CSR can be used to fund education in Nigeria is



through partnerships between private companies and educational institutions. Many private companies in Nigeria have already engaged in various CSR initiatives, such as donations to schools and scholarships for students. However, these efforts are often ad hoc and do not have a sustained impact on the education sector. To make a lasting impact, companies can consider creating long-term partnerships with schools, universities, and educational organizations to support their operations and improve educational outcomes. One way that companies can support education in Nigeria through CSR is by providing funding for infrastructure, such as building classrooms, libraries, and laboratories. Companies can also provide financial assistance to students in need, such as scholarships and bursaries, as well as support for teacher training and professional development.

Another approach is for companies to support educational initiatives that align with their business objectives. For example, a telecommunications company can support programs that promote digital literacy and STEM education, while an oil and gas company can support programs that promote environmental education and sustainability. In addition to providing

financial support, companies can also engage their employees in volunteering and mentoring programs. This can help to build relationships between companies and educational institutions and provide students with valuable exposure to the workplace (Rust, 2022).

Osibanjo (2018) sees it as man's immediate surroundings. Therefore, since organizations cannot operate in a vacuum, its activities largely depend on the interaction with environment. Hence, harmonizing the interests of such organizations and those of the society can only be achieved through the mechanism of corporate social responsibility, philanthropic activities and other social or community efforts to improve the well-being of the citizens within the environment. Since governments are unable to provide all the needs of the citizens, CSR has taken the centre stage globally. In as much as this scenario plays out differently in developed and developing countries, the intervention of corporate organizations in the provision of basic educational needs in developing countries like Nigeria has been significant. The contribution of CSR to the education sector is fairly high because governments at different levels have consistently failed to implement the United



Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO's recommendation that member-countries should allocate a minimum of 26 percent of their annual expenditure to education (Pooja, 2017). While other countries are aggressively improving on their educational system and repositioning their economies through effective policies to be able to effectively compete in the increasingly knowledge-driven global economy, Nigeria is regrettably moving backward through inadequate funding of the sector. The situation is aggravated by incessant strike actions on the part of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) among other education professional groups. In recognition of the potential of CSR in gaining competitive advantage, contributing to development and in brand building, many corporate brands have channeled considerable efforts towards the development of education in their respective host communities and incorporated education into their respective CSR budgets.

Education is the process of providing information to an inexperienced person to help him/her develop physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, spiritually,

politically and economically. That is why at graduation ceremonies one hears the Vice-Chancellors pronounce these words, while awarding degrees to their institutions' graduates, "you have been found worthy in character and learning..." In education parlance, it means that the individual has acquired adequate and appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes and values, known as cognitive, psychomotor and affective behaviours to be able to function optimally as a citizen. These behaviours are the focus of training individuals in institutions of learning. The planned and systematic training given in an institution of learning is formal education. In an informal education, there is no plan and the training is haphazard and incidental (Offorman, 2019). Education is the process through which individuals are made functional members of their society (Ocho, 2015). It is a process through which people acquire knowledge and realize their potentialities and use them for self-actualization, to be useful to themselves and the entire society. It is a means of preserving, transmitting and improving the culture of the society. In every society, education connotes acquisition of something good. The National Policy on Education (2014), cited in Santos (2016) defines education as the process that helps to develop the whole



man, physically, mentally, morally, politically, socially and technologically to enable individuals discover their potentials towards achieving self-goal and contributing to national development. Education, therefore, empowers an individual to acquire adequate and appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes and values, known as cognitive, psychomotor and affective behaviours to be able to function optimally as citizens.

The Nexus between Corporate Social Responsibility and Education According to Praveena (2015), in today's society, public education faces many challenges of standardized testing, strained budgets, teacher retention and qualitative education. These demands have given way to new opportunities for businesses to render various educational supports in a win-win situation to the benefit of everyone. They opined that companies get involved in education for a number of strategic reasons, including building a positive reputation and goodwill among consumers, employees and other stake holders due to the following reasons:

- Developing brand recognition, whether to increase consumer loyalty, boost sales, or establish the company as an industry leader;
- Building a more educated workforce;

raising consumer awareness about a particular issue; and

- Fulfilling a company mission or mandate so that students, schools and the general public can benefit from the experience and expertise that corporations bring to the table, particularly if the groups work together to ensure the right needs are being met on both ends.

Organisations looking to support public school education, for instance, must consider the many demands that schools and educators face daily- time constraints, tight budgets, technology access, standardized testing and explicit curriculum standards, as well as, the unique places where outside help is needed. Organisations have now resorted to a committed policy for the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities associated with the school education. The awareness of the importance of education and literacy is commonly seen among governments and international organisations, who are primary holders of this responsibility. Almost all national governments have the Ministry of Education which is responsible for integrating national resources to promote education for the good of the public.

It is pertinent to note here that CSR practices for the education sector are



increasingly gaining popularity among specific industries include the promotion of computer illiteracy, establishment of gender equity by targeting girls from economically disadvantaged families for quality education, provision of toilets and maintenance of a clean and hygienic school environment, customisation of programmes designed to provide educational support to children with disabilities, provision of nourishment to students, psychological support to underprivileged students by providing motivational talks on leadership development, personality development, establishment of training institute for teachers, libraries for rural school education of slum children and night schools for uneducated adults for empowerment of illiterate public in surrounding villages or rural areas (Pooja, 2017). Besides government departments, multiple NGOs (non-governmental organisations) are dedicated to the improvement of education, particularly across countries' borders. One of such examples, perhaps one of the most globally influential ones, is the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), which aims to empower the future generation by improving the presence and quality of education. The UNESCO takes a clear position to gap the imbalance between

developed countries and developing countries, as well as, between genders.

Pooja (2017) underscored some strategies that corporate organisations can attend their CSR in the educational sector. According to him, mere involvement from a financial perspective to strengthen the education system in underprivileged areas is not enough. For instance, a corporate fund in setting up of a school in a village is not translating itself automatically into a CSR product; unless teachers are recruited, adequate infrastructure is provided and literacy improves. Setting up a special purpose vehicle, a corporate foundation, instead to explore alternative social sector agenda can offer better opportunities for product and process innovations. Working in education sector requires specific skills and knowledge. Companies can share their most valuable resources by involving their top management to provide the operational know-how in such projects. Community volunteering, thus, can be one of the most sincere forms of CSR whereby companies can encourage their employee through internal communications to actively participate in their initiatives and contribute their skills. This will help inculcate corporate philanthropy. At the same time, students, schools and the general public



will benefit from the experience and expertise that corporations bring to the table.

Alumni Association

Alumni form a vital link between the educational institutions and the global community in which it operates. Institutions look to their local and international alumni for advice, advocacy and support, and remain responsive to the needs of their alumni to keep the line of communication open. In some countries, many alumni associations provide subsidized legal services for their members, as well as free library services, and offer information about their occupations and career. Furthermore, alumni associations: (1) offer services and activities which meet the need of alumni members; (2) provide a forum for alumni to become involve in policy making and education issues within tile institution; (3) raise funds to support educational programmes, thus, enhancing their institution's status and maintaining the continuing value of the qualification; and (4) contribute towards recurrent costs, particularly for educated inputs, library acquisitions, equipment and building

maintenance. It is, therefore, suggested that every student in the school should be encouraged to join the alumni association after graduation. Alumni should be taught, from day one, that their financial and moral contributions are important. They should be taught to be committed and enthusiastic long before they are ready to join the association (Rust, 2022).

The main objectives of an alumni association is to create a desire among ex-students to identify themselves with their university; to generate and sustain interest and participation in the affairs of their alma mater; to contribute to the developments of the university; and to promote the university's name and reputation (Rust, 2022). Governments are making substantial cuts in public spending, and its contribution to university education declined by 9% from 2000 to 2012 while the burden on students increased by 7% during the same period (PWC, 2015). This is one of the factors that has caused public education institutions to re-evaluate their relationships with stakeholders to remain globally competitive (Pérez, 2016). Other factors that drive universities to be more competitive are increasing competition due to globalization and an awareness of international rankings.



University education in Nigeria is currently experiencing a serious financial crisis. This is apparent because budgetary allocation for the Nigerian educational sector has declined. The federal government has not met the 26% recommended by UNESCO. The situation has been aggravated largely due to the economic recession that the nation is facing and more so with the increasing competition of education with other sectors for public monies (Ekpoh & Okpa, 2017). Nigerian universities are in serious financial crises because there is a continuous decline in government funding of universities amidst the increased cost of administering education. Still, the impact seems to either differ from one institution to another depending on the proprietor of the institution, either federal or state.

According to Ogunode, (2019), the challenges confronting Nigerian universities apart from funding includes lack of a sound strategic plan, ineffective teaching learning activities, poor leadership, poor research activities, poor international outlook, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor reputation, academic corruption and fraud, challenges of modern laboratories, poor international ranking. The report on 'Investing in

Education for a Changing World' by the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity states that for creating the learning generation, there is the need of about \$3 trillion annual education spending in low- and middle-income countries by 2030 compared to the current level of \$1.2 trillion (United Nations, 2016) due to the rapid expansion of enrolment in education.

Alumni are seen as the most important assets of a university. They are important assets as the university is represented in the real world by the Alumni (Jones, 2018). Historically, Alumni networks were created from regional groups brought together for fundraising purposes. Over time, these networks developed both in their importance because the university gained benefits from these networks for the development of the university and thus created an enormous outreach potential for current students in their career paths.

According to Cunnigham (2022), Alumni donations are consistently the highest- ranking charitable support source for higher education. In the United Kingdom and the United States of America, a large percentage of budgets are derived not from state funding or tuitions but



fundraising, especially from Alumni. Because of a steady reduction in higher education funding from state and local governments, public and private higher institutions should depend evermore seriously on financial donations from their Alumni as a source of budget enhancement (Terry & Macy, 2017).

Tertiary institutions need to identify the factors influencing Alumni's intentions to invest in the university that is their Alma mater, especially in terms of financial support Aikins, (2019), Alumni giving is hinged on students' social experience, academic experience, Alumni relations practices, and labour market orientation. According to Cunningham (2022), Alumni donation can be motivated by factors such as characteristics of the giver, readiness to give, ability to give, willingness to give, and view about how well an institution deserves a donation. Good academic performance, a conducive environment, academic performance, diversity of student support services, investments, and extra-curriculum activities positively affects a tertiary institution's reputation. Personal learning and student experience an alumnus has while studying in a university can lay the foundations for the future relationship with the university and positively influence

his/her behavior towards the institution (Francioni, 2021).

STUDENTS LOAN SCHEME

Owan, Bassey & Ekpe (2020) believed that Students can take out loans to finance their education. However, student loans in Nigeria have been limited and difficult to obtain, making it challenging for many students to access higher education. In Nigeria, students' loans can be a means of funding education for students who do not have the financial resources to pay for their education. The Nigerian government, through the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), has set up a Students Loan Scheme (SLS) to provide loans to Nigerian students who are pursuing undergraduate, postgraduate, and vocational/technical education. Halidu (2015) to access the SLS, students must meet certain eligibility criteria, including being a Nigerian citizen, being enrolled in a public tertiary institution, having a guarantor, and demonstrating academic excellence. The loan amount is determined based on the cost of tuition, accommodation, and other related expenses.

In any country, student aid policy is designed to achieve a number of different objectives, though these are not always



explicit. In the case of student loan programs, the objectives are often clearly spelled out, when the scheme is first established, but subsequent changes may give greater or less emphasis to particular aims. A further problem is that the language of student aid programs is not always clear, and different words are used to describe similar programs in different countries, while the word "loan" or "scholarship" is certainly not always used in the same way (Hawk 2022). The main purpose of student loans, or educational credit, is to provide access for students to capital funds, to enable them to finance all, or part of, the costs of their education, by borrowing, while they are studying, and to repay this, at a later date. The terms "student loans" or "educational credit" refer to a system of financial aid for students which entails a repayment obligation, on the part of the student, but this obligation may take different forms. In most cases the debt must be repaid, either with or without interest, in a given period of time, and the loan therefore resembles a mortgage. In some cases the length of time of repayment may be varied, and the installments may not be of equal size. Alternatively a student may undertake to repay the debt by means of a fixed proportion of his or her future salary, an "income-contingent loan" (Halidu, 2022).

In some countries such aid is called a "repayable scholarship", rather than a loan, and in some countries, the repayment obligation involves a commitment to work in a particular occupation (teaching) or in a particular region, rather than repayment in monetary terms. This type of financial assistance may be called a bonded scholarship, or a pre- salary (contrats de preembauche in France), but in the context of developing countries they have been called "service-loans" (Ciller 2015). Ekpo & Okpa (2017) Student loans, or educational credit, like other forms of financial aid for students which may be called grants, scholarships, bursaries, awards, fellowships, or may consist of subsidised work opportunities, as in the College-Work-Study Program in the USA, are primarily intended to provide students with financial assistance towards the costs of tuition or maintenance. However, the fundamental difference between loans and grants is that students must repay the loan, and so contribute directly to the cost of their education, out of their subsequent earnings. Thus, a loan scheme involves less financial burden for the government, and ultimately the taxpayer, than a system of grants or scholarships.



In some cases a student loan program may simply be intended to overcome financial barriers to access, and imperfections in the capital market which make it difficult for students or their parents to obtain loans from commercial banks, because of the riskiness of the investment, the long period of the loan, or shortages of capital. An example of this kind of program is the recent introduction of PLUS loans in the USA. The acronym stands for Parents' Loans for Undergraduate Study, though PLUS loans are also available for postgraduate students. Under this program commercial banks provide loans to students who do not qualify for subsidized loans under Federal or State government loan programs. In most countries, however, student loan programs are not simply intended to overcome capital market imperfections, but to provide loans on favourable terms, usually involving a subsidy. The purpose of the subsidy may be to encourage higher education enrolment on manpower grounds, or to increase equality of opportunity, on equity grounds (Anila, 2016).

THE ROLE NGOs IN FINANCING EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The success of higher education in any nation depends on the efficient nature

of basic education system. Education at the primary level is considered as a social service that must be provided to citizens at affordable rate (Angela, 2020). Children as future leaders are the focus of development programmes of all progressive and forward looking governments. As pointed out by Palmer (2017), the benefits of education in enhancing productivity is more glaring when there exist a dynamic and supportive environment around education. Although the development of primary education is the responsibility of government, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) play vital supportive role in complimenting government efforts. This is inevitable in developing countries where resources available to government are inadequate to take care of delivery of social services. Badu & Parker (2021) in a study conducted in Ghana, observed that, the World Bank's assessment of its role in improving educational access and quality in Nigeria through its support (working through NGOs) in 2005 and 2015 reforms was generally positive. It concluded that its contributions have led to "reversing the deterioration of the educational system in some parts of the country.

In Nigeria the situation pictures various scenarios. For example Jumare



(2019) observed that NGOs in Nigeria concentrated most of their activities on education through functional education for adults, both men and women. They have been particularly working on secondary school drop outs. Unfortunately roles of NGOs are not defined in most African countries. In the same vain NGOs in Nigeria have no assigned role that is backed up by law, thus NGOs working in the education sector are guided by the general rules guiding operations of an NGO.

These roles as elaborated by Togbolo (2022) includes the following:

1. **Development and Operation of Infrastructure:** Infrastructure provision is a major gap in educational development in Nigeria. It is very clear that government alone cannot shoulder this responsibility. Thus development partners (NGOs) come in to help. Infrastructures provided range from building class room blocks, to provision of electronic materials and among others.
2. **Supporting Innovation, Demonstration and Pilot Projects:** NGOs are saddled with the responsibility of bringing up ideas

that will help develop the education sector as well as setting up these ideas as models. For example model schools are built where quality is projected for all to see.

3. **Facilitating Communication:** NGOs are seen as a bridging gap between government and the primary school system. This is so in that NGOs communicate government policies better to schools and also communicate challenges of schools back to the government.
4. **Technical Assistance and Training:** NGOs provide assistance to fill the gap in technical matters. For example they employ teachers and send them to schools where they don't have enough. Also they help in training and retraining of teachers.
5. **Research Monitoring and Evaluation:** NGOs works are centered mainly on ensuring that a programmes action plan or government policies are followed up to achieve its desired objectives. This also ensures the judicious use of funds.
6. **Advocacy for and with**



the Poor: this forms the bulk of the work for most NGOs. This has to do with advocacy on equity and access to education for all especially at the basic education level.

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CHALLENGES OF FUNDING EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The challenges of Nigeria education sector in general and its funding in particular could be traced to policy and strategy instability and inconsistency, inefficient management, lack of coordination among government, inadequate statistical data, political instability, lack of political commitment, corruption, politicization of education,

wastages and leakages there by overriding macroeconomic conditions that have determined the fate of the sector and where the economy is not growing at a reasonable high and sustainable rate, it will not have the resources to fund a largely – social service sector such as education in Nigeria with a high population growth rate, lackluster growth rate of the GDP would imply severe resource constraints, which could lead to the poor resourcing of social sector such as education (Debie,2019).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while the government is the primary source of funding for education in Nigeria, the amount allocated is often inadequate to meet the needs of the sector. The government needs to prioritize education and increase funding to ensure that every Nigerian has access to quality education. The financial constraints in the country have negatively impacted education. Government alone may not be able to fund education effectively and efficiently due to the economic situation in Nigeria. To sustain education in the country, all stakeholders must be involved, the parents and guardians, the society in general, the private sector and non-governmental agencies.



Despite the support of some corporate organisations to the educational sector in Nigeria as x-rayed in this paper, a lot needs to be done to salvage the education system at all levels that is, elementary, secondary and higher education levels. This is attainable when the corporate organisations perform their responsibilities towards society. In order to reap concrete benefits they must help the various levels of education to produce such skilled and trained manpower by providing funds for research and development, organising various workshops, training and development programmes, cross over exchange programmes, infrastructural support and last, but not the least, providing facilities for qualitative education. Therefore, we conclude that corporate social responsibility has significantly contributed to the socio-economic development of Nigerian society. There is also the need for synergy between government, educational institutions and corporate organisations, alumni association to better accelerate educational reforms in order to bring about the desired social development in Nigeria.

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