



FUNDING ARCHITECTURE FOR NIGERIA HIGHER EDUCATION (TECHNICAL PERSPECTIVE)

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Abstract

The paper discussed the funding architecture for Nigeria higher education (technical perspective). It emphasizes that the funding architecture for higher education in Nigeria faces various challenges that hinder its effectiveness and sustainability. Corruption within public universities, frequent strike actions by staff unions, and inadequate funding for research and development are major obstacles. To address these issues, several potential technical strategies can be implemented. Leveraging technology through online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and distance education programs can increase access to education and generate revenue through course fees and collaborative research partnerships. Collaboration and partnerships involving government entities, private enterprises, philanthropic organizations, alumni, and international funding bodies can bring additional resources and support. Developing and expanding school farms within higher education institutions can generate revenue and promote community engagement. Additionally, advocating for increased funding from the government, encouraging private investments, and establishing transparent mechanisms for managing philanthropic donations and endowments are crucial. Allocating a portion of the national budget specifically for research grants and seeking collaborations with international research institutions can enhance research capabilities. Efficient resource management practices and transparent financial reporting mechanisms are also vital for maximizing available funding. By implementing these strategies, Nigeria's higher education system can overcome funding challenges, ensure the availability of quality education, and foster its growth and development.

Introduction

Nigeria's higher education system plays a crucial role in the country's socioeconomic development (Ogunode & Musa, 2020). It equips students with the necessary skills and knowledge to contribute to various sectors of the economy. However, one of the persistent challenges faced by the Nigerian higher education sector is funding. Adequate funding is essential for maintaining infrastructure, improving the quality of education, and ensuring access for all (Nwajiuba et al. 2020). 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 (Ogunode, Onyekachi & Ayoko, 2023). 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. Omolola & Jacob (2021) 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 have 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 (Ogunode, Akinjobi & Musa (2022). 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.

Therefore, the funding architecture for Nigeria's higher education system faces significant challenges that hinder the sector's growth and quality. Other challenges are insufficient financial resources allocated by the government, overreliance on public funding, and limited diversification of funding sources have created a funding gap (Eli-Chukwu et al. 2023). This gap negatively impacts infrastructure development, research activities, faculty development, and overall educational quality. In this article, we will explore the funding architecture for Nigeria's higher education system from a technical perspective, focusing on key considerations and potential solutions.

Conceptual Clarification

(A) Funding Architecture

Funding architecture serves as the underlying framework that determines how financial resources are allocated, managed, and utilized within the higher education sector (Hagood, 2019). It encompasses various components, including funding sources, allocation mechanisms, funding models, resource management, long-term sustainability, collaboration, and innovation. This essay aims to provide a conceptual clarification of funding architecture in the context of higher education, exploring its key elements and their significance. Funding sources refer to the origins of financial resources for higher education institutions. These sources can vary and may include government funding, tuition fees, philanthropic donations, endowments, research grants, corporate partnerships, and other revenue streams. Diversifying funding sources is vital to reduce dependence on a single entity and enhance financial stability (Hung & Hager, 2019). A well-designed funding architecture supports access,

quality, and innovation, ultimately benefiting students, faculty, and society as a whole.

(b) Nigeria Higher Education

Higher education according to National Policy on Education (FGN, 2013), is the Post -Secondary Section of the National education system, which is given of Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of

Technology including courses as are given by the Colleges of Education, Advanced Teachers Training colleges, Correspondence Colleges and such Institutions as may be allied to them (Ifeanyi, Jacob & Solomon, 2021). The objectives of the universities in Nigerian Higher education, including professional education has the following aims: the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and societies; the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate environment; the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community; the acquisition of an overview of the local and external environments (FGN, 2014). Looking at the importance of education and the role it plays in a country, this high demand of education in Nigeria should be met with the attention it deserves, to put Nigeria universities at par with those around the globe.

Ahaotu & Ogunode (2021) observed that higher education is under the supervision of commissions set up by law and which operate as parastatals of the Federal Ministry of Education. For instance, universities are supervised by the National Universities Commission [NUC], while colleges of education are supervised by the National Commission for Colleges of Education [NCCE]. The National Board for Technical Education [NBTE] oversees polytechnic education. These commissions are responsible for policy decisions affecting institutions under their supervision, maintenance of standards through a system of periodic accreditation of courses, distribution and monitoring of government funding, appointment of members of governing councils, and the day-to-day running of the institutions. The Nigerian higher education is characterized with many challenges (Ogunode & Musa 2020). University education in Nigeria is confronted with several challenges (Ogunode, 2020; Okoli, Ogbondah, and Ewor, 2016). Based on these submission, this paper examines the challenges facing higher education in Nigeria.



Mitigation in Funding Architecture in Nigeria Higher Education

1. 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. Fund 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 SocioEconomic 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.

2. 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 stability in architectural funding. As academic activities are suspended for a long period, expenditures increases and IGR is reduced. Inadequate funding responsible for various strike action in the higher institutions in Nigeria.

3. Poor Research and Development

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 funding attitude of governments towards research and research programmes. Lack of funds is affecting research in the universities and that there is no indication that this problems 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.

Potential Technical strategies in enhancing funding of Architecture in Nigeria Higher Education

1. Leveraging on Technology

Leveraging technology can greatly enhance the funding architecture of Nigerian higher education. Online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and distance education programs can increase access to education and attract a broader student base. These technology-driven initiatives can generate revenue through course fees, certification programs, and collaborative research partnerships with other institutions worldwide. Embracing technological advancements can provide new avenues for funding and expand educational opportunities (Rosenbusch, 2020).

2. Collaboration and Partnerships

Collaboration and partnerships play a crucial role in funding architecture. This involves engaging various stakeholders, such as government entities, private enterprises, philanthropic organizations, alumni, and international funding bodies. Collaborative efforts can bring additional resources, expertise, and opportunities for funding and support, contributing to the overall sustainability and growth of higher education.

3. Internal Generated Revenue

School farms can serve as a valuable asset for higher education institutions, offering numerous benefits beyond its revenue-generating potential. Establish and manage school farms as viable revenue-generating entities within higher education institutions. Ensure proper planning, resource allocation, and skilled personnel to optimize productivity and minimize operational costs. The institution can cultivate a diverse range of crops, livestock, and value-added agricultural products on the school farm. Market these products to the local community, restaurants, supermarkets, or within the institution itself through farmers' markets or designated outlets. Additionally, a school farm can enhance the institution's community engagement by providing outreach programs and serving as a platform for collaboration with local farmers and agricultural organizations.

4. Current Funding Landscape:

The current funding landscape for higher education in Nigeria heavily relies on allocations from the federal and state governments. Unfortunately, these budgets often fall short of meeting the requirements of universities and colleges. Consequently, the quality of education, infrastructure development, research activities, and faculty development suffer as a result.

5. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

Public-private partnerships have the potential to make significant contributions to the funding architecture of Nigerian higher education. Engaging private enterprises in the education sector can generate funding through corporate sponsorships, infrastructure development projects, research funding, and industry collaborations. Such partnerships can be mutually beneficial, with universities receiving financial support while private entities gain access to skilled graduates and research expertise.

6. Research and Development Funding

Promoting research and development (R&D) funding is critical for the advancement of higher education in Nigeria. Allocating a portion of the national budget specifically for research grants can enhance universities' research capabilities, attract talented researchers, and foster innovation. Additionally, universities should actively seek collaborations with international research institutions and explore competitive research grants from global funding bodies to secure

additional resources for cutting-edge research and development initiatives.

7. Efficient Resource Management

Optimizing resource management within higher education institutions is vital for maximizing available funding. Implementing effective budgeting processes, reducing operational inefficiencies, and prioritizing expenditure on academic programs, research facilities, and faculty development are essential. Transparent financial reporting and accountability mechanisms are necessary to ensure that funds are utilized judiciously and efficiently, thereby ensuring the optimal utilization of available resources.

Conclusion

Developing a sustainable funding architecture is pivotal for the growth and advancement of Nigeria's higher education system. Diversifying funding sources, fostering public-private partnerships, encouraging philanthropic donations, prioritizing research and development, optimizing resource management practices, and leveraging technology are key strategies that can address the funding challenges. By adopting a technical perspective and implementing innovative solutions, Nigeria's higher education system can overcome financial constraints, ensuring the availability of quality education and paving the way for a brighter.

Recommendations

The federal and state government should increase the funding of higher education in Nigeria. More funds should be allocated to research programme in all the higher institutions. Develop and Expand school farms within higher education institutions as revenue-generating entities.

Encourage private enterprises to invest in higher education through corporate sponsorships, infrastructure development, and research funding. Actively engage with alumni, successful entrepreneurs, and philanthropists to encourage donations and establish endowment funds. This can be best achieved by developing transparent mechanisms for managing and utilizing these funds, ensuring they are directed towards scholarships, research grants, faculty development, and infrastructure projects.

Advocate for the allocation of a portion of the national budget specifically for research



grants, collaborating with international research institutions to access global research grants.

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