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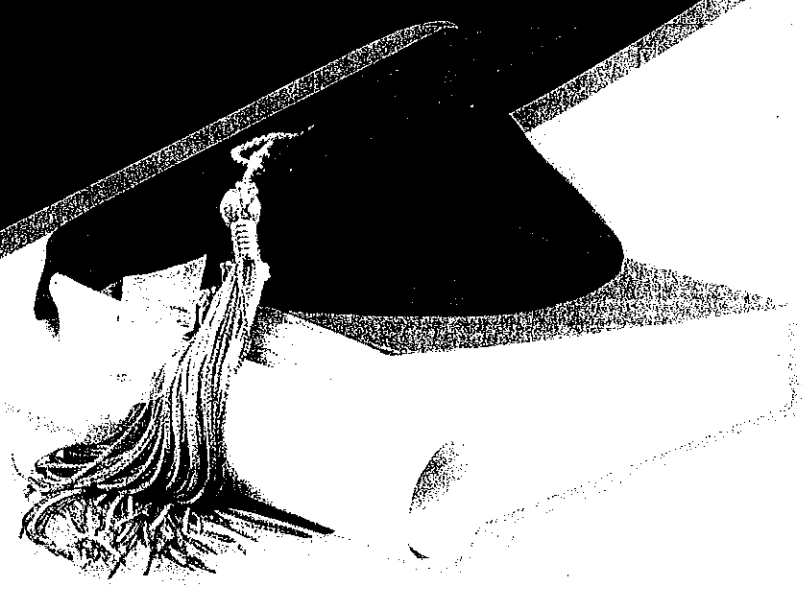

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EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INNOVATIVE FUNDING STRATEGIES IN RESOLVING FUNDING PROBLEMS IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

By

DR. V. O. IGBINEWEKA
Associate Professor of Educational Planning
Department of Educational Management, University of Benin,
Benin City, Nigeria
Email: voeweka@yahoo.com, GSM: 07033246631

And

MRS. B. O. ANUKAENYI
Faculty of Education, Godfrey Okoye University,
Thinker's Corner, Enugu, Enugu State.
Email: blessinganukaenyi@gmail.com, GSM: 0803374923

Abstract

The galloping rate of inflation that characterizes the Nigerian economy has also decimated the actual value of fiscal allocations to the universities. It is obvious therefore that the fiscal allocations to the universities may not improve or get better in the near future. In the circumstance, the need to identify and adopt innovative strategies to improve on funding the schools motivated the study that was guided by two (2) research questions and one (1) hypothesis. The study being a descriptive research adopted the Ex-Post-Facto research design with all the six (6) Federal universities in South-South Nigeria constituting the population of the study. The purposive sampling technique was used to select two (2) universities, university of Benin and Federal university, Otueke being the oldest and newest universities respectively as sample for the study. A total of 325 respondents comprising all the university management, staff and students served as respondents. A questionnaire titled: Innovative Strategies for Funding University Education Questionnaire (ISEFEQUE) was used to collect data for the study. Section A elicited demographic information about the universities and respondents; section B contained a list of 10 innovative strategies for university funding while section C requested the respondents to indicate the extent to which they support the adoption of the strategies for implementation. The respondents rated their responses on a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire, validated and pilot-tested ($n = 20$; $r = 0.78$) were administered on the respondents with the help of four (4) research assistants and lasted for six (6) weeks. The mean, standard deviation and ANOVA were used to analyse the data collected for the study. The result of the analysis showed that the innovative funding strategies were rated high by the respondents. Both the university management and student union government indicated their willingness to support the adoption of the innovative funding strategies for implementation.

Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that innovative funding strategies be adopted to reverse the problem of inadequate funding in schools.

Keywords: Innovative, Funding, Strategies, Universities

Introduction

No economy can develop beyond the quality of what its educational system can produce. It is on the basis of this premise that education in Nigeria has been adopted as *instrument par excellence* for effecting national development (FRN, 2004). Education at the university level is therefore deliberately supplied to develop the needed high level manpower, the recipe that fast tracks the processes of national development. To this end, government has allocated enormous fiscal resources to develop the universities (critical functions of teaching, research and consultancy, particularly in the recent past (Federal Ministry of Finance, 2017). Table 1 shows the budgetary allocations to the universities in the last ten (10) years.

Table 1: Budgetary Allocation to Federal Universities, 2006-2016

Year	Recurrent (₦)	Capital (₦)	Total (₦)
2006	15,562,439,234.98	6,946,005,000.00	22,508,444,234.98
2007	33,602,812,586.91	6,369,578,263.00	39,972,390,489.91
2008	33,194,971,502.91	9,622,169,359.00	42,817,140,861.91
2009	35,154,483,391.00	10,007,438,641.72	45,161,922,032.72
2010	39,023,050,639.33	8,281,674,820.10	47,304,725,459.43
2011	46,249,849,778.10	16,379,833,969.00	62,629,683,747.10
2012	50,624,894,688.70	16,324,066,000.00	66,948,960,688.70
2013	94,519,652,955.62	12,800,575,723.10	107,320,228,678.72
2014	80,553,350,992.09	14,043,721,234.00	94,597,072,226.09
2015	98,802,011,178.22	20,402,382,798.00	119,204,393,976.22
2016	106,134,411,080.81	16,111,030,980.00	122,245,442,060.81
Total	**633,421,928,028.67**	**137,288,476,787.92**	**770,710,404,817.59**

Source: Compiled from Federal Government Appropriations to Federal Universities, Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Abuja, 2017.

Within the period under review, government has released over ₦770.7 billion to all the available 36 federal universities in the country. This means that on the average, the universities are allocated over ₦77 billion annually with each

university getting a paltry sum of ₦2 billion to finance both recurrent and capital expenditures. This no doubt is seemingly inadequate for the universities that have myriads of expenditures to finance.

Public investments in university education takes place in three (3) levels. The first level is concerned with appropriation from regular government subventions in addition to special interventions from parastatals and agencies of government. The second level has to do with Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) in the universities while the third depends on donations, endowments and scholarships from private individuals and organizations. The total fiscal appropriation receipts from federal government in the recent past (2006-2016) to fund public education at all level is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Federal Appropriations to Public Education, 2006-2016

Fiscal Year	Total Budget ₦ (Trillion)	Total Allocations ₦ (Billion)	% Allocations
2006	2,856.76	314.24	11.0
2007	3,068.48	273.09	8.9
2008	3,284.73	427.01	13.0
2009	3,445.41	226.68	7.0
2010	4,206.50	271.16	6.45
2011	4,802.27	350.56	7.3
2012	5,042.44	504.24	10.0
2013	5,385.98	468.58	8.7
2014	5,708.23	559.03	10.0
2015	6,211.44	559.03	9.0
2016	6,844.31	506.48	7.4
Total Mean	**5,085.65**	**447.19**	**9.88**

Source: Compiled from Federal Government Appropriations to Federal Universities Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Abuja, 2017

As shown in Table 2, the mean total budgetary allocation to fund public education at all levels is a paltry sum of 447.19 billion which represents 9.88 percent of the total national budget within the period under consideration. Comparing the fiscal releases to the universities with the total budgetary allocations to the entire

education sub-sector in Table 2 shows that more than half of the total education budget is allocated to the universities alone. This creates a fear that the situation of underfunding in the universities may not improve in the nearest future. Government in the circumstance seemingly lacks the capacity to increase fiscal releases to the education sub-sector and the universities in particular.

The decline in the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) since the 1980s to date according to Bok (2003), Ibara (2011) and Muhammad (2016) explained why budgetary releases are inadequate to finance education expenditures. The GDP estimated to be 8.16 percent is reported by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to be the reason why money supply, particularly by way of deficit finance had increased tremendously in the last 10 years. By 1985 for example, the naira exchanged for US$1, to ₦10and later in 1995, the naira had depreciated to ₦85: US$1 and; presently, the value of the naira has depreciated so badly to ₦385: US$1. More worrisome is the rate of inflation that has perennially remained high, thus depleting the real value of actual fiscal releases to the universities to finance their expenditures.

The evidences of underfunding according to Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU, 2004) are legion. Classrooms are overcrowded; the quality of teaching manpower is not only poor but inadequate; workers embark on incessant strike to protest poor remuneration that are also paid in arrears; scarcity of all production inputs except students to mention many but a few. The situation in universities in South-South Nigeria from observation appears to be worse. In these universities, available lecture halls and laboratories are always overcrowded because the facilities are either inadequate or at various stages of dilapidation. For staff remuneration, only 80 percent of salaries is paid because available personnel emolument cannot pay full entitlements. School fees paid by students and other internally generated revenues are barely up to 10 percent of total fund required to finance expenditures in the universities. This situation cannot be allowed to continue if the accreditation of National Universities Commission (NUC) and employers of labour is to be enjoyed. The need to increase IGR has become germane as the question that begs for answer therefore is: what are the identifiable innovative funding strategies to reverse the perennial problem of funding in the universities? Will staff and students accept the strategies?

Research Questions

1. What are the innovative university funding strategies in universities in South South Nigeria?
2. To what extent are the identified university innovative funding strategies effective?
3. To what extent do university management, staff and students support innovative funding strategies in South South Nigeria universities?

Research Hypothesis

Research question 3 was answered and thereafter hypothesized.

Hypothesis 1

University Management, workers and students will significantly differ in supporting innovative funding strategies in South South Nigerian universities.

Literature

There is very little financial support from the public to the universities through gifts and endowment funds. Therefore, Igbineweka (2016) observed that minimal additional income is derived from income generating activities such as farm produce sales and consultancy services. There has actually been a decrease in income to the universities from these additional sources. Universities have recently started paying more attention to better income generating activities to supplement subventions from the government. The World Bank project report on the reform of Federal universities concluded that it might not be cost effective to develop university income generation activities and warned that such income generating activities might undermine the university goals mission of teaching and research (The World Bank, 2015). Student fees account for only about 5% of the university total income. Universities have therefore started exploring alternative sources of funding such as fee-paying students and improved relation with industries to supplement their income. There is an increasing demand and willingness to pay for academic programmes offered on a part-time basis. Many Nigerian universities are starting to rely on this mode of income generation as an alternative source of funding (Aina and Adebiyi, 1999). Satellite campuses in some instances according to Ibara (2011) have been set up to cut down on cost. Short-term courses offered on a part-time basis have become popular among part-time students who are already employed and can afford to pay fees or have their employers paying their fees.

Public education funding experiences from other countries across the world magnify the problem of inadequate funding in Nigerian schools. A few case studies are examined in Japan, Canada, South Africa and Ghana. In Japan, schools receive enrolment support fund that they apply to the cost of their students' tuition which equals about $100 a month, per student. However, if these funds are not sufficient, the student must make up the difference. If students come from a low-income household, the government provides further subsidies of up to $200 a month. Private schools also receive a great deal of public funding, with Japanese government paying 50% of private teachers' salaries. Other forms of funding are capital grants, which go to private schools for specific cost, including new buildings and equipment. While private schools are considered to be more competitive and prestigious than public schools, public schools still account for 99% primary schools and 94% of lower secondary schools. There are many more upper secondary schools, however; 23% of upper secondary schools are classified as private. The Japanese government spends less on its schools than do many other OECD countries. Schools are functional but unadorned, and most schools have a very small administrative staff, with only a principal, and assistant principal, a janitor and a nurse. The focus of the funding is on teachers and students. In 2008, Japan spent 4.9% of their GDP on education – lower than the OECD average of $8,831.

The situation for higher education in Japan is however different from that of the primary and secondary education. According to a 2000 survey by the OECD, Japan's funding to higher education GDP, compared with 0.9 percent in the United States, 0.7 percent in the United Kingdom and 1.0 percent in both Germany and France. Free education from the ages of six to eighteen is available to all Canadians, and more than 90% of Canadians attend state-funded schools. Public schools derive more than 90% of their revenue from the government at the local and provincial level. Over the last 20 years, most provinces have taken over the funding of their schools, so that the local contribution is zero or close to it. The provincial government provides funding directly to schools. The amount of funding a school board receives is recalculated each year based on the number of regular students, special needs students and location. In addition to public schools, Canadian students can also choose to attend either charter or private schools, though this represents fewer than 10% of students. Majority of these schools receive some funding from the government, depending on how they are classified. Charter schools are expected to meet the same provincial standards as public schools, while private or independent schools must only meet board general standards. In 2008,

Canada spent 6% of its GDP on education, which was slightly more than the OECD average of 5.9%. This meant on average, that Canada spent $8,388 per student for secondary education; OECD countries averaged $8,972.

Canada is a federation of ten province and three territories. Under the Canadian constitution (1867), the provincial and territorial governments govern postsecondary education. The federal government provides only indirect support to postsecondary education through financial transfers to the province and through its funding of university research and student assistance. Public postsecondary education derives majority of its funding from provincial/territorial and federal government sources. In 2006-07, Canada's public expenditure on public higher education for postsecondary education was C$32 million [US$26.6 million] (CICIC 2010). Provincial and territorial governments provide most of the direct funding for public education in Canada (45 percent). The balance of public postsecondary education income is obtained from tuition fees (21 percent), sale of goods and services (14.6 percent), federal government (9.3 percent), investment income (2.7 percent), and other income including philanthropic contributions (7.4 percent).

Cost sharing of higher education in Ghana was introduced in 1997 through the adoption of the 'Akosombo Accord' that divide the responsibility of the university funding between the government (responsible for 70 percent of the total funding) and three sources (30 percent) including university internal revenue-generation, private donations and student tuition fees. Student academic and residential facility user fees were introduced 1998. Students who are living in the university housing pay both, while students off campus pay the non-residential academic facility user fees and a small non-residential academic facility user fee. Academic fees were imposed ranging (depending on Course area) at present (2009) from GHC 93 (US$391) to GHC 300 (US$126) per year for continuing undergraduate residents (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology website). Residential students were charged a residential facility user fee of GHC218 (US$92) plus hall dues of GHC40 (US$17), while non-residential students pay a small non-residential academic facility user fee GHC24 (US$10). Universities may not admit fee-paying students who do not meet the competitive departmental requirements and cut off points, but satisfy the minimum entry requirements (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology website).

It is not possible to compare the levels and patterns of education expenditures in Nigeria with those in other countries. In UNESCO and World Bank publications for example, educational expenditure data for Nigeria are either totally omitted or are recorded for the Federal Government alone (Saint, Harriet & Strassner, 2003).In an ideal situation, financial administration in a university setting ought to be cost-effective. This condition is achieved when all inputs into the university enterprise having financial value, comprising money and money convertible inputs such as materials, equipment, labour, time, power electricity etc. have been utilized for the achievement of the goals of the institution without wastage or losses due to corruption.

Method of Study

The survey research design was adopted to observe and describe the situation of using innovative funding strategies in solving the problem of underfunding in public universities in South East Nigeria. The six (6) federal universities in the area were chosen as the study population, while two (2) universities representing 33.3% were purposively chosen to constitute the study sample. The University of Benin and Federal University, Otueke, being the oldest and newest universities respectively were deliberately chosen to constitute the study sample. The management staff comprising all the 2 Vice Chancellors; 5 Deputy Vice Chancellors; 20 Deans/Directors/Provosts, 118 Heads of Departments; 180 universities worker in bursary department and 28 universities students union government members who are the ends users of public investment in university education were also randomly selected to participate in the study as respondents. The only instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled: *Innovative Strategies for Funding University Education Questionnaire* (ISEFEQUE). The questionnaire had three sections A, B and C. Section A elicited demographic information about the universities and respondents; section B contained a list of 10 funding strategies from which the innovative once were identified by the respondents. Section C requested the respondents to indicate the extent to which they support the adoption of the innovative strategies for implementation. The respondents rated their responses on a 5-point Likert scale. The level of *'Effectiveness'* and *'Support'* of the funding strategies rated to be above the theoretical mean (3.00) was rated as "*Effective*" and "*High*" respectively while the one below was rated "*Ineffective*" and "*Low*". The instrument validated and

pilot-tested (n = 20, r = 0.82) in Delta State university, Abraka were administered directly on the respondents with the help of four (4) research assistants for 6 weeks. The data collected to answer the research questions were analysed using means, percentages and standard deviation while the only hypothesis formulated for the study was tested using anova.

Results

Research Question 1

What are the university funding strategies perceived to be innovative.

To answer research question 1, respondents rated the extent to which available university funding strategies in literature are innovative. The responses were descriptively analysed with means and standard deviation. The results of analysis are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of the Extent to which University Funding Strategies are Innovative

S/N	Innovative Funding Strategies	X	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	Streamline academic programmes,	1404	3.20	0.014	Innovative
2	Institutional Unit cost ascertainment for budget preparation.	1345	4.14	0.018	Innovative
3.	Government to solely finance university education	448	1.38	0.011	Traditional
4	University students contribute 50% of fund.	981	3.02	0.010	Innovative
5	University management to generate 25% fund through IGR	1209	3.72	0.017	Innovative
6	Resuscitate the students loan board	435	1.34	0.035	Traditional
7	Employers of labour to contribute 25% of fund	1036	3.19	0.011	Innovative
8	Bursaries, scholarships and endowment funds	367	1.13	0.006	Effective
9	Enshrining responsibility and Accountability in the System	708	2.18	0.020	Effective
10	Implementing the 70: 30 funding ratio of academic to non-academic activities	601	1.85	0.011	Traditional

N = 325

According to the data in Table 3, the innovative funding strategies in South South Nigerian universities are the streamlining of academic programmes; institutional unit cost ascertainment for budget preparation; appropriate and reasonable school fees including universities and employers of labour generating 25 percent each of required fund.

Research Question 2

To what extent are identified innovative funding strategies in South-South Nigerian universities effective?

To answer research question 2, responses of management staff, workers and students were analysed using means and standard deviation. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Mean Effectiveness of Perceived Innovative funding Strategies in South-South Nigerian Universities

S/N	Innovative Funding Strategies	X	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	Streamline academic programmes,	1040	3.20	0.004	Effective
2	Institutional Unit cost ascertainment for budget preparation.	1326	4.08	0.018	Effective
3	University students contribute 50% of fund.	1199	3.69	0.003	Effective
4	University management to generate 25% fund through IGR	1030	3.17	0.007	Effective
5	Employers of labour to contribute 25% of fund	1199	3.69	0.001	Effective

N = 325

According to Table 4, all the five identified innovative funding strategies are effective. They are the streamlining of academic programmes (3.20); institutional unit cost ascertainment (4.08) and university students contribution of 50 percent of required fund (3.69). The other two are university management (3.17) and employers of labour (3.69) contribution of 25 percent each.

Research Question 3

To what extent do university management staff and students support innovative funding strategies in south-south universities?

To answer research question 3, university Management; workers and; students support for innovative funding strategies in South-South Nigerian universities were analysed using means and standard deviation. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 4:

Table 4: Mean Analysis of Respondents' Support for Innovative Funding Strategies in South-South Nigerian Universities

Source	N	X	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
University Management	150	562.5	3.75	0.00173	High
Workers	86	374.96	4.36	0.00205	High
Students	28	106.68	3.81	0.00223	High
Mean Total	325	872.14	3.97	0.0020	High

According to the data in Table 4, university Management (3.75), workers (4.36) and students (3.81) support for innovative funding strategies in resolving the problem of funding in South South Nigerian universities is high.

Hypothesis 1

University management, workers and students will not significantly differ in supporting innovative funding strategies in South-South Nigerian universities.

To test hypothesis 1, the means of the support of university management, workers and students were compared and analysed with one-way anova. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 5

Table 5: Anova Summary of Means of University Management, Workers and Students' Support for Innovative Funding Strategies in Universities

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	28.67	2	14.33		
Within Groups	12141.00	323	34.68	0.410	0.068
Total	12168.67	325			

P>.05

According to the data in Table 5, the Anova F-value (0.410) with a P-value (0.068) is greater than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that says university management, workers and Students will not significantly differ in supporting innovative funding strategies in resolving funding problems is therefore retained.

Discussion

The Nigerian economy is basically driven by earned revenues from oil sales. It is however unfortunate that the drastic fall in the price of oil in the international market in the recent past has negatively impacted on public expenditures, the education sub-sector being the worst hit. Value of fiscal releases to education is further depleted by the galloping inflation that has made the procurement of teaching-learning facilities prohibitive. The result of this study has therefore unmasked the inability of government to effectively fund education generally and university education in particular.

A paradigm shift from the traditional ways of sourcing funds for education has become apt. The observed support for innovative strategies for university funding by university Management, workers and students unions is therefore good and heart-warming. What makes it even more heart-warming is the readiness of both university management, workers and students to support implementation of the innovative funding strategies. Elsewhere in Ghana, Japan, Canada and, South Africa republic education at all levels is jointly financed by the government,

employers of labour, parents and proceeds from business. In a situation like this, it is incumbent on those providing the responsibility and accountability from school administrators and teachers. The advantage of this in promoting effectiveness and efficiency in the use of available resources to achieve pre-defined goal (s) can-not be over emphasized.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that innovative funding strategies have been identified and support effective in solving the problem of underfunding in South-South Nigerian universities. To this end, university management, workers and student unions are ready to adopt the innovative strategies to improve on funding.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The innovative funding strategies are effective. Therefore, university authorities should adopt them as funding policies to reverse the perennial problem of inadequate funding.
2. The willingness to support the adoption of the innovative funding strategies in the universities is overt. Therefore, all critical stakeholders in the universities particularly students and employees should be encouraged to support the innovative funding strategies. for implementation

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