



Challenges of Inadequate Funding in the Administration of University Education in Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

Inadequate funding is a major challenge facing the administration of universities in Nigeria. The university system requires a lot of funds for effective administration to be realized. The annual budgetary allocation for the administration of universities in Nigeria is grossly inadequate. The inability of the federal government to stick to the UNESCO 26% of national budget for education is affecting the management of Nigerian universities. For over a decade now, the annual budget for the entire educational sector in Nigeria is below 15% and this is affecting the effective administration of the different levels of education in the country, including the university system. The poor funding of education is responsible for the poor quality of the universities' education in Nigeria. The annual budget for the administration of universities in the country is not adequate to provide the needed infrastructural facilities and human resources that the various universities required to function properly. This study therefore discussed the benefits of funding tertiary education in Nigeria. The provision of adequate funds in the university system will lead to the expansion of the universities and the establishment of more universities in the country. Moreover, adequate funding of tertiary institutions will help to fix the infrastructural facilities gap in the various institutions, attract international lecturers, prevent strike actions, enhance research development, improve international ranking, among more others.

Keywords: Inadequate Funding, Challenge, Administration, University education, Benefits

INTRODUCTION

One of the major problems of higher education in Nigeria for a sustainable development is funding. Higher education in Nigeria has remained under funded over the years [1-5]. During the former President Muhammadu Buhari's administration (2015–2023), a paltry fraction of 5-7 percent of the total budget was allocated to education as against the United Nations recommendation of at least 26 percent of the annual budget of any nation to education [6-8]. It is therefore, obvious that the government is not committed to the sustainable development of higher education in Nigeria. One of the major problems of funding higher education in Nigeria is government policy [9-13]. Today, there is an unprecedented growth of Federal Universities together with student's enrollment/population, without a corresponding increase in the budgetary allocation [14-17]. [4], observed that higher education plays a key role in the economic and social development of any nation. This is particularly the case in today's globalized information and knowledge-based economy. No country can expect to successfully integrate in and benefit from the 21st century economy without a well-educated workforce [18-24]. [5], noted that in today's life-long learning framework, higher education provides not only high level skills necessary for every market but also the training essentials for teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, engineers, humanist, entrepreneurs, scientist and a myriad of personnel [25-30]. In collaboration, the National policy on education [6] also stressed that, university education shall make optimum contribution to national development by intensifying and diversifying its programmes for the development of higher level manpower within the context of the need of the nation [31-34]. It is these trained individuals who develop the capacity and analytical skills that drive local economics, support civil society, teach children, lead effective governments and make important decisions which affect the entire society [35-38]. As regards higher education in Nigeria, the national policy in Education (2013) highlights the following as the expected goals of higher education in Nigeria:

- To contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
- To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and the society;
- To develop the intellectual capacity of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
- To acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;

- To promote and encourage scholarships and community services;
- To forge and cement national unity;
- To promote national and international understanding and interactions

Section 5, paragraph 82 of the National Policy on Education (2013) further emphasized that higher education shall pursue these goals through (a) quality student intake; (b) quality teaching and learning; (c) research and development; (d) high standard in the quality of facilities, services and resources; (e) staff welfare and development programmes; among many others. Considering these even goals of higher education in Nigeria, it could be seen that essentially higher education is meant for developing individuals intellectuals and otherwise so as to enable them cope with the challenges of contemporary society and to be able to meaningfully contribute to the development of the society [39-43]. This implies that investment in higher education is an investment in the present and future development of a nation for its relevance and survival. In spite of the laudable goals and objectives which higher education is expected to achieve as enumerated in the National Policy on Education [6], one of the major problems affecting higher education in Nigeria is that of inadequate funding. This paper therefore discusses the challenges of under-funding in Nigeria's higher institutions [44-49].

Issues of Under-Funding of Higher Education in Nigeria

There has been an increasing concern about the growing shortage of funds and learning resources in the university system, considering the fact that Nigeria government over the years has not been meeting the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommendation of 26% of total budget allocation to the education sector [50-55]. [7], observed that Nigeria ranked the least among 20 selected countries as regards annual budgetary allocation to education while smaller countries such as Ghana, Cote d'ivoire and Uganda were the first three countries with highest budgetary allocation to education in Africa. This obviously is an indication of the underfunding of education in Nigeria. Worst still, this low allocation to education would have to be competed for by various sectors of the educational system. Similarly, [8], also buttressed that the university system in Nigeria has witnessed a lot of turbulence [56-58]. The crisis has been characterized by a combination of chronic underfunding, rapidly increasing students' enrolment, inadequate facilities, deterioration of physical infrastructure and periodic staff strikes [59-64]. Some of the challenges of the nation's higher educational system are inadequate water supply and irregular electricity [65-70]. Without steady water supply most of the laboratory equipment procured cannot be used and without a regular power supply some experiments cannot be effectively performed [9]. In addition, most government owned institutions now introduce some token fees to help in defraying some sundry expenses. Attempts to generate revenues have led many higher institutions to embark on mounting revenue generating programmes [71-74]. Incidentally, efforts at solving these problems have often led to collision between government and staff unions [11]. In the view of [12], aside funding shortage, other problems have made significant contributions to the general problems of underfunding of higher education in Nigeria; such problems include lack of prioritization and poor funds management and accountability [75-82].

Benefits of Funding Tertiary Education in Nigeria

a. Sufficient Funds in the System

The availability of funds plays a significant role in determining the provision of quality higher education. Thus, adequate funding of tertiary education in Nigeria will lead to adequate funds in the various higher institutions' systems. This will help to ensure the effective administration and management of each institution. Higher institution managers will have access to adequate funds to implement the various programme of the institutions. Administrators of tertiary institutions will have enough money to spend on the provision of quality infrastructural facilities in various higher institutions. [13], opined that adequate funding of tertiary institutions will enable the institutions to carry out their cardinal programme of teaching, researching and community service programme. The problems of shortage of funds in the system can be solved through adequate budgetary allocation of funds to the system.

b. Fix Infrastructural Facilities Gap

Adequate funding of tertiary institutions in Nigeria will help to fix the infrastructural facilities gap in the various institutions. [14], defined educational infrastructure as facilities that are aiding the smooth delivery of academic and non-academic services in educational institutions. Educational infrastructural facilities include; libraries, laboratories, halls, offices, administrative blocks, hostels, road network, water, electricity, internet etc. The availability of infrastructural facilities in adequate quantities will support the effective administration of educational institutions. Infrastructural facilities have been described by [15] as one of the major components of the university system that support the implementation of teaching, researching and provision of community service. [16, 17] concluded that poor investment in higher institutions is a major cause of the shortage of infrastructure facilities in Nigeria. This problem can be solved through adequate funding of various higher institutions in Nigeria. More funding will help the higher institutions' management in providing more facilities such as hall halls, classrooms, laboratories, libraries and instructional materials.

c. Employment of Adequate Staff

Adequate funding of tertiary education in Nigeria will lead to the employment of adequate academic and non-academic staff in various higher institutions across the country. [18], viewed academic staff as the implementer of the school curriculum and lecture presenters. Academic staffs are the teachers and deliverer of instruction in the higher institutions. Academic staffs are the knowledge and character builders in the higher institution. The academic staffs are the engine room of the higher institutions. [19], outlined functions of the academic staff to include lecturing, preparing the lecture note, preparing the lesson note, giving assignments to students, assessing the students through continuous assessment and examination, setting exams questions, marking the answer sheet, supervising students research work especially projects, theses and dissertation and prepare the students' grade points.

[20, 21] attested to the problem of shortage of academic staff in Nigerian higher institutions. They further remarked that inadequate lecturers are 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 lecturers is responsible for the poor quality of teaching and learning in most Nigerian higher institutions. [13], stated that the availability of funds is very crucial in the employment of qualified personnel in educational institutions. Studies have shown that the funding level is a factor that is used to attract quality personnel. It is, therefore, necessary that funds should be provided to acquire this crucial human resource in educational institutions. This is because the presence of qualified personnel will help in transmitting quality knowledge to the students.

d. Increment in Salaries

Adequate funding of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria will also guarantee improvement in the welfare packages of staff and increase in their salaries. All the unions in the tertiary institutions have been agitating for salaries increment and increments in other benefits they are entitled. University workers are often underpaid and most times the Government pays part salaries to lecturers. Lecturers are not happy because many politicians go home with bags of money even when such politicians are not as educated as they are. According to [22], the underpayment of university staff vis-à-vis their counterparts in other economic sectors and the discriminating salary structure between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASU) have been a major cause of their dissatisfaction. [23], recommended the increment in the higher institution investment to cater for salaries and staff welfare packages.

e. Reduction Brain-drain

Adequate investment in tertiary education in Nigeria will help to fix the problem of brain drain in the various higher institutions in Nigeria. Brain drain according to [14] refers to the movement of professionals from developing countries to developed countries for better job offers. Brain drain is a situation whereby professional individuals are migrating from their countries to another country to seek greener pastures. Many lecturers and researchers are leaving public universities in Nigeria for other parts of African countries and Europe for better job offers and a more conducive working environment. [22], have linked the factors responsible for higher brain drain in Nigeria to include; poor motivation, un-conducive working environment, insecurity, underfunding and political interferences. [26], agreed that poor funding of higher institutions is the major cause of problems in the universities such as brain drain. [8], recommended adequate funding to solve the problem of brain drain. Adequate funding is critical in the administration of higher institutions and it is one of the resources to deploy to fix various problems facing the institutions.

f. Prevention of Strike Actions

Adequate funding of higher institutions in Nigeria will also help to reduce the strike actions in the various institutions across the country. [27], defined a strike as an organized work stoppage by a body of workers to enforce compliance with demands made on an employer or a group of employers. It is an aspect of industrial conflict used by workers to express their grievances. [22], viewed the strike as the collective, organized, cessation or slowdown of work by employees, to force acceptance of their demands by the employers. Nigerian higher institutions are known for strike actions, especially universities. [28], disclosed that the recent lecturers' union strike of 2022 is the 16th since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, shutting down academic activities in public universities for a cumulative period of more than four years within 23 years, a duration that is sufficient to complete a four-year degree programme, with some strikes lasting few weeks and others for several months. [20], opined that the issues of funding and facilities have been the cause of friction between ASUU and the government in almost all instances. This is because the union at different periods has been finding it difficult to teach in an environment without the expected amenities or with poor facilities. ASUU's contention has been to refuse underfunding of the universities which undermines the capacity of universities to maintain standards at desirable

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levels. Underfunding has made staff and students not to have access to the latest books and journals in their libraries, lack of reagents and equipment in the laboratories, so experiments cannot be conducted and local research funds have virtually dried up [29]. The budgetary allocation devoted to education has been considered to be grossly inadequate considering the phenomenon of an increase in student enrolment and increasing costs, which have been aggravated by inflation. A serious problem confronting Nigerian public university education today is the scarcity of funds [21]. Government financial policies on education have therefore been subjected to constant review to allocate more resources to university education.

The attraction of International Lecturers

Adequate funding of tertiary education in Nigeria will help to reposition the higher institutions in Nigeria to be attractive to international lecturers. The adequate funding of higher institutions will help to guarantee funds that can be used to pay lecturers based on global best practices. The mass movement of international lecturers from tertiary education in Nigeria was due to poor salaries. The budgetary allocation for the administration of public higher education in Nigeria is not adequate to expand and develop higher education to the level that the various higher institutions will have space to admit all the students [22]. The provision of adequate funds in the university system will lead to the expansion of the universities and the establishment of more universities in the country. The increment in the number of universities will provide more access to young Nigerians to apply and gain admission. The increment in the number of universities in Nigeria will reduce the number of Nigerians seeking international education, especially university education. This will help to reduce the pressure in the demand for foreign education and help to improve the Nigerian economy. [30], suggested that the government should increase the funding of higher education in Nigeria. This will help in the higher education expansion plans and programmes.

Research Development

Research is the second cardinal programme of higher institutions. Research is very important to the development of the society. Research is conducted mostly in the higher institutions' environment to solve problems affecting society. The academic staff is saddled with the responsibility of carrying out research in the universities. Conducting research is one criterion for measuring their performance. [19], submitted that the conduct of research is one of the basic functions of tertiary institutions, which comprised Universities, Polytechnics, Monotechnics and Colleges of Education. The academic staffs of these institutions are compulsorily required to carry out research activities as their promotions are primarily based on their research outputs. Apart from the academic staff being promoted through research publications, research activities enhance their credibility, and status, and also add value both to their immediate community and the larger global community. [31], opined that the role of higher education research in national development cannot be overemphasized. Research programmes in higher institutions are faced with the problem of shortage of funds [30]. Inadequate research fund is a major problem facing research programme in Nigerian public universities. The budgetary allocation for the administration of the research programme is not adequate. Adequate funding of public universities in Nigeria will help to develop the research programme of the universities. Adequate funding will help to ensure the provision of modern laboratories, ICT facilities and staff development. [32], recommended that the government should increase the funding of public universities in the country. This will enable the public universities to meet other pressing needs like developing the research programmes of the institutions.

Improvement in International Ranking

The poor ranking of public universities in Nigerian by international organizations like Time higher education (THE) has been linked to the poor funding of both the federal and state universities across the country. In the 2023 THE ranking only twelve Nigerian universities were ranked out of 220 as listed by NUC (2022). Out of these twelve, only four occupied 350 to 450 positions in the ranking. West Africa's best university came from Ghana while the African best university came from South Africa. Though the 2023 ranking saw improvement in some of the Nigerian universities, adequate provision and proper use of funds in the administration and management of universities in Nigeria will help to improve the number of Nigerian universities in the international ranking and better position them in strategic positions. [7], stated that funding is a prerequisite to the sustainable development of higher education. Adequate funding is the key to the implementation of higher education programmes. There cannot be any meaningful development in the higher education sector without adequate funding. The government and institutions saddled with the responsibilities of supervision and ensuring quality standards in higher institutions in Nigeria should wake up and ensure every higher institution in the country is adequately funded [30].

Effective Staff Training

Adequate funding of higher education in Nigeria will guarantee effective staff development. Staff training is an integral part of the higher institutions' system. [33], stated that training and development programs were necessary to improved employees' performance at work, updating their knowledge and improving their skills and

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development. [34], insisted that the purpose of training and development is to increase knowledge, skills and changing the attitude of a person. This would result in several potential benefits for the individual and their employer. Furthermore, [35] noted that training also increases the confidence, motivation and commitment of staff, provides recognition, encourages responsibility, and enhances the possibility of a pay rise and promotion. [14], posited that Inadequate funding of Nigerian higher education institutions is a major problem facing the administration of professional development programs for employees across higher education institutions.

Adequate funding is vital for the implementation of the professional development program. Without adequate funding, no professional development program can be fully implemented as planned. Inadequate funding has been a major challenge to the development of higher education institutions in Nigeria. Many programs for higher education institutions, such as the teaching program, research program and the community service program have not developed due to poor funding. The professional capacity development program for higher education institutions is not effectively implemented in many higher education institutions across the country due to the poor funding of higher education in Nigeria. Adequate funding of the higher institutions will help to ensure a sustainable staff training programme in Nigerian higher institutions.

CONCLUSION

In line with the above discussions, it is expedient for the Federal and State governments to increase the budgetary allocations to higher education. This is important so that the needs of research and development could be met at various levels and departments. Also, private individuals and organizations should be appealed to for contributions in terms of capital investments, building of infrastructures such as classrooms, laboratories, (ICT) centres, giving scholarship to deserving students and so on. Similarly, tertiary institutions should not only rely on Federal and State Governments but source for other means of generating income internally such as setting up business ventures in line with the needs of the environment. Importantly, university administrators should adequately manage the funds allocated to Higher Education. All avenues of mismanagement of funds should be adequately closed. This could be done by ensuring proper auditing of financial records on at least a quarterly basis. Lastly, there should be provision of adequate and functional infrastructures to enhance teaching and learning.

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