

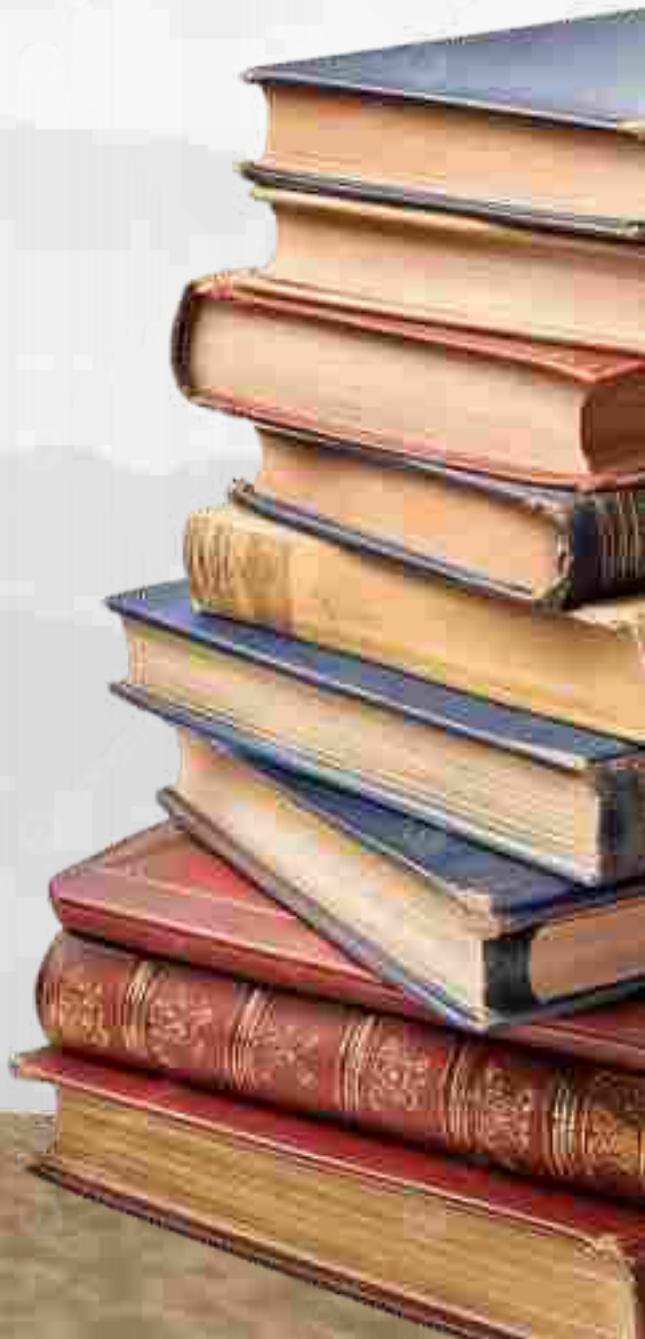


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PERSPECTIVE ON EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Acknowledgments

The authors gratefully acknowledge the support of our academic institutions and colleagues whose insights and contributions informed the development of this chapter, *Perspective on Education in Nigeria*. We also extend our appreciation to the editors of this volume for their guidance and for providing a platform to share our collective work.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

TERTIARY EDUCATION AND FUNDING IN NIGERIA**By****Saleh Khalid Mahmud**

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Email: khalidmahmuh13@yahoo.com**ABSTRACT**

Tertiary education is central to Nigeria's social and economic progress, yet chronic underfunding has limited its effectiveness in teaching, research, and innovation. This chapter examines the major sources of funding for tertiary education in Nigeria, discusses the benefits of adequate financial support, and identifies persistent challenges such as insufficient budgetary allocation, poor accountability, corruption, insecurity, and limited private sector participation. Sustainable funding strategies—including increased government investment, public-private partnerships, scholarships and loan schemes, transparent cost-sharing mechanisms, and diversified revenue streams—are proposed. The chapter concludes that the success of Nigeria's tertiary education system depends on coordinated policy reforms, accountability in financial management, and collaboration among government, institutions, and the private sector.

Keywords: tertiary education, higher education funding, Nigeria, sustainability, public-private partnership, scholarships, internally generated revenue

17.1. Introduction

Tertiary education plays a pivotal role in shaping the economic and social landscape of any nation, and Nigeria is no exception. As the most populous country in Africa, Nigeria faces unique challenges and opportunities in the realm of higher education. The country's tertiary institutions ranging from universities to polytechnics and colleges of education are crucial in preparing the workforce, fostering innovation, and contributing to national development. However, the reality

of sustaining and improving these institutions is complicated by chronic underfunding, infrastructural decay, and a reliance on inadequate government allocations.

In Nigeria, the funding of tertiary education has long been a point of contention, with debates surrounding the adequacy and efficiency of public sector investment, the rise of private universities, and the role of international funding. Despite the government's commitment to expanding access to higher education, many institutions continue to face severe financial constraints that hamper their ability to offer world-class education and research. This chapter explores the state of sources of funding tertiary education in Nigeria, delving into the benefits challenges of funding and sustainable funding strategies

By examining the intricacies of tertiary education funding in Nigeria, this chapter seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the concept of tertiary education, funding of tertiary education, barriers and opportunities that exist within the system, offering insights into the future of higher education in one of Africa's largest economies.

Thus, this chapter is discussed under the following subheadings.

Clarification of concepts

1. Tertiary education
2. Funding
3. Sources of Tertiary Education
4. Benefits of adequate funding of Tertiary Education
5. Challenges of Funding Tertiary Education in Nigeria
6. Sustainable Strategies to the funding of tertiary Education in Nigeria

17.2. Clarification of concepts

i. Concept of Tertiary education

The word tertiary, simply means of the third rank or order, and tertiary level of education in Nigeria, based on the aforementioned meaning, implies that tertiary education in Nigeria is the third order of education which can also be referred to as higher education (Okai, & Botimi –Slaboh 2019). Basically, tertiary education is a subset of the general society comprising of the collection of different people with different cultural and ethnic background, life styles, living standards and moral values (Ogunode & Odo 2023) participating in educational activities. The diversities of formal and informal educational activities carried out in tertiary institutions (Singh, 2015) usually puts into consideration the value system obtainable within a particular country. Tertiary education is a front liner amongst the tiers of education and is considered as the icon for national development

and transformation, implying that every skill, knowledge and information gained through this means is the vehicle for productivity, wealth creation, prosperity, good health and healthy living, competitiveness, communication, expansion, scientific and technological advancement (Ofojebe & Chukwuma, 2015).

ii. Concept of Funding

Funding refers to the financial support that is provided for a particular project or initiative. It can come from various sources such as government grants, research institutions, or private organizations. The amount of funding can vary depending on the nature of the project and the resources required. Securing funding is an important aspect of academic research as it allows for the implementation of new ideas and the advancement of knowledge. The process of obtaining funding can be competitive and often requires a well-written abstract that clearly articulates the research question, methodology, and potential contributions (Ogunode, Olaoye, & Yakubu, 2023).

iii. Sources of Tertiary Education

The sources of tertiary education funding in Nigeria can be categorized into two main types: public and private. Public funding includes government funding, scholarships, and grants from international organizations or foreign governments. Private funding, on the other hand, includes tuition fees, donations from individuals or organizations, and endowments. The primary source of public funding for tertiary education in Nigeria is the federal and state governments. The federal government provides funding through the Ministry of Education and the National Universities Commission (NUC). State governments also allocate funds for their respective state-owned universities (ActionAid 2013; Alagbe, 2022).

Scholarships are also available for students in Nigeria, which are usually funded by the government or private organizations. These scholarships cover tuition fees, accommodation, and other expenses for students with outstanding academic performance or those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

International organizations and foreign governments also provide grants for Nigerian students pursuing tertiary education. These grants are often used for research projects or exchange programs with universities abroad.

On the other hand, private funding for tertiary education in Nigeria comes mainly from tuition fees. These fees vary depending on the institution and program, but they are generally more expensive than public universities. In addition, many universities in Nigeria receive donations from individuals, alumni, and organizations. These donations may be used for specific projects or to improve the overall quality of education (Britannica (2022; Etuk, 2015).

Primary sources of Tertiary Education funding in Nigeria include government funding, private donations, tuition fees, and loans. Government funding is a major source of funding for

tertiary education in Nigeria, with the government allocating a significant portion of its budget to education. Private donations, both from individuals and organizations, also play a crucial role in funding tertiary education in Nigeria. Tuition fees, which are paid by students, also contribute to tertiary education funding (Akaranta, & Uche 2015). However, these fees are often not enough to cover all the expenses, and students may still require additional funding. This is where loans come in, providing financial assistance to students who need it. These secondary sources of funding play a crucial role in ensuring that tertiary education in Nigeria has the necessary resources to provide quality education to students. Some tertiary institutions in Nigeria have endowments, which are typically large sums of money donated to the institution. These endowments are invested and the income generated is used to fund various projects and initiatives, including scholarships and research programs (Adebayo, 2016).

17.3. Benefits of adequate funding of Tertiary Education

a) Improved Education and Learning Opportunities:

Adequate funding for tertiary education in Nigeria will result in a higher quality education system. This means that students will have access to better resources, facilities, and faculty, resulting in a more effective and engaging learning experience. This will ultimately lead to better-educated individuals who are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to contribute to the development and growth of the country (Ahaotu & Ogunode 2021; Akomolafe & Aremu, 2016).

b) Economic Growth:

Adequate funding for tertiary education will also result in economic growth for the country. With a well-educated workforce, Nigeria will be able to attract more foreign investment and develop new industries. This will lead to job creation and an overall increase in the standard of living for citizens.

c) Development of a Skilled Workforce:

Investing in tertiary education means developing a skilled workforce that is essential for the growth of industries and the job market. Adequate funding will allow universities and other tertiary institutions to offer specialized courses that are in demand in the job market, leading to the production of highly skilled individuals who can contribute to the development of various sectors in the country.

d) Research and Innovation:

Adequate funding for tertiary education will also lead to an increase in research and innovation. With proper resources and funding, universities will be able to conduct cutting-edge research and develop new technologies that can benefit society. This will also attract more funding from international organizations and lead to collaborations with other institutions, resulting in a further boost to research and innovation in the country.

e) Social and Cultural Progress:

Adequate funding for tertiary education will also promote social and cultural progress in Nigeria. With a diverse student body and access to different perspectives and ideas, universities will foster an environment of inclusivity and understanding. This will lead to a more tolerant and open-minded society, allowing for the development of new ideas and solutions to societal issues.

17.4. Challenges of Funding Tertiary Education in Nigeria

The problem of effective funding in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is a complex issue that has been a major challenge for many years. Despite various efforts and policies put in place by the government, the issue of inadequate funding continues to persist. This has hindered the growth and development of these institutions, resulting in low-quality education and limited opportunities for students.

a) Insufficient budget allocated to tertiary institutions

The main problem lies in the insufficient budget allocated to tertiary institutions, which leads to a lack of resources and facilities necessary for providing quality education. This, in turn, affects the students' learning experience, as they are unable to access the latest technology and modern teaching methods. Additionally, the low salaries and benefits offered to faculty and staff make it difficult to attract and retain highly qualified personnel, further impacting the overall quality of education (Ogbogu, 2013).

b) Lack of accountability and transparency in the management of funds

Moreover, there is also a lack of accountability and transparency in the management of funds allocated to these institutions, leading to mismanagement and wastage of resources. This not only affects the quality of education but also erodes trust in the system, making it difficult for donors and investors to contribute towards funding these institutions (Ofoegbu, & Alonge, 2016).

c) Corruption

Corruption is a major issue in Nigeria that is greatly hindering the effective funding of tertiary institutions. This issue not only affects the institutions themselves, but also the students who attend them. The misuse of funds, bribery, and embezzlement are just some of the corrupt practices that are negatively impacting the education system in Nigeria (Akinola, & Ogunode, 2022). As a result, there is a lack of proper resources, equipment, and facilities in these institutions, leading to a decrease in the quality of education provided. This in turn affects the overall development and progress of the country, as education is a key factor in economic growth and social advancement (Ahmodu, & Sofoluwe, 2018).

d) Poor private institutions participation

Poor private participation is a major issue that is greatly hindering the adequate funding of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This lack of private involvement poses a serious problem as it restricts the flow of necessary funds and resources into these institutions. The consequences of this are far-reaching and include inadequate infrastructure, shortage of learning materials, and limited opportunities for growth and development. By not addressing this issue, the Nigerian government is failing to properly support the tertiary education sector and its future. In order to overcome this problem and ensure effective funding for these institutions, it is imperative to encourage and increase private participation through various means such as partnerships, sponsorships, and investments. Without addressing this issue, the education system in Nigeria will continue to suffer and ultimately hinder the country's progress (Ojekudo, & Agabi, 2021).

e) Lack of Autonomy

The lack of autonomy in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is a major obstacle in the effective funding of these institutions. This issue impairs the development and progress of academic institutions and ultimately hinders the growth of the education sector in Nigeria. One of the biggest challenges faced by tertiary institutions in Nigeria is the lack of control over their own affairs. This includes issues related to funding, decision-making, and management. As a result, these institutions are unable to prioritize their needs and allocate resources efficiently, leading to a lack of proper funding for crucial academic activities (Ogunode, & Ukozo, 2023). The lack of autonomy also creates a barrier for institutions to establish relationships with external stakeholders, such as government agencies and private organizations, for additional funding opportunities. This restricts their ability to secure alternative funding sources and diversify their revenue streams. Moreover, the lack of autonomy also limits the ability of tertiary institutions to make strategic decisions related to their funding. They are often dependent on external funding bodies, which can delay or limit the implementation of crucial projects and initiatives. This ultimately hampers the progress and development of these institutions.

f) Low Budgetary allocation

Low budgetary allocation is a major issue that is greatly affecting the proper funding of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This has led to a significant decrease in the quality of education in these institutions, ultimately hindering their effectiveness in producing well-educated individuals. To address this issue, it is crucial for the government to allocate more financial resources towards the development and maintenance of these institutions. Without adequate funding, the necessary infrastructure, resources, and staff cannot be provided, resulting in a decline in the overall quality of education (Ogunode, Ukozo, & Ayoko, 2023a). As a result, students suffer from a lack of essential learning materials and are unable to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for their future careers. Moreover, low budgetary allocation also affects the research and development activities in these institutions, hindering their contribution to the advancement of knowledge and innovation in the country. It is imperative for the government to adequately prioritize and invest

in the funding of tertiary institutions to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of quality education to the future generations of Nigeria (OhiareUdebu, Sarafadeen, & Abashi, 2022).

g) Insecurity challenges

According to recent studies, insecurity problems in Nigeria have had a significant impact on the effective funding of tertiary institutions. These issues have created a state of uncertainty and fear among students and faculty, leading to a decrease in enrollment and donations to these institutions. As a result, tertiary institutions in Nigeria are facing financial challenges and struggling to provide quality education and resources to their students. Insecurity problems, such as banditry, kidnapping, and terrorist attacks, have not only affected the safety of students and faculty but have also disrupted the normal functioning of these institutions (Onuka.2014). For example, frequent attacks on transportation routes have made it difficult for students to commute to and from the campus, resulting in a decrease in attendance and ultimately affecting the revenue of the institution. Moreover, the persistent threat of insecurity has also deterred potential investors from funding these institutions, as they fear for the safety of their investments. This has further added to the financial struggles of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, making it challenging for them to secure necessary resources and infrastructure for their students (Ogunode, Hauwa,&Muhammad, 2023).

17.5. Sustainable Strategies to the funding of tertiary Education in Nigeria

Increase Government Funding: One sustainable strategy for funding tertiary education in Nigeria is to increase government funding. Currently, the government only allocates a small portion of its budget to education, which is not enough to cover the costs of tertiary education. By increasing government funding, more resources can be directed towards tertiary education, making it more affordable for students and reducing the financial burden on families.

Public-Private Partnerships: Another strategy is to establish public-private partnerships in the education sector. This would involve collaboration between the government and private companies to finance and improve the quality of tertiary education. Private companies can provide funding for infrastructure, technology, and other resources, while the government can offer incentives and subsidies to make education more accessible to all students (Uche, & Wordu, 2015; Akinsanya 2016).

Scholarships and Grants: Scholarships and grants are another viable strategy for funding tertiary education. These programs can be funded by the government, private organizations, or individuals who are passionate about education. They provide financial assistance to students who may not be able to afford the costs of tertiary education. By awarding scholarships and grants, more students can access quality education without worrying about the financial burden (Sanni 2016Gambo & Fasanmi, 2019).

Cost-Sharing Programs: Implementing cost-sharing programs is another sustainable strategy for funding tertiary education. This involves sharing the costs of education between students, the

government, and other stakeholders. For example, the government can cover a certain percentage of the tuition fees, while students are required to pay the remaining amount. This approach can help reduce the financial burden on the government and make education more affordable for students (Onuoha 2013; Nwafor, Uchendu, & Akani, 2015).

Diversify Revenue Streams: Finally, to achieve sustainable funding for tertiary education in Nigeria, there is a need to diversify revenue streams. This could involve exploring alternative sources of income, such as partnerships with foreign universities, revenue from research and development, and investments in profitable sectors. By diversifying revenue streams, tertiary institutions can generate more income to cover their expenses and reduce their reliance on government funding (Uche, 2013; Ogunode, Olaoye, & Yakubu, 2023).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the funding of tertiary education in Nigeria remains a critical issue that underpins the overall quality and accessibility of higher education in the country. Despite the increasing demand for higher education and its vital role in national development, Nigeria's tertiary institutions continue to grapple with insufficient funding, outdated infrastructure, and a lack of sustainable financial models. Government funding, although necessary, has proven inadequate to meet the growing needs of the sector, and as a result, institutions are often left to seek alternative sources of revenue, whether through private sector investments, international partnerships, or innovative funding mechanisms.

However, the challenges faced are not without potential solutions. There is a pressing need for strategic investments in higher education that prioritize both infrastructure and human capital development. Moreover, policy reforms that promote greater collaboration between public and private sectors, as well as the adoption of a more diversified funding approach, could ease the financial burden on government and improve the overall educational experience for students.

In navigating these challenges, the importance of sustained dialogue between government, educational institutions, students, and the private sector cannot be overstated. Only through a collaborative and innovative approach can Nigeria begin to realize the full potential of its tertiary education system, enabling it to produce graduates who are equipped to meet the demands of a dynamic global economy. The future of Nigerian higher education hinges on a clear and actionable vision that recognizes the crucial role of adequate funding in shaping the nation's educational landscape for generations to come.

Review of Questions

1. What is tertiary education?
2. Define funding
3. Explain four sources of Tertiary Education funding

4. Discuss five Benefits of adequately funding of Tertiary Education in Nigeria
5. Challenges Militating against funding Tertiary Education in Nigeria
6. Sustainable Strategies to the funding of tertiary Education in Nigeria

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