REVENUE GENERATION STRATEGIES FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

Adequate funding is fundamental to the effective development of universities and their constituent faculties and departments. In Nigeria, inadequate funding has remained a major challenge to the expansion of infrastructure, research, staff development, digital facilities and other academic activities in universities. The National Universities Commission (NUC) has acknowledged that inadequate funding constitutes a significant barrier to the growth and effective performance of Nigerian universities, particularly in teaching, research and community service. The problem extends from the university level to faculties and departments, including Departments of Educational Management, which require adequate resources to support teaching, research, staff development, educational consultancy and community service. This paper examines revenue-generation strategies that Departments of Educational Management can adopt to complement university funding. It focuses on the university as the broader institutional environment, the Faculty of Education as the academic structure responsible for teacher education and educational scholarship, and the Department of Educational Management as a specialised unit responsible for preparing educational planners, administrators and managers. The paper argues that professional training and short courses, consultancy and contract research, conferences and publications, online programmes, facility utilisation, professional certification, research grantFEAs, knowledge commercialisation, partnerships and alumni contributions can provide additional resources. Sustainable revenue generation, however, should complement rather than replace government and institutional funding and should be guided by transparency, accountability and university regulations.

Keywords: Revenue generation, university, Faculty of Education, Educational Management, poor funding, internally generated revenue.

1.0 Introduction

The university is a major institution for the production, transmission and application of knowledge. Its core responsibilities generally include teaching, research and community service. Through these functions, universities contribute to human-capital development, innovation, economic growth and social transformation. However, the extent to which a university can effectively perform these functions is strongly influenced by the availability and effective utilisation of financial resources. UNESCO describes education financing as the process through which resources are mobilised and allocated to support educational institutions and programmes, emphasising that sustainable financing is essential to achieving educational objectives. The issue of university funding is particularly important in Nigeria, where the higher-education system has expanded considerably in terms of student enrolment, academic programmes and the number of institutions. At the same time, universities require increasing resources for classrooms, laboratories, libraries, information and communication technology, research, staff development, student services and infrastructure. The National Universities Commission has specifically identified inadequate funding as a significant challenge confronting Nigerian universities and has noted its implications for research, remuneration and the effective delivery of the university's core mandates.

The problem of poor funding of university development is not limited to the central administration of the university. Its effects are transmitted to faculties, departments and other academic units. When institutional resources are inadequate, academic departments may experience difficulties in acquiring teaching materials, organising academic activities, supporting staff development, undertaking research, maintaining facilities and introducing innovative programmes. The Nigerian Education Sector Plan has similarly identified the higher-education sector as having funding challenges and proposed alternative and innovative financing mechanisms, including internally generated revenue, cost-sharing, grants and philanthropic support. Within the university system, the Faculty of Education occupies a strategic position because it is responsible for the preparation and professional development of teachers, educational administrators, planners, counsellors and other education professionals. It also serves as a centre for educational research and provides expertise to schools, government ministries, agencies and other organisations. Consequently, the development of a Faculty of Education requires resources for lecture facilities, educational technology, research, staff development, fieldwork, conferences and professional engagement.

One of the important departments within the Faculty of Education is the Department of Educational Management. The department focuses on the study and practice of educational administration, planning, leadership, policy, supervision, organisational management, financing and institutional development. Its academic expertise places it in a strong position to provide professional services to schools, government education agencies, private educational institutions, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders.

Poor funding can therefore constrain the ability of a Department of Educational Management to fulfil its academic and developmental responsibilities. Inadequate resources may limit research activities, professional training, conferences, academic publications, digital transformation, staff development and community-service activities. The NUC has noted that inadequate funding in Nigerian universities is associated with factors including low internally generated revenue, insufficient research income and limited contributions from the private sector, NGOs and alumni. This situation makes revenue diversification increasingly important. Revenue generation should not be interpreted as abandoning government responsibility for financing public universities. Rather, it should constitute a complementary strategy through which departments mobilise legitimate additional resources to support their development. The NUC itself has responsibilities relating to advising government on the financial needs of university education and recognising grants from government, private proprietors and other institutions as potential sources of university finance. For the Department of Educational Management, revenue generation can be linked directly to its academic expertise. The department can organise professional development programmes for school administrators, provide consultancy services, undertake contract research, organise conferences, develop online courses, establish professional certification programmes and collaborate with private schools and education-related organisations. These activities can simultaneously generate revenue and strengthen the department's teaching, research and community-service functions.

Furthermore, sustainable revenue generation requires accountability. Income-producing activities should be properly planned, approved by the university, transparently administered and subjected to appropriate financial controls. Revenue should be reinvested in departmental priorities such as research, digital resources, staff development, academic conferences, teaching facilities and student support. Thus, the challenge of poor funding provides an opportunity for Departments of Educational Management to rethink traditional approaches to financing academic development. Rather than depending exclusively on central university allocations, the department can strategically utilise its intellectual capital, professional expertise, research capacity and institutional networks to attract additional resources. Such an approach is consistent with broader international thinking on higher-education financing, which encourages diversification of funding sources while maintaining the academic mission of universities. UNESCO emphasises that sustainable education financing requires stronger domestic resource mobilisation, efficient spending and innovative approaches to expanding available resources.

2.0 Conceptual terms

2.1 Concept of Department of Educational Management

The Department of Educational Management is an academic unit within a Faculty of Education that is concerned with the study, teaching, research and practical application of principles of educational administration, planning, leadership, policy, supervision, finance and institutional management. The department prepares students and professionals with the knowledge and skills required to manage educational institutions and systems effectively. Educational management involves the systematic coordination of human, material, financial and information resources for the achievement of educational goals. It covers activities such as planning educational programmes, organising institutional resources, directing personnel, supervising educational activities, managing finances and evaluating institutional performance.

In a university, the Department of Educational Management serves both an academic and professional function. Academically, it provides students with theoretical and empirical knowledge about how education systems and institutions operate. Professionally, it develops the competencies required by teachers, principals, education officers, planners, administrators, supervisors and other education managers. The department is therefore important to the development of the education sector because the quality of an educational system depends not only on the availability of teachers and facilities but also on the quality of its leadership, planning, administration and management.

Mandates of the Department of Educational Management

Teaching and Training of Educational Managers

One of the major mandates of the Department of Educational Management is to provide teaching and professional training for people who will manage educational institutions and programmes. The department offers courses in areas such as educational administration, educational planning, school management, educational finance, leadership, supervision, policy studies and organisational behaviour. Through undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, students acquire theoretical knowledge and practical skills that prepare them for positions in schools, ministries of education, universities, colleges, education agencies and other educational organisations. The mandate goes beyond classroom instruction. Students are expected to develop skills in decision-making, leadership, communication, conflict management, resource utilisation and institutional planning.

Conduct of Educational Research

The second major mandate is the conduct of research into educational management and related problems. Educational institutions operate in changing social, economic, technological and political environments. Consequently, educational managers need reliable research evidence to make appropriate decisions. The department therefore undertakes research on issues such as educational financing, school leadership, teacher management, quality assurance, educational planning, policy implementation, educational technology, institutional effectiveness and students' academic outcomes. Research conducted by the department can help governments, universities, schools and other stakeholders understand educational problems and develop evidence-based solutions. The research function also contributes to the advancement of knowledge and provides opportunities for academic staff and postgraduate students to contribute to educational policy and practice.

Educational Planning and Policy Development

A third mandate is to contribute to educational planning and policy development. Educational planning involves determining educational goals, identifying available resources, establishing priorities and developing strategies for achieving desired outcomes. The department equips students and researchers with the capacity to analyse educational policies and assess their implementation. It can also provide technical expertise to government ministries, education agencies and institutions in areas such as manpower planning, enrolment projection, infrastructure planning, resource allocation and programme development. This mandate is particularly important because poorly planned educational expansion can lead to problems such as inadequate classrooms, teacher shortages, overcrowding, unemployment of graduates and inefficient utilisation of educational resources.

Professional Development and Capacity Building

The Department of Educational Management also has a mandate to develop the professional capacity of practising educational administrators and managers. Educational management is not a static field. Changes in technology, legislation, curriculum, financing, security, leadership and educational policy require education managers to continually update their knowledge and skills.

The department can organise workshops, seminars, conferences, executive programmes and short courses for principals, vice-principals, education officers, supervisors, lecturers, school proprietors and other educational personnel. For example, the department may organise professional development programmes on strategic school leadership, monitoring and evaluation, artificial intelligence in educational management, conflict management, quality assurance and educational financial management. Such programmes strengthen the connection between the university and the wider education system.

Community Service, Consultancy and Professional Outreach

The fifth mandate is to provide community service and professional consultancy. Universities are expected to contribute their expertise to the development of society. A Department of Educational Management can achieve this by providing professional advice and services to schools, government agencies, NGOs, private educational institutions and communities. Consultancy activities may include school organisational assessment, strategic planning, institutional evaluation, policy analysis, staff training, educational programme evaluation and monitoring and evaluation. Through community outreach, the department can also assist schools and communities in solving practical educational problems. This mandate allows academic knowledge to move beyond the university environment and contribute directly to the improvement of educational practice.

Promotion of Innovation, Leadership and Sustainable Educational Development

The sixth mandate is to promote innovation and effective leadership for sustainable educational development. Contemporary educational institutions face challenges arising from digital transformation, artificial intelligence, changing labour-market requirements, climate concerns, insecurity, financial constraints and increasing demand for quality education.

The Department of Educational Management should therefore prepare educational managers who can respond creatively to emerging challenges. This includes promoting the use of digital technologies, data-driven decision-making, innovative approaches to educational financing, effective human-resource management and sustainable institutional planning.

The department can also serve as an intellectual centre for developing new models of educational leadership and management. Its expertise can support institutions in improving efficiency, accountability, inclusiveness and quality.

3.0 Result and Discussion on Ways the Department of Educational Management Can Generate Revenue

The Department of Educational Management in a university can reduce its dependence on institutional subventions by developing revenue-generating activities that are closely connected to its core competencies in educational planning, administration, policy, leadership, supervision and management. International evidence indicates that higher education institutions can diversify income through customised training, consultancy, research contracts, knowledge transfer and other services.

Organising professional training, workshops and short courses

The Department of Educational Management can generate revenue by organising fee-paying professional development programmes, short courses, workshops and certificate programmes for principals, vice-principals, teachers, education officers, school proprietors, administrators and other education professionals. For example, the department could offer short courses in educational leadership, strategic school management, educational planning, quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation, data management, conflict management and the use of artificial intelligence in educational administration. Participants and sponsoring organisations can pay registration and training fees. The department can also enter into agreements with state ministries of education, local government education authorities, private schools and non-governmental organisations to provide customised training for their personnel. This approach is supported by the OECD, which identifies customised training and continuing education as legitimate sources of non-tuition revenue for higher education institutions. The OECD also specifically recognises revenue from workshops, seminars and training projects as an indicator of revenue generation through continuing education. The department could establish an *Educational Management Professional Development Centre* that runs quarterly paid training programmes for school administrators and education managers.

Establishing educational management consultancy and contract research services

The department can generate substantial revenue by providing consultancy and contract research services to governments, schools, educational agencies, NGOs, international organisations and private education providers. Its academic staff possess expertise that can be converted into professional services, such as school organisational assessment, educational policy analysis, strategic planning, institutional evaluation, manpower planning, curriculum implementation assessment, monitoring and evaluation, school leadership assessment and education-sector research. For instance, a state Ministry of Education could contract the department to conduct an assessment of principals' administrative competencies or evaluate the implementation of an education policy. Similarly, private school organisations could engage the department to develop strategic plans, conduct staff training needs assessments or evaluate school performance. The OECD identifies research grants and contracts, consultancy services and knowledge transfer among the established sources through which higher education institutions diversify revenue. The World Bank likewise reports that income generation in universities is particularly likely to succeed through contracted training, short courses, contracted research and consultancies. There is also African evidence for this approach. UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning reports that Nigerian higher education institutions have participated in income-generating activities, including consultancy, as part of broader efforts to diversify university financing. The department could establish an *Educational Management Consultancy and Research Unit* through which consultancy contracts are formally processed, with an agreed percentage of internally generated revenue returned to the department according to university regulations.

Organising conferences, professional seminars and publishing educational materials

A third strategy is for the department to generate revenue through academic conferences, professional seminars, policy dialogues, executive forums and educational publications. The department can organise annual conferences on emerging issues such as artificial intelligence in educational management, educational planning, school security, quality assurance, educational financing and leadership. Revenue can be obtained from conference registration fees, institutional sponsorships, exhibition fees, publication charges and training fees, subject to university policies. The department could also develop professionally oriented publications such as training manuals, policy briefs, educational management handbooks and conference proceedings for sale or licensing. This is consistent with OECD evidence that higher education institutions generate income through services, knowledge transfer, customised training and activities associated with conferences and other institutional services. UNESCO's review of higher education reforms in Africa also documents the movement of African universities towards greater financial diversification and the establishment of institutional mechanisms for managing income-generating activities. The department could organise an annual *National Conference on Educational Management and Planning*, charging registration fees and seeking sponsorship from education ministries, agencies, private schools, NGOs and educational development organisations.

Developing educational management research projects for external funding

The Department of Educational Management can generate revenue by developing competitive research proposals for government agencies, international development organisations, NGOs, foundations and private organisations. The department can undertake funded studies on educational planning, school leadership, teacher management, quality assurance, educational financing, AI in education, school security, policy implementation and institutional performance. For example, the department could establish a research team that responds to calls for proposals from education agencies and development partners. Where a research project is funded, the university can retain approved institutional overheads while the department and researchers receive resources in accordance with institutional research policies. This approach is supported by the OECD, which identifies research grants and contracts as important sources of higher-education revenue. The World Bank also reports that African universities can strengthen revenue generation through contract-based research and consultancy, citing examples of substantial external research income generated by African universities. The department could establish an *Educational Management Research and Grant Development Unit* responsible for identifying funding opportunities and preparing competitive research proposals.

Commercialising educational knowledge and intellectual property

The department can generate revenue by commercialising its academic knowledge, research outputs and intellectual property. Although educational management is not traditionally associated with patents in the same way as engineering or medicine, the department can develop marketable educational products such as school-management software specifications, educational management assessment instruments, leadership-training manuals, strategic-planning templates, policy toolkits, online courses and copyrighted educational materials. For example, a team of lecturers could develop a School Leadership Competency Assessment Instrument and license its use to private schools, government agencies or educational organisations. The department could also develop digital training packages on strategic school management and charge institutions for access.

The OECD identifies knowledge transfer, consultancy, intellectual property revenue, licensing and patents as potential revenue sources for higher education institutions. UNESCO similarly notes that technology transfer, licensing and other commercial activities can provide alternative income streams for universities. The department could create an *Educational Management Innovation and Knowledge Transfer Centre* to identify, protect and commercialise useful research outputs, subject to university intellectual-property regulations.

Building partnerships with private schools, educational organisations and industry

The department can generate revenue through formal partnerships with private schools, educational organisations, NGOs and relevant private-sector organisations. Such partnerships could involve paid leadership training, school-performance audits, institutional strategic planning, staff development, monitoring and evaluation, educational policy studies and professional advisory services. For instance, a network of private secondary schools could contract the department to assess their principals' management competencies and provide annual professional development. The department could also negotiate institutional partnership agreements under which schools pay for periodic training, evaluation and advisory services. This approach has strong international support. The World Bank identifies university–industry collaboration, joint research, training and commercialisation as important mechanisms for connecting universities with external economic partners. UNESCO also reports that public–private partnerships can diversify tertiary institutions' revenue, while documenting examples of African universities generating income through commercial activities and partnerships. The department could establish a *School–University Partnership Programme* and enter into service agreements with private schools, education companies and other organisations that need professional educational management expertise.

Offering online and distance-learning programmes

The Department of Educational Management can generate revenue by developing fee-paying online, blended and distance-learning programmes for teachers, school administrators, education officers and other professionals who cannot attend conventional face-to-face programmes. Possible programmes include Educational Leadership, School Administration, Educational Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Quality Assurance and Education Policy. Revenue can come from programme registration, course fees, certification and other approved charges. This approach can also expand the department's market beyond its immediate geographical location. The National Universities Commission (NUC) recognises distance-learning centres as part of Nigeria's university system and lists the University of Abuja among universities with approved distance-learning centres. More broadly, the OECD identifies continuing and adult learning as an avenue through which higher education institutions can diversify their income. The department could develop short online certificate programmes such as *Certificate in Educational Leadership and Management* and *Certificate in School Monitoring and Evaluation*, subject to university and regulatory approval.

Renting departmental facilities and educational equipment

The department can generate revenue by **renting underutilised facilities** for appropriate external activities. Where university regulations permit, lecture rooms, conference spaces, computer laboratories and other suitable facilities can be made available to professional associations, educational organisations and other users during periods when they are not required for teaching. For example, a department could make an appropriately equipped seminar room available for a professional education workshop during weekends or academic breaks. The OECD identifies **leasing or renting buildings and facilities** as one of the common mechanisms through which higher education institutions generate additional revenue. Its analysis also notes that renting unused university facilities can both generate revenue and improve the utilisation of institutional space. The department could develop a formal facility-rental schedule and charge approved rates for the use of available spaces, with all proceeds processed through the university's financial system.

Establishing an educational management professional certification programme

The department can establish **professional certificate programmes and executive education courses** for practising educational administrators. These programmes can target principals, vice-principals, education secretaries, inspectors, supervisors, education officers and managers of private schools. Potential programmes include:

- Certificate in School Leadership and Administration
- Certificate in Educational Planning
- Certificate in Monitoring and Evaluation
- Certificate in Education Policy Analysis
- Certificate in Quality Assurance in Education
- Executive Programme in Educational Management

Participants can pay approved registration and certification fees. The department can also collaborate with relevant professional bodies and education agencies where appropriate. This approach is consistent with the OECD's finding that higher education institutions can generate private non-tuition revenue through customised training and the sale of educational services. The OECD's 2025 assessment further identifies continuing education and adult learning as potential components of higher-education revenue diversification. The department could create an *Executive Educational Management Programme* offering weekend and holiday courses to practising education managers.

Establishing an alumni and educational management development fund

The department can establish a structured Departmental Educational Management Development Fund through which former students, alumni, retired academics, educational administrators, philanthropists and organisations can voluntarily contribute to departmental development. The fund could support departmental research, scholarships, conferences, digital resources, academic equipment and staff development. Where permitted by university regulations, an approved proportion of donations or investment returns could support departmental activities.

The World Bank identifies alumni endowments, gifts and contributions from private benefactors as potential sources of higher-education financing. Similarly, the OECD identifies bequests, philanthropic giving and private donations as sources of higher-education revenue. The department could establish an *Educational Management Alumni Development Fund* and organise an annual alumni fundraising event to support specific departmental projects.

Table 1: Ten revenue-generating strategies for Department of Educational Management

No.	Strategy	Major revenue source
1	Professional training and short courses	Training fees
2	Consultancy and contract research	Consultancy contracts
3	Conferences, seminars and publications	Registration and sponsorship
4	Externally funded research	Research grants/contracts
5	Commercialisation of knowledge/IP	Licensing and educational products
6	Partnerships with private schools/organisations	Service contracts
7	Online and distance-learning programmes	Programme/course fees
8	Rental of facilities and equipment	Rental charges
9	Professional certification/executive programmes	Certification and programme fees
10	Alumni/development fund	Donations and endowment income

The overall argument is supported by the OECD's evidence that higher education institutions can diversify revenue through **research contracts, consultancy, knowledge transfer, educational services, customised training, leasing of facilities and philanthropic contributions**. Importantly, such activities should be governed by the university's financial regulations and should not compromise the department's core responsibilities of teaching, research and community service.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Poor funding remains an important constraint to the development and effective functioning of universities in Nigeria. Its effects extend from the university administration to faculties and individual academic departments. Within the Faculty of Education, the Department of Educational Management requires adequate resources to support teaching, research, staff development, professional activities, educational consultancy and community service. However, the funding challenge also creates the need for departments to explore legitimate and sustainable sources of additional revenue. Because Educational Management possesses expertise in educational planning, administration, leadership, policy, supervision, research and institutional development, the department can convert this expertise into valuable professional services. Professional training, consultancy, contract research, conferences, online learning, professional certification, research grants, partnerships, knowledge commercialisation and alumni support can contribute to departmental development.

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

1) The Department of Educational Management should establish a revenue-generation committee responsible for identifying, planning and coordinating legitimate income-generating activities.

2) Professional training centres should be established within Departments of Educational Management to provide fee-paying short courses and executive programmes for principals, teachers, education officers and other education professionals.

3) Universities should support educational management consultancy units through which departments can undertake consultancy, evaluation, strategic planning, monitoring and research services for government agencies, private schools and NGOs.

4) The department should strengthen research-grant acquisition. Academic staff should be encouraged and supported to prepare competitive proposals for TETFund, government agencies, international organisations, foundations and other research sponsors.

5) Partnerships with private schools and education organisations should be encouraged. Such partnerships can provide opportunities for training, institutional evaluation, research and professional consultancy while generating approved revenue.

6) The department should develop online and blended professional programmes that can reach educational administrators and teachers beyond the university's immediate geographical environment.

7) Revenue-generating activities should be governed by strict accountability mechanisms. All income should pass through approved university financial channels, with transparent records and periodic auditing.

8) A reasonable proportion of internally generated revenue should be reinvested in the department. Priority should be given to research, ICT facilities, staff development, library resources, conferences and teaching facilities.

9) The university should create incentives for departments that successfully generate legitimate revenue. Such incentives could include matching grants, research support, improved facilities and approved departmental development funds.

10) Government funding should continue to be strengthened. Revenue generation by departments should complement, not substitute for, adequate public financing of universities. The NUC has identified improved budgetary allocations and subventions as necessary for addressing chronic underfunding in Nigerian universities.

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