

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR FUNDING SECONDARY EDUCATION IN ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study determined the challenges and strategies for funding secondary education in economic uncertainty: A study of Anambra State. The study was guided by two research questions. The study employed descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The entire principals were used as the sample size and no sampling technique was used for the study. This study used a questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire had two sections such as Sections A to B. Section A sought for information on the demographic data of the respondents. Section B had two clusters such as Clusters I to II. Cluster I sought for information on strategies for funding secondary school education in Anambra State, Cluster II sought for information on the challenges that will affect the strategies for funding secondary school education in Anambra State. Each cluster has 8 items and structured on a 4-point scale such as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Cluster I yielded reliability score of 0.958 while Cluster yielded 0.868. The instrument yielded an average reliability coefficient of 0.91. This coefficient indicated high internal consistency. The data generated from the copies of the questionnaire of the research questions were analyzed using mean scores. The study found that Some of the ways include collaborations with private entities for instrumental funding secondary education; issuing education-specific bonds or levies can provide a dedicated revenue stream for schools. This approach has been successfully employed in various regions to raise funds for educational infrastructure and programmes. Despite these strategies, there are some challenges that also affect these challenges such as insecurity, unexpected economic downturn and unforeseen situations such as disasters and pandemic among others. The study recommended that schools should a funding model such as strong alumni, Public-Private Partnerships and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) Contributions among others that is sustainability even in economic uncertainties. Government should promote education bonds that can provide a dedicated revenue stream for schools whenever there are economic uncertainties.

Keywords: Strategies, Funding, Secondary Education, Economic Uncertainty

Introduction

Secondary education plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of a country. It provides students with essential knowledge, skills, and a broad understanding of various subjects. It offers a solid foundation in subjects like mathematics, science, language, history, and others. Gray Group International (2023) asserted that During this phase of education, students are exposed to a wide array of subjects that go beyond the core curriculum. They can delve into subjects such as literature, history, geography, and foreign languages, which broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world. Additionally, secondary education introduces students to advanced mathematics and sciences, enabling them to develop analytical and problem-solving skills. This knowledge forms the basis for more advanced studies. With these subjects, it lays the groundwork for a nation's future leaders, professionals, and citizens. A strong secondary education system ensures that individuals have the knowledge, skills, and values needed to contribute effectively to society. It is an investment in the future prosperity and development of a country.

In spite of the significance of secondary education, the Nigerian economic uncertainties pose notable challenges to this education system in achieving its sets goals. Ozili (2022) has argued that this economic uncertainty results from frequent changes in central bank policies, unexpected changes in government policies, political interference, unexpected declines in global oil prices, economic recessions, and unethical practices. Uchendu (2009) added that economic uncertainty may be because policy-makers are unsure of the model that best fits the dynamics of the economy. Uchendu further stated that it may also be with respect to understanding the prevailing exogenous conditions of the economy. In Nigeria, uncertainty about the transmission mechanism and incomplete understanding of the system has remained a major challenge to the economy.

The outgoing Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group, Mr. Laoye Jaiyeola, nevertheless, lamented the unfortunate outlook for the Nigerian economy, with projections indicating a pessimistic economic outlook projecting from 2023 to 2025 with expectations of only moderate economic growth (Punch Newspaper, 2023). Unfortunately, this level of growth falls short of adequately addressing pressing issues such as unemployment, poverty, and various socioeconomic challenges confronting the nation. Consequently, these result to weak economic growth, high poverty rates, escalating living costs, increasing joblessness, and widening income disparities (Tunji, 2023). This is because uncertainties in economic policies have far-reaching consequences on various macroeconomic factors, and educational policies are not immune to these effects (Ashiru & Oladele, 2023).

Economic uncertainty can pose significant challenges to achieving the goals of secondary education as it has the potential to cause insufficient funding of secondary schools. Economic instability can lead to reduced government budgets for education. This can result in inadequate resources for schools, including outdated textbooks, limited access to technology, and a lack of extracurricular activities (OECD, 2016). Economic uncertainty casts a long shadow over the funding of education, exerting palpable influence on the resources allocated to this crucial sector. This phenomenon is not merely theoretical, as empirical evidence has shown its tangible impact on educational budgets. For instance, during the global financial

crisis of 2008, education budgets in many countries experienced substantial cuts. According to a report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in the aftermath of the crisis, over two-thirds of OECD countries reduced their education spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between 2008 and 2013 (OECD, 2016).

Furthermore, economic downturns often lead to decreased tax revenues, a primary source of funding for education. A study by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the United States indicated that during the Great Recession, state revenues for education saw significant declines, resulting in budget cuts and reduced resources for schools (NCES, 2010). Moreover, economic uncertainty tends to discourage private investments in education, as individuals and corporations may divert their resources towards more stable or immediately lucrative ventures. This diversion of funds away from education can hinder the development of innovative programs, research initiatives, and infrastructure improvements.

The impact of economic uncertainty on education is not limited to immediate budgetary concerns. It can also have far-reaching consequences on the quality and accessibility of education. Reduced funding can lead to larger class sizes, fewer extracurricular activities, and limited access to advanced courses and resources. This can exacerbate educational disparities, as disadvantaged communities are often hit hardest by funding cuts. This shows that economic uncertainty exerts a concrete and discernible influence on the funding of education. The empirical evidence, exemplified by experiences during the 2008 financial crisis, demonstrates the real-world ramifications of economic instability on educational budgets.

It is for some of these reasons above it becomes important for school management to look for or work in synergy with government so as to find strategies for funding secondary education. This is because investment in secondary education is a cornerstone of human capital development. The acquisition of knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities at this level equips individuals with the tools needed to navigate an increasingly complex and competitive global economy (World Bank, 2018). It enables students to pursue higher education or enter the workforce with a solid foundation, contributing to their personal growth and socio-economic mobility. These also showed that funding secondary school education in Nigeria especially in Anambra State is of paramount importance for a multitude of compelling reasons, each rooted in the pursuit of individual development and national progress. It is on this note this study sought to examine the challenges and strategies for funding secondary education in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

When a government is unable to adequately fund secondary school education, a host of formidable challenges emerge, with far-reaching consequences for both individuals and society at large. These issues have been extensively documented in various studies and reports, underscoring the critical importance of sustained investment in education. These mean, the challenges that arise when a government is unable to adequately fund secondary school education are both wide-ranging and deeply impactful. From compromised educational quality to exacerbating inequality, the consequences reverberate through multiple facets of society. These challenges might be some of the reasons many secondary schools in Anambra State cannot manage some of their school challenges such as buying of books,

cutting of grasses and mending dilapidated fences among others. Unfortunately, from the researcher's observations, there is little or no empirical evidence to buttress the need to understand the challenges and proffer strategies for funding secondary in economic uncertainty in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

1. Investigate the challenges for funding secondary education in economic uncertainty in Anambra State.
2. Determine the strategies for funding secondary education in economic uncertainty in Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. What are the challenges for funding secondary education in economic uncertainty in Anambra State.
2. What are the strategies for funding secondary education in economic uncertainty in Anambra State.

METHODS

This study employed descriptive research design. Sevan (2011) contends that descriptive research design enables the researcher determine and describe variable characteristics as well as offer ideas for further probe and research. The population of the study comprised principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State. According to Post Primary School Commission (PPSC, 2023), Anambra State has 263 public secondary schools and for this reason, the population of the study was 263 principals. The entire principals were used as the sample size and no sampling technique was used for the study. This study used a questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire had two sections such as Sections A to B. Section A sought for information on the demographic data of the respondents. Section B had two clusters such as Clusters I to II. Cluster I sought for information on strategies for funding secondary school education in Anambra State, Cluster II sought for information on the challenges that will affect the strategies for funding secondary school education in Anambra State. Each cluster has 8 items and structured on a 4-point scale such as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was validated by three experts in the Department of Educational Management and Policy in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State. The questionnaire was trial tested using 20 principals in public secondary schools in Enugu State with Cronbach Alpha statistic to establish its reliability. Cluster I yielded reliability score of 0.958 while Cluster yielded 0.868. The study yielded an average reliability coefficient of 0.91. This coefficient indicated high internal consistency. The researcher and three research assistants administered the copies of the questionnaire. The researcher was able to administered 100% of the questionnaire and returned 224(85.17)% of the questionnaire. The data generated from the copies of the questionnaire of the research questions were analyzed using mean scores. Items that have mean scores of 2.50 and above were taken as agree while mean scores below 2.50 were taken as disagree.

RESULTS

This section presented the results from the research questions.

What are the challenges for funding secondary education in economic uncertainty in Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean scores of the challenges affecting the funding of secondary education in economic uncertainty in Anambra State

S/N	Item Statements	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decisions
1	Economic downturns ranging from government policies	224	3.17	.937	Agree
2	Inequitable distribution of resources to schools	224	2.83	.937	Agree
3	Mismanagement of secondary schools' activities	224	3.33	.985	Agree
4	Unforeseen Events (e.g., Natural Disasters, Pandemics)	224	3.25	.965	Agree
5	Changing educational needs to meet economic reality	224	2.92	1.165	Agree
6	Limited access to technology	224	2.75	1.215	Agree
7	Lack of specialized education funding	224	3.08	.996	Agree
8	Security concerns within the school vicinity	224	2.92	1.084	Agree
Average Mean Score			3.03	1.034	Agree

Table 1 showed the mean scores of the challenges for funding secondary education in economic uncertainty in Anambra State. The results revealed that the average mean score of items 9 to 16 was 3.03 with a standard deviation of 1.034 is above 2.50. This signifies that in an economic uncertainty, the above listed items were challenges schools face for funding secondary education in the period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State.

What are the strategies for funding secondary school education in economic uncertainty in Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean scores of the strategies for funding secondary school education in economic uncertainty in Anambra State

S/N	Item Statements	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decisions
9	Placing education levies on the parents through P.T.A.	224	2.46	1.073	Disagree
10	Encouragement of public-private partnerships within schools	224	3.00	1.128	Agree
11	Seeking for grants from NGOs	224	3.00	1.044	Agree
12	Carrying out crowdfunding campaigns	224	2.67	1.073	Agree
13	Seeking alumni donations	224	3.17	.937	Agree
14	Encourage government to create education bonds	224	2.83	1.115	Agree
15	Organizing community fundraising events	224	3.00	.953	Agree
16	Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) contributions	224	3.25	.965	Agree
Average Mean Score			2.92	1.036	Agree

Table 2 showed the mean scores of the strategies for funding secondary school education in economic uncertainty in Anambra State. The results revealed that the average mean score of

items 9 to 16 was 2.92 with a standard deviation of 1.036 is above 2.50. This signifies that in an economic uncertainty, the above listed items were used for funding secondary education in economic uncertainty in Anambra State.

Discussions

Table 1 showed the mean scores of the challenges that for funding secondary education in economic uncertainty in Anambra State. The results revealed that the average mean score of items 1 to 8 was 3.03 with a standard deviation of 1.034 is above 2.50. This signifies that in an economic uncertainty, the above listed items were challenges schools face while trying to implement the strategies for funding secondary school education in economic uncertainty in Anambra State. This finding was supported by the findings of World Bank (2018) economic recessions or crises lead to reduced government revenues, making it more challenging to allocate adequate funds for education. UNESCO (2020) also found that in many regions, there is a disparity in the distribution of educational resources, with schools in disadvantaged areas often receiving fewer funds.

Table 2 showed the mean scores of the strategies for funding secondary education in economic uncertainty in Anambra State. The results revealed that the average mean score of items 1 to 8 was 2.92 with a standard deviation of 1.036 is above 2.50. This signifies that in an economic uncertainty, the above listed items were used for funding secondary education in Nigeria. In line with findings, Hart and Donnelly (2018) found that in economic uncertainty schools organize events, soliciting donations, and mobilizing community support for education. As educational approaches evolve, there may be a need for investments in new teaching methods, curriculum development, and teacher training (UNESCO, 2015). Ladd (2012) also found that issuing education-specific bonds or levies can provide a dedicated revenue stream for schools. This approach has been successfully employed in various regions to raise funds for educational infrastructure and programmes.

Conclusion

In an economy that is faced with uncertainties, many schools find it difficult to solve or manage some challenges. Some of these challenges include insecurity, unexpected economic downturn and unforeseen situations such as disasters and pandemic among others. As a result of these, secondary schools can generate funds in funding secondary education. Some of the ways include collaborations with private entities for instrumental funding secondary education; issuing education-specific bonds or levies can provide a dedicated revenue stream for schools. This approach has been successfully employed in various regions to raise funds for educational infrastructure and programmes.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions of the findings, the following were recommended:

1. Schools should a funding model such as strong alumni, Public-Private Partnerships and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) Contributions among others that is sustainability even in economic uncertainties.
2. Government should promote education bonds that can provide a dedicated revenue stream for schools whenever there are economic uncertainties

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