

FUNDING OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PERIOD OF ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This research focused on funding of university education: a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in period of economic uncertainty in Awka State. The study was guided by three research questions and three research hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. It adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 1041 senior lecturers of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Through simple random sampling, a total of 300 senior lecturers were selected for the study. Instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled 'funding of university education as panacea for excellence in teaching and learning'. The questionnaire was validated by three education experts. In order to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, it was tested on 25 university lecturers from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra who were not part of the selected sample. Test-retest technique was adopted for this process after which, scores were collated and computed using Cronbach Alpha which yielded coefficients of 0.83, 0.79 and 0.85 index respectively. Mean and standard deviation was used for data analysis while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. Findings show among others that university education in Nigeria is funded through education tax funds, government funding, tuition and fees, grants, consultancy and research activities as well as through community participation. The study recommends among others that stakeholders in university education should make funds readily available to universities in order to maintain the progress of innovation in human and material resources.

Keywords: Funding, University, Education, Economic Uncertainty, Excellence in teaching and Learning

Introduction

Education has been responsible for the development of man and his entire environments. This is truth because the soul of societies from one generation to another has solely depended on education for survival. This makes education an important instrument for change and development in the world today. Therefore, for students to be meaningfully trained and directed towards his future career, he is supposed to pass through the main three levels of Education in Nigeria, which include primary, secondary and tertiary. The tertiary level which is the main concern of this paper is sometimes referred to as university education.

The university education is the highest level of tertiary or higher education system cadre, likewise, the pivot on which the development of any society hangs. The university education trains useful and vibrant manpower that make contributive efforts towards socio-economic, political and cultural development in the country. Abdullah, Harun and Jali (2017) posited that university education is that form of education that trains the unemployed to acquire skills relevant in any industries in economic sectors. These skills are not just for the purpose of being employed in a firm, but to create employment opportunities for other people (Oyelola, Igwe, Ajiboshin, and Peluola, 2014). University education provides the students with diverse basic knowledge, information and skills through theory and practice for entrepreneurship and technological advancement in the Nigeria society. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013), this level of education makes optimum contribution towards national development through the intensification and diversification of its programmes for the development of high level manpower within the context of the needs of the nation; making all professional course contents reflect the country's national requirements; making all students part of general programme. All these cannot be successfully attained without adequate funding of university education.

Fund is synonymous to money. In a typical university, funding is needed to carry out all academic activities to ensure specific objectives are achieved. Funding entails making funds or money available for use. In education, funds are used to run all academic activities including administrative duties, purchase, payments of staff and maintenance of resources. Guthrie and Schuermann (2017) defined funding of education as governmental and organizational processes by which revenues are generated (through taxation, tuition, fees, and philanthropy), distributed, and expended for the operational and capital support of formal schooling. California Coast University (2023) described funding of education as that which is concerned with the process of understanding that resources, social progress, technological advancement and wealth are created through a sound and continuously improving educational system. Such a system itself depends upon many kinds of inputs, one of the most important of which is adequate funding. The issue of poor and inadequate funding of the Nigeria university education has continued to raise a lot of doubts and so much concern from various stakeholders. Rowell and Money (2018) express their dissatisfaction that the fact remain that education in Nigeria has experienced loss of facilities, deterioration of equipment and plant and uncompleted projects as a results of the financial crisis facing the system. University education if adequately funded will produce competent workforce for the Nigerian economy through excellence in teaching and learning.

Excellence in teaching and learning, as viewed in this study, means the university maintaining high standard in promoting best practices or service delivery in teaching and learning. Excellence in teaching and learning entail promoting teaching effectiveness based on stimulating students' interest; clarity; organization; and a positive classroom climate.

Teaching and learning in the universities takes place in different patterns of lectures in the classrooms, halls or auditorium, project/research work, consulting services, workshop, confidential counseling, laboratory practical, experiment and field work experience/industrial attachment (IT). (Nisar, 2015). Achievement of excellence in teaching and learning can be highly promoted through the consideration of all factors that facilitate the learning among students and enhance the teaching and supervision skills of teachers. However, students learn under difficult condition where facilities or teaching resources and other infrastructure are lacking greatly. There is also dearth in curriculum support equipment and facilities, the classrooms and halls are overpopulated and congested by students due to limited number of space. Femade, Omiyale and Adebola (2015) opined that building classroom, laboratories, and equipment, education infrastructures are crucial element of teaching and learning environment in universities, there is strong evidence that high-quality infrastructure facilities better instruction, improves student outcome and reduce dropout rate, among other benefits. On the side of the lecturers, they are not adequately motivated in order to promote excellence teaching. Rowell and Money (2018) asserted that lack of enough professionally qualify and trained teachers, teaching and learning resources and materials coupled with low remunerations and motivation for teachers, equally affect the quality of teaching provided in schools. The current poor conditions of teaching and learning in university education system present so much concern for achievement of excellence in teaching and learning. Since university education brings about national development, it is pertinent that these areas of primary concern affecting the achievement of excellence in teaching and learning be addressed through adequate funding. However, teaching and learning seem to be boring in the Nigerian universities due to unconducive school environment for both the students and lecturers especially this period of economic uncertainty.

Economic uncertainty simply means a situation where it becomes difficult to ascertain what the future holds. Pettinger (2016) defined economic uncertainty as the future outlook for the economy which is said to be unpredictable. Pettinger further averred that when people talk of economic uncertainty, they usually imply that there is a high likelihood of negative economic events. Similarly, Colak, Guney and Hacıhasanoglu (2020) refer to economic uncertainty as the situation where the future outlook for the economy is unpredictable. There is high risk in this period which can be caused by variety of factors such as political instability, change in government policies, natural disasters, and market fluctuations. Irrespective of the economic uncertainty, the researcher perceived that there could be strategies the university can adopt to generate fund to make teaching and learning excellence even in times of economic uncertainty, through Internally Generated Revenue (IGR). Ofor-Douglas (2023) opined that more ways to improve university education is through establishing academic concluding program, viable university farms, hiring of facilities, hotel services, leasing of university land, viable petrol station, commercial computer services, university printing press and foreign grants. Similarly, Femade et al (2015) opined that universities can improve funding through their institutions, this includes endowment funds, launching/appeal funds, awards of honorary degrees, through Alumni associations, part-time and remedial programs. Mbah, Nnadi, Nwachukwu and Onoh (2017) identified government subvention/allocation, education trust fund, student fees/levies, grants, private sector contributions and commercial ventures as ways by which university education is funded. Relatively, Ahmed (2015) mentioned government intervention and through cost-sharing as means by which university education is funded. Ogbogu in Mbah et al (2017) maintained that

provision of funds in university education helps to run administrative duties in the school, and enhances teaching and learning in the school. On the other hand, Mahabub (2014) stated that gender could play a role in deciding the perception of the effectiveness of funding options for university education. Gender refers to the societal categorization of female and male identities. It encompasses more than just biological variances between men and women; rather, it encompasses how these differences, whether actual or perceived, have been assessed, utilized, and depended upon to define the roles and responsibilities of individuals. Traditional gender roles may predispose male lecturers to prioritize certain funding avenues or strategies that align with perceived masculine traits such as assertiveness and risk-taking. On the other hand, female lecturers might lean towards more cautious and collaborative approaches due to societal expectations regarding femininity (Hevel, Martin and Pascarella, 2014). Furthermore, gender differences in communication and negotiation styles can impact lecturers' effectiveness in advocating for funding. Male lecturers, who may be socialized to assert their viewpoints confidently and negotiate assertively, might excel in securing funding through direct negotiations. In contrast, female lecturers may face challenges in advocating for funding due to societal norms that discourage assertive behavior in women (Cislaghi and Heise, 2020). These views have not been empirically proven to be true in Anambra State. It is against this background that the researcher investigated the funding of public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

University education plays a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of both states and nations, serving as the bedrock for the cultivation of human capital. Universities are esteemed as ivory towers where the nation's intellectual resources are shaped and refined. However, the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning within the university system is dependent on adequate funding.

In Anambra State, as in many States experiencing economic uncertainty in Nigeria, the efficacy of public university education in cultivating quality human capital has been called into question. Evidence suggests that universities in Anambra State have fallen short of realizing their mission to graduate highly competent individuals, which is reflected in the large number of graduates who are unable to effectively integrate into the 21st century work environment. This phenomenon underscores a systemic issue: the lack of sufficient funding within the university system. The dearth of physical and instructional resources required for effective teaching and learning shows the level of underfunding of universities in Anambra State in particular and Nigeria in general. This scarcity compromises the quality of education and hampers the development of students. Consequently, there is a growing concern that if this situation persists unchecked, it will exacerbate the unemployment rate not only within Anambra State but also across Nigeria. Therefore, the researcher investigated the funding of public university education as a panacea for fostering excellence in teaching and learning amidst the prevailing economic uncertainties in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the funding of public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to;

- Determine the avenues of funding public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State.
- Examine ways of funding public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State.
- Investigate strategies used internally to generate funds for public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study

- What are the avenues of funding public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State?
- What are the ways of funding public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State?
- What are the strategies used internally to generate funds for public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State?
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Hypotheses

1. There is no significant mean difference on male and female lecturers' response on the avenues of funding public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State
2. There is no significant mean difference on male and female lecturers' response on the ways of funding public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State
3. There is no significant mean difference on male and female lecturers' response on strategies used internally in generating funds for public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State

Methods

The study was guided by three research questions and three research hypotheses tested at 0.05

level of significance. It adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 1041 senior lecturers of the NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka. Through simple random sampling, a total of 300 senior lecturers were selected for the study. Instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled 'funding of university education a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning'. The questionnaire was validated by three education experts. In order to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, it was tested on 25 university lecturers from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, Anambra State who were not part of the selected sample. Test-retest technique was adopted for this process after which, scores were collated and computed using Cronbach Alpha which yielded reliability coefficient values of 0.83, 0.79 and 0.85 index respectively. Mean and standard deviation was used for data analysis while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. In analyzing

the mean, any item between 2.50 and above is regarded as agree while any item below 2.50 was regarded as disagree. For the hypotheses, where the calculated t (t -cal) is less than the critical value of t (t -crit), it means that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of the respondents. Thus, the hypothesis was accepted. Conversely, where the calculated t (t -cal) is greater than the critical value of t (t -crit), it means that there is a significant difference in the mean responses of the respondents. Thus, the hypothesis was not accepted.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the avenues of funding public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State?

Table 1: Respondents mean ratings on the avenues of funding public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty

S/N	Item Statements	Gender	N	Mean	SD	RMK
1	From individuals	Male	127	2.03	.87	Disagree
		Female	173	1.87	.28	Disagree
2	From education tax funds	Male	127	2.76	.67	Agree
		Female	173	2.81	1.03	Agree
3	Government funding	Male	127	3.02	.51	Agree
		Female	173	2.68	.39	Agree
4	Tuition and fees	Male	127	2.83	1.54	Agree
		Female	173	2.62	1.49	Agree
5	Through grants	Male	127	2.72	.90	Agree
		Female	173	3.00	1.28	Agree
6	Through gifts	Male	127	1.20	.31	Disagree
		Female	173	2.17	.82	Disagree
7	Consultancy and research activities	Male	127	2.86	.78	Agree
		Female	173	3.09	1.63	Agree
8	Community participation	Male	127	0.89	.55	Disagree
		Female	173	1.72	.86	Disagree
	GRAND TOTAL	Male	127	2.28	0.76	Disagree
		Female	173	2.49	0.97	Disagree

The result presented in Table 1 shows the mean ratings of avenues through which public university education is funded. It shows that university education in Nigeria is funded through education tax funds, government funding, tuition and fees, through grants, through consultancy and research activities and lastly through community participation.

Research Question 2: What are the ways of funding public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State?

Table 1: Respondents mean ratings of ways funding of public university education promotes excellence in teaching and learning during economic uncertainty

S/N	Item Statements	Gender	N	Mean	SD	RMK
1	funding enhances the availability and management of school resources to ensure effective academics	Male	127	2.98	.34	Agree
		Female	173	3.06	.73	Agree
2	Promotes the culture of the school which enhances teaching and learning	Male	127	2.78	1.34	Agree
		Female	173	2.82	.64	Agree
3	Funding enhances quality of teaching and learning in all academic courses	Male	127	3.12	.78	Agree
		Female	173	3.02	1.23	Agree
4	Reduces social unrest among students	Male	127	2.89	1.60	Agree
		Female	173	3.13	1.02	Agree
5	Funding attracts infrastructures suitable for teaching and learning in school	Male	127	2.76	.73	Agree
		Female	173	2.65	.66	Agree
6	Funding makes instructional materials available in schools and this promotes teaching and learning	Male	127	3.11	.28	Agree
		Female	173	2.83	.88	Agree
7	Funding makes administrative tools easy to access	Male	127	2.59	1.92	Agree
		Female	173	2.72	.21	Agree
8	Funding of university education reduces overtaxing of students	Male	127	1.08	.46	

					Disagree
	Female	173	2.42	1.67	Disagree
GRAND TOTAL	Male	127	2.66	0.93	Agree
	Female	173	2.83	0.88	Agree

The result presented in Table 3 shows the mean ratings of ways funding of public university education promotes excellence in teaching and learning during economic uncertainty. It shows that when universities are funded, it enhances teaching and learning through the promotion of availability and management of resources, promotes school culture, enhances teaching and learning of all academic courses, reduces social unrest among students, attracts infrastructures and instructional materials as well as makes administrative work activities of students easy.

Research Question 3: What are the strategies used internally to generate funds for public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean ratings on strategies used in generating fund internally to achieve excellence in teaching and learning in university education in Anambra State

S/N	Item Statements	Gender	N	Mean	SD	RMK
1	Establishment of hiring of facilities	Male	127	2.98	.92	Agree
		Female	173	3.12	1.23	Agree
2	Academic consulting programmes	Male	127	2.58	1.73	Agree
		Female	173	2.72	.99	Agree
3	Establishment of university hotel services	Male	127	2.87	.27	Agree
		Female	173	3.01	.72	Agree
4	Establishment of university printing press	Male	127	2.77	.38	Agree
		Female	173	3.05	1.42	Agree
5	Establishment of commercial computer services	Male	127	2.59	0.83	Agree
		Female	173	2.67	1.04	Agree

GRAND TOTAL	Male	127	2.75	0.82	Agree
	Female	173	2.91	1.08	Agree

The result presented in Table 3 shows the mean ratings on strategies in improving funding for the achievement of excellence in teaching and learning in university education. It shows that establishment of hiring of facilities, academic consulting programs, establishment of university hotel services, university printing press and establishment of commercial computer services are strategies to improve funding of university education in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant mean difference on male and female lecturers' response on the avenues of funding public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State

Table 4: Summary of t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of Male And Female Lecturers on the Avenues of Funding Public University Education as a Panacea For Excellence in Teaching and Learning in A Period of Economic Uncertainty

Location	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	A	Decision
Male	127	2.28	0.76	298	1.50	1.972	.05	Not Significant
Female	173	2.49	0.97					

Data in Table 4 reveal that t-cal is 1.50. This indicates that the t-cal of 1.50 is less than t-crit of 1.972. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted at .05 level of significance. It therefore means that here is no significant mean difference in the mean ratings of male and female lecturers' on avenues of funding public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant mean difference on male and female lecturers' response on ways of funding public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State

Table 5: Summary of t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of Male and Female Lecturers' on Ways Funding of Public University Education Promotes Social Stability in Teaching and Learning During Economic Uncertainties

Location	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	A	Decision
Rural	127	2.66	0.93	298	0.447	1.972	.05	No significant

Urban	173	2.83	0.88
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Data in Table 4 reveal that t-cal is 0.447. This indicates that the t-cal of 0.447 is less than t-crit of 1.972. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted at .05 level of significance. It therefore means that there is no significant mean difference in the mean ratings of male and female lecturers' on ways of funding public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant mean difference on male and female lecturers' response on strategies used internally in generating funds for public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State.

Table 6: Summary of t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of Male and Female Lecturers on Strategies Used in Generating Fund Achieve Excellence in Teaching and Learning in University Education

Location	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	A	Decision
Male	127	2.74	0.96					
				298	0.07	1.972	.05	Not significant
Female	173	2.73	0.64					

Information in Table 6 revealed that t-cal is 0.07 which is less than t-crit of 1.972. Since the t-cal of 0.07 is less than the t-crit, it means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female lecturers' on strategies used internally in generating funds for public university education as a panacea for excellence in teaching and learning in a period of economic uncertainty in Anambra State. The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Discussion

The first findings from table one show that university education in Nigeria is funded through education tax funds, government funding, tuition and fees, through grants, through consultancy and research activities and lastly through community participation. The above findings are related to the findings of Ahmed (2015) identified government subvention/allocation, education trust fund, student fees/levies, grants, private sector contributions and commercial ventures as was by which university education is funded. Similar to the above findings, Ofor-Douglas (2023) identified TETFund, federal and state government, revenues from fees and tuitions, funds from the proprietors, internally generated revenues, donations, grants, endowments and gifts as ways universities are funded. On the

whole, the above findings show that government and other bodies are actively involved in funding university education in Nigeria.

The second findings show that public university education promotes excellence in teaching and learning during economic uncertainty and that funding of university education in Nigeria promotes availability and management of resources, promotes school culture, enhances teaching and learning in all academic courses, reduces social unrest among students, attracts infrastructures and instructional materials as well as makes administrative work activities of students easy. The above finding are in line with the findings of Mbah et al (2017) maintained that provision of funds in university education helps to run administrative duties in the school, enhances teaching and learning in the school. Contributing to the above findings, Femade et al (2015) state that funding of university education not only promote academics in higher institutions in Nigeria, they also enhance the socio-economic transformation of students, the society and nation at large. This means that funding of university education has numerous benefits and advantages to the daily activities of the institution as well as enhances excellence in teaching and learning activities in the school.

The third findings sought strategies used in generating fund to achieve excellence in teaching and learning in university education. Findings show that establishment of a typical hiring facility, academic consulting programs, establishment of university hotel services, university printing press and establishment of commercial computer services are strategies to improve funding of university education in Nigeria. Some of the above findings are in agreement with the findings of Mbah et al (2017) submitted that ways to improve university education is through establishment of academic consultant program, establishing viable university farms, establishing hiring of facilities, hotel services, leasing of university land, establishing viable petrol station, commercial computer services, establishing university printing press and foreign grants. Similarly to the above findings is Ahmed (2015) who maintained that universities can improve funding through their institutions, that is, universities can improve funding through endowment funds, launching/appeal funds, awards of honorary degrees, through Alumni associations, part-time, remedial programs. These improvement promote academic excellence as well as enhances teaching and learning when it is adequately managed.

Conclusion

Allocation of funds into university education is really a prerequisite for excellence teaching and learning and very vital in times of economic uncertainty. The difficulties in achievement of excellence in teaching and learning in university education needs adequate improvement, since university education is one of the surest root to escape from poverty, therefore, demands adequate funding from all source reviewed in the study. Thus, government and various groups of civil society must have vested interest in ensuring that the Nigerian universities are adequately funded which is panacea for achievement of excellence in teaching and learning in period of economic uncertainty.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the researcher recommends as follows:

13. The government should increase budgetary allocation for university education to enhance effective teaching and learning.

- 14.** The stakeholders in university education should make funds readily available to universities in order to maintain the progress of innovation in human and material resources.
- 15.** The university system should utilize what they have within their environment to generate fund in order to maintain the school especially in this period of economic uncertainty.

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