

## FUNDING OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A FOCUS ON NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION

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### Abstract

*This paper provides a review of education funding in Nigeria. Funding is considered all over the world as the life wire that propels the educational sector towards achieving her objectives. The paper focused on the important role funding plays in determining the provision of quality education at all levels. Emphases were laid on the consequences of inadequate funding on education such as infrastructural decay, low patronage of Nigerian schools, and high cost of education. The paper also discussed the reasons for inadequate funding of education in Nigeria among which are corruption and embezzlement, wastages and leakages and lacklustre growth rate of the GDP. It was concluded that funding is the engine room of the education sector and its availability or unavailability will determine the outcomes of the education sector at all levels. It was therefore recommended that Government should allocate more funds if possible, 26 percent of her total budget as recommended by UNESCO to education sector to address the inadequacies in the sector and boost access to quality education in the country, while the private sector should also contribute to the funding of education in the country as part of their corporate social responsibility.*

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**Keywords:** Funding, Education, Budget, Nigeria

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### Introduction

Education is a social creation, designed to meet the specific needs of the society at any particular point in time. Its form, content, methodology and clientele are determined by the society (Abdulrahman & Paulley, 2019). Education as described by Vikoo (2016) is an interaction between a teacher and a student under the teacher's responsibility in order to bring about the expected change in the student's behaviour. Similarly, Adelowo (2010) conceptualised education as an enterprise which sets out to instil values, attitude and skills in members of the society. This was aptly supported by Pauley and Buseri (2019), that see education as a socializing agent that equips all its beneficiaries with the necessary tools such as knowledge, skills, attitude, cultural values, language and social skills to enable them conform to the desires/demand of their society. The above definitions show that education equip the individual in all ramifications. It is an enabler for job creation and employment opportunities as it equips the individual with the required skill sets and the technical know-how to start their businesses (Mourshed Farrel & Barton, 2018). In the context of this paper, education, whether formal or informal, is the recognized method whereby a person acquires most of his ideas, beliefs and attitude to combat the hazards and problem of life and to fit into

the company of his fellow human being. Inadequate funding however, remains a significant challenge facing the education sector in Nigeria and has persisted for decades. When funding is mentioned, the first thing that comes to mind is the availability of money for meeting the need for a given project or programme (Nwafor, Uchendu & Akani, 2015). It is a system of apportioning available capital belonging to an organization for meeting a need. Funding refers to a form of financial support that is given for the achievement of a project (Nwafor, Uchendu & Akani, 2015). Funding is the provision of financial resources in order to meet a need, project or program. Funding is regarded as the act of providing money or financial resources for a particular purpose on a continuous basis (Nwosu & Cyril, 2015). Such money or financial resources should be enough to cater for the project or programme for which they are provided. In the context of this paper, funding refers to the process of making funds available to the education sector. Education at all levels in Nigeria are grossly underfunded and therefore needs proper funding.

Funding of public schools is one of the major functions of the government. This is done through the preparation of annual budget for meeting the needs of the various sectors of the economy including education (Hall, 2013). Similarly, supplementary budget is usually prepared by government to take care of financial inadequacies in the education sector. The various levels of government; local, state and federal are partakers in the funding of the education sector (Hall, 2013). The government therefore plays a significant role of funding education through annual budgetary allocation. This is because funding serves as the life-wire for the management and administration of the educational sector. It is based on this fact that UNESCO recommended that 26% of the annual budget of any nation should be set aside for the administration and management of the educational sector (Odia & Omofonmwan, 2007). This is because such funding strategy will assist in providing the basic resources needed for teaching and learning both in terms of quality and quantity. However, Nigeria is one of the countries that are yet to allocate 26 percent of her budgetary allocation to education as recommended by the United Nations (UNESCO). This goes a long way to affect education in the country. Successive governments have continuously allocated meagre sums to the education sector. This contrasts with UNESCO's recommendation, thereby hampering access to education and its attendant problems of unemployment, poverty, and inequality. Consideration should therefore be given to the educational sector through continuous increase in the allocation to education sector (Nwafor, Uchendu & Akani, 2015). This will help to increase the quantity of available funds for managing the school system. However, the funding of education shouldn't be left solely to the government, the private sector should also be a contributor to the funding of education. The role of the private sector in providing financial support for the administration of education in the country cannot be over emphasized. According to Jakarta (2010) the contribution of the private sector to national education is a resource that remains largely untapped. Private sectors in the country usually have social corporate responsibilities of contributing to the development of their host communities (Nwafor, Uchendu & Akani, 2015). This implies that the provision of financial support to education is one of the areas through which private sectors can fulfil their corporate social responsibilities. Private business owners are expected to contribute financially to the

growth of the educational sector from their wealth of financial resources (Nwafor, Uchendu & Akani, 2015). This also will serve as additional revenue outlet for schools in the country.

### **Consequences of Inadequate Funding on Education**

Funding of education remains one of the important resources that are needed to manage the school system. All levels of education; primary, secondary and tertiary require sufficient level of funding in order to improve on the standard of education provided in the country. When funding is not provided in the right quantity and at the right time, it affects the education sector in so many ways. Some of the consequences of insufficient funding on the administration of education in Nigeria according to Nwafor, Uchendu & Akani (2015) include:

**Infrastructural decay:** According to Sullivan and Sheffrin (2003) infrastructure is a term used to refer to products, services and facilities that are needed for an institution to function. It therefore means that the ability of the school system to achieve her objectives depends on the availability of these products. Infrastructures are very important for learning to take place in any educational institution. Eseyin, Okafor and Uchendu (2014:196) stated that “Infrastructures play a significant role in the provision of quality education in any nation”. They aid in the dissemination, assimilation and transmission of knowledge. However, when funds are not available for the provision and maintenance of these facilities, it could result into a dilapidation of existing structures as a result of wear and tear and lack of maintenance. Funding is also required to upgrade facilities in the school environment and make them useful based on modern trends.

**Low Level of Commitment among Staff:** One of the benefits of funding is that it serves as a means of motivating staff in the work environment. According to Herzberg (1966) salary is one of the hygiene factors that motivate staff to work. When this is not forthcoming, it reduces the level of commitment of workers in the organization. The timely and adequate payment of staff salaries and other welfare package is a factor that stimulates workers willingness to work. Funding is therefore necessary in order to arouse the commitment of workers in the work place. The absence of this benefit will result to a poor level of commitment to work.

**Low level of Academic Performance:** Availability of facilities such as libraries, laboratories, workshops, comfortable hostels etc are necessary for a productive learning. These facilities make it easier for teachers and students to carry out their basic responsibilities in the school. Students need learning materials to learn well while the teachers also require teaching aids to be effective. However, in a situation where these facilities are not available for self-development, the performance level of both teachers and students will be very low. This is because teachers and students will have more idle time than productive time. The implication is that study periods will reduce and learning outcome will be low.

**Low Patronage of Nigerian Schools:** The quality of staff and facilities in Nigerian schools is a factor considered by parents and students when making institutional choices. The availability of these resources in quality and quantity usually determines the standard of

education provided. These resources cannot be provided as at when due when there is financial inadequacy. This situation can lead to the patronage of foreign educational institutions rather than local institutions. For example, over 75,000 Nigerian students are said to be studying in Ghana alone aside other countries (Punch, 2014). This is as a result of low expectations from educational institutions in Nigeria which is attributed to the poor funding policies in the educational sector.

**Higher Cost of Education:** The cost of acquiring formal education in Nigeria is gradually increasing when compared to other countries of the world. The cost of education is usually divided between the individuals and government. Cost sharing in this case makes the cost of education to be cheaper for individuals who wish to acquire formal education. However, when the needed funding from the other educational stakeholders is not forth coming, this will increase the cost of acquiring education by interested individuals. The implication of this is that the level of enrolment will drop since interested students may not be empowered to pay for the high cost of getting quality education.

#### **Importance of Funding on Education**

The quantity of funds made available to the education sector during budgeting will go a long way in improving the quality of education provided. Adequate funding of the education sector according to Nwafor, Uchendu and Akani (2015) will be of importance in the provision of quality education in one or more of the following ways:

**It Leads to Infrastructural Development:** The availability of fund is very important in the provision of school infrastructures. More funding will help in providing more facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries and instructional materials. Available facilities will also be provided based on modern development while obsolete facilities will be discarded. This means that the higher the level of funding, the more the infrastructures that will be provided for teaching and learning.

**Attraction of Quality Resource Persons:** The availability of funds is very crucial in the employment of quality teachers. Various studies have shown that the income level is a factor that is used to attract quality teachers. It is therefore necessary that funds should be provided to acquire this crucial human resource. This is because the presence of quality teachers will help in transmitting quality knowledge to the students. Most organizations in developed countries now pay workers based on performance (Podgursky & Springer, 2007). The payment of high wages and salaries is now used to attract quality teachers and this is based on the availability of funds.

**Reduction in Education Cost:** Adequate funding of education by various educational stakeholders is a very important step in reducing the burden of the cost of education on parents and students. Rich (2012) stated that until alternative funding sources are provided, students will continue to pay high education cost even if the cost is unreasonable. Exploring funding sources will therefore help to reduce the burden of funding of education among the various educational stakeholders. Additional funding from alternative sources will provide

avenue for generating funds for the purchase of learning resources which will reduce the burden of the cost of education on the government, parents and students.

**Increases the Level of Patronage:** When schools in Nigeria are properly funded to the minimum level specified by UNESCO at 26% of the annual budget, there will be an improvement in the standard of education provided and this will increase the level of patronage of Nigerian schools by both citizens and foreigners. This in a long run can help to improve on the image of Nigerian schools and increase the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Proper funding of education will restore the confidence of parents and the international community on the standard of education provided in Nigeria.

### **Reasons for Inadequate Funding of Education in Nigeria**

There are various factors that are responsible for the underfunding or inadequate funding of education in Nigeria. Some of the reasons according to Nwachukwu (2014) are:

**Corruption and Embezzlement:** Corruption is a social problem that is affecting most of the sectors in Nigeria. The educational sector has also not been left out of the misappropriation and underutilization of funds set aside for the improvement of the education system. Ayobami (2011) pointed out that corruption can be systematic in nature but in a long run will affect the whole life of an institution or society. Corruption can therefore limit the goals of an institution thereby resulting to wastages. Some of the funds made available for the provision of quality education are sometimes diverted for selfish use while in other cases, the budget for the educational sector are misappropriated. This has given rise to the inadequacy of funds for managing the levels of education; Wastages and leakages are overriding macroeconomic conditions that have determined the fate of the education sector and where the economy is not growing at a reasonable high and sustainable rate, it will not have the resources to fund a largely social service sector such as education in Nigeria with a high population growth rate; Lacklustre growth rate of the GDP would imply severe resource constraints, which could lead to the poor resourcing of social sector such as education; Over dependence on oil revenue as a source of funding of education in Nigeria; Policy and strategy instability and inconsistency and Inefficient management.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the literatures that were reviewed, it was concluded that funding is tied to the provision of quality education delivery and the standard of education provided for the citizens to a large extent depends on the availability of funds. This implies that funding is the engine room of the education sector and its availability or unavailability will determine the outcomes of the education sector at all levels.

### Recommendations

Based on the literatures that were reviewed, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should allocate more funds if possible, 26 percent of her total budget as recommended by UNESCO to education sector to address the inadequacies in the sector and boost access to quality education in the country.
2. The private sector should cooperate with the government and other educational stakeholders in supporting the education system through financial and material assistance. This should serve as part of its cooperate social responsibility since the education sector also contribute to the provision of quality manpower for this economic sector of the economy.

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