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## FINANCING UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS' MANAGEMENT IN THE SOUTH WEST GEO-POLITICAL ZONE

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### **ABSTRACT**

Education is widely accepted as a major instrument for promoting socio-economic, political and cultural development. Education is a life-long process that has interpretation in purpose, type and level. It is a means of socializing people into the community, for upholding customs and traditions as well as for the modification or changing of same in conformity with existing ideologies, ideological expansion or reformation. University education aims at generating national development. It should not only to seek to develop the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environment, but should endeavour to equip recipients with requisite physical and intellectual skills fit for life in the society. The achievement of these objectives, centre round its ability to encourage teaching, research and community service. This paper examined financing university education in Nigeria and its implications for staff and students' management in the South West Geo- Political Zone for the period of six years (2001-2006). It was found out that the gross inadequate financing of education sector has been rendering the university education incapacitated. Government's allocation to universities is grossly insufficient to take care of the population explosion of staff and students in these institutions and the funding pattern did not give adequate consideration to the requirement of the universities. Education sector supposed to be given a high priority in budgetary allocations because it produces the skilled manpower for other sectors of the economy. If smaller nations like Ghana and Cameroon could fund education better, there is no reason why Nigeria cannot do better. Therefore, it was recommended that government should allocate more funds into the education sector in order to address the current dreadful decadence in the university system, review upward the pay-package of academics to prevent brain drain, universities should search for better ways of generating revenue to supplement government efforts, some of which are large scale farming, animal breeding industries and consultancy services in the areas of research.

**Keywords:** *Financing, University Education, Management*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The role of education as an instrument for promoting the socio-economic, political and cultural development of any nation can never be over-emphasized. Ajayi & Ekundayo (2006) considered education as a form of public good which has a highly positive externality to the society. Anyambele (2004) drove this point home further when he stated that education is one of the basic means of human and cultural self-realization as well as a means of realizing the productive power of a nation. The very concept of development according to him implies the constant improvement in the quality of life in a nation through the improvement of the productive capabilities of individuals. Education is one of the decisive tools for achieving this.

Since culture differs from one society to another, every society ultimately has its own system for training and educating the youths. Universities educate future leaders and develop the high-level technical capacities that strengthen economic growth and development (Odekunle, 2001). Besides, Akintayo (2004) also posited that the main purpose and relevance of university education in Nigeria is the provision of much needed manpower to accelerate the socio-economic development of the nation. Such specialized education at the higher level is regarded as an instrument of social change and economic development. According to the National Policy on Education (2004), university education is expected to:

- (a) Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training.
- (b) Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society.
- (c) Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments.
- (d) Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.
- (e) Promote and encourage scholarship and community service.
- (f) Forge and cement national unity.
- (g) Promote national and international understanding and interaction.

Ojedele & Ilusanya (2006) also posited that the NPE specified how university education in Nigeria should pursue these goals. Considering the importance of university education, Ajayi & Ekundayo (2006) submitted that the funds allocated to university education should not merely be considered as an expense but a long-term investment of benefits to society as a whole. These benefits are reflected on a societal level in terms of lower unemployment rates, better health, lower crime rates, more involvement in societal activities, higher tax returns and other trickle-down effects. University education is the nation's hope for national development. It is the type of education given to individuals after secondary level of education which consists of conventional universities offering courses in sciences and humanity and special universities for sciences, agriculture and engineering. University education is expected to create needed human capital with enhanced skills that can lead to technological innovation, productivity and growth within the economy (Samuel, 2003). Hence, university education is specially designed to provide the needed manpower for the overall turnaround of a nation. Generally, education, and particularly university education, is fundamental to the construction of a knowledge economy and society in all nations (World Bank, 2000). The Federal Ministry of Education has observed that university education in Nigeria is in a state of decay (FME, 2000). Government is aware that this decadent situation portends danger to the country, particularly as poor quality graduates who are ill-equipped for the world of work are currently being produced. The Nigerian university system lacks the financial resources to maintain educational quality. In fact, the quality of university education in Nigeria has reduced considerably (Ekpo, 2005). Aina (2002) further affirmed that federal universities in Nigeria are lacking the financial resources to maintain educational quality in the face of enrolment explosion. Financing in education is concerned with the mobilization and allocation of resources to educational institutions. Financing of university education in Nigeria at federal universities has always been a major and persistent problem. The incidence

of poor financing is seen in incessant strikes by Academic Staff Union of Universities and the dearth of curriculum support equipment and facilities (Okoli, (2005). In support of this observation, Ekpo (2005) asserted that there has never been a time that adequate money is sent to match the wage bills. Where learning facilities are not available and lecturers are most of the times on strike as a result of inadequate financing, is an indication that the product of such academic programmes may not meet the standard required. Inadequate financing of federal universities in Nigeria is a prime cause of other problems that have undermined quality in university education. The issue of poor financing according to Babalola (2002) has its manifestation in problems such as academic staff shortage, dearth of library books and journals, decline of reading culture among students, dilapidated buildings, outdated equipment, the desire to obtain degrees by unusual means etc. The Nigerian university system he asserted lacks the financial resources to maintain educational quality because Nigeria's recent allocation shares for education diverge sharply from regional and international norms. For example, UNESCO's Report (2002) indicated that for 19 other countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, education expenditures averaged 5.1 percent of GDP and 14.3 percent of government expenditure (Okebukola, 2002). In fact, Nigeria's funding efforts of education is low and its budgetary priority for the education sector is even lower. The financing situation in the Nigerian university system in the 1960s and early 1970s' was considered adequate until late 1970s' and early 1980s' when the situation began to change, a situation in the university that is said to be causing considerable tension and stress within the university system during the period.

The Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) subsequent to Nigerian economic crises has drastically reduced government funding of university education. Before SAP, the Nigerian university could be said to be in a state of boom. In fact, facilities that existed in the universities were equivalent with what existed in other parts of the world (Babalola, Jaiyeoba, & Okediran, 2007). The real impact of SAP cannot be estimated because of "notoriously weak" data on official expenditures (Aina, 2002). The problem of financing in the Nigerian universities has resulted in the curtailing of research activities. The economic deterioration even started shortly before SAP, hence SAP alone cannot be held totally responsible for the pitiable situation in Nigerian universities. The real impact of SAP can only be appreciated when it is understood that the provision of university education in Nigeria is the total responsibility of governments (Odekunle, 2001). Ekundayo & Ajayi (2009) asserted that inadequate funding of the universities has had calamitous effect on teaching and research and has also led to brain drain of the academics. Akindutire (2004) emphasized that while the best brains are leaving the university system to overseas countries where their services are better rewarded, the broad aim of producing high level manpower from the system for national development cannot be achieved.

### **Historical Development of University Education in Nigeria**

The history of university education in Nigeria started with the Elliot Commission of 1943, which led to the establishment of University College Ibadan (UCI) in 1948. UCI was an affiliate of the University of London. Babalola, et al.,(2007) The UCI was saddled with a

number of problems at inception ranging from rigid constitutional provisions, poor staffing, and low enrolment to high dropout rate. In April 1959, the Federal Government commissioned an inquiry (the Ashby Commission) to advise it on the higher education needs of the country for its first two decades. Before the submission of the report, the eastern region government established its own university at Nsukka (University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1960). The implementation of the Ashby Report led to the establishment of University of Ife (*now* Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife) in 1962 by the Western region, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1962 by the Northern Region and University of Lagos in 1962 by the federal government. Babalola, et al., again posited that the University College, Ibadan became a full-fledged university in 1962. This meant that UCI, Ibadan and University of Lagos became the first two federal universities in Nigeria – the other three remained regional. In 1970, the newly created Midwestern region opted for a university known as University of Benin. The six universities established during this period 1960-1970 are still referred to as first generation universities. Ekundayo & Ajayi (2009) remarked that during this period, universities in Nigeria were under the close surveillance of the government. Appointments of lay members of the council, and that of the vice-chancellor, were politically motivated. In the Third National Development Plan (1975–1980), the government established seven universities instead of the four proposed in the plan, and also took over the four regional universities in 1975. They were Universities of Calabar, Ilorin, Jos, Sokoto, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt and Ado Bayero University, Kano — all known as second generation universities. The third generation universities were established between 1980 and early 1990. These were the Federal Universities of Technology in Owerri, Makurdi, Yola, Akure and Bauchi. While state universities were found in Imo, Ondo, Lagos, Akwa-Ibom, Oyo and Cross-River states (Anyambele, 2004). The fourth generation universities are those established between 1991 and the present date. They include more state universities, Nigerian open universities and private universities. According to NUC (2011), there are 36 federal, 37 state and 50 private universities currently operating in Nigeria.

### **Sources of Financing University Education in Nigeria**

Financing university education in Nigeria today is a crucial national problem (Hincliffe, 2002). Odekunle (2001) stated that funds for running a university are derivable from two major sources – external and internal. Federal universities secure grants for recurrent and capital expenses from government. Sources of financing university education in Nigeria as highlighted by Emunemu & Isulu (2008) are as follows:

**1) Government Subvention and Grants:** Government grants and subventions constitute a very substantial proportion of the finance that is available for use by universities in Nigeria. This method of funding education is usually very important because, in most, if not all countries, education is seen as a social service and governments allocate a sizeable proportion of their annual budgets to the provision of and financing of education. These grants could be capital or recurrent. The former (capital), when paid to institutions of higher learning, is meant for the erection of new buildings, carrying out of major repairs of old structures and the purchase of hardware, school equipment such as laboratory equipments, etc. The principle that underlies the granting of the subvention is the same, except that the

amount of grants does change from year to year. Recurrent grants on the other hand, are used for the payment of academic and non –academic staff salaries, allowances and the purchase of other educational goods and services (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2002). Odekunle (2001) remarked that Nigerian universities have been grossly under-funded and as a result it becomes practically impossible to rely on budgetary allocation from the government to finance university education.

**Table 1: Sources of Funds for University Financing**

Items of Expenditure	Sources	Percentage (%)
Personnel	Government Grants	98
	Other Sources	2
Overhead	Government Grants	45
	Income from User Charges	49
	Income from Investment	6
Capital	Government Grants (NUC)	68
	Government Grants (ETF)	12
	Private Sector Support	10
	Income from Investment	4
	Others	6

**Source: Culled from Emunemu & Isuku (2008)**

**2) Donations and Endowment Funds:** Another source of financing university education is through donations and establishment of endowment funds. These donations are made by corporate organizations especially Multi-National Companies (MNCs), communities and individuals who are eager to contribute to the upliftment of university education in their states or nation. Most of these donations are essentially free willing gifts in cash and kind to universities. Such donations have been remarkably quite small (Okuwa, 2008). However, in the past, he asserted that substantial (foreign) grants were received from organizations like the UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation, the German Academic Exchange Services, Canadian International Development Association (CIDA), etc. These grants were mainly geared towards aiding programmes in the universities especially postgraduate studies and staff development. Unfortunately, these grants actually declined in the 1970s when Nigeria's oil wealth gave the impression that such aids were no longer necessary. It is important to note too that most of the established Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Nigeria and around the globe equally contribute substantially to educational development in Nigeria. On the other hand, endowment appeal funds are a recent introduction to assist educational establishments in executing their developmental plans. Universities in Nigeria have, in the recent, been launching endowment funds, but unfortunately, very little have been realized from these launchings.

**3) Tuition fees /Levies:** When students attend school or university, they are likely to be asked to pay for the teaching they are going to receive. When such payments are made, we say that tuition fees are paid by such students. Usually, tuition fees may not be the only payments made by students, they may have to pay levies for such purposes as examinations, laboratory use, development, non- refundable admission deposits, etc. All these are possible

forms of sourcing funds from students. Such fees represent a small percentage of the total institution's income, especially in the federal universities. Adeyemi & Osunde (2005) asserted that the proponents of tuition fees believe that it is a means of generating income for the university and at the same time makes the university to be more responsive to students' needs.

**4) Education Trust Fund (ETF):** The Education Trust Fund (formerly known as Education Tax Fund) was established through the Education Tax Decree Number 7 of 1993 which compelled companies operating in Nigeria, which have up to 100 employees on their pay roll to contribute 2% of their pre-tax earnings in a year to the Education Trust Fund (ETF) for the funding of education. The ETF has so far made its presence felt in many universities across the country through the construction and /or rehabilitation of new classroom blocks, hostels, staff office complexes, laboratories, etc.

**5) Loans:** Educational institutions can take loans from financial institutions to execute their programmes (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2002). However, because of non-profit motive of public schools they do not have advantage of taking loans from commercial banks and other lending agencies.

**6) Income-Generating Activities:** Income generating activities, according to Odekunle (2001) are insignificant except at the University of Lagos where that source is used to fund a significant percentage of the recurrent expenditure. The income generating activities, especially informal sector activities will enable the university to meet its financial needs and obligations.

### **Federal Government Expenditure on Education (2001-2006)**

The First National Development Plan (1962-1968), according to Samuel (2003) allocated 69,763 million pounds to education sector out of a total expenditure of 676,800 million pounds. This amount represented 10.3 percent of the total expenditure during the period. In the Second National Development Plan (1970-1974), out of a total capital expenditure of 1,025,369 billion naira, 138,893 million naira representing 13.3 percent was allocated to education. In the Third National Development Plan (1975-1980), 2,464 billion naira out of 32,855 billion naira was allocated to education. This amount represented 7.5 percent of the total capital investment for the plan period. This pattern of financing has not changed, not even in contemporary or recent history of financing education in Nigeria as can be seen below.

**Table 1: Proportion of Federal Government Budget Allocated to Education (2001-2006)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>% of total budget allocated to education</b>
2001	7.0
2002	12.2
2003	11.3
2004	10.5
2005	11.3
2006	11.0

**Source: Federal Government of Nigeria, Annual Budget (various years). Reported in Okuwa (2008)**

From table 1 above, it can be obviously inferred that there is no time when allocation came close to the 26 percent minimum recommended by UNESCO. If this recommendation of 26% allocation of the annual budget of any country to education is anything to go by, we could rightly conclude, based on available statistics, that the education sector in Nigeria has always and still remains grossly underfunded. It is thus, clear why educational institutions have been incessantly shut in the two decades and over now Odekunle (2001). Okuwa (2008), in a comparative analysis involving some African countries expenditure on education vis-à-vis their Gross National Product concluding that, for Nigeria, the facts are embarrassing. The abysmal nature of fund allocation to the education sector in comparison to some other countries on the African continent is further illustrated in the table below.

**Table 2: Comparative Proportion of National Budget Allocated to Education in some African Countries (various years)**

<b>Countries</b>	<b>% of Allocation to Education</b>
Botswana	21
Egypt	13
Ghana	26
Namibia	22
Tunisia	17
Morocco	17
Malaysia	18
Turkey	18
Kenya	20
Brazil	21
Indonesia	9
Cameroon	12
Iran	21
Kuwait	20
Uganda	15
Jordan	15
Nigeria	3
Angola	15
Mauritius	13

**Source: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Reported by Okuwa (2008)**

The above table reveals that education in Nigeria, when compared with what obtains in other countries, is grossly under-funded. Whereas central government allocation to the total annual budgetary allocation in Ghana, Kenya and Uganda, averaged 26%, 20% and 15% respectively, while that of Nigeria was 3%. The spending ratio of Nigerian government on education in proportion to its GNP in relation to other African countries shows that the funding of this sector of the economy is very poor.

**Table 3: Funds made available to Federal Universities in the South West Geo-Political Zone (2001-2005)**

Institutions	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
University of Ibadan	766,905,911	815,302,791	913,008,464	1,092,196,247	1,751,808,224
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	3,303,389,646	4,359,713,922	4,609,846,701	5,951,377,870	6,209,070,465
University of Lagos	4,259,181,233	6,557,382,324	6,194,855,446	9,203,836,971	7,864,356,077
Federal University of Technology, Akure	1,105,097,338	1,951,898,104	2,045,120,036	2,527,405,352	2,358,304,591
University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	1,739,408,239	2,713,794,383	2,649,482,237	3,517,443,646	4,079,254,604
NUC Secretariat	3,763,487,809	3,047,817,127	3,008,927,827	3,040,715,443	2,670,833,015

**Source: Federal Government of Nigeria, Annual Budget (various years).**

Table 3 depicts the allocation to Nigerian federal universities including NUC Secretariat 2001 and 2005. It can be inferred from this table that even NUC Secretariat which is a regulatory body shares from the allocation to the universities thereby depleting further the paltry sum of money allocated to the universities compared to the enormity of the task they are to expend such funds on.

**Table 4: ETF Intervention in the Selected Federal Universities in the South West (2001-2006) (in Million-Naira)**

Universities	Total Allocation	Total Disbursement
Federal University of Technology, Akure.	393,277,776.67	352,557,776.67
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	418,348,776.67	346,348,776.67
University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	468,277,776.67	413,777,776.67
University of Ibadan	418,277,776.67	274,952,776.67
University of Lagos	419,308,776.67	281,308,776.67

**Source: ETF Disbursement Intervention as at 1/8/2008 in Universities (2001-2006)**

Table 4 reveals the ETF intervention in the selected federal universities in the South West, Geo- Political Zone in the allocation and total disbursement from 2001-2006. A total allocation for Federal University of Technology Akure was 393,277,776.67 while total disbursement was 352,557,776.67. Universities of Ibadan and Lagos were allocated 418,277,776.67 and 419,308,776.67 respectively. The total disbursement for University of Agriculture, Abeokuta and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife was 413,777,776.67 and 346,348,776.67 respectively. Relatively speaking, the above disheartening statistics show how insufficient Nigeria's allocation to the education sector has been. One can only get what he or she has ordered!. Nigeria has to change her value system and invest on education, which is the intellectual laboratory of any nation and the engine that propels the economy. Further increase in student enrolment and staff distribution in the selected federal universities, without corresponding basic amenities to cope with this increase is another problem facing university education in the South-West Geo Political Zone. Available data



show that students' enrolments in Nigerian universities have continued to increase by 200% while the budgetary allocations continued to decline rapidly annually. It is therefore clear that the Nigerian government has placed least priority on education over the years. Tables 5 and 6 below show the distribution of students' enrolments and academic staff distribution from 2001-2006 academic sessions respectively.

**Table 5: Total Student Enrolment in the Selected Federal Universities in the South West (2001-2006)**

Universities	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006
Federal University of Technology, Akure.	10,121	8,086	6,960	8,029	7,556
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	18,723	22,742	20,236	25,156	24,628
University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	4,507	5,195	5,097	7,200	7,460
University of Ibadan	20,026	20,026	12,523	18,957	14,023
University of Lagos	20,312	24,206	38,902	27,532	34,253

**Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2007).**

**Table 6: Academic Staff Distribution in the Selected Federal Universities in the South West (2001-2006)**

Universities	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006
Federal University of Technology, Akure.	385	375	375	439	439
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	1259	1279	1343	1343	1066
University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	252	334	334	570	374
University of Ibadan	1238	1238	1238	1146	1243
University of Lagos	1062	1104	904	904	1024

**Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2007).**

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

So far, it has been established that the gross inadequate financing of education sector in Nigeria has been rendering the university education incapacitated. The university education has not had the financial resources necessary to maintain educational quality in the midst of significant enrolment of students. According to Akintudire (2004), the inadequate financing of the universities has had devastating effect on teaching and research and has also led to brain drain of the academics. He emphasized that while the best brains are leaving the university system to overseas countries where their services are better rewarded, the broad aim of producing high level manpower from the system for national development cannot be achieved. In the midst of these crises, the chief executives of the system have found themselves between the devil and the deep blue sea. For one, Nigerians are aware that our economic crises are not as a result of dwindling or scarcity of resources, but as a result of mismanagement of its resources. It is with these understanding that students react violently to any intolerable policy. Of course, the nucleus of such reactions are university campuses as students demonstrate peacefully or violently to register their displeasure and disagreement

Odekunle, (2001). The chief executives of universities he continued end up managing students and staff crises and more importantly, the financial crises they must put up with. However, in order for Nigeria to reap the benefits of its investment in human capital, university education must have financing to provide quality training and sound professional prospects for their students Akintayo, (2004). For meaningful development to take place in the university system, the government must be ready to address the issue of financing the education sector adequately.

Based on the findings of this paper, it is recommended that:

1. Education sector should be given a high priority in budgetary allocations because it produces the skilled manpower for other sectors of the economy. If smaller nations like Ghana and Cameroon could fund education better, there is no reason why Nigeria cannot do better.
2. Universities should embark on fund-generating activities such as consultancy services in the area of research and other professional disciplines, large-scale farming and breeding industries, hiring of university facilities, establishment of community banks and setting up of viable filling stations.
3. Satellite campuses of part-time programmes should be made to thrive in the country as they go a long way to provide additional sources of income to the universities.
4. The government should as a matter of national importance review upward the pay-package for academics to prevent brain drain.
5. Genuine efforts should be made to improve the living standard of the Nigerian citizens for peace to reign. By so doing, less money would be spent on defense and internal security.
6. Disbursement of grants to universities should be implemented as stipulated in the National Policy on Education:
  - Recurrent should be based on enrolment.
  - Grants for capital projects to be based on approved expansion plans; and
  - Special grants for specific projects to be given as at when necessary.

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