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Review Article

WHY NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT MAY NOT FUND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

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University in Nigeria are growing rapidly in terms of creating access for the citizen which is a greater achievement in the world. These universities have complained of underfunding over the last 2 decades, government have made several measures to allow private investors to participate in the business of providing knowledge. An approach with which have resulted in the introduction of university deregulation, privatisation and commercialisation in terms of creating more access widen the gap and increasing the need and demand for government support. Government have however made several other contributions such as introducing petroleum trust fund, yet the gaps remain unfilled as universities (both private and public) continue to cry for funding issue. This paper is design to look at the reality of why the universities existence has continue to suffer for funding problem. To achieve the aim of this paper, the research focused attention on politician who directly or indirectly the university rely on for their funding, therefore their knowledge of event needs to be ascertained. The paper adopts a standard literature review using immanent critic to identify problems and issues that might be overlooked by other methodology. The paper use qualitative approach with interview as the sole research instrument. Sampling criteria as purposive with the intend to focus on issues around funding. 5 past commissioner for education and 4 honourable were selected. The information provided by the 9 participants was rich in content and covers lot of area that are untouched by past research. The paper used a descriptive analysis to explain the finding in themes. The study reveals that politicians or political office holders who are expected to invest on university and education in general did not because university educators never give back meaningful or tangible contribution specifically for immediate development to the government.

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INTRODUCTION

The Nigeria government like any other government around the world have shown interest and committed to the development of university education. The government have directly or indirectly invest a lot on the development of university education. Such investment has included infrastructural building, financing of the institution among others (Fabunmi, 2005). Although it was clear from a study put forward by Adetunji (2014) that the primary objective of the Nigeria government investing on university education is to develop human capital that will fill the ministries. However, Adetunji (2015) claimed that the ministries are now full and the Nigeria government are yet to redefine another reason why they should support university education. It was observed from past studies that the federal government is the highest owner of university in Nigeria (Arong & Ogbadu, 2010; Arowolo & Ogunboyede, 2013).

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They have solely contributed to the development of federal universities only while state owned universities have received funding solely from the state government. It is obvious that Nigeria university government as a whole have not for once been contributing to the university education within the country as government but as owners of the sector (Arowolo & Ogunboyede, 2013). The immanent critics used in this study help in locating these major facts on how universities have been managed. Likewise, it worth appreciating that the federal government to some extent have promote the compulsory education that is primary and secondary schools, however their provision is not free as parents pay for their children's tuition fees (Igbuzor, 2006). Private providers also play a vital role in delivering of compulsory education, the private establishment/owners were given autonomy to charge what ever they consider appropriate for the provision of the services they render. This has been in existence since late 80's. Babalola, Okediran and Jaiyeoba (2007) claimed that the involvement of private investors has jeopardised the intention of providing a uniform standard for the education to operate.

No wonder stakeholders are beginning to question the quality of service provided from all these educational providers (Sofowora, 2011). In other country education especially the compulsory education that is primary and secondary are solely delivered by the government. The government give a sound quality bases and yardstick for the institution to operate and they control what the institution does in that what is delivered in environment A is same as what is delivered in B raising quality through consistency (Telford & Masson, 2005). Likewise, it is very easy to correct any defect since the institution are meant to operate using the same framework. Surprisingly, in Nigeria there is no common framework from compulsory education making it difficult to adopt a framework at higher level (Obasi, Akuchie & Obasi, 2010). Agreed, National University Commission may raise an argument here that the university benchmarking is standard framework they are adopting but what the immanent critic is doing here is establishing the reality of an event. Therefore, in reality or in practical National University Commission is only working towards assuring that the benchmark is met which is not a best practice to determine quality of service provision. Likewise, in the compulsory or elementary schools, the government of Nigeria have use policy characterised by 6-5-4 (six years in primary, five years in secondary and four years and above in the university) since the beginning of education in Nigeria. The policy was later revised to 6-3-3-4 in 1987 (that is six years, three in junior secondary school, three in senior secondary school and four years and above in the university). In 2004 the policy was revisit and revised to 9-3-4, that is nine years in primary or compulsory education, three in senior secondary school and four years or more in university (Tahir, 2006).

However trending into the area of government policy is good as the reality here is that government as owners of majority of the schools control or dictate how the education system will be run, a good example of their demonstration is underfunding, obsolete facilities among others but it worth mentioning here that this paper is not interested in discussing government policy rather focused on why government may not fund university education having established that although majority of the universities and schools are owned by the government whether state or federal. The government is he founder who is responsible for their funding of their establishment increasing government duties to legislate for the running of the sector.

Research

Establishment of university in Nigeria

Following the advice of the Ashby commission, a law to establish a University in the Northern and Eastern Regions of Nigeria was delivered. This approach marks the formal beginning of University history in Nigeria, the passing of this regulation was the culmination of many years of discussion and thought by inspired particularly by the then Premier of the Eastern Region, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and several other Nigerian leaders. the Eastern Nigeria Government first steps towards their plan to implementation and commitment to the establishment of university regulation was an invitation to both the United Kingdom and the United States of America to send advisers to help in the educational aspects of the proposed university in terms of physical planning, involving curriculum and many more.

Under the shared supports of the International Co-operation Administration (now the United States Agency for International Development) and the Inter-University Council for Higher Education and Overseas, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Exeter, the person of J.W. Cook, President of Michigan State University, the person of Dr John A. Hannah and Dean of International Programmes the person of Dr Glen L. Taggart, at the same university, came to Nigeria in 1958. The team surveyed the site at Nsukka, and comprehensively examined a great range of factors related to the establishment of a new university. The products of their works were enclosed in a white paper delivered by the Eastern Nigeria Government on 30 November 1958. The team advocated there is a need for university education to be established in Nigeria. They recommended that a temporary council be founded to "draw upon the consultative of technical resources available throughout the world for help in planning the institution". Further, they pointed

"that the development of the University in Nigeria should be based upon the concept of service to problems and needs of Nigerians. They claimed that establishing university in Nigeria for Nigerians is a desirable project and one that should receive encouragement from any source which could help to make it a sound endeavor" (Fafunwa, 2005).

Following the report, the Governor in Council in April 1959 authorized the Eastern Nigeria Legislature to establish provisional council to give necessary administrative and financial powers to build a sound university. It echoed the spirit of international cooperation which has given birth to the University of Nigeria. The council was chair by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Dr Okechukwu Ikejiani and Dr T. Olawale Elias from the Federation of Nigeria, Dr Eldon Lee Johnson and Dr Marguerite Cartwright from the United States of America and J.S. Fulton from the United Kingdom (Adesina, 2002).

The University was lawfully opened on 7 October 1960, as the close to the Nigerian independence celebrations in the Eastern Region. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was represented by Her Royal Highness, Princess Alexandra of Kent at the Nigerian independence celebrations, executed the opening ceremonies and laid the foundation stone of one of the University's early buildings. With an enrollment of 220 students and 13 members of the academic staff, lectures began on 17 October 1960. The Chairman of the Provisional Council, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, the first President of the Federation of Nigeria, and President of Michigan State University, USA, Dr John A. Hannah, delivered the opening convocation addresses (Amaghionyeodiwe and Osinubi, 2012).

Ibadin, Shofoyeke and Ilusanya (2005) highlighted that education in Nigeria is shared responsibility of the federal, state and local governments. Fashina (2005) claimed that the Federal Ministry of Education plays a dominant role in regulating the education sector, ensuring quality control and engaging in policy formation. However, education system is divided into three tiers that is the federal government is more directly involved with tertiary education than it is with school education, which is largely the responsibility of state (secondary) and local (primary) governments.

Although this study only focus on university but this is not to underestimate other activities carried on in other branches of education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper was in search of reality of why government office holders have continue to underfund the university education in Nigeria. A relative sampling of immediate past commissioners for education and immediate past honourable who serves as committee chairman on education were selected from 6 states in the south-west area of Nigeria as participants. Only 10 participants took part in the study, 5 of the immediate past honourable s who took part in the study had served in the same capacity for 8year and above. The 5 immediate past commissioners who took part in the study had served for 4 years and above in the same capacity during their term in office. The justification for selecting participants from southwest region, was because the people in the southwest region of Nigeria were assumed to have more interest on university education and education in general compare to other region of the country. 1 past commissioners and 1 past honourable do not take part in the study, they were from the same state, they gives one complain or the other. The 10 participants selected were asked to share their experience and knowledge of why they were less concern about funding university education during their term in office. Due to the nature of the study, purposive sampling technique was adopted for the selection process.

The selected participants make meaningful representation and were able to take part in the study revealing things to the best of their knowledge. Major question was centred on why the present government have failed to invest on university education from their experience of been a political office holder. This question was put forward to the participants to see if we could drawn any lesion from why university education have remain underfunded. The participants were able to exposed further gaps to why the country is experiencing underfunding in the area of education. The importance attached to each of the participants' points and if re-occurrence of such points in another interview section present the study more realistic and establish the reality behind an event as noted by (Edwards, O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014). An approach Adetunji (2014) terms as critical realism study that Africa country like Nigeria need if the country researchers will make a different in the improvement and development of human capital that will change the system or support development of the citizens.

The important or justification for using critical realism in this study is associated with the philosophy of Newton (2007) adopted by Adetunji (2014) in his research work on quality management in Nigeria university using critical realism approach. Faircloth (2005) established that, in critical realism writing reality appears to be disconnected from human senses making activities. Fleetwood (2004) argued that critical realisms is committed to epistemological relation is disruptive of structuralism and empirical realist analyst, that is instead of focusing on the problem of funding in Nigeria university, critical realism belief in commitment to epistemological relativism problematizing the university funding (Njihia, 2011).

A context that can be categorised upon which the problem of funding is refilled (Al-Amoudi & Willmot, 2011). Therefore, the author intension to use critical realism is clear and it is expected to provide a different result to that with other methodology.

PARTICIPANTS	STATE				
	1	2	3	4	5
Honorable	*	*	*	*	*
Commissioner	*	*	*	*	*

Immediate past Honourable is represented by Ph, immediate past Commissioner is represented by Pc. Therefore Ph1, Ph2 .. Ph5 are Honourable while Pc1, Pc2 ... Pc5 are commissioner. Likewis, Ph1 and Pc1 are from state 1, Ph2 and Pc2 are from state 2,..... Ph5 and Pc5 are from state 5,

RESULTS

No return on investment

Many of the participants who took part in the study were of a general consensus that universities are not meeting up with what they term as return on investments. A respondent clears the statement further he expressed that,

I think educationist through government area charity organization as they expect government to invest money in their sector without getting anything in return (Pc4).

Two other respondents were also of the view that Nigeria government or political office holders do think like a business man and on many occasion government officials will prefer to keep money to them rather than given it to organization that will not account for the money given to them. (Ph1, Pc2). One of the respondents a formal commission on education expressed further that,

I belief the mother of corruption is the university especially the government owned once, he said, why do I say so, let me explain to you better. In 1985 when I was serving as permanent secretary for education, you want to be the one telling government to give a certain amount of naira and in return you promising to give them opportunity to supply you a certain number of student that the institution will train for the ministry (Pc2).

Three of the respondent who happened to share a similar experience in the past as commissioner for education expressed that there are the good academia who do the work of impacting knowledge without prejudice. They claimed that lecturers in the past are always happy with their salaries, they are committed to the job, without an atom of doubt. Lecturers do not like money in the past, they are keen about making a different in student's life but suddenly the view changes and commitment to work began to reduce gradually (Pc1, Pc2, Pc4). Two of the respondents were of the view that the changes in lecture's perception really affects the university system as a whole and the politicians feels if for example money must be invested in the education or given to any university you actually want to get something good in return (Pc2, Pc4). One of the respondents explains that as soon as we don't get that return which we expect from the university the why do we need to give them money (Pc4).

On the contrary another respondent who claimed to have served as chairman on the committee for education at the state level, argues that give and take is all about this world, that if money can be given for a project the people want to see the project done which is return on investment. He further argues that on many occasions when you give money to the university no one gets to see how the money is spent or what the money has been used for. Which sometimes make people to assume we as politicians are doing nothing. He expressed that,

I tell you one thing, if I construct just 4 roads with take for example 5million naira, everyone in the community will benefit from it they will see it and also be saying that is the work of honorable. But if I invest 10 million in to the Nigeria university education, the management of the university will not even greet me tomorrow to talk of remembering it in 5years while the road constructed are still there (Ph1).

Two of the respondents who are past honorable and claimed to be chairman on committee for education share a common feeling by saying don't let deceive ourselves what people of our community can reason with is what they could physically see (Ph2, Ph4). Another respondent explained that from my experience when you invest on people, you tend to get nothing but shame in return. He further stressed that,

Let me tell you a live story, that happen to me between 2005 and 2009 that I was in office, I sponsor 20 candidates to university of their choice, they all did well and when they return from school they came back to thank me for the support. But requested further if I could get them a job. I manage to get job for 5 of them, I was told 2 have traveled out of the country while 4 managed to get job for themselves. Surprisingly, I walked into a bank in Lagos one morning just to cash some money one of the cash, was the one of the candidate I sponsored. I ask him to give me a call that I may need him to help my own son to get into banking industry. I tell him jokingly but do you know till today since then he has not call me even that I drop my card with him. Tell me will I be willing to invest money on people again when I can't get anything back in return (Pc2).

Four other respondents were of the opinion that they were not sure of how to quantify investing money on intangible entity like university because offering money is given you don't get anything in return, such money are classified as donation, gift, grants or aids which take not account of how it is managed (Pc3, Pc4, Ph2, Ph5).

Mismanagement

Two respondents stated by saying why do you think government will invest on university education when government is already paying for their staff salaries and yet university raises funds from student which are never accountable for (Pc3, Ph4). One of the respondent explained that the level of funds mismanagement going on in the university is very high than that going on in other sector but you hardly see people about it because university management can hide under so many areas within the sector as areas where they have spend money on for example university management can say the money are spend on sensation project you can not query it because you cannot say who do you sensed, how many

are involved and many more, making it difficult for them to give proper account of how money are been spent (Pc5). Three other respondents were of the opinion that although officers in the universities mismanage funds and as well generate funds for themselves through sales of handout, textbooks and many more, even some will tell students you can't pass my course unless you buy my textbook (Pc4, Ph1, Ph3).

I think they don't care where or not student reads the text books they are just keen at selling it to students (Pc4).

Two of the respondents claimed that when they were in school lecture notes are produced by the university and not by the lecturers and they are free (Pc5, Ph2). One of the respondents argued on a contrary that,

I pay for textbooks; I even pay for late attendance to be upgraded. Although no lecturer will come forward to collect this money from student but they normally use the nominated class rep (Pc5).

Another past honorable was of the opinion that the lectures in the universities were the first set of people who train mature student to be corrupt, through the class rep activities of collecting unaccountable money for them (Ph3). This money will not even get to the university management but they will hear about it and kept quiet which means they support the behavior which kept it going on for longer period within the system.

I have even heard a professor who queries the university management on their spending saying 'we can get our own money from the student through sales of books and handout, you can spend the allocated fund of the university any how, I don't care in as much as you don't stop me from getting my own money (Pc2).

Five of the respondents were of the view that due high level of mismanagement that they have also been part of, it difficult for them to fund the universities. Two of the respondents expressed that do you know why universities complain less about spending? (Pc3, Pc4, Ph2, Ph4, Ph5). One of the respondents expressed that

I tell you it's simply because they don't want to be asked to come and explain how they have spend the money given to them (Ph2).

Political issue and antecedents

Three past commissioners begin by saying why are you asking all these questions, you know we don't like expressing things like these but anyway, we will try and answer your question in a political way (Pc1, Pc3, Pc5). Two of the participants explain that in Nigeria party politics is very important and you know our tenor of office is 4years, but the tenor of office of a vice-chancellor are sometimes lapsing into another political year/term (Pc4, Pc5). Remember most of the universities in Nigeria are government owned and they constitute the governing body of the universities. So when for example PDP candidate won election, he wants to put his party members as part of the governing body. When another version of PDP won they will remove those working as the governing body and re-nominate

another set of people on and on and on. This does not only affect the governing council member it also affects the vice-chancellor sometimes. Sometime the politician funded university properly because it's their party person that is in office (Ph1). Two of the respondents quickly pointed that remember vice-chancellor position is political mainly because most of the universities are government owned (Pc2, Ph3). Sometime because of party versions or differences, loyalty expectation you don't need to put the best man forward for the job (Pc4). One past honorable clear that this is more reason why government hardly gets return on investment. He explained that,

If I put the Vice-chancellor in office, because we are from the same party, it is an opportunity for the party top officials to get jobs and admission of their choice for their children and relatives (Ph1).

No wonder, another respondent expressed that university is full of politics even to get promotion as staff, it has to be politicized, not on merit of their job or hard work, it all about politics. The respondents claimed that many who are supposed to have returned given other upcoming graduate opportunity to develop themselves are not because those in power are their group. They belong to the same political group or one fatality (Pc5). Two past commissioners on education debated separately that funding university is purely political even though they are government owned (Pc4, Pc5). The first respondent claimed that,

I don't know why, but paying of staff salaries are even politicized, you get to hear government saying they did not vote for our party, we lost in their state or town, therefore we need to punish them by not paying their salary (Pc4).

The second commissioner debated that non-payment of staff salaries are as a result of staff not been able to stand out. What do I mean?

I mean academic is not like other sector where worker where workers within the parastatal can do things any how and get away with it. If your behaviour is bad as academia or as institution, then your student behavior in the market will reflect in a similar way. To cut the story short you are not supposing to get involved in politics as a civil servant (Pc5).

I remember years back when university management were demanding for staff increment, on many occasion they riot independently, using sit down strike approach (peaceful demonstration) but at a point when they assume it is not working with the politician, they instigate student against the government, an attempt that normally go out of control. Student will damage the university properties in the name of protest and at the end government will respond to their needs (Pc1).

Three of the respondents claimed that these antisocial behaviors instigated by staff through student have registered in the mind of the students and today when students can't get what they want they also riot, vandalize the university properties (Pc3, Pc4, Ph1). One of the respondents expressed that,

I think there is a lesson for the universities to learn here, if they will ever restore their peace back (Pc3).

Another past honorable expressed that I agreed that funding universities is political but when I am in office what I always thought of is there is no justification for funding university. He claimed that building worth 10 million, cars worth 4 million will be built within 20minute of student unrest, tell me what sense is in this behavior, lack of character and manner so how do you expect me to give the fund such system. Sometime university may be requesting for 100million for example and their student will damage 200 million worth of properties, so where do we go from there (Ph3).

I think funding universities will remain political unless universities community are ready to prove beyond doubt that they are ready for the business of educating their student to be of good character (Ph3).

Unmerited Honor or recognition

As politicians we like to be recognized, and we use money to buy our way into any sort of recognition that we could get. Three of the respondents clearly explained that many Nigeria past governors are now doctors (honorary) all because they pay their way through the university system, lowering the integrity of academic institutions as a whole (Pc1, Pc4, Ph2). Four of the respondent expressed that honorary doctor should be given to those who contribute meaningful to the development of the university, empowering other parastatals or making a powerful experience or contribution to the world of education not financing the system with the money generate within the system for the system (Pc3, Pc5, Ph1, Ph5). One of the respondent expressed that

I can count number of honorary doctors in Nigeria today that are meaningless, what do I mean, when a university honors someone who do not have moral, integrity with her degree it is a shame for the university. Again honoring someone who do not even have a first degree to talk of master degree and to sum it up someone who can not make a different in the society or not even because they make economic contribution to the university system, then is a taboo to honor such person (s) with a honored of higher education. Now tell me how will such people respect your products or even respect university as a center for learning (Ph1).

Two past honorable also explain that institution of higher learning have no seriousness in the way government support them, so how do government expect the university operation to be done (Ph3, Ph4). Another past honourable with a contrary opinion expressed that university do not have any justification to lower their integrity in quest for money (Ph5). He highlighted that,

I think the problem is the purpose for which university are created really need to be re-define if government will ever support university, for example when I was in office, debate where raised on several accession on why do the ministry need additional hands, we discovered that the ministry are now full, moreover we do not need government own university alone to supply the ministry any more, the private universities are doing so as well. So there is need to re-define why university will continue to produce graduate (Ph5).

Another respondent stated in support that,

I think it is high time high learning institution learn their lesson, they need to come up with new ideas on what they want the government to do for them, otherwise the problem of funding will continue as every political office holder will have justification for not funding university education, so will say they don't even trust Nigeria education, others may say they prefer graduates from abroad. All because those in office are not ready to do what they want (Ph4).

Two of the respondent's advice that universities and their products need to work together to re-energise the system and help take responsibility of effecting change rather than sitting down and complaining of lack of funding (Ph3, Pc2). Integrity need to be restore back to the institution using the senior academic officer to re-energise sanity by not honoring political because of money but bases on their economic contribution to the development of the education on a continues bases if possible over a long period of time not less that 10years (Pc5).

Conclusion

With the level of underfunding in our tertiary institutions, there is the need to evolve some strategies that will make it possible for the universities to achieve qualitative education. As part of the funding strategies, it is very important to adhere strictly to the principle of fiscal justice Principle of Fairness where all stakeholders are to share in the burden of funding university education based on the personal benefit they derive through good employment and higher rates of return of income an average, and the high social status or positions they attain in the society. There should also be partial deregulation of the education not commercialization so as to ensure the provision of additional resources for the universities. There should encourage private sector participation which will provide additional resources for the institutions not privatization. and lastly there is the need to introduce the macroeconomic strategy where the government needs to diversify to other sectors of the economy.

The adoption of critical realism methodology in this study was challenging as it uncovers issues that are not consider by past researcher as important. The study unveils the reality of why funding have suffer and may continue to suffer in the production of knowledge in Nigeria. The paper reveals that government like any other organisation has interest on return on investment will be a long term realisation like university education track record of what is done needs to be presented to motivate the government to invest more in the university education.

The paper found that majority of educator has failed to contribute meaningfully to their close community to talk of national development of the country. On many occasion academics have been confident for satisfying with the classroom delivery of services such as theoretical based knowledge passed on to student. Which is not fit for purpose in today's world as company who employee such students will have to invest more on re-training the student before they can be fit into their own organisation. The paper found that if academia are only confined to the dissemination of theoretical knowledge then student they produce will only be unable to

compete in the labour market based on knowledge acquired theoretically on approach which make stakeholders to consider university productions has half baked in the modern centuries.

The paper suggested that findings identify in this study is not the end to the problem but the same methodology can be adopted in study of university education in Nigeria there is huge possibility of been able to identify why a particular sector is functioning in a certain way.

Further study

This study only focused attention on why university education has been underfunded in Nigeria. The idea was to get to the root of funding problems confronting the sector. Therefore, the research assume it will be best to learn from politician's past experiences first while future research can look into other stakeholders' involvement. The research acknowledges that there is need to involve those in the ministry of education, National university commission and other external participants in a study of this nature. At the same time the researcher calls on other researcher to identify why government has been discouraged in investing on university education through other stakeholder's view in other to profound a lasting solution to the problem. It worth mentioning here that non-involvement of other stakeholders in this paper is not to overlook their contributions, rather the research is in search of reality of why government has not fund the university sector, using past knowledge of those who have been in the position to fund or implement funding to uncover the reality.

This paper do not suggest any possible way to address the problem but identify why underfunding remain an issue and may still continue in the same manner. Therefore, it becomes the obligation of those intending to implement any part of this paper to carefully remove the triggers that cause underfunding to remain within the sector. Other areas not consider in this paper such as how to resolve funding problem, duties and responsibilities of each stakeholder involved can be studied using the same techniques with the intention to get it right the first time and make the university education relevant and fit for purpose which is the bottom effort for improving quality management in the university.

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