

## MANAGING TERTIARY EDUCATION IN A DEPRESSED ECONOMY

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### Abstract

*The educational sector is a system with sub-systems and supra-system. The tertiary institution is a system with various faculties as it's sub-system various department as it's sub sub-system and the external environment such as the government as its supra-system. Since a system is inter-related and inter-dependent, whatever affects the government as the supra-system will definitely affect the tertiary institution as a system. The moment an economy is hit by depression, that same depression will flow down to the tertiary institution. However our educational sector has been seriously underfunded even before depression hit the nation. The problem of underfunding of education is not synonymous with depression in Nigeria, it is an age long challenge. Therefore the government on its part must as a matter of urgency begin to review its budgetary allocation for education upward with the knowledge that education, brings about national development. The government should work towards the implementation of the UNESCO recommended 26%; the institutions on their parts should make a deliberate effort of maximizing funds allocated to them; and a regulatory body should be set up by the school authorities for checks and balances.*

### Introduction

The relevance and value for tertiary education cannot be undermined given the fact that education seeks to impart knowledge, which translates into a positive change in behavior or attitude of an individual who is a member of the society and for national development. Tertiary education as an integral and imperative segment of education, and the last phase of formal education which provides the output for the society at large. In a developing country like Nigeria, the glaring desire and need for education has prompted an increase in the demand for education; this has led to the expansion that the educational sector has experienced lately. There has been increased number of students striving to gain admission into tertiary institutions, increased number of the students in the school and also increased number of both public and private tertiary institutions. These factors have given rise to more facilities, manpower, (both teaching and

non-teaching staff) funding and efficient management.

However, it's expedient to note that the resources (human, material, infrastructural facilities, teaching aids e.t.c.) are no match to the number cum influx of students in our tertiary institutions. Suffice it to say that, a whole lot of issues in our tertiary education has dragged it to this sorry state of depression. Issues such as geographical politics, corruption, bad governance, federal character, quota system of admission, fall in crude oil price, inadequate funding, poor budget allocation to Education, Economic meltdown e.t.c

Depression of the Economy amongst others has made management of tertiary education a strenuous task. Several issues have brought the economy to this state of depression. fall in the price of crude oil and sole dependence on oil in other words the government has not made the most of the multiple streams of income. Many

State governments sit in their States without seeking for other sources of generating funds, but only wait for the monthly allocation from the federal government, and some of these State governments fund tertiary institutions in their State with a fraction of the allocation due them which is grossly inadequate. This Paper attempts to address how tertiary education can be properly managed in a depressed economy like Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Review Management**

According to Wehrich and Koontz (1994) management is the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which individuals working together in groups efficiently accomplish selected aims. This definition is expanded thus:

- As managers, the functions of management which are planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling are carried out by people.
- Every kind of organization is concerned with management.
- It applies to managers at all organizational levels.
- The aim of all managers is the same to create a surplus
- Managing is concerned with productivity; this implies effectiveness and efficiency.

Gibson in Peretomode (2003) opines that management refers to a set of activities, which can be classified as planning, organizing, controlling, staffing, directing and coordinating. It is an act of getting things done through people. This definition suggests that management is a process that is in a sequence of coordinated events. The importance of managing cannot be over emphasized as a human related activity. For as long as individuals who couldn't achieve an aim alone began to form clusters of people to achieve their aims collectively, managing began. This has led to organizations and the society at large relying solely on the task of managers.

### **Tertiary Education**

The word tertiary, simply means of the third rank or order, and tertiary level of education in Nigeria,

based on the aforementioned meaning, implies that tertiary education in Nigeria is the third order of education which can also be referred to as higher education. Tertiary education is synonymous with higher education in Nigeria. This is the aspect of education that is in charge of producing the output required by the society for national development.

Tertiary education is a front liner amongst the tiers of education and is considered as the icon for national development and transformation, implying that every skill, knowledge and information gained through this means is the vehicle for productivity, wealth creation, prosperity, good health and healthy living, competitiveness, communication, expansion, scientific and technological advancement (Ofojebe & Chukwuma, 2015).

The National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004) described Tertiary Education as the education given after secondary education in Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses.

FRN (2004) states that the goals of Tertiary Education shall be to:

- a) Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training
- b) Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individuals 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 and
- g) Promote national and international understanding and interaction

These goals are to be pursued through:

Teaching, research and development, virile staff development programmes, Generation and dissemination of knowledge; a variety of modes of

programmes including full-time, part-time, block-release, day-release, sandwich e.t.c. access to training funds such as those provided by the Industrial Training fund (ITF); Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES); maintenance of minimum educational standards through appropriate agencies.

The Commonwealth of Learning in Jegede (2017:20) has listed in its recent newsletter, the four dominant trends in higher education worldwide, asserting that institutions of higher learning are steadily developing new programmes, new methods of delivery and corresponding policies to meet the demands of the global labour market and the growth of new and innovative information and communication technologies.

COL proceeded to list the following as the recent 4 dominant trends:

- Raise in blended learning programmes (this is a combination of traditional classroom-based learning cum online and digital learning).
- Integrating life skills into higher education (skills that are needed to make the most of life and are considered useful).
- Rapid rise in micro-credentials (mini-degrees or certifications in a specific topic area that are geared towards providing hands-on training to supplement their learners' education for better employment prospects).
- Growth and potential of mobile technology (the integration of mobile technology in higher education to increase access to education and offering learners high levels of interactivity, flexibility and personalization).

### **Depressed Economy**

In economics, a depression is a sustained long-term down turn in economic activity in one or more economies. It is a more intense economic downturn than a recession, which is a slowdown in economic activity over the course of a normal business cycle Wikipedia (2019). Therefore, a

depressed Economy is an economy that is in a state of downturn for a long-term.

A Depressed economy is characterized by the following:

- High inflation, a general rise in price of goods and services, leading to low purchasing power, where citizens have difficulty purchasing their desired items due to lack of funds
- Accumulation of foreign debts with great difficulty in servicing them.
- Investors are no longer interested in investing due to high interest rate resulting from inflation
- Fall in aggregate demand, fall in wages and income.
- Citizens loose their confidence in the government due to economic indices and a very high level of unemployment

### **Causes of Economic Recession in Nigeria**

#### 1) Poor Economic Planning:

The planning and implementation of economic policies are inadequate, which is a glaring reason of recession, delay in budget and exchange rate policy in Nigeria. The government has proclaimed the usual generalities such as

- Diversifying the economy
  - Improving manufacturing/mining sector
  - Raising agricultural output
  - Encouraging foreign investment amongst others, yet no concrete evidenced strategic plan for growth.
- 2) High inflation rate: Inflation is usually caused by unpopular and unscrutinized policies of government. The idea of government banning the import of some essential agricultural commodities like rice, chicken, without considering gestation period is a grievous error. Also the removal of fuel subsidy that has led to increase in the price of fuel, speculation in stock market due to budget delay, rise in fuel price.
- 3) High-Interest Rate: Investors are often discouraged and can be hardly persuaded to invest in any economy with high interest rate.

This high interest rate is discouraging investors from investing in the economy and this leads to a high rate of unemployment in the country.

### Features of a Depressed Economy

Emunemu in Onukwu and Igoni (2017) listed the following as signs of recession

- 1) Constant increase in unemployment: This is when the level of unemployment amongst different groups and individuals in a nation is on the rise constantly, just like what we are experiencing in Nigeria for years. There have been constant steep rise in the number of jobless citizens, and this is a clear sign that recession is at the corner.
- 2) Large companies start giving depressing profit figures: When many companies across all sectors of the economy in a country start giving depressing sales and profit figures, making losses, thereby retrenching their staff then individuals and business analyst will envisage recession.
- 3) When borrowers start defaulting: If it is glaring that people, or corporate bodies who borrow money in a particular economy are unable to pay back their loans on businesses, vehicles, properties, e.t.c, then it is a clear pointer that the economy is in recession.
- 4) When prices of properties and stocks drop drastically and people still struggle to buy, it is obvious that recession has hit that country, like in Abuja where properties are being auctioned yet buyers are few. Even the price of stocks has been lowered, yet people seem to lack funds to purchase them.
- 5) Prices of essential commodities increase: if the prices of basic necessities like food, clothes, electricity, house rent, fuel, transportation and other utilities rises and government is not able to bring about a drastic reduction, then recession has set in.
- 6) When the country's GDP nosedives constantly, i.e there is a consistent fall of a country's (GDP) gross domestic product, then recession has set in.

- 7) When savings become what individuals leave on from hand to mouth, they no longer have savings because times are hard then savings become a challenge, it is clear that recession is around the corner (Emunemu in Onukwu & Igoni 2017).
- 8) When ratio of students travelling abroad as international students, reduces drastically, not because of a better educational sector, but because of lack of funds, then recession is obviously in the country.

### Challenges of Managing Tertiary Education in Nigeria

The aim of educational management is to utilize the attributes of management i.e planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling, and forecasting to achieve efficient educational goals. However, managing tertiary education in a depressed economy is a herculean task for tertiary education managers. The tertiary education managers can be either the Vice Chancellor for Universities, Provost for Colleges of Education and Rector for Polytechnics and Monotechnics. Tertiary education managers require proper efficiency, because depression of the economy will cause investments to drop value, the purchasing power of individuals and even government will reduce, likewise allocation of funds to all sectors including education will be low. Tertiary education everywhere in the world, is a very high capital investment, because it is very expensive, it's major source of funding is from government allocated revenues. However, tertiary education is being grossly under funded by the government.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) had recommended 26% as benchmark of total budget to education as a sector, but the Nigerian government had been in the habit of allocating very low resources to education (Onukwu & Igoni 2017). Whawo in Nweededuh (2003) asserts that the hidden truth is that tertiary education is highly under funded by the government. Consequently the research activities in these institutions are frozen for lack of funds. Uzonwune (2016) opines

that governments' budgetary allocation to education, falls short of the UN stipulation. Due to the paucity of funds, lecturers in our universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education cannot access fund to carry out researches.

According to Onukwu and Igoni (2017) the percentage allocation to education for the past 59 years of Nigeria's independence has been inadequate.

**Table 1: Percentage (%) of Federal Government Allocation to education sector since Independence 1960 to 2019**

S/N	YEAR	EDUCATION %	S/N	YEAR	EDUCATION %	S/N	YEAR	EDUCATION %
1	1960	6.02	21	1980	4.95	41	2000	8.7
2	1961	6.19	22	1981	6.45	42	2001	7.00
3	1962	5.19	23	1982	8.08	43	2002	5.9
4	1963	3.43	24	1983	4.04	44	2003	1.83
5	1964	3.65	25	1984	4.49	45	2004	10.5
6	1965	3.57	26	1985	3.79	46	2005	9.3
7	1966	4.23	27	1986	2.69	47	2006	11.00
8	1967	4.88	28	1987	1.93	48	2007	8.9
9	1968	2.84	29	1988	2.40	49	2008	11.0
10	1969	2.20	30	1989	3.55	50	2009	6.54
11	1970	0.69	31	1990	2.83	51	2010	6.40
12	1971	0.53	32	1991	1.09	52	2011	7.3
13	1972	0.62	33	1992	3.86	53	2012	10.0
14	1973	0.88	34	1993	5.62	54	2013	8.7
15	1974	2.96	35	1994	7.13	55	2014	10.0
16	1975	4.57	36	1995	13.0	56	2015	9.0
17	1976	8.7	37	1996	10.08	57	2016	6.00
18	1977	3.12	38	1997	11.5	58	2017	6.00
19	1978	11.44	39	1998	6.9	59	2018	7.00
20	1979	3.70	40	1999	11.4	60	2019	7.02

**Source: Central Bank of Nigeria (2016). Statistical Bulletin and information, and [www.educeleb.com](http://www.educeleb.com) Retrieved on 12/3/2019**

Obviously from the information in the table, education has been grossly under-funded; the needed attention in terms of funding has been denied the education sector. It is glaring that financing education only by the funds gotten from the government, would rather cripple our educational sector. Therefore, this calls for other sources of funding such as the Internally Generated Revenue (IGR).

This type of situation according to Nwankwo, Madu and Lezor (2017) is an evidence of financial constraint which needs urgent solution, that is to develop other strategies of funding that would drastically reduce the cost of funding education. This could be short, medium and long term policy interventions covering cost recovery and

redistribution of financial burden of investing in education.

Therefore, the following ways can be used: there should be an arrangement between government, parents, communities, students and private sector investors for cost-sharing and funding partnership of education.

Parents and local communities should be more involved in the provision of books, materials and equipment to schools as it was done during the second republic (1979 – 1983) in western Nigeria. This self-help method provides extra-resources and even ensures that resources are used effectively and flexibly for optimum utility in education sector (Nwankwo, et al 2017).

Once an ample size of any nation's population is poor, detaching poverty from the dynamics of development and higher education is almost impossible (UNRISD in Jegede 2017) One of the indices of a depressed economy is that most citizens of that nation begin to leave from hand to mouth. Some are even unemployed, and others under employed. If this is the case, then where do parents and communities have the capacity of partnering and funding education with government. Also during the Second Republic, (1973-1983) as quoted by Nwankwo et, al there was no economic recession or depression.

Usually damages done to education are like objects thrown into the river, it sinks down to the base of the river and begins to float up gradually until it gets to the surface of the river and remains there. It takes a good number of years for damages done to education to become glaring, when the resultant effects are felt in many other sectors of the nation.

The government of Nigeria has depended and relied for too long on one source of income, which has been the oil revenue. Given the worldwide economic meltdown, drop in crude oil price and reduced quantity of crude oil export from the country, militant activities in the Niger Delta area not left out and depression of the Nigerian economy set in. This is the tertiary institutions in Nigeria have pitched their tents too long on government funding and this has given rise to a nosedive of our sources of income for the management of education in general including the tertiary education.

According to Omoniyi in Botimi-Slaboh (2015), the most challenged, most ignored, and least addressed is the problem of funding and financing of tertiary education. To buttress this point, is the fights and struggles of the Academic Staff Union of Universities through various strike actions.

Odufowokan (2011) asserts that the economic depression, which is as a result of the oil glut of the 1980's till date is still affecting the educational sector, and indisputably the sector has not recovered fully the undying effect it had. Since then, there has been evidence of constant increase

of financial constraints coupled with the proportion of government budget available to funding of education. Contributing to these, is the escalating cost of financing education which has placed the government in a sort of serious dilemma. However, the bulky amount of money allocated to education is small in real terms reflecting a hyperinflation situation rather than that of real increase.

Adesola (1991) states that in the face of continued uncontrolled expansion and in the absence of basic facilities for teaching and research, the university system cannot sustain a healthy growth. Our educational sector at all levels have experienced a tremendous enlargement over the decades. The primary level, the secondary level and the tertiary level had all experienced a serious expansion. This has given rise to proliferation of schools at all levels. Increased number of schools (primary, secondary, and tertiary). The rate of growth of the Nigerian University system could be described as phenomenal, doubling every four or five years and probably faster than anywhere in the world. (Adesola,1991) There has also been increase in number of students enrolling in our tertiary institutions. Over the years the number of students enrolling into the tertiary institutions has been alarming, and because our tertiary institutions are underfunded, we see situations where a lecture hall originally designed to contain 100 students is been used to teach over 200 students. Students are seen hanging by the window sides, some sitting and many others standing of course with this kind of situation, effective teaching and learning cannot take place. To buttress this point, Botimi-Slaboh (2015) states that learning conditions is now characterized by over-congested classrooms, over-crowded laboratories where many at times no electricity to run the equipment, no good convenience to answer nature's call. This had led to incessant industrial actions by lecturers in the tertiary institutions, agitating for either provision of better infrastructural facilities or increment in salaries, needless to say that this has led to our academic calendar being inconsistent.

According to Ariguzo (2016) the availability and state of infrastructures play a role of either

facilitating or endangering the teaching and learning process. In a depressed economy, the available infrastructural facilities are not enough and even the ones that are available are in a sorry state.

University autonomy in Nigerian universities is in jeopardy. The autonomy of the university is another challenge of managing the tertiary education in a depressed economy. According to Okeke (2007) autonomy of higher education is an urgent topical issue in the academic world today. It refers to the right of the higher educational institutions to govern themselves without outside control.

Autonomy is one of the cherished ideals of universities that have medieval origin. It relates to the independence of institutions of higher education from state and all other forces of society, to make decisions regarding its internal government, finance, and administration and establish its policies of education, research, extension work and other related activities. (Lima Declaration in Okeke, 2007). Since autonomy is the right of the higher educational institutions to govern them without external control, then managing tertiary education in a depressed economy which carries its own diverse challenges should not be battling with issues like autonomy any longer. Take for instance in a State owned tertiary institution where the government has the right to present its own list of people for employment, and some people are not qualified for the teaching jobs are recruited into the system, obviously such faculty members end up producing graduates that cannot compete with their counter parts anywhere in the world.

This point is buttressed by Uzonwune (2016) that as there are students who are not supposed to be in the tertiary institutions so also are faculty members who are not worth their onions. In some States of the federation, the methods of recruiting Lecturers are not transparent, stringent and fair. People make a show of their relationship with people in positions of power (godfathers) and are offered jobs at the expense of better qualified ones. The factors of cronyism, nepotism, bribery, and corruption determine those who will have the

teaching jobs. The aftermath effects are bad faculty who don't know their onions, and mess up the educational sector, student's graduate not knowing their left from their rights, thus garbage in garbage out.

### **Measures that will Ensure Efficient and Effective Management of Tertiary Education in a Depressed Economy**

In managing tertiary education in a depressed economy, tertiary education managers need to be well informed with other sources of financing tertiary education and to harness them. It is clear that of all the challenges faced by tertiary education in a depressed economy, finance is the most critical. If this be the case, then managers or the Chief Executive Officers of tertiary educational Institutions must as a matter of necessity source for other ways of generating revenues to manage their institutions. According to Odufowokan (2011) there are several sources of financing education:

- 1) Public Authorities: Apart from the government budgetary allocation in form of subventions to the provision and financing of education, Fannade in Odufowokan (2011) states that in support of the above, the government put in place the Education Tax Fund in 1994, which mandated companies operating in Nigeria to pay 2% of their annual profit as Education Tax Fund (ETF), and disbursed the sum of ₦1. 344 Billion to Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and Secondary Schools for rehabilitation of infrastructure and provision of facilities.
- 2) Foreign Loans and Grants: This is another way of financing education. It can also be called bilateral or multi-lateral. According to Famade in Odufowokan (2011), about ₦120 million World Bank loan was secured in 1992 by the federal government for primary education project. This type of loan has been sourced for the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education on foreign aids. However the most recent trends now are the sourcing of scholarships for specialized training outside the country.

- 3) **Internally Generated Income:** This is another source of income to be thoroughly harnessed. This is done by setting up projects that are income generating in order to raise alternative viable source of funding for the institution, Projects such as paint-making, bakery, soap making, hostel accommodation, farming (fish, piggery, snail, poultry and cash crops), fees-charged for parking spaces etc. All these and many more can help generate revenue for the institutions.
- 4) **Redrafting of our National Policy**  
There hasn't been any deliberate and resolute to completely redraft from scratch our national policy on education, as the one currently in use is being panel-beated and has out-lived its usefulness. It is like using 19<sup>th</sup> century tools to solve 21<sup>st</sup> century issues and concerns in nation building (Jegede, 2017). Our National Policy on Education should be completely redrafted. It obviously needs a total overhauling. We should start thinking of micro – credentials, mini-degrees and specialist degrees in order to redirect our graduates towards expertise and make them employable, and employers of labour.
- 5) **Private Sector Involvement :**The private sectors can establish a collaborative effort (with all sense of sincerity) with government and the universities and invest enormously into the development of the definite type of graduates who are employable right from the day they graduate (Jegede ,2017).

### Conclusion

The educational sector is a system with sub-systems and supra-system. The tertiary institution is a system with various faculties as it's sub-system various department as it's sub sub-system and the external environment such as the government as its supra-system. Since a system is inter-related and inter-dependent, whatever affects the government as the supra-system will definitely affect the tertiary institution as a system. The moment an economy is hit by depression that same depression will flow down to the tertiary institution.

However our educational sector has been seriously underfunded even before depression hit the nation. The problem of underfunding of education is not synonymous with depression in Nigeria, it is an age long challenge. Therefore the government on its part must as a matter of urgency begin to review its budgetary allocation for education upward with the knowledge that education, brings about national development. The government should work towards the implementation of the UNESCO recommended 26%; the institutions on their parts should make a deliberate effort of maximizing funds allocated to them; and a regulatory body should be set up by the school authorities for checks and balances.

### Suggestions

- 1) It is clear from various literatures that our educational sector is grossly under-funded, therefore all stakeholders, (teachers, parents, community leaders) should hold a meeting and send a high powered delegation to the government at State and Federal level to increase and meet up the approved 26% UNESCO benchmark for the education sector.
- 2) The government should come up with measures of revitalizing our entire educational sector, (not just higher education but education from the basic) with plans that are holistic, strategic, purpose – driven and with genuine intentions of good for the nation and not white wash promises.
- 3) Tertiary education managers should begin to introduce blended learning and life skill training into our educational system, such that students can have a sort of control over their time and pace of learning, in order to be grounded in their various fields.
- 4) Tertiary educational managers should pursue vigorously other viable sources of internally generated revenue, in order to create a surplus. Investments like snail farming, piggery, fish farming, bakery, paint making, hostel accommodation and even tickets for car parking space e t c



- 5) Educational manager should utilize whatever funds made available to them and not to misappropriate or embezzle the funds. Character is key in leadership, every manager should be prudent with funds.
- 6) There should be a collaboration of the private sector and the tertiary institutions to research and extend the frontiers of knowledge, after all the private sector is the end user of a good number of the output of tertiary institutions. So if there is an involvement of the private sector it will also be of benefit to them because they use the graduate to make profit for their business.
- 7) The government on its part should allocate and make readily available more funds for educational institutions.
- 8) Entrepreneurship training should be carried out vigorously to reduce the unemployment rate as a result of depression.
- 9) Tertiary educational managers are to put into proper use the function for management, whatever allocation given to the school should be planned with and priorities should be set right.
- 10) The tertiary educational managers should strive towards efficiency and not just effectiveness. Goals should be achieved but with minimal means, given that the funds are inadequate.
- 11) Tertiary institutions as pace setters must do away with vices that degrade the educational system like corruption in recruitment and admission process, the best candidate should be given opportunity in order to achieve the best output.
- 12) Investor friendly policies should be made by the government in other to attract more investors to eradicate economic depression.

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