

Assessment of Alternative Sources of Financing Secondary Education for Sustainable Development

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Abstract: This study assessed the possible alternative sources of funding secondary education system in Nigeria, using Ebonyi State as a case study. The purpose of the study was to try to establish and give direction to financial viability of secondary education system in Nigeria through possible alternative sources of financing. The population of the study was four hundred and forty six (446) respondents, out of which a sample size of three hundred and twenty eight (328) respondents was selected through simple random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.81 through the Cronbach Alpha Approach. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions whereas the null hypotheses were tested using t-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the study revealed that (1) items 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the questionnaire were possible alternative sources of financing secondary education in Nigeria and (2) all alternative sources of funding so established were viable. One of the implications was that secondary schools were now in a position to pursue these sources of funding their programmes for financial self-reliance. Based on the results and implications, recommendations were made which included carrying out enlightenment campaign among schools for sensitization of the alternative sources of funding secondary education in Nigeria

Key words: Alternative • Sources • Financing • Secondary Schools • Principal • Bursars

INTRODUCTION

The significant roles of secondary education in promoting the growth of economies and in the improvement of human well-being are broadly recognized. [1] , [2] note that education has been at the top priority list of Nigeria yet the education system is still far from being achieved. Financial crisis of educational system in developing countries is a compound of growing constraints on revenues, inexorably growing demands for more and better education [3-5]. [6], asserts that global recession now poses a new challenge to educational investment at the secondary school level as events in East, South East Asia and Russia have led to

financial crises and a loss in confidence that has dampened growth and has led to serious recession across the developing world. [7], [8] independently align their views that government budgets are already suffering from pressures created by the devaluation of assets, exchange rate collapses which accompanied the contraction of demand on public secondary schools in Nigeria.

Secondary education is a stage where future students of tertiary level are admitted and taught essential and foundational skills necessary for lifelong development and sustenance. Competitiveness, especially in high value added and knowledge based sectors of the economy, depends on knowledge, skills and

competencies associated with abstract reasoning, analysis, language and communication skills and the application of science and technology. These are most efficiently acquired through secondary schooling [9]. [10], [11] remark that no country can respond successfully to the needs of increasing production in manufacturing and service industry without middle level workers who must have passed through secondary level of education. In line with the United Nations (2012) international conventions and protocols which Nigeria is a signatory to and coupled with the provision of Nigeria National Policy on Education 2008) which emphasized the provision of a holistic, quality education that promotes the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning through the acquisition of societal values such as equality of all human beings, honesty, peace, security, humility, tolerance, patriotism, cooperation, mutual respect and democratic principles for the attainment of national goals. Experiences gained herein considerably influence lifelong learning as they consolidate basic skills learnt in primary schools. These are the tenets behind the introduction of the Universal Basic Education, meant purely at the basic level of the school system for the self reliance of the students after graduation [12]; [13]; [14]. The acquisition of good cultural norms and values that help in the preparation of individual students for useful citizenship whose knowledge base is built on experiences is greatly targeted by secondary education. According to [15], secondary education provides access to abstract reasoning and flexible thinking skills associated with growth oriented production in the manufacturing sector of the economy.

The understanding of the above highlights the significance of secondary education in increasing information processing and knowledge content as well as skills that are highly required for middle manpower production whose absence could possibly constitute a clog in the wheel of acquisition of national emancipation and prowess required for the 21st century sustainability. In a related view [16], [17] buttressed that secondary education is of particular importance to national development because it seeks to augment the general intellectual skills acquired at primary level which are also relevant to any productive occupation and subsequent education.

Summarily put, secondary education provides quality education for students to strengthen their basic knowledge and skills which will help in broadening their competences and in enhancing their employability skills. No wonder the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013)

noted that education is an instrument par excellence. Thus, the importance of secondary education can never be over quantified as it prepares the ground for sustainable economic growth which can be achievable if the resources necessary for the acceleration of secondary education are mobilized through adequate financing. Unfortunately, secondary education has been quite neglected, squeezed as it is between primary education, the object of so much attention and higher education which has never really lost its supporters [18].

Finance is the live wire of every organization including secondary education. Secondary education in Nigeria is challenged for improved efficiency and quality because of poor funding. The United Nations (2014), reports that financial needs are huge and challenges in meeting them are enormous but surmountable. Currently, financing and investment patterns will not deliver sustainable developments. There are many competing demands on government resources which have made government not to be able to mobilize public schools adequately. Inadequacy of funding is responsible for the whole lot of decadence found in public secondary schools in Nigeria and this has culminated to the poor physical conditions, brain drain and the institutionalization of mediocrity as those who are qualified cannot cope with the paltry salary paid and hence look for greener pastures; while those who are not qualified are recruited to fill the existing vacancies created by the exit of qualified human resources [19], [20]. Supportively, [11], [12] in their independent views maintained that financing secondary education is one of the critical issues in contemporary debates in education and hence remains the greatest problem facing educational growth and development in Nigeria. Lending further support to the above views, [6] affirmed that finance has remained a critical factor in the provision of secondary education for national development. Also [9] asserted that in most developing countries such as Nigeria, the issue of financing secondary education has remained a perennial problem. [17] maintained that one of the greatest problems facing Nigerian secondary education is that of limited financial resources in the face of increasing responsibilities and dwindling economies. A synthesis of the above views shows that finance has been a contending issue facing the management of Secondary Schools in Nigeria since the inception of western education.

The amount allocated to the educational sector in Nigeria has always been very minimal compared to the enormity of works expected to be accomplished with it.

For instance, Nigeria's budgetary allocation to the education sector has never met the 26% benchmark recommended by UNESCO for financing education. Figures below show the budgetary allocation to education within the last six years- 2011: ₦306.3bn (6.24%), 2012: ₦400.15bn (8.43%), 2013: ₦426.53bn (8.7%), 2014: ₦493bn (10.7%), 2015: ₦492.034bn (10.5%) and 2016: ₦369bn (7.93%), (Campus Buzz, 2016, Guardian, 2016). A cursory look at the figures shows that none of the allocations exceeded 11% as against the 26% recommended by UNESCO.

If the above figures were plotted on a graph, it will present a shape of inverted pyramid. Campus Buzz (2016) reported that countries such as Ivory Coast (Cote –de Voire), Senegal and Ghana have met and gone beyond the 26% benchmark by UNESCO. In line with the above, [10] stated that Ghana, South Africa, Cote –de Voire, Kenya and Morocco have 31%, 25%, 30%, 23% and 17.7% respectively. It is pertinent to note that even Morocco with the least percentage as shown in the figures above is still far ahead of Nigeria. It is quite appalling that the most populated country, the biggest economy and the largest exporter of crude oil in Africa is yet to meet up with the UNESCO 26% benchmark. A critical analysis of the above discussion shows that finance is the most important of all the resources needed for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools. The reason stems from the fact that finance is a major determinant of the availability of every other educational resource. It is therefore important that finance is adequately provided in all educational sectors but especially in secondary education level, which is the focus of this study.

Without prejudice, the Nigerian Government over the years has done much in the financing of secondary education two decades ago. One of the factors that greatly assisted Government in doing this was the huge wealth generated from the sales of oil. However, with the dwindling oil price in the international market and the present economic crunch in the country which has affected the value of the naira globally in relation to other currencies, there is no gain saying the fact that the need for alternative sources of finance is most urgently desired and should be sought for to help augment the subvention from Government so that secondary education will be saved from hindsight and perhaps total collapse. In the same connection, [11], [12] affirmed that faced with this inexorable finance and cost squeeze, educational authorities have only two possible avenues of escape and there should be advised to pursue them both vigorously;

One is to seek out new sources of revenue for education in Nigeria. It is on this premise, that the study is set to investigate using an empirical compass, the alternative sources of financing secondary education for sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

Problem Statement: In Ebonyi state as is the case in most states of the Federation, budgetary allocation to the secondary education sector has been grossly inadequate most recently. This situation in part is responsible for the poor state of secondary schools in terms of human and material resources provision and utilization. This situation is worrisome to stakeholders in education, especially parents and government. The researchers are worried that if the situation should persist, secondary school system may collapse, knowledge acquisition at that level would be sparse and attainment of scientific and technological feats may be delayed if not impossible. This calls for immediate alternative sources of financing secondary school education in Nigeria in general and Ebonyi State in particular. This study therefore sought for possible solution to this prevailing situation by exploring alternative sources of finance in secondary schools with the hope that it will help secondary education in the achievement of its aims and objectives. The problem of this study therefore is, "what are the alternative sources of financing secondary education for sustainable development in Nigeria".

Research Questions: The following research questions were formulated to give direction to this study.

- What are the alternative sources of finance in secondary schools in Nigeria?
- How could the alternative sources of finance increase revenue generation in secondary schools?

Hypotheses: Two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance in this study.

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female respondents on possible alternative sources of finance available to secondary schools.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the mean responses on how the alternative sources of finance could increase revenue generation in secondary schools based on status.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study sought and adopted a descriptive and cross sectional survey research design to investigate the alternative sources of finance in secondary schools. Ebonyi State which is in the South East geo-political zone of Nigeria was the area of study. The total population of the study was 223 principals and 223 Accounting Officers in all the Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State totaling 446. Firstly, stratified sampling technique was applied to select the subjects into males and females for 223 principals (129 males and 94 females) and 223 Accounting Officers (145 males and 78 females) in all the Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State totaling 446 (274 males and 172 females). Then, simple random sampling technique was applied to select a sample of three hundred and twenty eight (328) via balloting by replacement made up of two hundred and seventy one (271) Principals and fifty seven (57) Accounting Officers; all in the category of 209 male and 119 female respondents.

The researchers designed an instrument entitled: "Alternative Sources for Financing Secondary Education Questionnaire (ASFSEQ)" which was used to elicit responses from the Principals (Administrative Heads of Secondary schools) and Accounting officers (Bursars of secondary schools) to respond to the questionnaire items. The instrument had two sections, A and B. Section A dealt with the bio-data of the respondents (sex, status and name of school) whereas the section B of the instrument contained the statement items, numbering twenty (20). The twenty items of the instrument were contained in two clusters of ten (10) items in each cluster. A four point Likert type rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree(A), Disagree(D) and Strongly Disagree(SD) was the response mode of the instrument, which was also weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 for positive items and 1, 2, 3 and 4 for negative items.

The instrument was face validated by three experts: two from Educational Administration and Planning option of Educational foundations Department and one from Measurement and Evaluation unit of Science Education Department; all from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The validators vetted the instrument in terms of clarity of language, adequacy of items constructed as well as suitability of the items that were constructed for use. The validators reconstructed some of the items and made other expert amendments that were effected to produce the final instrument. But no item was dropped.

The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha statistic. In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, thirty five copies of the instrument were distributed in Abia State, a neighbouring

State to Ebonyi State to avoid interaction of the instrument with the subjects of study in the main area of study, Ebonyi State. From the data collected, a reliability index of 0.81 was obtained which was adjudged very high and thereby making the instrument suitable for the study.

Three hundred and twenty eight copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the Principals and Accounting Officers of the selected secondary schools in Ebonyi State with the help of thirteen (13) research assistants, one for each Local Government Area, while the researchers acted as the overall supervisors and coordinators. The respondents were encouraged to complete the questionnaire on the spot to avoid loss and ensure maximum return. Through this process, no questionnaire was lost.

The two research questions were answered using the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation while the two null hypotheses were tested by the application of t-test statistic. For data interpretation, a mean value of 2.50 was the benchmark for accepting or rejecting the result of analysis for each questionnaire item. Hence, any item with a mean value of 2.50 and above was accepted as positive while any item with a mean value below 2.50 was not accepted and as such was treated as negative. For interpreting the result of the hypotheses, an item was rejected if its t.calculated was greater than its t.critical while an item was accepted if its t.calculated was less than its t.critical

RESULTS

The results of the analysis of data were presented in Tables according to the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question One: What are the alternative sources of finance in secondary schools in Nigeria?

Result of research question one as contained in Table one shows a ten (10) item statement on alternative sources of financing secondary education in Nigeria. Their mean responses ranged from 2.08 to 2.88 while the standard deviation ranged from 0.83 to 1.20. Eight items-1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 obtained mean values above 2.50, the limiting mean value set for the study, implying that the respondents accepted them as alternative sources of financing secondary education in Nigeria.

The other two items- 4 and 5 whose mean values are below 2.50 were not accepted by the respondents as alternative sources of financing secondary education in Nigeria. The range of standard deviation from 1.16-0.93 showed that their responses clearly deviate.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Alternative Sources of Finance in Secondary Schools

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	X	S.D	Interpretation
1	Farm produce is sold in my school at the end of farming season	113	93	78	44	2.88	1.04	Accepted
2	Hiring of halls in my school is a source of revenue generation.	58	145	102	23	2.72	0.83	Accepted
3	My school does use her bookshop for revenue generation	70	153	51	54	2.72	0.97	Accepted
4	My school organizes lessons for revenue generation	41	71	146	70	2.25	0.93	Not accepted
5	My school organizes summer holiday school for revenue generation	51	122	83	72	2.46	1.00	Not accepted
6	My school raises finance through organization of inter house sports	33	91	75	129	2.80	1.20	Accepted
7	My school periodically organizes alumni home coming for revenue generation.	143	47	70	68	2.80	1.20	Accepted
8	My school uses her grocery store for revenue generation.	119	66	100	43	2.79	1.07	Accepted
9	My school uses her Home Economics Unit as a source of revenue generation.	109	20	128	71	2.50	1.16	Accepted
10	My school produces customized packaged drinking water as a source of revenue.	119	33	144	32	2.72	1.05	Accepted
Grand Mean								

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on How Alternative Sources of Finance could increase Revenue Generation in Secondary Schools

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	X	S.D	Interpretation
1	Sales from farm produce at the end of farming season increases revenue generations in my school.	81	63	112	72	2.50	1.08	Accepted
2	Renting of halls does increase revenue generation in my school.	58	71	116	83	2.78	0.83	Accepted
3	Sales from bookshop do not increase revenue generation in my school.	87	61	140	40	2.59	1.10	Accepted
6	Inter house sports organized in my school increases revenue generation.	69	90	115	54	2.53	1.00	Accepted
7	Periodically organized alumni home coming does not increase revenue generation in my school.	58	104	114	52	2.51	0.96	Accepted
8	Sales from the grocery store do not increase revenue generation in my school.	85	79	117	47	2.61	1.02	Accepted
9	The Home Economics Unit increases revenue generation in my school.	59	93	134	42	2.51	0.93	Accepted
10	Sale of customized packaged drinking water does not increase revenue generation in my school.	46	107	140	35	2.50	0.86	Accepted
Grand Mean						2.57	0.97	Accepted

Research Question Two: How could the alternative sources of finance increase revenue generation in secondary school?

Table 2 shows the eight (8) item statements that were accepted as alternative sources of financing secondary education in Nigeria. On how the alternative sources of finance could increase revenue generation in secondary school, their mean values were established. Their mean values ranged from 2.31 to 2.64 while the standard deviation range from 0.83 to 1.08. All eight items had mean values above 2.50 and were therefore accepted by the respondents as alternative sources of finance that could increase revenue generation in secondary schools. The grand mean also had a mean value of 2.57, which is also above 2.50, hence, the respondents agreed that the entire items could increase revenue for the schools.

Hypothesis One (H₀₁): There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female respondents on possible alternative sources of finance available to secondary schools.

The t-test result of hypothesis H₀₁ at 0.05 level of significance shows that for items no 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10, the t-calculated values are greater than the t-critical value showing significant difference; hence the

null hypothesis is rejected. Item 7 has the t-calculated value as 0.18 which is less than the t-crit value of 1.96. This means that the null hypothesis is not rejected. However, the t-test value of 6.54 is greater than the t-crit value, hence; H₀₁ is rejected, meaning that there is a significant difference in the mean responses of male and female respondents on possible alternative sources of finance available to secondary schools.

Hypothesis Two (H₀₂): There is no significant difference in the mean responses on how the alternative sources of finance could increase revenue generation in secondary schools based on status.

The test of hypothesis H₀₂ at 0.05 level of significance based on status showed that items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10 have their t-cals to be greater than the t-crit of 1.96, which shows a significant difference; hence the null hypothesis for the items is rejected. But items 2, 7 and 8 have their t-cals less than the t-crit and therefore their null hypothesis is not rejected. But the over-all t-test value of 2.81 is greater than the t-crit value of 1.96; therefore, the null hypothesis 2 is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference in the mean responses on how the alternative sources of finance could increase revenue generation in secondary schools based on status (that is Principals and Bursars).

Table 3: T-test Results on Possible Alternative Source of Financing Secondary Schools Based on Gender

S/N	Variable	Number	X	S.D	DF	t.cal	t.crit	Decision	Significance
1	Male	209	3.16	0.93	326	8.14	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant
	Female	119	2.26	0.99					
2	Male	209	2.89	0.78	326	4.89	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant
	Female	119	2.43	0.85					
3	Male	209	3.09	0.81	326	10.37	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant
	Female	119	2.08	0.90					
4	Male	209	2.55	0.85	326	8.60	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant
	Female	119	1.72	0.81					
5	Male	209	2.81	0.84	326	9.46	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant
	Female	119	1.84	0.96					
6	Male	209	2.37	0.97	326	7.18	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant
	Female	119	1.57	0.93					
7	Male	209	2.79	1.19	326	0.18	1.96	Accept H_0	Notsignificant
	Female	119	2.82	1.21					
8	Male	209	3.05	0.98	326	6.04	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant
	Female	119	2.34	1.08					
9	Male	209	2.81	1.09	326	6.81	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant
	Female	119	1.96	1.07					
10	Male	209	2.89	1.04	326	3.73	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant
	Female	119	2.44	1.03					
T-test value						6.54	1.96	Reject H_{O_1}	Significant

Table 4: T-test Results on Possible Alternative Source of Financing Secondary Schools Based on Status

S/N	Variable	Number	X	S.D	DF	t.cal	t.crit	Decision	Significance
1	Principal	271	2.66	1.03	326	7.80	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant
	Bursars	57	1.52	0.82					
2	Principal	271	2.36	1.03	326	1.84	1.96	Accept H_0	Notsignificant
	Bursars	57	2.08	1.04					
3	Principal	271	2.66	1.01	326	2.75	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant
	Bursars	57	2.26	0.93					
6	Principal	271	2.47	0.92	326	2.01	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant
	Bursars	57	2.77	1.28					
7	Principal	271	2.54	0.93	326	1.40	1.96	Accept H_0	Notsignificant
	Bursars	57	2.35	1.07					
8	Principal	271	2.58	1.01	326	1.13	1.96	Accept H_0	Notsignificant
	Bursars	57	2.75	1.07					
9	Principal	271	2.57	0.90	326	2.74	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant
	Bursars	57	2.21	0.99					
10	Principal	271	2.56	0.85	326	2.81	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant
	Bursars	57	2.21	0.84					
T-test value						2.81	1.96	Reject H_{O_1}	Significant

DISCUSSION

The research question 1 sought to x-ray alternative sources of financing secondary education for sustainable development in Nigeria. The finding of the research from the quantitative data shown in Table 1 revealed that Principals and Bursars in secondary schools in Ebonyi State are already using the alternative sources of finance because of their understanding that government subvention is not enough to help schools cope with financial needs. The following sources were found to be the alternative financial sources: sell of farm produce,

hiring out the halls, use of bookshop, organizing inter-house sports, Alumni home coming, sales from the grocery, sales from the home economic unit and sale of customized packaged water.

The above finding for alternative sources of financing secondary schools supports the views of [7] and that of [8] who independently maintained that one of the greatest problems facing secondary education in Nigeria is that of limited financial resources in the face of increasing responsibilities and dwindling economy. Therefore, this study and the findings are timely especially in this time of world economic recession of

which Nigeria is inclusive. The result also buttresses the attention needed for the directive from Ebonyi State Government for schools to explore alternative sources of generating revenue. The result is a step in the right direction because Principals and bursars of secondary schools are exploring more sources to add to the already identified ones so as to increase their revenue generation.

The test of significance for hypothesis 1 as revealed in Table 3 indicated that the t-test value of 6.54 is greater than the t-crit value of 1.96, hence; H_0_1 is rejected, meaning that there is a significant difference in the mean responses of male and female respondents on possible alternative sources of finance available to secondary schools.

The research question 2 aimed at finding out if the possible alternative sources of financing secondary education system could increase revenue generation. The finding as shown in Table 2 showed that the identified alternative sources of financing secondary education could actually increase the revenue generation of secondary schools in Nigeria. This finding raises great hope for public secondary schools in Ebonyi State particularly and Nigeria in general since subventions to the schools from government is daily dwindling. By implication, if the principals and other managers of secondary schools intensify action on these viable alternative sources of finance to secondary education, the secondary schools, with time will become self financing. By achieving this feat, most of the challenges posed by finance will become history or at least greatly reduced. It is very possible that with the sustenance of these alternative sources of generating revenues, schools will have strong financial base.

On the test of hypothesis 2, the over-all t-test value of 2.81 is greater than the t-crit value of 1.96; therefore, the null hypothesis 2 is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference in the mean responses on the strength of the alternative sources of finance to increase revenue generation in secondary schools based on status (that is Principals and Bursars). This confirms the research question 2 result where all the items were accepted not only as viable sources of revenue but capable of increasing revenue for the secondary schools.

Educational Implications of the Findings: The findings of this study have great implications for educational growth and development at all levels in Ebonyi State and Nigeria. Since the explored alternative sources of financing

secondary education have been found to be viable enough in increasing the revenue base of schools, it is urgently expedient that aggressive awareness campaigns by secondary school managers be embarked upon. This will be in an effort to key into the use of alternative sources to generate funds for their institutions and general instruction so that the goals of education which had remained tall dreams as a result of poor financing will become history. It further implies that education managers will now wake up and face the reality on ground about generating finances for their instructions.

Recommendations: Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- Principals should strive to make the alternative sources of finance sustainable
- Alternative sources of financing education at all levels must be seriously pursued by the Government.
- Principals should ensure effective utilization of revenues generated through the alternative sources for the growth and development of secondary schools.

Limitations of the Study: The major limitations of this study were:

- The scope of coverage is not wide enough for generalization. The use of one State to represent 36 States made the study grossly insufficient for generalizations.
- The use of questionnaire is another limitation to the study. Analysis of data was solely based on respondents' decision whose extent of trust cannot be determined. This definitely affected the result

CONCLUSION

This study determined alternative sources of financing secondary education in Nigeria, taking Ebonyi State as a case study. Alternative sources of funding secondary education were established and their capabilities to increase revenue base of secondary schools ascertained. Implications were considered for which recommendations were made the end. The researchers believe that when all the recommendations are implemented, secondary schools in Nigeria will become self-reliant, Ebonyi State secondary schools inclusive.

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