

## **ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF FUNDING PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN RIVERS STATE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study investigated alternative sources of funding public universities for sustainable development in Rivers State. The study reveals funding of public universities generally in Nigeria is majorly done by the government and recent times have decreased which has led to the insufficiency in the administration and management by the universities. Student enrollment has been in Nigeria a high increase while the fund allocation is not increasing). The study employed a descriptive survey design. Two research questions were formulated and two hypotheses were postulated and tested. The population of this study comprised all the 3,702 staff in the 3 public universities in Rivers State. To achieve this, proportionate sampling technique was used to select 447 staff from university of Port Harcourt, 530 from Rivers State University and 133 staff from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The 1,110 staff that was sampled for the study represented 30% of the total population of staff in the 3 public universities in Rivers State. It was constructed in line with the modified four-point Likert scale Questionnaire that was constructed in line with the modified 4-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA)- 4points, Agree (A) - 3points, Disagree (D) - 2points, Strongly Disagree (SD) - 1 point. The study conclude that has established sources used by university administrators to source fund for the effective administration as well as the formula adopted by university administrator in allocating fund generated for the effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. The findings of the study indicated that university administrator generate fund for the administration of the institution through the Parents Teachers Association, school community, renting school facilities and engaging in production of goods and services. The study recommend among others education administrators should map-*

*out others sources of generating fund in addition to the provision made by government. In managing educational resources, government should ensure that funds provided are sufficient to meet school demand for smooth operation.*

**KEYWORDS:** Funding, education, university, sustainability, community and resources.

## Introduction

Funding of universities education system is very crucial. Funding is probably the second most important resources (i.e., after human resources) in higher education. It is a crucial component in university education as it determines the functionality and success of all other component of the system. Availability of adequate fund in the university system is required for adequate provision of quality human and material resources and guarantees effective transformational process and enabling environment to receive output. It is believed that money spent on education represents the best investment any nation can make in, Eze, (2025).

University education is an important tool to the achievement of suitable development. University education sets the standard for primary and secondary education like providing policy advice in the preparation of school curriculum as well as training of administrators and teachers for primary and secondary schools (Nwoye in Uche, 2016). Tertiary education as defined by the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2014) is the education given after post basic education in institutions such as universities and inter university centre such as the Nigeria French language village, national institute of Nigerian languages, institutes such as innovation enterprise institution (JETs), colleges of education, monotechnics, polytechnics, and other specialized institutions such as college of agriculture, schools of health and technology and the national teachers institute (NT!).

These objectives stated above can be achieved when human and material resources are managed effectively which requires adequate funding. Ololube, (2019) cited in Eze, (2025) asserted that human resource are human beings, workers, laborers, human agents, workers in the firms, industries, offices, ports, schools, colleges, etc. all of whom he referred to as Pool of human unit. Human resources in this contest are the entire staff of the universities which comprises of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the institution, they need to be paid adequately, housed, and insured. Material resources has to do with infrastructures, social amenities, functioning laboratories and library, ICT gadgets, etc.

University funding in Nigeria for decades has declined in government's bridgetary allocation as against 15% recommended by The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Premium Times reports on October 24, 2020, that out of N13.08 trillion budgeted for the next year (2021), N 742.5 billion was allocated to education. That is just 5.6% of

the budget and the lowest since the year 2011, this is considered inadequate for the effective management of public universities. There has been an increase in the enrollment of students into the universities in Nigeria and the fund allocated to these universities are meant to increase as corresponding to the increased enrollment of students but sadly this is not so, hence the need for alternative sources of funding public universities in Nigeria.

In order to cushion this burden of funding public universities by government alone, some suggestions are being made. They include collaborating with international bodies, introduction of farming for sales of agricultural products, payment of tuition fee, part-time programmes, commercial activities on campuses gifts and endowment, alumini, companies and communities internally generated revenue will go a long way to supplement government grants and subversion for sustainable development.

Rivers state like every other state in Nigeria is faced with similar issues of poor funding of its public universities and the management and success of its smooth running to a large extent depends on the amount of fund at its disposal hence the need for alternative source to funds its universities in the 21st Century for last an able national development.

International collaboration with universities as revealed by Okorie and Uche as cited in Ohia (2018) has been a long time approach. This he explained is in form of ownership of intellectual property, knowledge exchange and research which was why tobacco manufacturers in UK 9 (United kingdom) paid 250,000 Pounds to the medical Research Council for the purpose of research. This collaboration between the university and the international body is aimed at providing alternative source of funding the university in achieving its set goals and also providing solution to problems at benefits humanity using research findings. This partnership does not in a way affect or change the core functions of the parties involved, it is instead a win situation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Funding of public universities generally in Nigeria majorly is done by the government and in recent times have decreased which has led to the inefficiency in the administration and management of the universities thereby hampering the achievement of the university goals. Students enrollment into Nigerian universities have continued to rise while the budgetary financial allocation is not increasing.

The public universities in Rivers state rely on government grants for funding of programmes' which has been inadequate and consequently led to setbacks in effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. Poor funding of public universities in Nigeria have given rise to deterioration of infrastructural facilities, strike action low research work, cultism among students etc. It is in the light of the above that the need for alternatives approaches to funding of public universities in Rivers state becomes imperative.

The aim of the study was to determine the alternative sources of funding in public universities for sustainable nation development in Rivers State. The study attempted to:

1. Find out the alternative sources of funding in public universities for sustainable development in Rivers State
2. Determine the formula adopted by university administrators in allocating funds generated internally for sustainable development in Rivers State

The following research questions that were formulated guided the study:

1. What are the alternative sources of funding in public universities for sustainable development in Rivers State
2. What are the formula adopted by university administrators in allocating funds generated internally for sustainable development in Rivers State

The following hypotheses postulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

**H01:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female staff on the alternative sources of funding in public universities for sustainable development in Rivers State

**H02:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female staff on the formula adopted by university administrators in allocating funds generated internally for sustainable development in Rivers State.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Funding**

Funding of university is crucial for the effective running of the university by its managers. Fund according to Farlex (2015) is a sum of money or other resources set aside for specific purpose. This could also be seen as the amount of money that is collected or saved for the purpose of solving a problem. Funding of public universities in Nigeria has been largely left for the government alone inspite of the increased demand. Government can no longer bear the cost of funding public universities alone and this situation is so glaring that a lot of universities have embarked on diverse conventional measures to generate funds internally to support the government grants and subventions. There is also the need for prudence in the manner and method in allocation of available fund because without effective management, proper appropriation and accountability, no amount of fund provided will be able to solve any problem. Funding of public universities has continued to diminish as years roll by with it's adverse effect on infrastructure, research, teaching and quality of higher education product.

Funding in educational perspective is used to describe money set aside to finance educational project or programmes. It equally means money or financial resources. Fund could be in form of cash, credit facilities, shares and bank credits etc. Also, allowance, undistributed profits in the form of secondary education occupies a strategic position in Rivers state because of the important roles it plays in preparing the students for useful living in the society and for higher education. The state government manages and funds secondary education in the state through its state ministry of education. The ministry does this through the state education commission for execution of their administrative function. Azunna, (1977), cited in Eze (2021); the funds provided to secondary education is capital intensive and involves a huge amount of money for procurement of physical infrastructures for the achievement of secondary education goals and objectives. Funds is one of the important factor resources for realization of education objective. The advent of his HRH ohna Ezeotto, it was basically contributory as dependent on individual, family, parents, groups, clubs, and organization in funding education. In addition, parents deny themselves a lot of benefits to keep their children in school as communities often levy themselves to raise enough funds to provide facilities in schools like classroom blocks, halls and dormitories. Similarly, as a way to motivate and embrace education brilliant personality were given scholarship to study in the western world.

**Amazonwu (2000)** reported that most patient and local communities assist schools that have resource problems. Regrettably, most serious problem facing secondary schools in Rivers state poor infrastructure or dilapidated poor learning facilities is that of inadequate funds. The funds provided by the state government are never enough. Fagbeni(2000) concluded that the obvious consequences of inadequate funding of secondary education in most states included that the obvious consequence of inadequate funding of secondary education in most states include difficulty to provide instructional materials. Pay teachers salaries and provided equipment for teacher science in the schools. The problem of funding has been the most persistent and stormy issues militating against schools ability to maintain existing service in the state. Since the state government finds it difficult in recent times to provide the resources and materials to schools, the broad aims and objectives of secondary education will not be realized. This perhaps is one of the reasons why the state government encourages private sector participation in its funding of secondary schools. According to Patrick (1998), private sector is the part of country's economy owneds, operated managed by private individuals. Private sector includes business organization industries and firms owned and managed by individuals or groups. They employ the service of secondary school graduates as typists, clerks and sales agents. As noted by Ogbonnah, that private participation in funding of school is low.

## Alternatives Approaches of Funding University

**Basically, there are various ways of funding the university education namely**

**Renting of School Facilities:** The school is an educational institution established with the collection of so many physical facilities. These facilities include the library, classroom, sport facilities, office blocks among others. However, since the school has a specific time of operation within the week and during the day, the rest of the time when students and teachers are not in the school provides an opportunity for the school administrators to use these facilities for commercial purposes.

There are universities where the school field is provided for public use for occasions such as weeding, birthday, naming etc. at an agreed fee. The institutional administrator therefore has this privilege of using all the available physical facilities as a revenue earner for the administration of the school. Similarly, the school filed is also rented to other schools that have no provision for fields which can be used for annual inter-house sports.

**Business Venture:** One of the ways an administrator can generate revenue for the administration of the school is by establishing business ventures within the school. There are schools that operate a mini-shop where consumables are sold. These shops provide opportunity for students, parents and the members of the public to buy consumables for personal use. There are business opportunities such as painting, weaving and other small scale businesses that can be operated by the schools and this provides an opportunity for the school to generate revenue internally.

University administrators also generate fund by running businesses that involves the provision of services. The administrator with the cooperation of other staff of the school can provide commercial services to members of the public as well as those within the school at an agreed rate. When this is done over time, it can help the institutional administrator to generate additional fund to whatever has been generated from other sources. School administrator also has the capacity to partner with other commercial institutions that will help the school to make income from such business partnership for the administration of the school.

**Alumni Association:** Alumni should be taught, from day one, that their financial and moral contributions are important. They should be taught to be committed and enthusiastic long before they are ready to join the association. Schools that desire to improve on their internal revenue generation base need to establish a functional alumni association. The alumni help to bring past students of the school together who are doing well in the society. These individuals also play an important role in assisting the school financially for meeting the needs of the school.

There are various other strategies that are applied by university administrator to boost the revenue base of their schools. Some of these strategies include community involvement, proceeds from

school farm activities, and support from non-governmental organizations. These strategies have the capacity to increase the revenue available to the administrator for meeting the administrative needs of the school.

### **Formula for Allocation of Fund Generated by Universities**

There are lots of expenditure that the institutional administrator is saddled with in order to achieve the goals and objectives of education in the school. However, in the face of dwindling fund, the administrator is expected to adopt the best strategy for allocation of fund generated internally for effective administration of the institution. Some of the fund allocation strategies that can be adopted by the university administrator include but is not limited to the following.

#### **Student's Needs**

The primary reason why most schools especially the public ones are in business are to provide education which is a social need to students. This means that if the students are not in school, the school will have no reason to be in existence. Therefore, attention is usually given to students as they form the basis for investment in the educational system (Ben David-Hadar & Ziderman, 2010). This forms the basis for allocation of revenue generated in the school.

There are institutional administrators who allocate available revenue as long as it has to be for the satisfaction of the need of students. The students therefore stand at the center of all financial locations in the school. The administrator therefore gives priority during revenue allocation to those expenditure that has to do with satisfying student's needs. Allocation of revenue in this case therefore focuses on providing educational resources and services for meeting the needs of students so that goals and objectives of education can be achieved.

**Population:** One of the criteria used by the government for the allocation of revenue to the state government is the population of the state. This is because it is believed that needs are more essential when it affects a lot of people (Baker et al., 2010). This strategy has also been applied by some university administrator in the allocation of revenue in the school. The administrator therefore allocate internally generated revenue for school expenditure if he or she believes that the need will satisfy the expectation of a more people in the school.

**Educational Programmes:** There are different educational programmes that are floated from time to time in school to meet the educational expectation of stakeholders. The administrator who puts these criteria into consideration ensures that attention is given to educational programmes that will contribute to the achievement of the goals and objectives that the administrator and the institution wish to achieve.

**Urgency of Need:** The needs of the school are enormous. There are administrators who think that revenue should be allocated first to needs that are very urgent before others can be considered. In this case, revenue generated internally must be allocated to needs that are very pressing so as to prefer further damages. For example, when there is a need that is a threat to life or a need that will stop educational activities from going on in the school, the administrator need to allocate resources to these areas as this will affect the entire activities in the school. Allocation of fund is therefore based on the urgency of the need other than other criteria used in other public institutions.

### **Methodology**

The study employed a descriptive survey design. It is descriptive because the study focused on gathering data for the purpose of describing alternative approaches to funding of public universities in Rivers states for sustainable national development in the 21 St century. The population of this study comprised all the 3,702 staff in the 3 public universities in Rivers State. This consisted of 1,492 staff in University of Port Harcourt, 1,766 staff in Rivers State University and 444 staff in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

(Source: University Digest, 2017).

The sample size for this study comprised 1,110 staff which was drawn from the 3 public universities in Rivers State. To achieve this, proportionate sampling technique was used to select 447 staff from university of Port Harcourt, 530 from Rivers State University and 133 staff from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The 1,110 staff that was sampled for the study represented 30% of the total population of staff in the 3 public universities in Rivers State.

The instrument of the study was a self-developed instrument titled “Alternative Sources to Funding of Public Universities for Sustainable Development Questionnaire (ASFPUSDQ). It was constructed in line with the modified four-point Likert scale Questionnaire that was constructed in line with the modified 4-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA)- 4points, Agree (A) - 3points, Disagree (D) - 2points, Strongly Disagree (SD) - 1 point. In scoring the questionnaire responses, the weighted point was added as  $4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5$ . Thus 2.5 is the Criterion Mean. Therefore, the remarks for any item below 2.5 was disagreed and agreed for any item of 2.5 and above

The degree of consistency of the instrument was established using test re-test method. The copies of the questionnaire were administered to 25 staff outside the sample. After two weeks, another set of 25 copies of the same instrument was given to the same group of respondents. The two sets of scores were correlated using the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation to establish the reliability co-efficient value of 0.86.

One thousand and fifty (1,050) copies of the questionnaire instrument was distributed personally by the researcher with the help of two (2) research assistants who were adequately trained on the modalities of administering the instrument. Some of the respondents who could not attend to the questionnaires on the spot were allowed to go home with it for proper filling. But due to threats of security and unavailability of some of the respondents on several visits for the retrieval of the questionnaires, only 1,084 questionnaire instruments, which represented 97% of the total questionnaires distributed were distributed.

The mean and standard deviation statistics were used as the statistical tools to answer the research question while z-test statistical tool was used to test the formulated null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. In respect to the mean the weight points was summed up; thus  $4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 10/4 = 2.50$ , this is the criterion mean. Based on this any mean value below 2.5 was disagreed upon and mean value up to and above 2.50 was agreed upon.

## RESULTS

### Data Analysis

**Research one:** What are the alternative sources of funding in public universities for sustainable nation development in Rivers State

**Table 4.1: Mean ratings and standard deviation on the alternative sources of funding in public universities for sustainable nation development in Rivers State**

#### Alternative sources of funding in public universities for sustainable nation development in Rivers State

Female staff = 526      male staff = 552

S/N		X	S.D	X	S.D	Weighted mean	Rank	Remark Order
1	Fund is sourced through financial assistance to the school.	2.84	0.97	3.32	0.9	3.08	4 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
2	Fund is generated through selling	3.2	1.13	3.2	0.78	3.2	5 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed

products  
produced by the  
school.

3	Fund	is	3.15	0.95	3.07	1.06	3.11	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Agreed
	generated								
	through								
	contribution								
	from								
	parents								
	teachers								
	association								
	(PTA)								
4	Fund	is	3.16	1.05	3.22	0.95	3.19	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Agreed
	generated								
	through								
	renting								
	of								
	school								
	facilities								
	for								
	ceremonies								
	e.g.								
	School hall.								
5	School generates	3.46	0.83	3.05	0.83	3.25		1 <sup>st</sup>	Agreed
	revenue	through							
	special								
	subventions	from							
	government								

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**Legends:**

X : Mean

S.D: Standard Deviation

n : Number

**Scales:**

1.00 - 2.49: Disagree

2.50 - 4.00: Agree

Data on Table 4.1 shows the mean ratings and standard deviation on the alternative sources of funding in public universities for sustainable nation development in Rivers State. The Table shows that both male and female staff agreed that generating fund through financial assistance to the

school, generating fund through selling products produced by the school, generating fund through contribution from Parents Teachers Association (PTA), generating fund through renting of school facilities for ceremonies and generating revenue through special subventions from government are the sources used by university administrator in generating revenue internally for the effective administration of public universities in Rivers State, as they agreed with the weighted grand mean value of 2.99.

The findings of this study is in line with Venture in Ololube (2013), cited in Eze(2016). when he stated that, internally generated funds are those funds that are realized through the efforts or operations of an entity itself. This type of fund is derived from the goods or services produced from the internal activities of an organization. This therefore implies that any formal organization that produces goods or services can generate, revenue internally from these activities which will help in facilitating academic activities. The findings of this study also revealed that fund is not generated through donation from community and philanthropist to the school. This finding is not in agreement (Okorie, 2016), having opined that the school authority could appeal in writing to wealthy persons in the community where the school is located for financial assistance in order to develop their school. This implies that the school community and the philanthropist does not support the school financially and that is not healthy for the growth of the school. The findings also reviewed that the institutional administrators generate more of their fund from special subventions from the government. More also, the findings of the study is in line with Owhondah (2018) in his positions that levies that are realized from PTA constitute a major source of school finance in Nigerian educational system which are used in providing support for the school by constructing physical facilities for the use of the school as well as stakeholders.

The study went further to find out that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Male and Female staff on the sources used by university administrators in generating fund for the administration of public universities in Rivers State.  
**Research Two:** What are the formula adopted by university administrators in allocating funds generated for sustainable nation development in Rivers State?

**Table 4.3: Mean ratings and standard deviation on the formula adopted by university administrators in allocating funds generated for sustainable nation development in Rivers State**

**Formula adopted by university administrators in allocating funds.**

**Female staff = 526**

**male staff = 552**

S/N		X	S.D	X	S.D	Weighted mean	Rank	Remark
7	The administrator allocates fund according to the need of the school.	3.11	0.74	1.93	0.66	2.52	6 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
8	The administrator categorize activities into groups and strata in order to efficiently allocate funds.	3.04	0.74	3.4	0.83	3.22	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Agreed
9	The administrator considers the impact of programs that will impact directly on the academic performance of the students.	3.05	0.83	2.89	0.76	2.97	5 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
10	The administrator formulate plans for achieving the set objectives of the school.	3.1	0.88	3.24	0.88	3.17	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Agreed
11	The administrator calls a meeting of staff and students to decide on the need to pursue first.	3.06	0.74	3.21	0.96	3.13	4 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed

12	The administrator allocates more funds to projects that will impact on the academic performance of students.	3.2	0.89	3.25	0.76	3.23	1 <sup>st</sup>	Agreed
	<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>2.99</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>3.04</b>		<b>Agreed</b>

Data on Table 4.2 shows that mean ratings and standard deviation of the responses of male staff and female staff on the formula adopted by the university administrator for allocating fund generated for the administration of public universities in Rivers state includes: allocating fund according to the need of the institution, categorize activities into groups and strata in order to efficiently allocate funds, considering the impact of programs that will impact directly on the academic performance of the students, formulating plans for achieving the set objectives of the institution, calling a meeting of teachers and students to decide on the need to pursue first and allocating more funds to projects that will impact on the academic performance of students as noticed with the weighted grand mean value of 3.04.

From the findings of this study the administrator considers most the needs of the school in general before allocating the fund of the school. If the need of the school is facility; more attention will be given to it. More funds will also be channeled to hiring more staff if that becomes a need to the school. In this same vein, Ofoegbu and Alonge (2014) pointed out that revenue generated from the school are usually used to increase the capacity of staff. In most schools, teachers are exposed to capacity building programmes in order to increase their level of efficiency and effectiveness geared towards delivering quality service to the school. The administrator most times uses some of the revenue generated from the school to send the teacher(s) out for training to empower them for better service delivery. Internally generated revenue is therefore used by administrators to provide training for the teachers through workshops, conferences and seminars so as to assist the teachers to improve on their service delivery for achieving the educational objectives of the school. Enriching the job of a teacher with development programs equips the teacher with a lot of skills and innovations that will add to their store of knowledge for academic excellence.

In this same vein, the findings of this study also agreed Ofoegbu & Alonge, (2013), having opined that, there are other areas where fund is sourced are used in public universities and they include provision of capital projects, welfare of staff, payment of salaries, students welfare, maintenance

of facilities, purchasing office equipment, beautifying the school premises, equipping the library, providing electricity and water as well as research development. All these are important areas of fund utilization by the administrator for the effective administration of public university in Rivers State.

The findings of the study also revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female staff on the formula adopted by the university administrator for allocating fund for the administration of public universities in Rivers State.

### Conclusion

This study has established sources used by university administrators to source fund for the effective administration as well as the formula adopted by university administrator in allocating fund generated for the effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. The findings of the study indicated that university administrator generate fund for the administration of the institution through the Parents Teachers Association, school community, renting school facilities and engaging in production of goods and services. The study also showed that ensuring that new staff receive training to enable them function effectively on the job of teaching and learning, taking statistics of the instructional facilities to be provided, using generated fund for the reduction of fee deficit, using fund for rewarding teachers and students are the ways employed by administrators in utilizing fund of the school.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings made on the study, the following recommendations are made

1. Education administrators should map-out others sources of generating fund in addition to the provision made by government.
2. In managing education resources, government should ensure that funds provided are sufficient to meet school demand for smooth operation.
3. There should be mutual relationship between the administrators of tertiary institution and new employee in management of organizational resources for effective utilization of funds.

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