AN ASSESSMENT OF PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE FUNDING OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study descriptive survey assessed private sector participation in the funding of university education in Rivers State. The study identified the rationale for private sector to participate in the funding of university education. Two research questions and two hypotheses were used for the study. The population drawn from the three universities consists of 194 university staff and 149 personnel from the four registered industries in Rivers State. This gave a total population of 343. The 194 HODs, Deans, Bursar and Registrar and the 149 personnel representing 100% of the population served as respondents. A 12-item questionnaire titled An Assessment Private Sector Participation in the Funding of University Education Questionnaire (APSPFUEQ) was used for data collection. A test re-test method was used and the scores obtained from the exercises were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to determine the reliability of 0.77. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the z-test statistics was employed to test the research hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result amongst others revealed that the ways by which private sector can participate in funding university education is through the provision of relevant and appropriate infrastructural facilities, providing financial support for designs, construction and reconstruction of projects to suit University programmes among others. On the other hand, the strategies that can be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education is that university administrators should inform private organization on how the funds they have contributed are being utilized and also establish mechanisms at universities to solicit funds from diaspora among others. It was recommended that private sector should recognize the fact that training personnel to act as agent of refurbishment in industrial operational capability to bring about productivity from institution is necessary, and this will make them to be active in funding university education.

Keywords: Private Sector, Funding, University Education, Public University, Stakeholder and Development.

Introduction

Inadequate funding has been the bane of higher education institutions in Nigeria, coupled with explosion in enrolment and ageing infrastructural facilities. The establishment and running of universities are capital intensive and as such, the government cannot cater for its finance alone. Running the institution needs ample investment and steady income necessary to sustain minimum level of infrastructure as in terms of facilities, staff enrolment, non-academic staff, hostels and staff accommodation etc. In this vain, Ogbonnaya (2000) opined that funds are necessary for staff payment, staff development and procurement of educational materials, which in themselves are indices of effective management. Funding education is the provision of money either by the government, private donors, private investors, organizations and individuals to run education programmes in other to ensure quality of education if properly managed.
There are internal and external sources of finance in this context. The internal sources are generated within the institution and include retained earnings, depreciation provisions, accounts payable, new equity and proceeds from the sale of assets. External sources on the other hand, are those fund sources available outside the school or educational institutions and therefore require contact with external bodies like the private firms, the United Nations Children’s Funds (UNICEF) and United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural organization (UNESCO), commercial bank loans, exchange programmes embarked upon by various institutions etc.

However, the mainstay of Nigeria’s economy which is oil and the ebb in its price in the global market depleted the coffers of government, thereby affecting the amount of fund allocation to universities in the national budget. It is important to state that the present economic down-turn experienced in the country may not be unconnected with the dwindling price of oil in the global market. Therefore, there is an urgent need for universities in Rivers State to shift from traditional universities’ practices (among which is total dependence on government’s funding) or better still, improve on their entrepreneurial practices (that is commercialization of research, public-private sector participation in university funding, Private sector-Government partnership, among others) in order to improve on their funding base.

Private sector consists of non-governmental organizations or industries that are managed by independent companies of private ownership not controlled by the State. They include private individuals, business organizations and multinational companies and contribute regularly to the funding of education by facilitating the sustenance and quality maintenance of education programmes. This research is anchored on the theory of Participation propounded by Bacharch and Botwinicky (1992). The participatory theory is based heavily on the application of the democratic process. In this theory, Private sector may assist through the donation of funds and other relevant facilities like library, computers, offices, staff rooms, and training of both staff and students, among others. The theory is significant in the field of educational management in terms of how programmes should be handled and funded.

**Ways Private Sector can participate in Funding University Education**

The ways private sectors respond to funding education are in device categories. There is a long-term binding contract between the government and private sector which involves the services and standard of services to be delivered by the private sector. On the other hand, institution pays private sector indirectly in the form of capacity building and services that will be transform and transfer back to the industries to help build the operational capability to bring about productivity. However, the private sector of the society should complement the efforts of government in terms of financing to bring about meeting quality standards in education for all as well as achieve the goal of equal educational opportunities to every citizen of the country. The fact that the private sector could improve the nation’s educational system through the provision of relevant and appropriate infrastructural facilities as well as equipped learning environment cannot be overstated as governments cannot single handedly solve the problems existing in the present day education sector (Ezekwesili, 2006).

Meanwhile, individual university institutions opt for generating internal revenue by initiating projects that will help generate funds to supplement their funding stream. The projects initiated by universities to generate funds that is needed to help for effective productivity and delivery of quality services, are usually located in the commercial center of the school where businesses like bookshops, super market, cyber cafe, hotel and catering services, printing press and publishing house, university journals, consultancy services, etc. Other means of generating revenue in the universities are school fees paid by students, development levy, caution fee, admission, and registration and examination fees. However, the private sector can assist the university by subsidizing fees for students, providing accessible loans as well as allowances to students, giving scholarships to students and sponsoring academic staff for training.
Assistance also come from the United Nations Children’s Funds (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural organization (UNESCO), commercial bank loans, exchange programmes between institutions and TETFund which stand the cap to ensure that education tax is properly utilized by the government by pouring the funds generated from education tax back to the education sector. This is done to ensure that funds for educational facilities and infrastructural development are provided at full scale to improve the quality of education in Nigeria. This fund is also used to promote creative and innovative approaches to educational learning and services, and enhance teaching activities by supporting Teacher Education, Teaching Practice, Library Development, etc. In another dimension, Olatunji (2003) stated that the envisaged partnership should cut across different mutually inclusive groups of stakeholders such as International Non-Government Organizations and Development Agencies such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture (UNESCO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Multinational Corporations such as Alesco Cooperation Limited, SPDC, Chevron, Taxaco, Total Fina ELF, Exxon-Mobil and other Organized Private Sector (OPS) championing new literacy-enhancing areas such as scientific, information and technology literacy university.

There are several interventions made by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) to enhance and improve the quality of teaching and research in tertiary institutions. These interventions can be in the form of technical assistance, grants, credits and loans to higher institutions as well as staff. The lack of funds in the university education has been part of the reason the Nigerian government approach the international community for loans (bi-lateral and multi-lateral) or grants. Most of the grants rendered by foreign countries are focused graduate scholarships outside the country. These are largely in form of bi-lateral and multi-lateral loans. As regards foreign grants, it is nowadays largely restricted to the offer of scholarships for specialized training particularly at the graduate level outside the country. There are several ways by which the private sector can contribute to the improvement of university education through funding; some of the ways are as follows:

1. **Provision of Physical Facilities**

   A safe structure with adequate sanitary facilities, balanced visual environment and sufficient shelter space for work needs to be provided in order to meet the physical needs of the children and teachers that will transform to quality out come in the teaching and learning process. Agabi (2002) defines educational facilities as the physical structures, the furniture, the equipment, the machine, the aesthetic environment and other material resources that directly or indirectly contribute to effective teaching and learning. For these facilities to be in proper shape and in quantity and quality there is need for participation of private sector in funding education to achieve quality infrastructures, school plants, machines facilities, equipment’s, buildings, land, laboratories within the school that facilitate the teaching-learning process.

2. **Construction of New Infrastructural Facilities**

   In constructing new infrastructures, Onuka (2004) stated that, investment in education entails the provision of the necessary infrastructure and facilities that could lead the system to the desired goals and objectives. Chike (2007) found that inadequate infrastructure and poor facilities coupled with congestion of students and substandard spatial design can disorganize the students physically and mentally, which in turn affects their academic performance. School facilities are needed to be able to development men and women with the necessary skills needed to exploit the national resources of the country.

3. **Maintenance of School Environment**

   Environmental maintenance therefore is the process of ensuring that the surroundings are friendly and habitable to man by keeping the earth in order through controlling, coordinating and planning. Udoh (2004) conceives school environment as an organization where students go to
participate in learning activities that can result in behavioral change. The quality of teaching staff in terms of academics and professional qualification and the favorable environmental conditions to a large extent determines the quality of any educational system. There is need for increase in maintenance activities such as cleaning, inspecting, repairing equipment’s, restoration of floors, painting and so on. The school physical facilities are very important in teaching – learning situations. A good school premises could have significant education effects on students. Effective restoration of the environment is achieved through good design which encompasses good school hygiene that includes sanitation, creating an eco-friendly environment with trees to takeout the bad air in order for the students to receive quality air, strategic noise control system, good lighting system with relaxing colours, and general comfort provided by temperature and climate. Maintaining a healthy environment in the school affects the attitude of students, teachers, parents, and surrounding community positively, and facilitates the achievement of effective teaching-learning process.

4. Assisting in the Buildings of Schools

The physical environment of the school includes the building; classroom blocks infrastructural facilities, learning materials etc. Other components of the physical environment include play fields, skating rinks, swimming pools audio-visual equipment, walls, machinery, decorative objects, (Mickay, 1964 in Egim, 2003). Buildings constitute a very large part of the school environment and members of the school community. This can be accomplished by means of using good quality materials with appropriate architectural design and regulation. In Nigeria, millions of children spend their days in thousands of public schools yet these school buildings are besieged with dilapidation.

5. Renovation of Dilapidated Facilities

Udoh (2004) describes physical facilities available in the school environment for maintenance to include the school building (classrooms, dining hall, assembly hall, laboratory, library, hostel etc.) equipment’s (laboratory, workshop, sports, computers, instructional materials): machineries (workshops machines, tools, vehicles) furniture, books, electrical and water supply infrastructure. Improving and maintaining the work environment of higher institutions will improve staff performance and boast educational quality. Some notable structures in universities in Rivers State are in a state of disrepair as less attention to renovate dilapidated building as a result of over utilization, under-utilization and misplace priority in the use of human and material resources in the school system. The private sectors should not wait pending such a time when physical facilities are completely derelict but rather should get involved by maintaining these facilities as this enhance and improve the teaching learning situation, so as to accomplish the teacher performance.

6. Funding the Building of Hostels

Hostel accommodation does not only foster co-operation living among students, it also socialized and adapts them to the norms of miniature society, that is the school, as students from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds learn to live and work together. According to Arikewuyo and Adegbesan (2008) hostels that are well constructed encourage students and develop in them the habit of reading as they see their mate going out to read for their exams. They stressed that for quality hostels to be provided, it requires active participation of the private sector, international agencies and educational stakeholders, and this will help in achieving the stated goals of the system.

Strategies that can be adopted to Strengthen Private Sector Participation in the Funding of University Education

The private sector need to devise strategies that will be used to monitor the implementation of programmes to make sure the entire populace is properly sensitized and
educated irrespective of age and cultural background (Charles, 2002). On the other hand, Oduleye (2002, p.2) observed that the private sector of the economy can support education through the provision of necessary facilities that support curricular and extra-curricular activities, but the extent to which to achieve this depends on the level of support they get from government. The united nation system in Nigeria is made up of 14 agencies working with the government of Nigeria to ensure that development challenges are addressed and solved and helps in Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) attainment. It also functions closely with partners in development and civil society organization. Education nationwide has call for the participation of some of these international agencies in contributing financially and materials towards the achievement of education goals and also to the economic and social development of recipient countries.


1. Guidelines for Regulators
2. Provide a sound policy framework for the operation of the private education sector
3. Introduce clear objective and streamlined criteria and processes for establishing and regulating private education institutions
4. Allow for-profit schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) to operate
5. Allow private schools and HEIs to set their own tuition fees
6. Promote and facilitate foreign direct investment in the education sector
7. Incentives and support for the private sector
8. Provide parents and students with information to help them select quality private education
9. Establish Quality Assurance/ Monitoring Processes
10. Develop Government Regulatory and Oversight Capacity

According to United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) (2008), there are six widely accepted core principles of good governance in Public-Private sector participation; participation; which is the level of participation of the stakeholders, decency; adhering strictly to the rules and regulations of the process, transparency; clarity and openness in the process of making decisions, accountability, fairness, and efficiency. All these are said to be closely linked to each other (UNECE, 2004), the literature review conducted revealed that these six principles are lacking in the Nigeria PPP procurement process. (UNECE, 2008). Emunenu (2008) recommended different strategies that will be helpful to encourage the contributions of private sectors to university education. Such strategies include allowing the private sector to bring in their expertise in terms of management style; make provisions for programmes that includes seminars and workshops where professionals and entrepreneurs share their knowledge with the students; encourage partnership among firms in the private sector to help the student get first class experience from industries.

According to Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2005), this can take the following form:

1. The government should redesign the educational organogram to include the community; this will create a sense of commitment on communities which will make them to be highly committed to the system.
2. Government should organize forum for the education of communities on the need to be practically involved in the management of schools establishment in their communities.
3. Educational managers should also create conducive conditions and initiate programmes that will bring the community closer to the school for effective participation.

It is in this wise that Bagyo et al, (2012), and Anggel (2012), identify the following ways through which universities can assist curb these threats of societal development.

1. Develop anti-corruption agenda in all their activities, including education, research, and community service.
2. Help government renew its legislative laws on corruption.
3. Inculcate the rightful values in the citizens to make them become better citizens.

Okuwa (2004) and Ebuara and Coker (2013) suggested possible strategies to include:

- The establishments of a center of philanthropy that will help to promote, advocate as well as coordinate philanthropic activities in higher education learning.
- Creating of administrative offices that will be in-charge of fundraising programmes.
- Creating and sustaining the alumni associations at universities.
- Establish mechanisms at universities to solicit funds from diaspora.
- Establish Government matching fund program.

In addition to this Ebuara and Coker (2013) suggested that:

1. The Government through the Ministry of Education should loosen up on those policies that are obnoxious so that the private sector can contribute meaningfully to university education management.
2. University administrators should inform private organization on how the funds they have contributed are being utilized.
3. Private sector should be encouraged to pay education tax (Ebuara and Coker, 2013).

**Statement of the Problem**

Over the years, there has been ugly situation concerning underfunding of education across all levels of education in the Nigeria. Despite the fact that the nation is in possession of abundance of natural and human resources, the Nigerian economy is still confronted with the issue of poor infrastructural facilities to accommodate students and teachers in the school. The ineffective utilization of teachers and wastages in education seem to have contributed to the falling standard of education especially in public secondary schools. Some scholars lamented that the poor conditions of universities education, such as poor teaching, poor motivation of staff, lack of facilities and equipment have culminated into inefficiency in the system with students not performing as expected in the labour market. This situation has given serious concern to stakeholders in education and has attracted a lot of research interest on alternative means of developing secondary education through funding. Therefore, there is need for private sector to participate actively participate in the funding and assisting to redirect the educational system in line with its stated goals and objectives. It is on this note that the research embarked on an assessment of private sector participation in the funding of university education in Rivers State.

**Purpose of the Study**

Generally, the aim of this study is to assess private sector participation in the funding of university education in Rivers State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Find out ways by which private sector can participate in funding university education in Rivers State.
2. Identify the strategies to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education in Rivers state.

Research Questions

1. In what ways can private sector participate in funding university education in Rivers State?
2. What strategies can be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of university staff and human resource development personnel on the ways private sector can participate in funding university education in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of university staff and human resource development personnel on the strategies that can be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education in Rivers State.

Methodology

The research design for this study is a descriptive survey. The population drawn from the three universities consists of 3 Bursar and 3 Registrar from the three universities; 74 HODs and 15 Deans of faculties from the University of Port Harcourt; 44 HODs and 7 Deans of faculties from Rivers State University; and 41 HODs and 7 Deans of faculties from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, which amounted to 194 university staff. The population drawn from the companies consists of 52 staff of Human Resource Development Department from Shell; 44 from Total; 33 from Agip; and 20 from Chevron; which amounted to 149 personnel from the four registered industries in Rivers State. This gave a total population of 343.

The sample for the study comprised of 343 members of staff of the three universities and four registered industries in Rivers State. That is, 194 staff of the three universities, which consists 194 HODs, Deans, Bursar and Registrar representing 100% of the population and the 149 personnel of the various departments of the four registered industries in Rivers State, representing 100% of the population served as respondents. Census sampling technique was used for the study. In this case, every member(s) of the population were completely used as respondents of the study. The instrument that was used for data collection in this study was a self-designed questionnaire titled An Assessment of Private Sector Participation in the Funding of University Education (APSPFUEQ). The questionnaire was divided into two sections: section A was for collection of demographic data on the respondents. While section B was based on the questionnaire items using the 4-Points modified likert rating scale of (Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points; Agree (A) = 3 points; Disagree (D) = 2 points; and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point) respectively.

A test–retest method was used to obtain the reliability of the instrument. Applying this method, the instrument was re-administered after two weeks to 20 HODs and Deans and human resource development personnel selected among those that were not part of the sample respondents. One week later, the same instrument was re-administered to the same respondents. It was also retrieved after one day. The scores obtained from the exercises were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to determine the reliability of 0.76. The 343 copies of the questionnaire were administered personally to the respondents by the researcher with the help of three research assistants. The respondents were given 2 days to respond to the questions after which all retrieved copies of questionnaire were used for data analysis. The data gathered from the APSPFUEQ was collated and analyzed. The mean scores and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while the z-test statistics was used to test the
research hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A criterion mean of 2.50 or above was accepted while any mean below 2.50 was rejected.

**Results and Discussion**

**Data Analysis and Empirical Results**

**Research Question 1:** In what ways can private sector participate in funding university education in Rivers State?

**Table 1:** Mean Responses of University staff and Human resource development personnel on the ways private sector can participate in funding university education in Rivers State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S / N</th>
<th>Ways private sector can participate in funding university education</th>
<th>University Staff (178)</th>
<th>Human Resource Development Personnel (122)</th>
<th>( \bar{x}_1, \bar{x}_2 )</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Through finances, designs, construction and reconstruction of projects to suit University programmes</td>
<td>3.28, 1.363</td>
<td>3.43, 1.454</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Through the provision of relevant and appropriate infrastructural facilities as well as equipped learning environment</td>
<td>3.35, 1.41</td>
<td>3.48, 1.487</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Subsidies, as well as student eligibility for loans and allowances.</td>
<td>3.43, 1.454</td>
<td>3.16, 1.298</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Enhancing improvement activities in educational foundation areas like Teacher Education, Teaching Practice and Library Development</td>
<td>3.36, 1.411</td>
<td>3.08, 1.259</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Assisting in the Buildings of Schools</td>
<td>1.99, 1.229</td>
<td>2.11, 1.399</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>Disagreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Funding the Building of Hostels</td>
<td>3.33, 1.392</td>
<td>2.83, 1.167</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand mean and standard deviation</td>
<td>3.12, 1.38</td>
<td>3.02, 1.34</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 indicated that item number 2 had the highest mean scores of 3.42 followed by item 1 with 3.36, item 3 with 3.30, item 4 with 3.22 and item 6 with 3.08, respectively. The various scores were above 2.50 which is the criterion mean except item 5. It simply implies that the ways by which private sector can participate in funding university education is through the provision of relevant and appropriate infrastructural facilities as well as equipped learning environment, through finances, designs, construction and reconstruction of projects to suit university programmes, enhancing improvement activities in educational foundation areas like teacher education, teaching practice and library development, subsidies, as well as student eligibility for loans and allowances and also funding the building of hostels.

Meanwhile, from the responses of both university staff and human resource development personnel, item 5 had mean score of 2.05 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50 indicating that private sector do not fully participate in funding university education in the buildings of schools but rather they assist in the construction of infrastructures within the school.
Research Question 2 What strategies can be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean Responses of University staff and Human resource development personnel on the strategies that can be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education in Rivers state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Strategies that can be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education</th>
<th>University Staff (178)</th>
<th>Human Resource Development Personnel (122)</th>
<th>( \bar{X}, \bar{X}_2 )</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Governments create sound policy for private sector to render meaningful financial support to education.</td>
<td>3.13 1.283</td>
<td>3.09 1.264</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Create development offices at universities to oversee fundraising efforts</td>
<td>3.06 1.250</td>
<td>3.02 1.233</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Promote and facilitate foreign direct investment in the education sector</td>
<td>2.99 1.24</td>
<td>1.83 1.322</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>Disagreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Education managers create conducive conditions and initiate programmes that bring private sector closer to university institutions.</td>
<td>3.29 1.369</td>
<td>3.29 1.369</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Establish mechanisms at universities to solicit funds from diaspora</td>
<td>3.21 1.324</td>
<td>3.64 1.598</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>University administrators should inform private organization on how the funds they have contributed are being utilized</td>
<td>3.23 1.335</td>
<td>3.61 1.575</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Grand mean and standard deviation</strong></td>
<td>3.15 1.30</td>
<td>3.08 1.39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 indicated that item number 6 had the highest mean scores of 3.42 followed by item 5 with 3.43, item 4 with 3.29, item 1 with 3.11 and item 2 with 3.04 respectively. The scores were above 2.50 which is the criterion mean. This simply implies that the strategies that can be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education is that university administrators should inform private organization on how the funds they have contributed are being utilized, establish mechanisms at universities to solicit funds from diaspora, governments should create sound policy for private sector to render meaningful financial support to education, creation of development offices at universities to oversee fundraising efforts and education managers to create conducive conditions and initiate programmes that will bring private sector closer to university institutions.

Meanwhile item 3 had mean score of 2.41 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50 indicating that promotion and facilitation of foreign direct investment in the education sector is not a strategy that could be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education as responded by human resource development personnel. Meanwhile university staff considers promotion and facilitation of foreign direct investment in the education sector as a strategy to that can be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education.
Test of Hypotheses

**Ho1:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of university staff and human resource development personnel on the ways private sector can participate in funding university education in Rivers State.

Table 3: z-test Analysis of the Difference between the Opinions of university staff and human resource development personnel on the ways private sector can participate in funding university education in Rivers State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>z-cal</th>
<th>z-crit</th>
<th>Level of sig.</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University staff</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>±1.96</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>Ho1 Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Development Personnel</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of table 3 showed that the z-calculated value of 0.63 is less than the z-critical value of ±1.96 at degree of freedom of 298 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted and upholds that: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of university staff and human resource development personnel on the ways private sector can participate in funding university education in Rivers State.

Table 4: z-test Analysis of the Difference between the Opinions of university staff and human resource development personnel on the strategies that can be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education in Rivers state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>z-cal</th>
<th>z-crit</th>
<th>Level of sig.</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University staff</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>±1.96</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>Ho4 is Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Development Personnel</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of table 4 showed that the z-calculated value of 0.16 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 at degree of freedom of 298 and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted and uphold that: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of university staff and human resource development personnel on the strategies that can be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education in Rivers state.

Summary of Findings

1. It was discovered that the ways by which private sector can participate in funding university education is through the provision of relevant and appropriate infrastructural facilities as well as equipped learning environment, through finances, designs, construction and reconstruction of projects to suit university programmes, enhancing improvement activities in educational foundation areas like teacher education, teaching practice and library development, subsidies, as well as student eligibility for loans and allowances and also funding the building of hostels. Meanwhile, private sectors do not fully participate in funding university education in the buildings of schools but rather they assist in the construction of infrastructures within the school.

2. It was found that the strategies that can be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education is that university administrators should inform private
organization on how the funds they have contributed are being utilized, establish mechanisms at universities to solicit funds from diaspora, governments should create sound policy for private sector to render meaningful financial support to education, creation of development offices at universities to oversee fundraising efforts and education managers to create conducive conditions and initiate programmes that will bring private sector closer to university institutions. Nevertheless, human resource development personnel refused the fact that promotion and facilitation of foreign direct investment in the education sector is a strategy that could be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education.

3. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of university staff and human resource development personnel on the ways by which private sector can participate in funding university education in Rivers State.

4. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of university staff and human resource development personnel on the strategies that can be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings and Implications

Ways Private Sector can participate in Funding University Education

From table 1, it was revealed that the ways by which private sector can participate in funding university education is through the provision of relevant and appropriate infrastructural facilities as well as equipped learning environment, through finances, designs, construction and reconstruction of projects to suit university programmes, enhancing improvement activities in teacher education, teaching practice and library development, subsidies, as well as student eligibility for loans and allowances and also funding the building of hostels. Meanwhile, private sectors do not fully participate in funding university education in the buildings of schools but rather they assist in the construction of infrastructures within the school.

The research work consented to the work of Arikewuyo and Adegbesan (2008) who found out that it requires active participation of the private sector, international agencies and educational stakeholders to involve in the construction of hostels to encourage students and develop in them the habit of reading as they see their mate going out to read for their exams and this will help in achieving the stated goals of the system. This is also in line with the work of Nakpodia (2013) whose results revealed that private sector recognized the country’s educational enterprise as a costly social service which should include both government and the private sector especially in the provision of relevant and appropriate infrastructural facilities and improvement in the learning environment.

Strategies that can be adopted to Strengthen Private Sector Participation in the Funding of University Education.

From table 2, it was revealed that the strategies that can be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education is that university administrators should inform private organization on how the funds they have contributed are being utilized, establish mechanisms at universities to solicit funds from Diaspora, governments should create sound policy for private sector to render meaningful financial support to education, creation of development offices at universities to oversee fundraising efforts and education managers to create conducive conditions and initiate programmes that will bring private sector closer to university institutions. Nevertheless, human resource development personnel refused the fact that promotion and facilitation of foreign direct investment in the education sector is a strategy that could be adopted to strengthen private sector participation in the funding of university education.

This is in line with the work of Okorie and Uche (2004) who found that direct contact
and inquiry with companies, proposal and media advertisements are among the major sources of information on sponsored research. It also agrees with the work of Oduleye (2002) which affirmed that there is need for government to align with private sector and give them the opportunity to support university education financially. Apart from financial support, the private sector can provide facilities for both academics and extra-curriculum activities that are required to develop the intellectual capabilities of students. Also in agreement are Nwakaudu, Eneh and Bema (2015) who found that universities can generate funds by embarking on consultancy services to the public and organized private sector, universities should organize commercial business venture to raise funds, public Universities should collaborate with multinational business corporations, endowment funds are good sources of funds for public universities, and alumni associations should contribute in funding public Universities.

To crown it all, Nakpodia and Obielumani (2011), Bagyo et al (2012) and Van den; Hurk and Verhoest (2015) figured out in their various works that government and institutions should do the following to attract a clear cut participation.

1. Provide guidelines for regulators
2. Provide a sound policy framework for the operation of the private education sector
3. Introduce clear objective and streamlined criteria and processes for establishing and regulating private education institutions
4. Allow for-profit schools and HEIs to operate
5. Allow private schools and HEIs to set their own tuition fees
6. Promote and facilitate foreign direct investment in the education sector
7. Incentives and support for the private sector
8. Provide parents and students with information to help them select quality private education
9. Establish Quality Assurance and Monitoring Processes

Conclusion

Funding is very indispensable in education for qualitative output and effective administration. From the findings so far, it is clear that for university education to achieve its stated goals and objectives, active participation of private sector in the development of university education in Rivers State is important. Since the government is still the major funding source to education in Nigeria, there is need to change the policy framework to avoid unregulated and uncoordinated pattern of funding so that provision for university education will adequately match its needs by involving the private sector to participate actively in making the programme a success.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers recommended that:
1. Private sector should recognize the fact that training personnel to act as agent of refurbishment in industrial operational capability to bring about productivity from institution is necessary, and this will make them to be active in funding university education.
2. Administrators of higher institutions should strive to establish functional frameworks and act to reflect credibility in their operations so as to encourage private sector to fully participate in funding university education by providing funds for academic staff capacity building programmes and also to provide fund for student’s excursion activities.

REFERENCES


