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Evolved Stakeholders Funding Mobilisation Model for Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria

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Abstract: In this *paper, the authors examined the type of funding that exists in Nigeria Public Higher Education Institutions and evolved a funding model that encourages stakeholders' participation to reduce instability in the Institutions. The study adopted the concurrent mixed method research type. The target population consists of stakeholders in Federal and State Government higher education institutions (universities, polytechnics and colleges of education) selected from the already existing six geo-political zones in Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select a state with at least one each of the three types of institutions making a total of 18 institutions from six states. To ensure maximum representation of the stakeholders, respondents including school administrative officers, lecturers, parents, students, philanthropists, corporate organisations, business men and women, employers of labour, farmers, artisans, were purposively and randomly selected. Three questionnaires and an interview schedule were used to generate data. The instruments were trial tested on 60 stakeholders who are not part of the study sample. The reliability index were established using Cronbatch's alpha. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis using ATLAS.ti software. The major findings include the fact that though there was no documented common current model being used by NPHEIs for fund mobilisation, however the pattern that emerged reveals the government as the principal and TETFUND, which is also government agency, as almost responsible for major infrastructural development in federal and state owned institutions. Results from interviews shows a more encompassing and sustainable model suggested by the stakeholders which if adopted or adapted would reduce instability and improve quality higher education provision in NPHEIs.*

Key words: Fund mobilization, stakeholders' involvement, model, Higher education, Nigerian.

Introduction

Public Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in Nigeria have been on the increase in spite of the fact that existing ones are poorly funded by the Government at both Federal and State levels. This has been the reason for incessant industrial crises in the institutions. It is on record that the Nigerian Government both at the national and state levels collectively pursue policies geared towards establishing higher institutions probably for political reasons losing sight of the fact that the major objective of establishing higher education in Nigeria is to produce quality high level manpower that will improve the country's production level as well as for knowledge based economy. This, thus, highlights the fact that higher education institutions should be the main pillars of Nigerian economic growth.

Therefore, making funds available to higher institutions is a way of meeting these economic and cultural goals because it is a critical training ground needed by Nigeria people in realizing their potential. Funding of tertiary institutions has become one of the greatest issues of national importance. There are about 571 different institutions at this level and millions of students as well as prospective candidates, making the representativeness of higher education in Nigeria to be diverse. Though the diversity is regarded as one of its major strengths, so a good funding system that would reduce distortion of such programmes, agitations from employees but promote a common path towards transparency, quality, growth, efficiency and excellence is regarded as an absolute prerequisite for boosting the education system and economic growth. To achieve these, there is need to maintain quality in the teaching-learning processes. As such, the Nigerian government needs to pay greater attention to its funding if she is to achieve the sustainable development goals. This idea has given rise to a series of financial problems being experienced by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Prominent among such problems include nonpayment of workers' salaries, inability of the government to provide enabling teaching-learning environment and these have led to series of industrial actions by HEIs workers.

A good indicator for ascertaining the extent to which any government value education can be deduced from the volume of funding and resources allocated to the sector in the fiscal budget. In the case of Nigeria, budgetary allocation to the education sector is a far cry (with allocations sometimes falling below 6%) from the standard of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which suggest a minimum of 26% of the national budget. This low allocation is a concern, as it hinders

the development of human capital and economic productivity to a reasonable extent. In Nigeria, fund allocations to the education sector is distributed among the Primary, Secondary and Tertiary education levels in the proportion of 30%, 30% and 40% respectively (Oralu & Oladele, 2015). It is pertinent to note that only 40% of the usually less than 10% of national budget goes to all federally owned higher education institutions consisting of universities, polytechnics/monotechnics and colleges of education.

Table 1 shows fund allocations to the entire education sector from 2015 to 2025. It can be inferred from the Table that fund allocation to education was a little above ₦484.2 billion (10.7%) in 2015 but declined to ₦369.5billion (7.9%) in 2016, while it decreased further to 5.21% in 2023.

Table 1: Budgetary Allocation to Education Sector (2015-2025)

Year	Total FG Budget	Allocation to Education ₦	Percentages (%) of the Budget
2015	₦4.5	₦484.2	10.7
2016	₦5.0 trillion	₦369.5bn	7.9
2017	₦7.4tn	₦550.5bn	7.4
2018	₦9.1trn	₦605.9bn	7.04
2019	₦8.8trn	₦620.5bn	7.05
2020	₦10.3trn	₦671.07bn	6.7
2021	₦13.08trn	₦742bn	5.6
2022	16.39trn	₦705.27bn	5.39
2023		₦1.07trn	5.21
2024		₦1.59trn	5.52
2025		₦2.52trn	5.47

Source- Olamilekan Omidiji 2022: Federal Government allocations to education in the last 10 years.

This implies that the allocations of fund to education sector have rather been dwindling, especially when inflation is also factored into the analysis and this may make HEI a difficult venture to pursue. This has led to series of disputes between government and ASUU and other unions in the public university system. Okebukola (2015) also reported that studies by some Nigerian scholars showed that in the ten years before 2014, at no time, was allocation to education in Nigeria ever more than 2% of Gross National Product (GDP). Thus, this has caused the Nigerian public tertiary education system as a whole, which produces high calibre of human capital for the nation, to faced shortage of funding for decades (Akinwole, 2020 and Ogunyemi, 2020). This has led to series of industrial disputes between government and ASUU and other unions in the higher education sub-sector.

Disputes between government and ASUU led to the establishment of the Education Tax Fund in 1992, which became Education Trust Fund (ETF) at a point and now Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund). Though, the situation has resulted in significant improvement in the funding of NPHEIs, but much still needs to be done because TETFund is only an intervention programme that cannot replace regular source of funding NPHEIs. Onuka (2005) indicated that the way, the available fund was being distributed among education institutions, Ministry of Education and education agencies left much to be desired. The study found that between 1992 and 2002, there were more than twenty-two agencies and parastatals in the Federal Ministry of Education, which meant that funds which would have ordinarily been devoted to education institutions, were being shared between the institutions and these parastatals, some of which the study recommended for merger or total scrapping to make more funds available for education provision.

Onuka (2007) also posited that the current method of funding Nigerian public university education needs to be reviewed to broaden its scope by bringing in various stakeholders into the funding model. Again, Onuka (2011) submitted that there are two ways to sustaining adequate funding of the Nigerian public university system: mobilisation and utilisation. Furthermore, Onuka (2017a) proffered that stakeholders' involvement in fund provision in the Nigerian public university system has become imperative and that every employed adult as well as beneficiary of University education ought to contribute some amount annually as token, aside tax, to funding National Public Universities while Oralu and Oladele (2015) submitted that education is an expensive social service and, therefore, requires adequate financial provision from all stakeholders of education institutions for successful implementation of education programmes.

In other climes, funding is a major steering mechanism for their higher education systems. For instance, in Europe, governments remain the primary funding source for higher education institutions (Jongbloed, 2004; Barr and Crawford, 2005). However, a number of developing countries as a result of financial downturn necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic have drastically reduced their education budgets. The pandemic has exposed numerous ills in the education systems around the world, especially in many African countries and Nigeria in particular where challenges of poor infrastructure, inadequate staffing, poor funding as well as lack of teaching and learning aids abound (Edeh, Nwafor, Obafemi, Shuvro, Atonye, Aabha and lhuseen, 2020; Loayza and Pennings, 2020). For instance, currently, e-learning has become the alternate means that educational institutions have adopted as the

new normal in Nigeria (Igbokwe, OkekeJames, Anyanwu, and Eli-Chukwu, 2020); and this mode would require adequate funding from all stakeholders, for it to be sustained.

In Nigeria, government gives lump sum funding, meaning that the institutions are free to decide on their internal resource allocation decisions indicating a high degree of autonomy on how funds allocated are utilised. The notion of autonomy also extends to the possibility for universities to generate external funds, from business and industry as well as from tuition fees to be collected from students participating in higher education. Autonomous universities may generate resources through fund-raising or through measures to increase efficiency and will have the freedom to orient their strategy according to the available funds, for example focusing on specific research themes or shifting the balance between education and research. Thus, to ensure sustainability, a funding model which is flexible with diversified revenue generation inlets and establishing a partnership with the business community, research centers and NGOs may also be of great help.

Kim, Perreault, and Foster (2011) defines a "funding model" as a systematic and institutional approach to creating a reliable revenue base to support an organization's core programmes and services. Funding models according to Burke and Henrik (2003) can also be defined based on three characteristics: the type of funding (e.g., government or individual), the funding decision maker (e.g., government administrators or wealthy individuals), and the funder's motivation (Hillman, Tandberg, and Gross 2014, Hillman, Fryar, and Crespín-Trujillo 2018). Others include the use of funding formula, performance funding, negotiated funding among others. Funding formula is understood as a procedure used to calculate the size of university funding using a mathematical formula. Formula variables may include student population, publication performance, and other indicators while performance-based funding and outcomes-based funding, is a policy that uses a formula to allocate state funding to public colleges and universities based on student outcomes, student retention rates, graduation rates, degrees conferred, and job placement rates. Target model on the other hand can be described as outcomes that should be achieved while leaving the institution free to choose any specific measures to be taken within the agreed period of time while negotiated funding suggests that the amount of funding has been determined historically and embraces all kinds of informal negotiation mechanisms that are used to obtain funding. The funding models described may be used separately or in combination, where one is primary and the other is secondary. Nevertheless, these models are not without some negative effects.

However, research has shown that 90% of the most education service providers adopt a funding model built around a single primary source of revenue. Jongbloed 2004 is of the view that university funding model should not just be sets of tools to allocate funds among donors and beneficiaries (who may include the government, students or research and teaching staff). They should represent sets of mechanisms to achieve specific goals and maximize outcomes with the existing resource limitations. It is against this backdrop that we sourced for a funding model that could aid to stabilise higher education funding in Nigeria.

Statement of problem

Nigerian Public Higher Education Institutions (NPHEIs) have suffered acute shortage of funds over the past three decades. This may be so, because the burden of funding NPHEIs is almost entirely on the government. Poor funding of the system had resulted in consistent agitations and complaints by employees of Public Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria, leading to several industrial disputes such as strike actions at different times, poor infrastructural facilities provision which became so glaring in the new normal that came with COVID 19 pandemic, and little or no development programmes for academic staff among other problems. The consequence of these anomalies is poor quality graduates that may not be able to match the demands of the contemporary world of work in the era of technologically driven knowledge economy and even the other outputs from these NPHEIs. There was, however, a dearth of research outcome on the best ways to improve the funding of the Nigerian Public Higher Education Institutions (NPHEIs). This study, was therefore designed to evolve stakeholders' fund mobilisation model that can aid sustain quality higher education funding in Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

Based on the issues raised and discussed, this study dwelt on the following:

i. identify the type of stakeholders' fund provision that currently exists in NPHEIs,
ii. develop a stakeholders' consensus sustainable fund mobilisation model for higher education provision

Research Questions

On the instances of the outlined objectives, the following questions were addressed in the course of this study:

1. What type of fund mobilisation currently exists in NPHEIs?
2. What type of fund mobilization model is suggested by stakeholders' to appropriately address sustainability of fund in NPHEIs?

Methodology

To ensure that the data needed to provide information on the research questions are collected, mixed method of QUANT+qual design was adopted which involved use of questionnaire and Key Informant Interview (KII) sessions with the respondents. Data were simultaneously collected, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, in order to provide a multi-dimensional perspective of funding model that can stand the test of time in ensuring stability and quality products in NPHEIs at both federal and state levels.

Population

The target population comprised the entire public higher education system (universities, polytechnics and Colleges of Education) nationwide and the stakeholders: Governments (Federal and States), alumni/ae associations, lecturers, students, other workers within the institution's system, philanthropists, corporate world, employers of labour, parents, and others.

Sampling Technique and Sample

Multi-stage sampling procedure was used for sample selection. Nigeria is already stratified into six geo-political zones: North-West, North-Central, North-East, South-East, South-South and South-West. From each zones, the state with all the three variants of HEIs: Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education was purposively selected. Care was taken to ensure representation of federal and State public higher education institutions. Thus, Ogun, Edo, Enugu, Kwara, Borno, and Kaduna were purposively selected because they met the criteria. From each participating state, 3 institutions (one of each variant) was selected. Thus, 18 institutions comprising 6 universities, 6 colleges of education and 6 polytechnics were used for the study. Stakeholders such as: Vice Chancellors/Provosts/Rectors, Heads of Regulatory Bodies, alumni/ae associations, lecturers, students, other workers within the university system, philanthropists, corporate world, employers of labour, parents, among others were purposively and randomly selected. To provide data for research question one, 81 respondents comprising 16 bursars, 54 deans and 11 Directors of Academic Planning participated whereas for research question 2, which required stakeholders to respond to the questionnaire on suggested fund mobilsation model that could aid sustain the Institutions financially, 888 other stakeholders which include certain officers: Vice Chancellors/Rectors/Provosts, HoDs, lecturers, non-academics, students, parents, graduate employees, Faith-Based Organisations, philanthropists, employers of labour, artisans, farmers, business owners selected through random sampling and tracer and snow ball sampling techniques while 32 were interviewed.

Instruments

Three instruments used were: Strategies for Public Higher Education Fund Mobilisation Proforma; NPHEI Stakeholders' Suggested Sustainable Fund Mobilisation Profoma and a structured interview schedule. Each profoma has two sections A & B. Section A generated demographic information on each institution with respect to name, type and year of establishment, while section B has items on strategies used by the institution for fund mobilisation (information needed here were provided by stakeholders who work within the higher education institutions) and the other on suggested sources by stakeholders through which NPHEI could Mobilise funds (provided by all stakeholders indicating percentage of contribution from every group). However, to get more detailed information on suggested sources, Key informant interview sessions were also conducted on 32 stakeholders. The questionnaire was pre-tested on 60 stakeholders and the reliability indices of 0.77 and 0.9 were established through Lawshe's Content Validity Ratio statistic respectively while responses from the interview were ascertained by crosschecking responses with verifiable data.

Method of Data Collection

Permission was obtained from appropriate higher education leaders: Vice Chancellors, Rectors and Provosts of the selected institutions: Universities, Polytechnics, and Colleges in selected States from the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. This was as soon as the permission was given by TETFund and University of Ibadan. The Research assistants were trained on the technicalities of instruments administration as well as on data collation. Further, structured interview sessions, were responses and views of the participants were obtained using interview schedules and audio recording devices were conducted, and transcribed for further thematic analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data analyses methods were employed. The qualitative method involved thematic approach using ATLAS.ti software while the quantitative analysis involved descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages).

Results

Research Question 1: What type of fund provision currently exists in Nigeria Public Higher Education Institutions (NPHEIs)?

This question focused on identifying the type of stakeholders' fund provision model which currently exists in NPHEIs.

Information on this research question were collected from 16 bursars, 54 deans and 11 Directors of Academic Planning in Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities.

Table 2
Responses from stakeholders – Bursars, Deans and Directors of Academic Planning

S/N	Sources of Fund	Yes	No
1	Bursary awards to students	31(38%)	50(62%)
2	Scholarship to students	42 (52%)	39 (48%)
3	Loan to students	15 (19%)	66 (81%)
4	Relevant Ministry	13(16%)	68 (84%)
5	Donation: a. Buildings	29 (36%)	52 (64%)
6	Donation: b. Equipment	32 (40%)	49(60%)
7	Donation: c. Machinery	24 (30%)	57(70%)
8	Donation: d. Utility Vehicles	18 (22%)	63 (78%)
9	Sponsorship	27(33)	54(67%)
10	Tuition fee	37(46%)	44 (54%)
11	Levies paid by students	38 (47)	43 (53%)
12	Publications	19 (23%)	62 (77%)
13	Events/Rentals	26 (32%)	55 (68 %)
14	Special Endowments	11(14%)	70 (86%)
15	Research/Innovations/Inventions	12 (15%)	69 (85%)
16	Donations	39(48%)	42 (52%)
17	Sponsorship/scholarship to staff	26 (32%)	55 (68%)
18	Capital project	29 (36%)	52 (64%)
19	Research grants	26 (32%)	55 (68 %)
20	Fellowships	13 (16%)	68 (84%)
21	Building	21 (27%)	59 (73%)
22	Alumni contributions	19 (23%)	62 (77%)
23	Lease financing/Borrowing	23 (29%)	58 (71%)
24	Tetfund a. Physical structure	24 (100%)	
25	Tetfund b. Equipment	24 (100%)	
26	Tetfund c. Furniture	24(100%)	
27	Tetfund d. Research	24(100%)	
28	Tetfund e. Training/staff development	24(100%)	

The information in Table 2 presents the type of fund provision sources that currently exists in NPHEIs. Analysis of the Table reveals that the major fund mobilisation source in Nigeria Public Higher Education Institutions as indicated by stakeholders is through TeTFund where all the respondents (100%) indicated that in the areas of physical structure, equipment, furniture, research and training/staff development, TeTFund is the major provider. This is apart from government, which is the main source of fund for NPHEIs. Further, 52% of the respondents indicated that funds are equally mobilized through scholarships to students, while less than 50% indicated that they generate funds through donations, levies paid by students, tuition fees and donations of equipment and other facilities. The Table also shows that majority of the respondents (more than 70 %) indicated 'No' to each item with the exception of fund from TeTFund. This implies that public higher institutions in Nigeria depend much on TeTFund for the provision of funds for some activities and major development projects in the institutions.

Research Question 2: What type of fund mobilization model is suggested by stakeholders' to appropriately address sustainability of fund in NPHEIs?

The suggestions given by the respondents with respect to the fund provision model that can aid in addressing paucity of funds issues in Nigeria Public Higher Education Institutions were generated through quantitative and qualitative modes. The needed pieces of information on the quantitative data were generated from 888 stakeholders including lecturers, parents, employers of labour, students, businessmen and women, farmers among others. The quantitative data were collected using a questionnaire while the qualitative data were generated using interview guide and focus group discussions. The result from the quantitative data are presented in Table 2 while the qualitative result are presented in Figures 1 to 4.

Table 3
Stakeholders' *Suggested* Ways to Mobilise Funds in NPHEIs

Respondents 888 – Lecturers/Parents/Employers of Labour/Students/ Business Men and Women/Farmers/ etc.						
S/N	**Sources**	***Suggested Percentage of Contribution***				
		1-20	**21-40**	**41-60**	**61-80**	**81-100**
1	Government	94 (11%)	114 (13%)	169 (19%)	209(23%)	**302 (34%)**
2	Alumni/ae	**316(37%)**	244(29%)	181 (21%)	87 (10%)	28(3%)
3	IGR other than fee/Research fund	219(26%)	239(28%)	236(27%)	124(14%)	43(5%)
4	Research Income	245(29%)	244(28%)	197(23%)	129(15%)	42(5%)
5	Tuition Fees	**317(36%)**	237(27%)	163(19%)	84(10%)	69(8%)
6	Other types of levies	**348(42%)**	216(26%)	152(18%)	75(9%)	42(5%)
7	Community Based Organisations	**311(36%)**	228(27%)	191(22%)	85(10%)	43(5%)
8	Industries/Corporate Organisations	202(23%)	234(27%)	241(28%)	126(15%)	62(7%)
9	Foundations	221(26%)	235(28%)	206(24%)	132(15%)	61(7%)
10	TETFund	114(13%)	131(15%)	196(23%)	229(27%)	189(22%)
11	Parents' Forum	**394(46%)**	190(22%)	132(16%)	76(9%)	62(7%)
12	Student loan/Bursary/scholarship	**330(38%)**	192(22%)	144(17%)	103(12%)	94(11%)
13	Faith-based Organisations	**331(39%)**	**198(23%)**	169(20%)	107(13)	39(5%)
14	Alumni	**322(41%)**	**234(30%)**	146(18%)	74(10%)	4(1%)
15	FIRS' contribution	149(18%)	198(25%)	**270(32%)**	145(17%)	69(8%)
16	*Other source	212(28%)	172(23%)	198(26%)	115(15%)	62(8%)

Table 3 presents suggested percentage of funds to be contributed by stakeholders for effective funding in NPHEIs. The tables reveals that a good number of the stakeholders about 57 percent are of the view that 61 to 100 percent of the funds should come from the government while 49 percent indicated that tetfund should also provide 61 to 100 percent of the funds. However, more than 50 percent of the stakeholders indicated that about 21 to 60 percent of the funds should be provided by Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Industries/Corporate Organisations, Alumni/ae and through Foundations, Research Income, IGR other than fee/Research fund. Furthermore, a good number of the stakeholders (60 percent and above) suggested that at least about 20 percent of the funds should be generated through Tuition Fees and Community Based Organisations, other types of levies and Parents' Forum; Student loan/Bursary/scholarship, Faith-based Organisations, Alumni while 34 percent suggested that 80 percent and above of the funding should come from the government. This indicates that fund provision model that will appropriately address the paucity of fund in NPHEIs in Nigeria should be making funding at the higher education level a responsibility of all the stakeholders. The result thus, reveals that stakeholders appear to take up their responsibilities by acknowledging that some percentage of higher education funding should come from them and not just to make it the sole responsibility of the government.

To further generate more information, qualitative data were generated from Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KII) conducted with stakeholders on fund mobilisation methods they can suggest to aid NPHEIs financial stability. This section focuses on compiling the various strategies and recommendations put forward by participants to raise funds

for higher institutions. These suggestions are aimed at addressing financial challenges and improving the overall financial health of the institutions. The suggestions elicited from the respondents were grouped into two main themes - internal and external fund mobilisation.

Theme 1: Use of Internal fund mobilisation mechanisms

The theme highlights participants' suggestions on the importance of utilising internal resource mechanisms and initiatives aimed at generating revenue from within the institution itself, without relying solely on external sources such as government funding or donations. Two themes which emerged under this from participants' include suggestions on creating new education programmes and engaging in entrepreneurial activities.

Theme 1.1: Fund mobilisation through education programmes

Under this theme the participants suggested generating resources through various educational initiatives or programmes, introduction of school fees, purchase of admission forms by prospective candidates, hostel fees, registration fees, engaging ground breaking research programmes, affiliations, rentals, and establishing business ventures. They also suggested leveraging on these activities and other initiatives to attract funding. For instance, a principal officer recommended implementing revenue-generating programmes within faculties, fostering affiliations, and expanding consultancy services in unique areas of expertise. In his words:

> *'Faculties should put programmes in place that will yield revenue which should be shared according to a particular formula with university management. Affiliations should be entered into with colleges, institutes or schools which will attract income to various departments. Consultancy services should be encouraged and expanded in different areas of expertise which are uncommon within the rest of society."* **(IP1: Former Deputy Vice Chancellor, in the Northern Region)**

Furthermore, a HoD in a CoE suggested diversifying into the production of some products with specific mentions of Technical Education and Science Education departments, in their words:

> *Then those in Technical Education should go into the fabrication of all these building materials and the rest of them, and those in Science Education, maybe Chemistry option and the rest of them, they can go into the production of these liquid soap detergent, soaps and others, so these are some of the areas…,* ***(FP: HoD, CoE, in Southern zone)***

Similarly, a HoD suggested utilizing consultancy services, specifically in Psychology, Guidance, and Counselling, to provide services to secondary schools as an opportunity to generate funds. The suggestions for fund mobilisation through departmental programmes ventures are presented in Figure 5.

With respect to mobilizing funds through charging of school fees, the participants' responses indicate stakeholders' acceptance to be part of higher education funding. A participant, a clergyman (IP2: North-West), suggested the introduction of school fees as a means to ensure quality education. Also, a university student (IP9) from the North-East linked the non-payment of school fees by students as the major contributor to the financial challenges schools face. A postdoctoral student highlighted the importance of accepting fees for development activities, emphasising the need for students to recognise the financial challenges faced by educational institutions. According to the participant:

> *They should be conscious of the fact that the government alone can never provide all that we need here…, so they should accept any fees the school introduces, such as school fees, development fees and the likes. These fees can cover several activities that the school will require* **(IP2: A student in a Polytechnic, Southern .zone)**

More participants also underscore the importance of leveraging on research endeavours as a medium of revenue generation. The participants emphasised researchers should engage in ground breaking research activities that has practical applications and market value. These emphases can be seen in the following accounts by some university students:

[1] *"Knowledge generated and produced through research by the university should be put to practical use where it can command financial value."* (FP3: A University Student, North-East)

[2]: *…the university and tertiary institutions are where knowledge are generated, and this generation should aim at 'problem-solving'* and I believe this same knowledge can be used to get something that would solve the subvention problem around the university and even beyond. **(FP3: A University Student, Northern zone).**

[3]: Similarly, a HoD suggests monetising students' inventions through patent licensing. This suggestion highlights the potential for commercialising students' innovations and leveraging intellectual property for financial gains. According to the participant:

> *We can research them in our School of Sciences. Over the years, students have come up with some inventions. I believe those inventions can be improved upon, and then the patent license can be given, and that one can generate money for the college.* **(HoD, College of Education, in the Southern zone)**

Fund mobilisation through research programmes suggested by participants from higher institutions are presented in Figure 1.

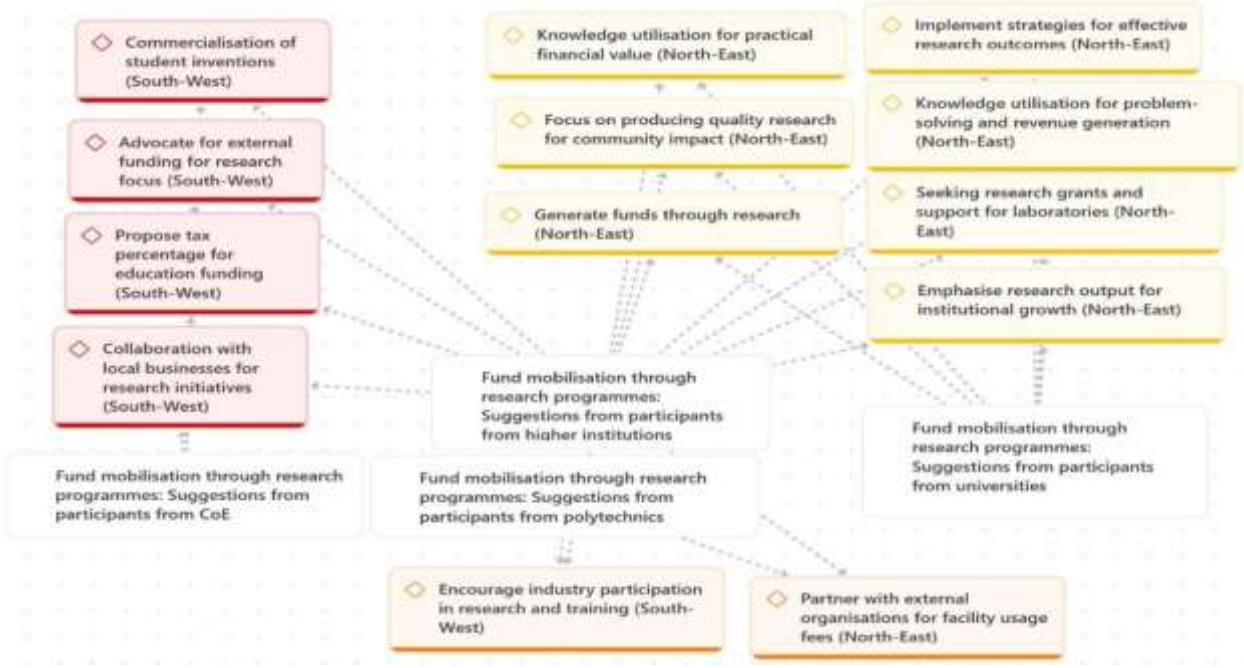


Figure 1: Suggestions on fund mobilisation through research programmes

Theme1. 2: Suggestions on fund mobilisation on entrepreneurial activities

This sub-theme outlined suggestions on various revenue-generating initiatives in the higher institutions to supplement traditional funding sources from the government. For instance, a HoD shared this view by saying that:

> *"This school is strategically located, if they can, as a matter of fact, if we have borehole here in the school, look at the entire place, they can be selling water to the nearby resident and even other places so that they can make maximum use of the available resources. Borehole is very, very necessary, here is a very nice place, many people are even coming from outside to come and draw their water here in the school."* **(FP, HoD, CoE, Southern zone).**

A non-teaching staff suggested diversifying into agriculture, citing the importance of food production for societal well-being.

> *My suggestion is that the institution should diversify into agriculture because, in Nigeria, without food, people will not be able to move. So, I think we should diversify because we have a lot of land here that can be used to cultivate food. Agriculture is one suggestion.* **(IP2: Chief Accountant, Polytechnic, Southern zone).**

Another participant said that "…*I believe that the college can generate funds through engaging in businesses like consultancy. It's part of the business." (IP13: Non-Academic Staff, Librarian, CoE, South-West).*

These suggestions affirm the potential profitability of consultancy services as a business venture. The suggestion highlights the potential for institutions to contribute to food security while generating income through agricultural ventures. The suggestions on entrepreneurship and business ventures are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Fund mobilisation through entrepreneurship and business ventures

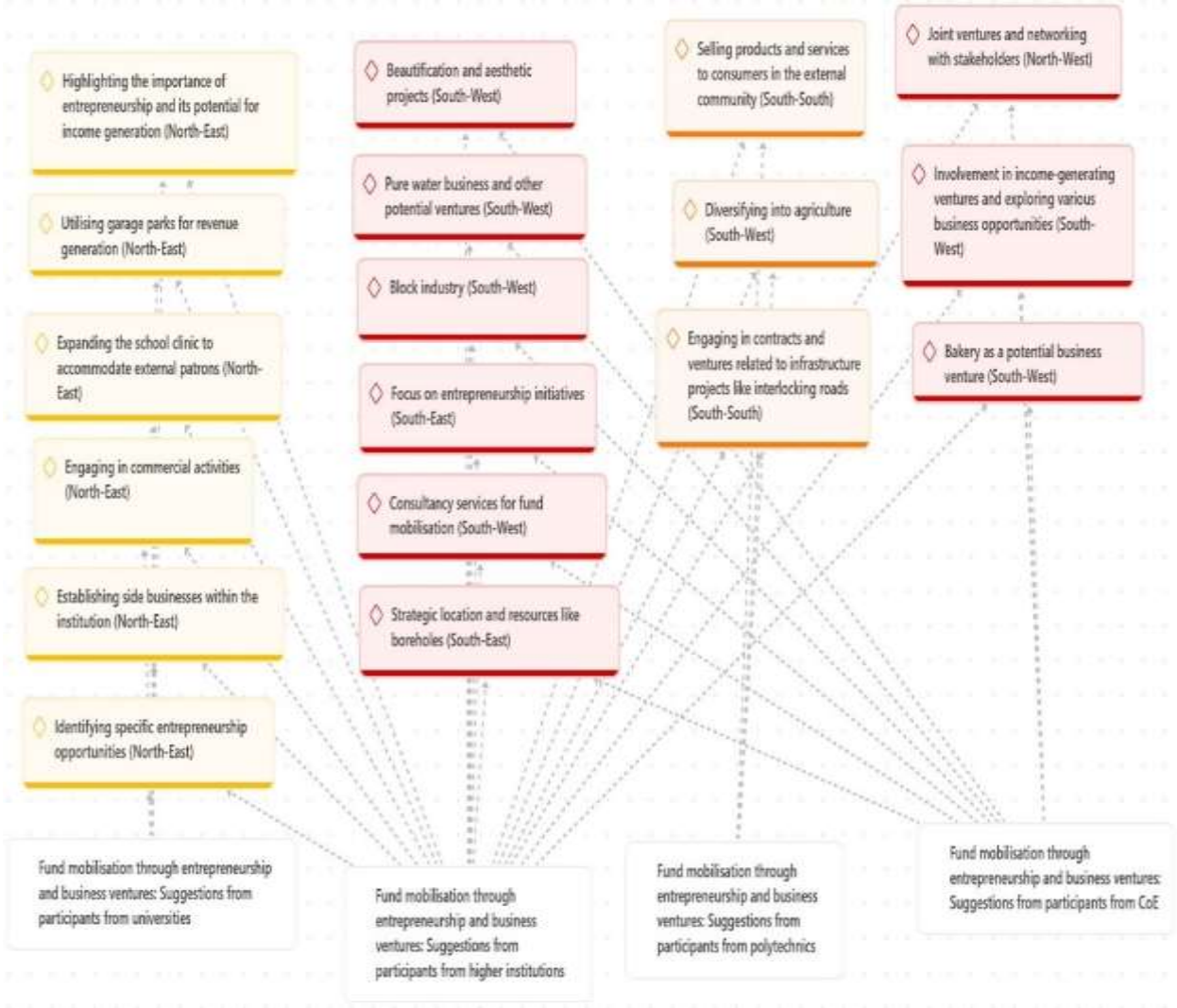


Figure 2: Fund mobilisation through entrepreneurship and business ventures

Theme 2: Suggestions on external fund mobilisation

This theme also outlined suggestions from stakeholders on how Nigeria Higher Institutions can generate fund through external fund mobilization mechanism, which involves seeking financial support from sources outside of educational institutions. The suggestions were hinged mainly on stakeholders' encouraging various groups and individuals who are beneficiaries of the higher education products to contribute financially. The major sub-themes derived from the stakeholders' suggestion include funding from non-government bodies, parents, alumni, private sector and from government at all levels.

Theme 2.1: Funding from non-government bodies

This sub-themes emphasises the collective responsibility and collaborative efforts required from various stakeholders to support and finance education. A businessman in a university community from a Northern State emphasised that: *"All stakeholders like parents, students, religious bodies, business centres, should contribute towards the funding of the institutions because all of us are benefiting from it."* (IP1: Businessman 2, in a State in the North-East). A student underscored the global economic challenges of COVID and argued that: "*All stakeholders should contribute to the funding of education because based on current reality globally. There is economic recession after the COVID pandemic era, Government alone can't do it so it is an added advantage to the institution."* (IP9: University student, in a Northern state).

A non-teaching staff suggested that influential individuals should contribute by providing scholarships, building infrastructure, and establishing partnerships to benefit both the institution and students.

Some participants emphasised the importance of collective responsibility and active involvement of the alumni leveraging their connections and resources to support the institution financially or through material contributions. These suggestions are evident in the following contributions by two deans and a HoD:

[1]: *Most students who graduated from the school and then other stakeholders have to come in so that at least they can put in their best to see that the school is functioning"* **(IP3: Dean, University, in the Northern zone).**

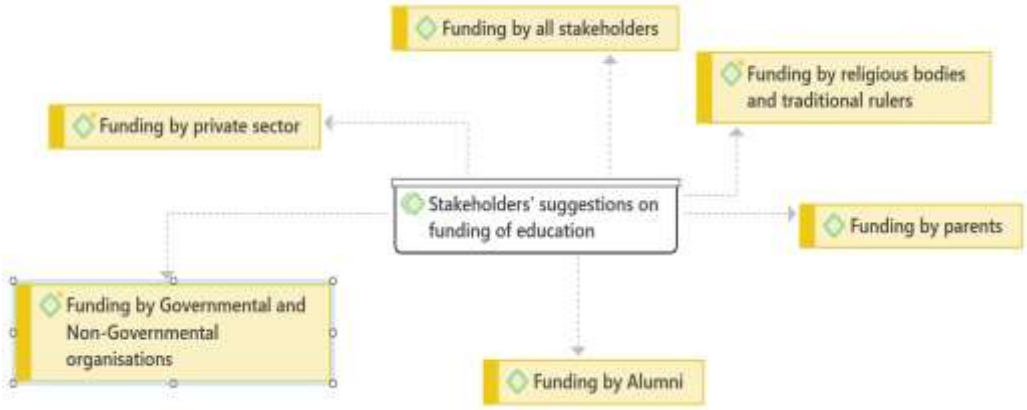
[2]: *The only suggestion for now is that the alumni, old boys that are in places of trust that they will be able to use their organization to support the institution. It could be directly financial; it could be through some material resources that they can provide for the institution to assist the institution in running their programmes* (**IP8: HoD, Polytechnic, in South-South, Nigeria;** (**IP13: Librarian, in a CoE, in a Southern state).**

Others the focus of their suggestions on the potential for institutions to get money from parents and the community to act and acknowledge that nothing is entirely free. These suggestions are evident in the following excerpts:

[1]: *Yeah, this institution can get money from parents, parent's community, they can do it."* **(IP9: University Student, Northern state)**
[2]: *Normally, it's the government that's supposed to take care of the universities and parents are supposed to pay the school fees. Parents should contribute as well."* **(IP2: Business man, Chemist, in a Northern state)**
[3]: "*So, the government should do something about it, the stakeholders, that is parents that have students, that have their children, that have their wards in these federal universities they have to seat up, nothing is free, nothing is free."* **(IP6:HoD1, University, Southern state).**

These excerpts, from the university student in North-East, imply the importance of exploring multiple avenues for funding, including contributions from parents and the broader community, to support educational institutions.

Figure 3
Thematic networks for suggestions on funding of education



Others suggest that fund mobilisation could come from organisations, companies and profit-making institutions. This reflects a perspective on the potential positive impact of incentives in encouraging financial support for education. A market woman (IP5) from a university community in the North-East proposed a specific percentage (10%) that organizations should contribute, and 5% for churches emphasizing the concept of stakeholders sharing the responsibility of funding education. Responses from other participants affirmed the involvement of communities and religious leaders in the funding of education. This suggests a structured approach to financial participation from various entities.

In summary, the suggestions elicited from the respondents reveals that NPHIs can explore internal and external fund mobilisation strategies leveraging on the corresponding sub-themes such as providing more educational programmes, engaging in institution entrepreneurial activities, eliciting funds from non-governmental bodies, private sector as well as from the government. All these are presented as the new suggested model in figure 4.

Figure 4: Evolved Suggested Stakeholders Sustainable Fund Mobilisation Model for Nigeria Public Higher Education Institutions

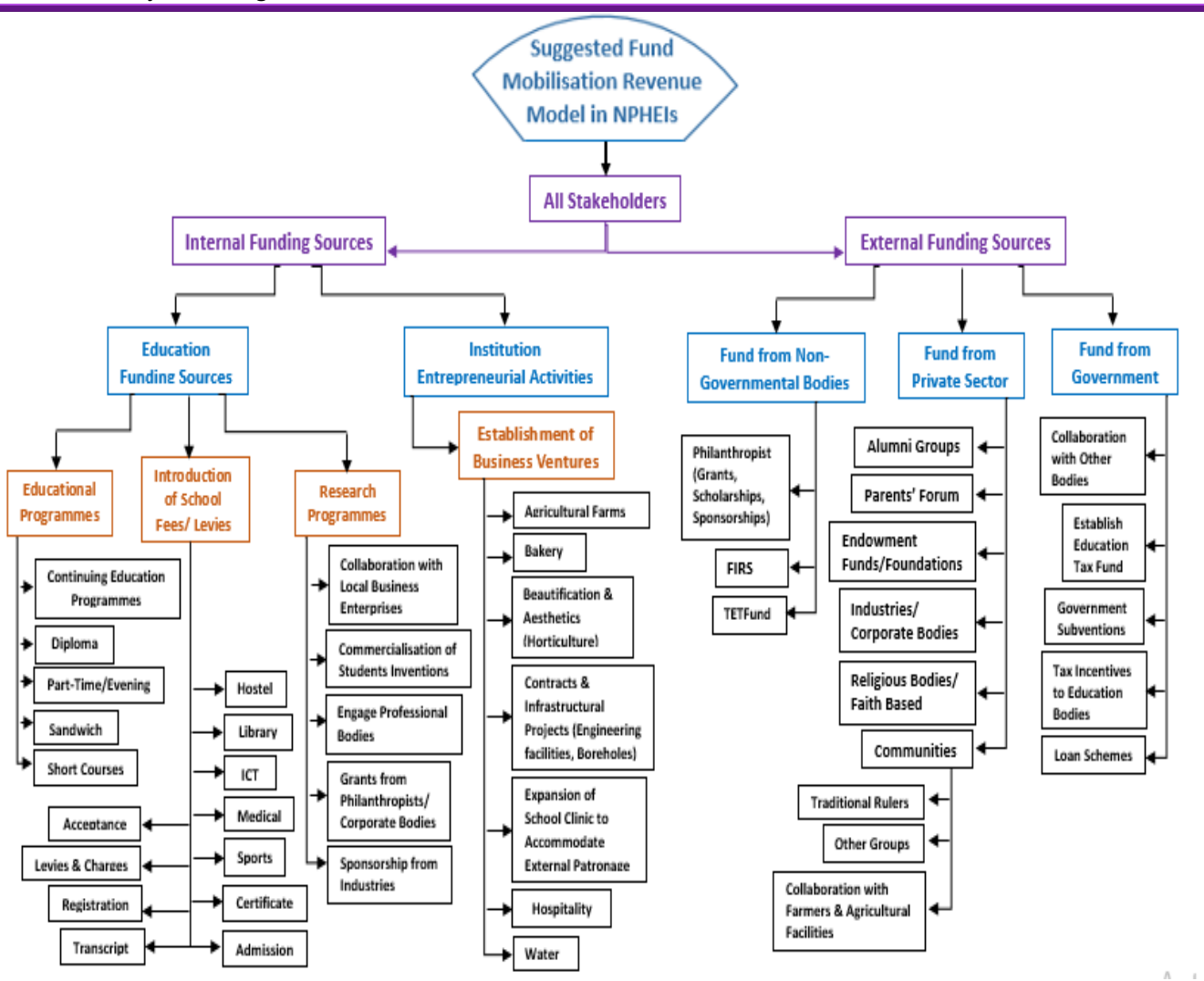


Figure 4 shows full model as suggested by the stakeholders on ways through which funds can be generated in Nigeria Higher Institutions to ensure better financing and stability.

DISCUSSION

The growing distortions in Nigeria Higher Institutions because of funding issues have cast doubt on their hope for survival. It is against this backdrop that we researched higher education funding in Nigeria. As on all continents, in Europe for instance, governments remain the primary funding source for higher education institutions. Funding mechanisms are closely linked to general policy choices concerning higher education (Jongbloed, 2004; Barr, 2003). However, the reverse is the case with Nigeria. As a result, it becomes imperative that Nigeria Higher Institutions seek other means of funding to ensure stability in the system. To generate the information, various stakeholders were involved and were asked to suggest ways through which NPHEIs can generate funds outside the conventional government funding system. In our clime, no known stakeholders' funding model exists, hence, the consistent advocacy for a sustainable funding model in the Nigerian public HEIs (Onuka, 2007; 2011; 2017; Adedji, 2023).

The participants in the study affirmed that NPHEIs supplementing government funding and supporting various operational and developmental activities would play a critical role in the financial sustainability of educational institutions. This diversity is crucial for ensuring financial stability and reducing dependency on a single funding source. The emphasis on departments being able to stand on their own financially suggests a decentralized financial structure in the higher institutions. However, out of the various suggested methods of funding educational institutions, introduction tuition fees (generally known as school fees) primarily paid by students were suggested to be the primary source other than government funding. Many stakeholders shared this view and it indicates

significant reliance on student contributions to finance the institution's operations. The participant noted that some of the institution had been able to accomplish much due to its large student population, indicating the importance of student enrolment in financial sustainability. However, reliance on student fees has its negative implications. This is because educational institutions may face financial instability if there is a decline in student enrolment or if students encounter difficulties in paying fees.

The number one important revealing fact emanating from this study is participants acknowledging the various charges levied on students as significant sources of revenue generation for the higher institutions. Second is the indication of a strong consensus among participants from universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education regarding the critical role of school fees as a primary source of internally generated revenue (IGR) for funding institutional operations. Another is the stakeholders' reiteration that parents and students need to be aware of institutions' financial constraints and be supportive of charging of fees. However, the participants cautioned that care must be taken to ensure that the fees to be charged by institutions are reasonable and within the reach of parents from varying socioeconomic backgrounds. Participants highlighted disparities between the fees charged by public and private institutions and the financial strain faced by students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds and suggested that introducing student loans can help with post-graduation repayment, and many students can self-train through part-time work.

In addition, some of the participants recommended that HEIs should establish programmes that focus on educating both students and management on revenue-generating skills. A good example given is incorporating entrepreneurship courses into the curriculum content which they believe can be a valuable asset which will aid in improving the institutions' finances as well as booths students' prospects and diversity into different revenue-generating ventures.

Another area mentioned was fund mobilisation through research programmes. The participants suggest diversifying income sources through research alongside government funding. The suggestion reinforces that universities should actively pursue research funding opportunities to supplement government allocations. The analysis of the responses of the participants from universities further show that universities are crucial in generating and applying knowledge to create financial value in any nation. To achieve this, they suggested that universities should focus on increasing their research output, which could attract funding and help address societal problems. Additionally, advocacy for research grants and establishing laboratories in different departments can help universities achieve their research goals. According to them, universities could collaborate with related business outfits for research and development, patent student inventions, and generate revenue. These measures can help universities make the most of their research while improving society.

However, a critical analysis of the suggestion cast a wary eye when one considers the trends or level of investment in education. Research and Development in Nigeria, especially from private sources, is not pushing towards parity with places like the USA but instead are showing an ever-widening gap. The investments differ significantly between Nigeria and other countries across the globe. Aggregate public investment in both education and research still lags in Nigeria than in other European countries where European Commission could call on member states to nearly double aggregate Research and Development investment and increase the share of industry sponsored research from 56% to 66% in 2010 (European Commission, 2002; 2005). The investments differ significantly across countries and even more so across subnational regions (Dill and Van Vught 2008). Although government investments in research have grown through contributions from tetfund while other government promises at both Federal and State levels end in political rhetoric when it concerns knowledge economy and the realities of political financial priorities (Dill and Van Vught, 2008).

With respect to externally fund mobilisation sources, the stakeholders suggested that NPHEIs should seek and obtain funds from donations from wealthy individuals, groups and organisations, alumni, and TETfund. Fund mobilisation from individuals refers to the process of raising financial resources from individuals, philanthropist and collaborative efforts and stakeholders' involvement. The transformative impact of philanthropists in building structures within a higher institution was highlighted by a key officer. For instance, a participant linked the naming of an institution to the acknowledgment and recognition of the philanthropic gestures of an individual. Similarly, some are of the view that such donations from philanthropists can come in form of vehicles. Furthermore, the participant indicated a structured and organised effort through constitution of committees to explore external funding sources. Also, an Engineer highlighted a division of responsibilities through the acknowledgment of specific sections within the college tasked with reaching out to philanthropists; a decentralized approach that suggests that various departments or units within the institution play distinct roles in mobilizing funds from external sources.

Another important factor that emerged is participant acknowledgment of Fund Mobilisation from TETFund a Tertiary Education Trust Fund established in Nigeria to provide supplementary support to public tertiary institutions for the improvement of infrastructure, teaching, and research. The participants indicated that TETFund funds both personnel development and training, and capital projects in NPHEIs. For instance, an Engineer identified TETFUND as the most prominent contributor to funding projects at the Polytechnics. He posited that the transition from PTF to TETFUND marked a significant shift in a primary source of funding, with TETFUND becoming the most instrumental source of fund, aside from the conventional government subvention. Also, a student leader in a State CoE expressed gratitude for TETFUND's assistance, attributing the construction of all new buildings within the

school to TETFUND projects, saying, *"Thank you very much ma actually all the building that we are seeing inside this school are TETFUND projects, which means we have the assistance of TETFUND"* (A Key Student Leader, in a CoE, IP3).

Summary

The result from this study reveals multifaceted means outlined by the stakeholders through funding issues in NPHEIs can be reduced. Prominent among is that all stakeholders need to contribute in funding education. Some of the means suggested include fund mobilisation through students' fees, education programmes, research programmes as well as through entrepreneurial activities. Suggestions on the use of external fund mobilisation strategy such as encouraging stakeholders, alumni, parents, private bodies, religious bodies, communities, Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations take part in funding of education were also made. The listed fund mobilisation outlets suggested by the stakeholders underscore the multifaceted needs of educational institutions where stakeholders can play a pivotal role in enhancing infrastructure and facilities to create a conducive learning environment. The continuous reiteration of importance of stakeholders to contribute significantly by supporting activities in NPHEIs in ensuring that students have access to quality learning experiences affirms and highlights the urgency for external support in rebuilding and equipping higher institutions in Nigeria.

Conclusion

These findings showcase the various revenue-generating initiatives suggested by stakeholders which NPHEIs can explore to supplement traditional funding sources by the government. The suggestions highlight the holistic roles stakeholders can play to ensure that quality funding of Nigeria Public Higher Institutions is sustained. The major suggested strategies include leveraging on institution's assets, capabilities, and expertise to pursue entrepreneurial activities, partnerships, and ventures to mobilise income and promote financial sustainability. The avenues suggested include seeking for financial and material support from stakeholders such as alumni, parents, organisations (government and non-governmental), using internally generated revenue (IGR), seeking for collaborations between outsiders and school management, and encouraging public-private partnerships. Further, ensuring proper maintenance of existing facilities is also highlighted as key areas for improvement.

These suggestions reiterate the fact that stakeholders appears to have analysed the realities on ground which is that government alone may not fund higher education that other beneficiaries should participate. Thus, based on their suggestion, have agreed to take up their responsibilities by acknowledging that some percentage of higher education funding should actually come from them and not just to be provided by the government alone to ensure stability in NPHEIs. This indicates that securing alternative (i.e. private) revenue sources will be necessary in the years ahead to sustain the current carrying capacity. This is in line with some research findings which revealed that institutions that utilize internal models, more rigid or dynamic models of funding, such as centralized, incremental, or zero-based funding may not be faced with many difficult decisions in the advent of any delay or refusal of funding by the owner of such institution.

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