

## **Private Sector Contribution in the Management of University Education: A Case Study of Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU), Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

The study, sought to identify the contribution of private sector to the achievement of educational goals in Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU). Three research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey was adopted. The population of the study comprised 169 members of the University senate who are disposed to know the private sector's contribution to the University. Due to the limited number of the population, there was no sampling for the study. Data was collected using questionnaire techniques, which was validated by three experts and having a reliability index of 0.83. The three research questions were answered using weighted mean, while the findings of the study revealed among others: that grading of NAU roads, donation of buses, building of hostel blocks are the contributions of various classes of private sectors in the management of education in NAU; that office equipment, library materials, funding researches are the areas the university requires more private sector contributions. Therefore, awareness campaign and direct contact with private sectors among others were the strategies to be adopted by the university to attract more private sector contributions. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that; honorary award be given to outstanding private sectors, direct contact with private sectors and immortalization would improve their contribution to the University. This study which seek to identify the nature and extent of contributions already received from the private sector and the modalities for attracting more effective private sector contributions to of the university, will certainly help to create a better environment for effective teaching and learning as well as reposition the provision of financial and material resources in the management of education in Nnamdi Azikiwe University.

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**Keywords:** private sector contribution, management, university education.

### **INTRODUCTION**

High quality higher education has become synonymous with self-sustained economic growth and international competitiveness. In contemporary times, education is not seen as the basic social obligation from the government but as a vital catalyst for development. Hence according to Carrales (1999), the economic success and miracle of East Asia from the 1970s to the 1990s was investment in human capital especially through well targeted educational investment. Many Countries are taking this concept very serious. 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 tertiary institution are capital intensive venture, and as such, the government cannot cater for its finance alone. Running the institution need ample investment and steady income necessary to sustain minimum level of infrastructure as in terms of facilities, staff enrolment, non-academic staff, hostel and staff accommodation etc. Even the Federal Government of Nigeria (2004:37) in the National Policy on Education stressed the importance of alternative sources of funding. According to the policy, it is necessary to supplement government funding of Universities.

“The Universities and other tertiary institutions are encouraged to explore other sources of funding such as endowment, consultancy services and commercial ventures”. In financing of Education, it is also clearly stated in the National policy on Education (2004:61) that; “the financing of education is a joint responsibility of the Federal, State and Local governments and the private sector. In this connection, government welcomes and encourages the participation of local communities, individuals and other organizations”.

Meanwhile, the number of approved universities in Nigeria has increased to 113 with the recent appointment of nine Vice-Chancellors and Registrars for the nine newly approved Federal Government owned universities. These new universities have resumed academic activities in September 2011 (Gbadegesin, 2011). Also, with a population of 120 million in 36 states, both federal and state governments try to make university education accessible to the people. While every state government tries to establish a university, the federal government spreads federal character by establishing federal universities in the states. It is in this regard that Nnamdi Azikiwe University was established as a

federal university in Anambra state in 1992. When in August 1991, Enugu and Ebonyi States were carved out from Anambra State (leaving the present Anambra State), the Awka and Nnewi campuses of the former Anambra State University of Technology were merged by the new Anambra State Government to constitute Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU). In 1992, NAU was taken over by the Federal Government and it became a federal government university. NAU is located in Awka with campuses at Nnewi, Agulu, Ifite-Ogwali and a pre-science school at Mbaukwu. Records for the 2004/2005 academic year indicate that NAU has a population of twenty-four thousand seven hundred and six (24,706) full time students and twelve thousand, four hundred and seventy-six (12,476) students in the various part-time programmes. (Source: Management Information System, NAU, January, 2011)

As a relatively young university, with a large student population, the university management has many on-going projects aimed at facilitating academic activities in the institution. Being a federal government institution, the federal government is the major provider of its needs. However, the institution is expected to supplement normal government subventions by generating the statutory 10% of their fund. Akinsanya (2007) notes that universities in Nigeria find it difficult to get this 10% internally generated revenue and consequently many projects are cash-starved and academic activities are not carried out as expected. Emunenu (2008:166) opines that "government alone cannot meet these demands. There is need, therefore, for a greater community and civil society participation in providing, managing and funding education." It is in this regard that private sector contributions are inevitable in managing university education.

Private sector comprises all ventures or aspects of a nation's economy controlled by individuals rather than government. Obanya (2002) presents four broad categories of the Nigerian private sector as:

- 1) Micro-business, which ranges from petty trading, petty contracting, to a variety of one-person enterprises
- 2) Small and medium sized enterprises, for which there is also a wide variety.
- 3) Established businesses and corporations, in the organized private sector proper.
- 4) Multinational enterprises.

Since government cannot single handedly bear the burden of university education in Nigeria it is necessary that university administration devise the means of strategically involving these categories of private sectors in the areas of construction of facilities, generation of ideas and experiences, advocacy with government agencies, staff development, sponsorship of research etc. It is a fact

that NAU has benefitted from the contributions of some of these categories of private sector to university education. Some of these contributions include:

1. Dr. Chudi Anyaegbu partly-funded the CHISCO institute of transportation studies building.
2. Alhaji Ishyaku Umar funded the Department of Economics building.
3. Chief Mrs. Stella Okoli of EMZOR Pharmaceuticals fully-funding the buildings for the Chike Okoli Centre for Entrepreneurial studies.
4. Dr. Ifeanyi Okoye of JUHEL Pharmacy and five Agulu business men funded the six buildings for the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences.
5. Chief G.U. Okeke of GUO Motors/Transport built the Department of English building.
6. Engr. Arthur Eze funded the construction of two deep giant groundwater boreholes for portable water supplies to the University.
7. ELMADA Canada, partly-funding the construction of blocks of student's hostel in the University.
8. Chief Ifeanyi Ubah of Capital oil Nigeria Limited donated a vehicle/bus and motorcycles.
9. The governor of Akwa-Ibom State Obong Akpabio gave a donation of ₦50 million and a bus. (UNIZIK NEWS, 2011)

However, the extent of such contributions in the management of education in NAU, needs to be identified and properly documented while suggesting strategies for improvement. In this study, emphasis was laid on the contributions of established businesses and corporations (i.e organized private sector proper), politicians/government bodies and multinational enterprises, Philanthropists/Individuals. The findings will reveal to NAU management the nature and extent of contributions already received from the private sector and the modalities for attracting more effective private sector contributions for the achievement of educational goals of the university.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study

- 1) What are the contributions of the various classes of private sector in the management of education in NAU?
- 2) In what areas does the university require more private sector contributions in the management of University education?
- 3) What strategies can the university adopt to attract more private sector contributions in the management of University education?

## METHOD

The research design was a descriptive survey. The area of study is Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and this covers the main campus at Awka as well as

Nnewi, Agulu, Ifite-Ogwali and Mbaukwu Campuses in Anambra State of Nigeria. The population comprised 169 University senate members which include; all the 8 principal officers of the University (including the Bursar), the 15 Deans/Acting Deans of Faculties and Students' Affairs, 19 Directors, 85 Professors, and 42 Heads of Departments. These constituted the respondents used for the study. There was no need for sample and sampling technique, since the population of 169 is relatively small. The choice of these 169 members of staff was based on the fact that each of them was likely to have witnessed private sector contributions to the university, since most of the contacts and deliberations with the private sectors are done and approved by the senate. Data were collected using questionnaire technique, which was validated by three experts, and a reliability index of 0.83 was obtained, indicating that the instrument was reliable. The instrument with 35 items was arranged in three sections to answer the three research questions. The obtained data were analyzed using weighted means of four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. Therefore, any mean score that is up to 2.50 and above was accepted while any mean score below it was rejected.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question 1**

What are the contributions of the various classes of private sectors in the management of education in NAU?

**Table 1:** Mean responses on the contributions of the various classes of private sectors in the management of education in NAU.

S/	The contributions of private sectors are:	MEAN	DECISION
1.	Grading of NAU roads	2.93	Accepted
2.	Building of Hostel Blocks	3.43	Accepted
3.	Donation of Buses	3.75	Accepted
4.	Office Equipments	2.20	Rejected
5.	Building of Chike Okoli Centre for Entrepreneurial Studies	4.00	Accepted
6.	Building of Ekwueme Research Centre	4.00	Accepted
7.	Funding researches	2.46	Rejected
8.	English Department Building	4.00	Accepted
9.	Faculty of Arts Building	4.00	Accepted
10	School of Post-Graduate Studies	4.00	Accepted
11	Library Materials	2.42	Rejected
12	Economic Department Building	4.00	Accepted
13	Faculty of Pharmaceutical Science Building	4.00	Accepted
14	Department of Mass Communication Building	4.00	Accepted
15	Bursaries and Scholarship	2.19	Rejected

Table 1 indicates that apart from items 4,7,11&15, all other 11 items were accepted. This implies that all the accepted items are contributions made by various classes of private sectors to the development of

education in NAU. Items 4,7,11&15, are less rated private sectors contribution to the university.

**Research Question 2**

In what areas does the University require more private sector contributions in the management of University education?

**Table 2:** Mean responses on the areas the university requires more private sector contributions in the management of University education.

S/N	Areas of Need	MEAN	DECISION
1.	Office equipment	3.86	Accepted
2.	Library Materials	3.75	Accepted
3.	Funding researches	3.44	Accepted
4.	Computer and other electronic facilities	3.63	Accepted
5.	Office accommodation for Staff	3.84	Accepted
6.	Irrigation channels	3.15	Accepted
7.	Campus buses for students	3.79	Accepted
8.	Classroom blocks and furniture	2.51	Accepted
9.	Bursaries & Scholarship	3.84	Accepted

Table 2 shows that all the 9 items were accepted. This is an indication that all the items are areas of need the university requires more private sector contributions in managing University education.

**Research Question 3**

What strategies can the university adopt to attract more private sector contributions the management of University education?

**Table 3:** Mean responses on the strategies the university can adopt to attract more private sector contributions in the management of University education.

S/ N	The following strategies can be adopted:	MEAN	DECISION
1.	Awareness creation through radio/television programmes.	3.43	Accepted
2.	Direct contact with the private sector agencies	3.88	Accepted
3.	Corporate executives work with educators to develop curricular that reflect private sector technology, standard and practice.	3.08	Accepted
4.	Mentor programmes where professionals and entrepreneurs have link with individual students.	2.89	Accepted
5.	Capitalization on business enterprise, where educational institutions with business organizations could set up programmes that focus on various specific aspects of business education eg. Finance.	3.43	Accepted
6.	Partnership among the private sectors to set up academics for a particular industry like tourism.	2.82	Accepted
7.	Provision for management expertise.	3.54	Accepted
8.	Awarding of honorary degrees to outstanding private sectors.	3.25	Accepted
9.	Naming a building after the sponsor or private sector.	3.14	Accepted
10	Sensitization workshops for tertiary institutions and organized private sectors.	2.82	Accepted
11	Involving private sectors in the governance of school.	1.57	Rejected

Table 3 shows that all the items except item 11 were accepted. This is also an indication that items 1-10 are accepted as the strategies which the university can adopt to attract more private sector contributions. Involving private sectors in the governance of the school is a strategy that should not be adopted in University management.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The contributions of various classes of private sectors stated in research question 1 have taken different dimensions. A good number of private sectors have contributed immensely to the development of education in NAU. Prominent among such contributions include; building of hostel blocks, class-room buildings like Chike Okoli Centre for entrepreneurial Studies, Ekwueme Research Centre, construction of roads and alleviation of transport problems by providing buses for students, among others. This agrees with Okuwa (2004) who noted that considering the enormous cost of running education in this country, it is generally advocated among policy makers that education funding should be the joint responsibility of the government, the private sectors, and the beneficiaries. Based on the items in Table 1, 11 items among the 15 identified items were accepted while items 4,7,11&15 were rejected as contributions of Private Sectors to University development in NAU. However, the rejection was not an outright one, this is because the mean values of the items rejected ranges from 2.19 to 2.46, which may mean that little concerns are shown to these items in the school. This is confirmed in the Speech presented by Dr. G. Nnamdi Okafor, on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2012, on the commissioning of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Motor-park named after him. Among his 9 itemized contributions to the University, is the Scholarship programme given to some students of the University (Source: Office of the Public Relation Officer, NAU, December, 2012). He seems to be the only person documented as a sponsor of students' scholarships and this appears insignificant especially now that poverty ravages many of the students and at times leads to their withdrawing from the University for lack of money to pay school fees and still meet other financial responsibilities in the school.

In table 2, the areas the university requires more private sector contributions were highlighted as: office equipment, scholarships, office accommodation, classroom blocks and furniture, library materials among others. This corroborates with Emunenu (2008) when he said that private sector involvement in education in Nigeria is gaining prominence in terms of giving bursaries and scholarship to students in different tertiary institutions. This is done mainly by large corporate organizations. Even-though all the items in this section were accepted as areas of need, item 8

revealed a poor acceptance mean value of 2.51, which shows that Classroom blocks and Furniture in NAU are not much problem, having been contributed by Private sectors in the school. This is supported by the classroom-building donations as outlined in the introduction of this paper, which includes; Dept. of English Language built by G.U Okeke, Dept. of Economics by Alhaji Ishyaku Umar, Six buildings of Faculty of Pharmacy by Dr. Ifeanyi Okoye & Co.

The findings in table 3 indicates that a number of strategies have been identified for the university to adopt to attract more private sector contributions. This is to boast the standard of university and achieve the goals of education. In collaboration with this, Emunenu (2008) suggested a number of strategies that could promote more private sector contributions to university educational as: making provision for management expertise, partnership among the private sector to set up academies for a particular industry, e.g tourism, mentor programmes where professionals and entrepreneurs have links with students, among others. If these strategies are fully harnessed by NAU management, much improvement would be achieved in areas of funding and academic progress.

### CONCLUSION

Various classes of private sectors have contributed in a number of ways in the management of education in NAU as identified by respondents with mean values of 2.50 and above. Such contributions are in the areas of; donation of buses, grading of NAU roads, buildings of hostel blocks and other multipurpose centers and facilities and so on. These have helped the university management in minimizing the accommodation and transportation problems of both staff and students. The University management has identified some areas of need, not less than 2.50 mean scores, to include; Office equipment, scholarships, office accommodation, more classroom blocks, furniture, library materials among others. These certainly will help to create a better environment for teaching and learning. To attract more private sector contributions to the University, a number of strategies, rated above 2,50 mean scores, were suggested which include among others; creating awareness through media, direct contact with the private sectors; corporate executives work with educators, provision for management expertise. Effective incorporation of these strategies will reposition the provision of financial and material resources in the management of education in Nnamdi Azikiwe University.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Honorary award should be given to outstanding private sectors. This is to compensate them and ginger others to partner with university.

2. Awareness creation through media and direct contact with the private sectors should be established. This is to sensitize the private sectors on the need to partner with university to promote education.
3. There should be capitalization on business expertise where educational institutions and business organizations could set up programmes that focus on various specific aspects of business eg. Finance.
4. Blocks or buildings sponsored by private sectors should be named after them. This is to strengthen the partnership between the university and the private sectors

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