

## Managing Direct Private Cost of University Education in Nigeria

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### Abstract

*The paper gave an overview of private cost constitute its accompanying challenges in Nigeria university. Some of the causes of increase in direct private cost of university education in Nigeria include family economic status, parents literacy level, altitude of academic staff and inadequate school facilities. To reduce the direct private cost of Nigerian university system, some basic principles could be adopted such as practicing financing transparency, conducive atmosphere, adequate school facilities and subsidization of education were discussed. The paper concludes by suggesting that individual student should strategies to help in managing direct private cost of university education in Nigeria.*

**Keywords: Managing, Private Cost, Direct Private Cost, University Education**

### Introduction

Private cost of education is one of the most promising paths for individual to realize better and more productive live, and it is vital for the achievement of the desire goals and objective of any level of educational system. In Nigeria, education is seen as the process of acquiring necessary skills, attitude, knowledge and values to fully develop an individual's capacity for political, socio-cultural, economic and technological transformation of the society. In fact, no country who wishes to achieve development will easily neglect the need for the provision of university education to her citizens. According to World Bank (2010), university education is central to the creation of intellectual capacity on which knowledge, skills, production and utilization depends and the promotion of lifelong learning practices for updating the knowledge, skills and value of people. It is only qualitative university education that can brighten the minds and ideas of an individual and thereby forming a basis for social, political, economic and cultural development in a given nation.

University education plays a very important role in the production of high level manpower for national development. Parents and private individuals are increasingly demanding for more of this type of education with the aim of creating a prosperous family/private individual in the future. Hence, the place of private (individual) cost of university education cannot be over measured or over estimated. The cost of university education is a determinant factor of assessing university education and into various disciplines. Private cost of education is seen as an investment/expenditure incurred by individual students and their families brought about through payment of tuition fees, purchase of admission forms, books, medical, fee, faculty dues, among others(Jagero, 2012).

P cost is divided into direct and indirect costs. The direct cost refers to the amount of money expended in educational goods and services during the period of study. The direct private is further divided into

academic cost and incidental cost. Academic cost refers to expenses on the items such as fees and funds paid to the institution (that is tuition fees, examination fees, library fees, laboratory fees, clearance fees, registration expenses among others), while cost which is not directly related to instruction is seen as incidental cost. Incidental cost of learning includes; feeding, transport cost to school, development levy, and medical fee among others. Indirect private cost is the opportunity cost forgone for the programme. That is, what the family loses in the interim by sending children to school (Nwaka, 2012). However, its provision does not only depend on resource allocation but also on prudent management through accountability, adequate planning, transparency and management of these resources. For instance, Inegbedion (2016) asserted that the average direct private cost of undergraduate students of university education in a year in Nigeria was ₦263534.25. Private cost vary greatly between and within state, nations, between different levels, type of institution. The indices of direct private cost of university education include tuition fees, levies, books, culture fee, registration fees, internet bills, hospitality levy, utility bills and administrative charges, among others. It covers academic cost and incidental costs.

In Nigeria, parents/guardians or private individual have invested a lot of financial resources in education of their children/wards (students) in order to support the production of critical manpower especially at the university education level. Private cost is the key in the quality of university education ( Nwadiani, 2010), Private cost plays major role in university education. There have been great efforts by parents the best investment or legacy any parents can give to their children because it brings out the innate ability and skills in the child in solving any problem in every human endeavor.

It is however observed in recent time that the private cost of university education in Nigeria is high which poses a great threat to students enrolment and completion of their university programme. It is noticeable that the number of students facing some severe psychological difficulties is on the increase; this is as a result of rising cost of university education mostly on the student emotional wellbeing, mental wellbeing, social wellbeing, and moral wellbeing as well as economic wellbeing. The issue of private cost of university education varies from one place to another. Parents/guardian are under pressure to initiate innovative management practice that are geared towards improvement of their children and wards as measured through enhanced life accomplishment through university education. The high cost of living is likely to impede on the education of children, as parents do often neglect their responsibilities on their children and wards by failing to provides their children with the basic requirement for university education such as textbooks, administrative charges, accommodation fees, hospitality levy, tuition fee or user charges on time and such negligence and delay can lead to students absenteeism and neglect of school work. The situation might hamper academic performance of students which result in high rate of student dropout, repetition, stagnation and sometime leads to complete withdrawal from school. Consequently, these students are never fully socially, politically, economically liberated. Majority remain unemployed which create a lot of fear, anxiety and frustration to their parents.( Chibuokwu and Nwosu)

### **Private Cost of University Education**

Private cost of education are the direct and indirect costs borne by the private individual and his/her family for the purpose of acquiring university education (Tiamiya, 2015). Nwadiani and Okafor (2015) see private costs of education as cost incurred by the learner or his or her parents, guardian or by any relation. Private cost of education which are borne by individual students and their families are payment of tuition fees, cost of books, uniform and transport (Adedapo & Afolabi, 2017). Private cost is the part of investment in university education made either by the student or parents or both. These cost could be direct or indirect costs. Direct costs are those cost that are visible and are traceable to a particular educational item. Direct private cost include money spent on purchase of books, stationary,

accommodation and transportation expenses while indirect costs are those that are not directly visible and cannot be calculated or easily traced to a particular item of expenditure, opportunity cost of foregone economy is part of indirect private cost. Nwadiani (2010) opined that private cost consists of user charges, cost of books, stationaries, uniform, transport cost for school journey and others (non-tuition) and the income learners forgo during the period of schooling. This expenditure is purely household and is borne by families of students. These investment cover cost incurred on academic cost and incidental cost. Jagero (2012) defined private cost of education as the cost of education incurred by individuals, household and the community to support the production of educational services at the school.

Private costs comprise three elements: academic/tuition cost, non-tuition or maintenance cost, and foregone earning of the students. It is the responsibility of parents and guidance to care for their children/wards in the society in the process of training them in formal education. These consist of expenditure on tuition fees, clothes, books, transportation and accommodation (Aneth. 2012). The decision to go to school is personally costly to the students. The student ability to foregone the opportunity to work and contribute to family income earnings add up to private cost. Private cost is divided by Ramachandran (2003) into academic and non-academic or incidental cost. Academic cost is the expenditure which is directly related to instruction such as tuition fee, pre-admission fees, cost of books, stationary, project work, study tours and others. While incidental cost on the other hand are those that are not directly related to instruction but are necessary towards aiding the individual or group of individuals in the course of acquiring formal education. These costs include hostel expenses, clothing, entertainment, feeding, transportation, among others. The private unit cost of education is calculated as;

$$\text{Private unit cost of education} = \frac{\text{total private cost}}{\text{total number of student}}$$

Where: Total private cost = tuition cost (where applicable) + non-tuition costs + earning foregone – scholarship.

A study carried out by Ofem (2011) found that the private unit cost for full-time bachelor's degree programme for student per discipline in public university in 2007/2008 academic session was ₦193,170.15 with a minimum average private unit cost of ₦175,536.26 for education courses and ₦262, ₦733.95 for College of Medicine.

### **Causes of Increase of Direct Private Cost of University Education in Nigeria**

**Family economic status:** It can influence direct private cost in Nigeria educational system. Students from wealthy and educated homes persevere in school programme to overcome all hurdles on the way to success. Family is the engine of any society. The direct private cost include acceptance fee, tuition fee, recommended textbooks, project work, assignment and so on. The ability of parents to meet the needs of their children/wards guarantees their stability and zeal in the school. Uwaifo (2012) pointed that family economic status of parents of a child affects his/her reaction to life situation and his/her level of direct private cost of education. These increase the direct private cost of university education in Nigeria.

**Parents' literacy level:** Another factor responsible for increase in direct private cost of university education is parents' literacy level. Some parents know the advantages and benefits of education to the life of an individual. Parental attitude to school activities will go a long way to increasing the direct private cost of university education in Nigeria. Educational level of parents can influence children and it determines their access to private cost of education. Asikhia (2010) noted that parent's literacy level

influence direct private cost of education. Egunsola (2015) observed when parents are educated and well informed, it increases their consciousness for quality education for their children /wards no matter the cost implications.

**Attitude of academic staff/teacher:** The attitude of teachers influences the increase in direct private cost of university. So, the success or failure of any educational system depends on the attitude of the teachers. Academic staff can influence increase in direct private cost of university education. The teacher is a leader of a class and it is expected of him/her to care and show concern to all the students in his/her class irrespective of his/her character, religion, race and so on. Academic staff in the university compel students to buy their books and other relevant study materials at outrageous price (Aina, 2013). The reason why academic staff force students to buy their books at outrageous price is attributed to short supply of reading materials in the library while available ones are filled with old and obsolete books that are irrelevant to their programme (Igu, 2007). Some academic staff have negative attitude of forcing handbooks or handout on students, recommended textbook, among others which the students pay or spend money on. This action or inaction of academic staff increases the direct private cost of university education in Nigeria.

**Inadequate School Facilities:** The palletize situation in Nigeria universities coupled with the increase in students' enrolment, non-availability of adequate school facilities have worsened in schools. Most Nigeria public universities have been in existence with limited classrooms, libraries, toilets and other facilities. This can discourage students from school due to inadequate school facilities. In most public universities in Nigeria, students are up to 80 per teacher and they receive lessons outside the classroom due to inadequate classrooms, desks and chairs. This situation becomes inconveniences to some students. This propels them to pay for tutorial classes to gain knowledge and skills. Uzoechina (2013) revealed that school facilities at the universities were in unmanageable state with insufficient lecture halls, laboratories while Nwagwu (2007) regretted that inadequate school facilities in schools hinders effective teaching and learning process. This constitutes increase in private unit cost of education.

**Indiscipline among the students:** Student indiscipline can influence direct private cost of education in Nigeria. Student indiscipline willingly or unwillingly violate laid down rules and regulation of an institution of learning which hinder effective academic activities (teaching and learning process) in the school. The acts of indiscipline exhibited by the student are include damaging school property, poor time management, defiance to school authority, truancy among others. This trend has affected the attitude of students to study and their perception of school as a whole (Usman, 2016). Truancy is one of the major disciplinary problems found among higher institution students (Moye, 2011). These negative actions or inactions of students as a result of indiscipline, can result in students paying for damage school property and in the process replace it. It constitutes increase in student direct private cost of university education in Nigeria.

**Ability and Capacity of Students:** The inability of the student to cope with academic work thereby spending additional year for his/her academic programme is another increase in private cost for the students and parents. The parents have to bear the cost for that additional (extra) year. The parents or the guadance has to pay for school fees and other fees to the school due to inability of students to comprehend academic work in the school as a result of students' absenteeism from school, student stubbornness, peer group influence, ill-health of students, laziness, and ignorance of students towards education. There is financial and time implication when students spend additional year to achieve his/her university education programme (Ayodele, Adaralegbe & Adeleke, 2015). The reason for this can be traced to ill-health, truancy and financial difficulty during his/her academic pursuit (Nwaka, 2012). The personal problem of students can constitute increase in private unit cost.

**Inadequate Academic Staff:** The progress and the effectiveness of school depend on the availability of teachers. The shortage of academic staff in school will encourage them not to cater for individual differences of students in the class during academic activities (teaching and learning process). In the school because of the inconvenience by shortage of academic staff, some students will pay for tutorial classes to gain new knowledge and skills to improve on their academic performance in school. Nigerian Universities with about 56.4% of the academic staff are being lecturer 1 and below (Jamila, 2010). The reason for this inadequate academic staff can be attributed to poor salaries to academic staff. Utile (2008) noted that a professor in Nigeria university earn ₦3.6 million per annum while his counterpart in South Africa earn ₦9.4 million. This can constitute increase in private unit cost of education.

**Frequent Strike Action by Academic Staff:** Strike actions by academic staff have seriously affected school system and students. Parents therefore spend more resources on their children during and after the strike action have been called off, as such transportation cost, living cost and other cost to encourage the child not to lose focus on his/her study. Strike actions by the academic staff of university hinder the seamless teaching/learning activities in schools (Famous-Izedonmi, 2017). The reason for academic staff strike is attributed to inability of the government to honour agreement reached with them (Ekundayo & Konwea, 2010). During the strike some students will wish to pay for tutorial classes to gain lost knowledge and skills in the class in order to make up for the lost classes occasioned by the strike.

### **Strategies for Managing Direct Private Cost in University Education in Nigeria**

It is imperative for private direct cost to be reduced in Nigeria university system. To achieve this feat, the following strategies should be adopted:

**Accountability:** There is need for an urgent students financial accountability in their spending in school. This will help to reduce financial burden from parents and guardians. Students financial accountability is the process of ensuring students are answerable for the outcome of their financial actions in schools. Akporche (2011) observed that student financial accountability system strive to protect students from unnecessary financial spending in school. Student financial accountability will help to build financial discipline, reduce unnecessary financial spending in schools and give them great sense of responsibility, passion for order and zeal to discharge financial spending promptly and efficiently (Moye, 2015). This will help to minimize direct private cost from the parents.

**Transparency:** This will help to reduce direct private cost from parents. There is need for urgent taught of students financial transparency in school. This will help to reduce financial burden from parents and guardians. When students are open, human reliable, dependable and benevolent in their financial dealing in school, they will enjoy trust from their parents. The student financial transparency is an inevitable and crucial tool to reduce high level of private cost of education in Nigeria (Akporche, 2011). Gbenu (2012) pointed out that in order for students to have financial transparency, there is need to make note of financial planning in school. This will help to cure incidence of fraud and misappropriation of fund by students in the process help to minimize cost from the parents.

**Effective monitoring and supervision of students:** There is need for parents to intensify monitoring and effective supervision of their children to check excesses, lapses, and unwanted attitudes of their children (students). This frequent supervision and monitoring are aimed at identifying the area of needs of students as well as enhancing their academic performance. The use of record management by parents will provide and make sure of efficient and financial accurate work process (Oluwalola, 2017). Supervision is an important regiment for the effectiveness of any administrative setting. Supervision provide financial guidance to students to keep to their financial ethics in school (Anho, 2015). This will

help students to be accountable and transparent with his/her financial spending. In the process, it will help to reduce unnecessary expenses incurred by parents in the school system. This is another mechanism to minimize direct private cost for parents and guidance.

**Conducive atmosphere:** There is need for conducive atmosphere in university education. Conducive atmosphere is a critical issue that could guarantee adequate provision of resources necessary for effective operation of the educational sub-sector. Ajayi (2011) stressed that there is a need for government to provide an avenue for the private sector to give necessary financial support to university education. The private sector makes great effort in providing necessary facilities required to develop and mould the intellectual capabilities of university students. The private sector should see themselves as a hub playing complementary role in supporting government's effort (s) in terms of funding to ensure a qualitative university education to citizens (Nakpodia, 2013). This will help to reduce financial burden from parents and guardians. It also helps to overcome inadequate school facilities and shortage of academic staff that students pay for tutorial classes.

**Subsidization of education:** Government can assist in reducing direct private cost of university education by providing incentives to students. This could be in form of providing learning materials, textbooks and so on to students. Olobube (2016) remarked that the direct private cost of university education in Nigeria can be subsidized when there is strong policy framework based on organisational procedure or mechanisms. Asodike and Ikpitibo (2012) recommended that government should endeavor to moderate financial charges in school to make it available to the masses at an affordable price. This will help to minimize direct private cost of university education in Nigeria.

**Increased Funding:** The funding of education in Nigeria needs to improve in order to raise the quality of education. The financial budgetary allocation by the different tiers of government to education in general and university education in particular should be reviewed upwards. The only way to guarantee effective operation of educational resources that are needed for effective operation of educational sub-sector is adequate funding, planning, accountability and transparency. The government (federal and state) should provide each university in the country with sufficient financial resources in order to provide quality education to her citizens (Aneth, 2012). On the other hand, financial resources allocation to universities should be well utilized (Ajayi, 2011). This will help to reduce financial burden from parents and guardians. It also helps to overcome inadequate school facilities, shortage of academic staff and frequent strike action by the academic staff of universities that make students pay for tutorial classes.

**Skilled Manpower:** Experienced teachers should be employed and there should be training and retraining of academic staff. The academic staff should be encouraged and motivated by way of incentives to sustain in the university. The incentives could be through the creation of special salary structure for academic staff. The skilled manpower will be able to cater for individual differences of the students in the teaching/learning process in the class as such the students will not spend more on tutorial classes to gain new knowledge and skills for him/her to cope with academic work in the university. Oware and Oghurwu (2011) observed that human resources development improve skills, knowledge and the academic staff can also enhance their job commitment in the school. On the other hand, Ferdimen (2007) opined that highly motivated and committed academic staff in the university increased students behaviour in terms of effective and efficient learning, discipline and students' academic performance can be aroused and sustained. This will help to minimize cost from the parents and the students.

**Adequate School Facilities:** This will help to reduce private cost from parents as well as the students. The students will not spend additional time and money to gain knowledge and skill, as a result of

inadequate school facilities in universities. Odigbo (2005) remarked that adequate school facilities in universities will ensure productive teaching and learning and relieve burden from parents and students. This is why Owoeye and Yara (2011) acknowledged that adequate school facilities are very vital input to educational system all over the world. This can be managed through adequate school facilities like Instructional facilities, workshops/laboratories, computers, equipment, tools and other facilities should be made available for the effective management of education to minimize private cost of education.

**Curriculum Reform:** There is need to bridge gap between theory and practice in school to prevent a disconnect between what the curricula offers and the needs of the society in terms of value orientation, employability skills and technological advancement, the curricula should be reviewed periodically. Iyamu (2005) observed that school curriculum is a dynamic process which must respond to the needs and value system of the society. Supporting this point, Ajayi (2011) suggested that the school curriculum should be reviewed periodically to meet the yearning of the society. University curricular should be well-structured to enhance effective teaching in order to reduce cost. Moreover, academic staff should be actively involved in curriculum developments so that university curricula can be more meaningful and effectively implemented. This will help to minimize private cost in university education in Nigeria.

**Effective Monitoring and Supervision of School Management:** The National Universities Commission (NUC) needs to intensify inspection and monitoring of schools to check excesses, lapses and unwanted attitude among academic staff as well as records of materials to avoid misuse of resources. This is geared towards identifying the areas of needs and adequate provision suggested for replacement of such facilities. The use of record management will provide security with document files and folders against dust, mishandling and information pilferage and also make for efficient and accurate work process (Oluwalola, 2017). Supervision is an important regiment for the effectiveness of any administrative set up. Supervision provides professional guidance to management staff and academic staff in the university to keep to their ethics of the system (Anho, 2015). This will help the vice chancellor to be accountable and transparent in his/her duty. In the process, it will help to reduce unnecessary expenses incurred by parents and students in the school system. This is another mechanism to minimize cost for parents and guardians.

## Conclusion

Private cost is an important factor for individual student decision to enroll and complete university education. The parents and guardian should strategies effort to manage the increasing direct private cost of university education in Nigeria.

## Recommendations

The following are recommend in order to manage private cost in university education in Nigeria.

- Government can help to reduce the burden of the high direct private cost by subsidizing it through growths to university in Nigeria.
- Non-governmental organization can give indirect funding to students such as scholarship to include meals, accommodation to reduce direct private cost burden from parents.
- University management should endeavor to provide more hostel accommodation within the school areas for students in order to reduce the cost incurred by student in hostel accommodation.
- There should be free flow of financial information between school and parents. It will help to reduce direct private cost burden from parents.
- University management should provide enabling environment for students to learn which would

reduce cost burden.

- Parent should employ quality control mechanism to reduce direct private cost to the barest minimum.

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