

**GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ,MANPOWER NEEDS AND ENHANCING
STANDARD IN THE NIGERIAN EDUCATION SECTOR**

BY

**RICHARDSON U.K, EDEME* AND SUNDAY OKUBOR, IJIEH
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS,
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION,
AGBOR, DELTA STATE
TEL: 08035813888 or 08075783321**

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** To whom all Correspondence is addressed.*

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents an overview of the trend of government expenditure in meeting the manpower needs in line with improving the Educational Standard in Nigeria. Various Educational Policies and programmes have been introduced by the Nigerian government. In the quest to improve the quality of education. The study reveals that for the period covered by the study, expenditure on education has not been consistent and did not follow a definite pattern. Acute financial, economic and political problems affected all levels of education and their capacities to perform efficiently. The deficit and surpluses in manpower in the economy is a pointer to the fact that the education sub-sector has not impacted much in meeting the needs of the nation. The important role of education in the society should constitute enough reasons for the nation to feel concerned about the future survival of education. For this reason, the present situation should call for a reflection of her mistakes of neglect on the educational sector and a determination to take the necessary steps clearly focused on adequate investment in transforming the education sector. Moreover, greater proportion of the nation's annual budgetary allocations should be allocated to education; disbursement, utilization, monitoring of education funds and encouraging other stakeholders to invest more in the education sector.

1.0 Introduction

Education is essentially one of the obvious means through which knowledge, skills and attitude are acquired for the effective performance of socio-economic responsibilities, social integration, improving personal competence and seeking better employment opportunities. The socio-political and economic development of any nation is, in many ways, influenced by the quality and level of educational attainment of the citizens.

Economists had long realized the importance of education in the development process. For instance, in the *Wealth of Nations*, Adams Smith (1776) emphasizes the importance of education in assisting members of the society in acquiring useful abilities. Alfred Marshall (1930) also emphasizes the importance of education as a national investment, and according to him, “the most valuable of all capital is that invested in human being”.

The Nigerian Government recognizes the importance of education, hence, at independence, it embarked on measures of quantitative and qualitative expansion of educational facilities at all levels. Thus, from five universities in 1972, facilities for university education rose to about 40 public universities, 46 polytechnics, and 64 colleges of education. In two decades, the numbers of university students increased eightfold, from about 55,000 in 1980 to more than 500,000 in 2005. (Bollag, 2006) Today, there are over 16,000 largely private pre-primary educational institutions, 48,242 largely public primary schools, 7,104 secondary schools.

However, these bold educational initiatives have not been translated into significant achievements in standard of education as the efforts have only produced 70 percent gross enrolment, transition rate from primary to secondary school of 44 percent, adult literacy rate of 57 percent; while about 60 percent of those attending primary school will regress into illiteracy. About 56 percent of the female population is illiterate, the male/female literacy ratios are 4 and 1 percent, respectively (Borisade, 2002); the quality of university graduates and (secondary

graduates), especially their communication skill has fallen continually for two decades (World Development Report, 2001), unemployment rate is over 50 percent. This is a manifestation of decreasing quality of education provided by these institutions (CBN, 2004),

Here vital questions need to be asked: what has been the trend of government expenditure in education? why has investment in education not been able to pay off in terms of manpower needs in Nigeria? Does government expenditure bring about high education standard and therefore economic development.?

Consequently, the objective of the paper is to ascertain the impact of government expenditure on education standard in Nigeria. To achieve this, the specific objectives are: to examine the trend in educational expenditure in Nigeria; to determine the relationship between expenditure in education and manpower development in Nigeria; to ascertain the impact of education expenditure and education standard overtime.

Accordingly, section 2 of the paper reviews the conceptual framework and empirical evidence, while section 3 assess the state of education in Nigeria and government expenditure in education. Section 4 highlights the correlation between education expenditure and manpower needs in the educational sector. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2.0 Conceptual Framework and Empirical evidence

Government funding of education is based on the classical literature on public goods, where it is argued that social goods provide a rationale for the allocative function of the budget policy. The argument is that the public sector performs certain functions due to the fact that some goods cannot be provided efficiently through the market system due to market failures. Market failure occurs because the benefits created by social goods are not limited to one particular consumer who purchases the good as in the case with private goods (Edeme and Imide, 2004). It

would be inefficient, therefore, to prevent any consumer from partaking in the benefits of a social good since such consumption does not reduce or limit the benefits accruing to others. Thus, the cost of providing educational services would have to be weighed against the magnitude, pace, pattern, composition and utilization. The human capital model argues that skills are acquired through expenditure in education, which adds to the overall volume of national competitiveness. Thus, the more education individuals acquire, the better they are able to absorb new information, acquire new skills, and familiarize themselves with new technologies. (Borisade 2002) contend that government funding of education is anchored on the notion that for continuity of the society, the new generation must be given the appropriate access to knowledge that previous generations have accumulated.

Expenditure in education has been found to increase both individual and national output (World Bank 1980; Adamu 2002; Mokyr 1990), reduce unemployment (Crawford 1991; Howe 1993; Mincer 1991), reduce fertility rates (Mooock and Jamison (1988); World Bank 1980), improve health and facilitate social and political participation (Hill and King 1991; Ehusani 2002; Weisbrod 1962; Grossman 1976). Todaro (1986) has observed that education, may infact, reinforce existing inequality and poverty level or reduce it, depending on the egalitarian nature of the society and the educational system. Lewis and Fagnano (1993) contended that since education is an investment, there should be returns, and for the society, it is plausible to believe that this would be in form of the enhanced contribution made by those who have received the education and, hence, the quality of life that it leads to. Before any investment in education can be adjudged profitable, the output of the system must be productive. Therefore, adequate investment by the government is needed to ensure adequate and qualitative education (Longe, 1999). Lewis (1993) identify greater earning power, enriching the quality of life, promoting

equal opportunity, maintaining a free market economy, enhancing personal fulfilment, ensuring world leadership and preserving democracy as the gains of education to the society and the individual. He asserts that when government invests in education, the development in the society is commensurate with the level of investment, when an individual invests in education, his future income is enhanced, but the society benefits by proxy. The study by Ehusani (2002) is particularly striking. He examined the underlying rationale for government expenditure in education. The study reveals that such expenditure is to equip people with the knowledge, skills, and capacity to enhance or improve their quality of life, augment productivity and capacity to earn knowledge of new techniques of production in order to be able to participate actively in the development process. Thus, while primary and secondary education aims at inculcating literacy and numeracy, higher education creates the needed manpower with improved skills for technological innovation with growth in productivity. Education is, therefore, the process of socialization by which men and women learn to adapt, to and, where necessary, conquer their environment.

3.0 State of Education in Nigeria

In an attempt to increase the quality and reduce illiteracy in Nigeria, different educational policies and programmes have been put in place. For instance, the nation launched the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976 but this programme failed due to series of problems ranging from paucity of fund, corruption, among others. In 2002, Nigeria launched another mass-oriented program, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) which is expected to provide free education to children between the ages of 7-17. However, not long after, the federal government reported that the falling standard of education in Nigeria is as a result of acute shortage of qualified teachers in the primary school level. It is reported that about 22 percent of

the over 200,000 teachers employed in the nation's primary schools do not possess the Teachers' Grade II Certificate, even when the Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) is the minimum educational requirement to teach in the primary schools (Ogbeifum and Olisa; the Vanguard, 2001).

UNICEF's (1999) report on the state of the world's children indicates that about four million Nigerian children have no access to basic education, and that majority of those that are lucky to enter school are given sub-standard education. In 1994, there were 16, 190,947 teachers in 38, 649 primary schools, taught by 435,210 teachers. In the secondary schools, 4,457, 349 students were taught by 152,592 teachers. The pupil-teacher ratio at the primary level was estimated at 45:1 in 2005. (The Guardian, 1999,2005 and Dike 2000). Today, Nigeria has about 7,104 secondary schools with 4,448, 981 students (Guardian, 2006).

The increased need for higher education brought about by the oil boom of the 1970s in Nigeria, coupled with political pressure, led to the establishment of many universities. And the an explosive expansion in enrolments during the period marked the beginning of the decline in quality of education in the society. A major obstacle to the further advancement of education standard in Nigeria is the shortage of qualified teachers. Large numbers of foreigners are employed, especially by the universities. In 1993-94, universities had 12,031 teachers and 207,982 students (Anya, 2001).

3.1 Expenditure On Education in Nigeria

In Nigeria, educational expenditure is undertaken by the three levels of government – federal, state and local in conjunction with the private sector and external stakeholders. One of the means through which government adopts in financing education is the annual budgetary allocations that are distributed as subventions or grants to different levels of education.

Although Nigeria's educational institutions in general are in need of fund, the most troubled is the primary sector. Statistics available shows that there are about 2,015 primary schools in Nigeria with no standard buildings of any type. With this alarming statistics, the government is still in the habit of allocating less money to the educational sector.

Table 1: Federal Government Expenditure on Education as a share of Total Federal Expenditure (1996-2006).

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total allocation	15.4	16.8	23.7	27.8	56.6	6.2.5	69.0	69.2	72.6	75.8	72.9
% as Total Budget	10.8	11.5	9.61	11.1	8.7	7.0	5.9	6.0	6.6	14.8	14.0

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletin.

Table 1 shows that Federal budgetary allocation to education rose from N15.4 billion in 1996 to N75.8 billion in 2005. However, the pattern of allocation as a percentage of the total budget revealed that it was inconsistent. In the period, the Federal government's expenditure has been below 12 percent on its overall expenditure on the average, and the trend being largely downward. This is more worrisome when Nigeria's allocation to education is compared with that of other less affluent countries in Africa. In Nigeria, about 8 percent of the annual budget is allocated to education while Angola, Ghana, Kenya allocates 4.9 percent, 4.4 percent, and 6.5 percent respectively to the same sector (see table 2 below):

Table 2: Percent GNP Expenditure on Education for Selected African Countries as Compared to Nigeria

Country	Angola	Cote d'ivoire	Ghana	Kenya	Malawi	Mozambique	Nigeria	South Africa	Uganda
%GNP	4.9	5.0	4.4	6.5	5.4	4.1	0.8	7.9	2.6

Source: Africa Department; Jubilee 2000.

Further, state government are also involved in expenditure in each level of education in Nigeria. The World Bank (2004) has shown that since 1995, state government expenditure in education put together is about a sixth of the Federal government expenditure. Available data on

state funding of education shows an absolute mean share of 18 percent in 1999, and the continuous fall in the share of education in the state budgets (see table 2 below).

Table 3: Share of Selected State Government Education Expenditure by Level of Education in Selected States (%)

Education sub-sector	Enugu	Delta	Rivers	Niger	Ekiti	Borno	Benue	Plateau	Average
University	0.0	20.1	18.3	3.8	10.4	0.0	22.2	0.0	9.35
Tertiary	30.3	50.2	21.4	16.6	13.0	25.8	15.3	12.8	24.4
Secondary	52.7	83.2	50.6	65.8	66.2	69.1	50.2	83.9	65.2
Primary	17.0	14.0	9.7	13.8	10.4	5.0	11.9	3.3	10.6

Source: World Bank

Table 3 further reveals that on the average state government spent more money on the secondary school level of education than the primary, tertiary and university levels of education combined and this has been declining in most states

Beside Federal and state government allocations, another major source of education financing in Nigeria is the payment from Education Tax Fund (ETF) and this fund is geared towards capital projects in the three levels of education in the country.

Table 4: ETF Allocations and Disbursements by level of Education (N million)

Year	Tertiary	Secondary	Primary	Agencies of Education	Total
1999	4,291.8	657.0	3,117.6	532.0	8,598.5
2000	1,876.1	698.7	1,010.6	588.2	4,165.1
2001	1,624.3	1,112.0	1,111.9	252.9	4,688.2
2002	1,587.4	277.2	572.0	1,405.4	3,842.1
Total	10,372.9	2,350.3	5,812.7	2,778.5	2,1314.0

Source: Federal Ministry of Education

A critical analysis of table 4 shows that the disbursements to the education sub-sectors decreased from N8,598 million in 1999 to N3,842.1 million in 2002, with the tertiary education ranking highest, followed by primary school level and then the secondary school level of education. This

implies that the yearly allocation and disbursements to education sub-sectors did not follow any pattern, an indication of the fact that there were not set standards in both allocations and disbursement; a pointer to neglect on worsening state of education and its financing in Nigeria.

4.0 Government Expenditure and Manpower Needs in the Educational Sector: The Correlation so far.

In this sub-section, we would attempt an analysis of the relationship between expenditure in education and manpower available in Nigeria. In an attempt to examine the correlation, some critical subjects and discipline would be considered to determine areas of surpluses and shortages.

Table 5: Summary of Students Enrollment (Selected Discipline) in Relation to Academic Staff Available in Nigeria Universities

Discipline	Student enrolment	Staff available	Requirement by NUC	Existing staff-student ratio	Requirement by NUC	Shortfall *
Agriculture	25,933	1,904	2,845	1:13	1:9	941 (33%)
Arts	45,440	2,116	2,272	1:21	1:20	157 (7%)
Sciences	72,092	4,146	7,709	1:19	1:10	3,563 (46%)
Social sciences	72,092	1,831	3,622	1:40	1:20	1,791 (49%)
Education	48,812	1,632	1,930	1:28	1:24	274 (14%)
Law	24,431	586	1,172	1:40	1:20	586 (50%)
Medicine	23,241	1,876	3,874	1:12	1:6	1,998 (56%)
Pharmacy	5,066	360	507	1:14	1:10	147 (29%)
Engineering technology	52,843	1,798	5,871	1:29	1:9	4,073 (69%)
Veterinary medicine	2,318	364	386	1:6	1:6	16 (4%)
Environmental science	15,663	904	1,566	1:7	1:10	662 (42%)

Sources: (i) National Universities Commission (NUC)

(ii) Federal Ministry of Education

Note: * Author's Calculations.

Table 5 revealed that education investment has not yielded enough results as there is dearth of academic staff in the universities in Nigeria and this is more noticeable for engineering and technology (69%), and medicine (56%). Furthermore, beside the shortfalls of staff shown in the table, existing staff-student ratios shows that it was only in Veterinary medicine and Arts the calculated ratios were near the NUC requirements. Engineering and technology tripled the NUC standard ratios, and by implication the disparity in standard of Education.

Considering the secondary schools, a critical analysis of available statistics (for selected subjects) indicate that there is shortage of qualified teachers (see table 6 below:)

Table 6: State of National Shortfalls of Secondary Schools Teachers in Nigeria, (2004). (selected subject)

Subject	Annual Production Rate	National Shortfall	Duration to meet Shortfalls (years)
Commerce	-	10,982	41
Typing	-	2,656	-
Shorthand	-	246	-
Business management	-	2,438	-
Principles of Accounting	-	5,265	-
Business Methods	1,132	14,192	7
Agriculture	1,960	93,335	48
Home Economics	968	42,951	44
Food and nutrition	30	2,954	86
Home management	69	846	12
Clothing/Textiles	18	296	16
Introductory Technology	1,091	41,122	38
Computer Practice	498	-	-
Book keeping	-	-	-

Local craft	-	4,450	-
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Source: Adopted from Aigbokhan, Imahe and Ailemen (2003)

Table 6 reveals that the national shortfall in qualified teachers for Agriculture Science, Home Economics, Introductory Technology, commerce, among others and it is therefore not a surprise that among the targeted disciplines in the nation’s universities, the shortage of manpower was not noticeable in the agricultural sub-sectors as depicted in table 5. A critical look at Table 6 shows that there existed a yawning gap between demand and supply in manpower, and this explains why the duration of meeting the shortfall were alarming. Also, from the picture presented in table 6, it is worthy to note that it would take concerted efforts of both public and private sectors to ameliorate this trend through investing more in education.

The World Conference on Education for all State had declared that, “*the focus of Basic Education must be on actual learning acquisition and outcome*” (Chinapah, 1997). However, the Monitoring of Learning Achievement (MLA) project in Nigeria provides a good insight in the quality and effectiveness of basic education in Nigeria. (See table below).The MLA has a special and deliberate focus on minimal basic learning competencies in the domain of literacy, numeracy, and life skills.

Table7: Performance of Nigerian Primary School Pupils in Literacy Numeracy and Life Skills (2004)

MLA Domain	Percentage mean score						
	National	Sex		Type of Residence		Type of schools	
		Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Public	Private
Literacy (Total)	28.8	23.8	25.6	28.9	32.0	26.1	58.8
Numeracy (Total)	30.2	12.2	30.8	36	38.2	38.2	52.1
Life skills (Total)	30.6	2.6	32.2	32,2		30.1	42.2

Source: CBN 2004

The table above depicts that while there was no difference in the performance of either sex, pupils in private schools performed much better than those in public schools, and those in urban areas better than their counterparts in the rural areas. Nationally, the mean scores on the literacy, numeracy and life skills tests were 28.8 percent, 30.2 percent and 30.6 percent

respectively (CBN 2004). The reasons for the low quality of education in Nigerian primary schools and indeed of all levels, has very little to do with the curriculum, which is generally regarded as being of high quality. The delivery of the curriculum is the main area of challenge. Consequently, wide gaps exist between the contents of the curricula and classroom teaching, with the result that students are not attaining the desired level of knowledge and skills.

4.1 Implications for Enhancing Education Standard in Nigeria

In Nigeria, so far, expenditure in Education has not resulted in meeting the educational standard of the society as evidenced in shortage of manpower in the Educational sector. This is as a result of myriad of problems. The World Bank Report (2003) identified four interrelated threats resulting from this phenomenon. One of which is the mismatch between supply and demand, which is brought by the sudden contraction in both public and private sectors due to the economic recession of the 1980s and the structural rigidities in the education system. Another threat identified relates to the poor quality of output of educational institutions. This problem is attributable to the scarcity of capital and recurrent inputs, weak management, poor research environment, in developing countries of which Nigeria is one. Hence the observed symptoms of educational crises, which include dilemma of schooling without learning, rising, graduate unemployment, fast deterioration in educational infrastructures, poor human capital based and increasing distribution inequality in education standard in Nigeria.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The fact that educational expenditure has not impacted enough in bringing about the desired standard should constitute enough reasons for the nation to feel concerned about the future survival of education. It is disheartening that Nigeria's allocation to the educational sector has not been encouraging. Nigeria has to invest more on education which is the intellectual warehouse of any nation and the engine that propels the economy. It has been observed that without a formidable intellectual base, it is unlikely that any society would move forward (Anya 2001)

The basic analysis carried out in this study reveals that the expenditure in education did not show much positive impact on the overall education standard in Nigeria. The overall financial involvement by the different levels of government in Nigeria have not been encouraging, However, improvement can be made in terms of increasing the educational standard in country.

In view of the above, and in order to enhance the education standard in Nigeria, there is need to improve higher education and this can be achieved by giving greater attention to our preprimary, primary, secondary and vocational schools. These areas are the building blocks of the nation's educational foundation. In this regard, the nation must make meaningful use of the current UBE program. To supplement the efforts of the government, the private sector should assist in the form of financial and material donations, and collaborate with institutions of higher learning to assist the primary and secondary schools to improve their teaching standard. Private financing of higher education could contribute greatly to improving both the financial and infrastructural situations of the institutions and the quality of education in Nigeria.

Moreover, political leaders in the country should find constructive means to collaborate with those in academia to improve and upgrade the nation's as an educational standard, rather than seeing them as an "enemy" for criticizing the government's lackadaisical attitude toward the educational sector. Also, the funds for educational services should not be diverted to private purses by corrupt politicians. Beside, the society should offer education that provides the needed

skills and knowledge to secure a job and to compete in the developed world economy. Improvement in students communication skill and the use of the computers and information technologies will increase productivity, and in the long run manifest into lasting, durable and participatory democracy. All these mean the need to positively transform the society, especially education, into a viable sector.

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