

Education Funding and Sustainable Development Goals in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Akwaibom State of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted the correlational design, using 142 school principals determined through multi-stage procedure and simple random sampling technique as sample from the population of 251 principals of the 251 public senior secondary schools. The instruments for data collection were Education Funding Scale (EFS) and Sustainable Development Goals Scale (SDGS) which were validated by educational experts with reliability coefficients of 0.91 and 0.89 respectively, determined through Cronbach's Alpha Statistics. Research questions were answered with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r) while hypotheses were tested with corresponding test of significance of correlational coefficient (r) with special z_r -test at 0.05 level of significance and at 140 degree of freedom for two-tail test. The findings of the study revealed a positive and high relationship between government sector education funding and sustainable development goals, and private sector education funding and sustainable development goals. There is a high and positive relationship between education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State. Thus, funding enhances sustainable development goals. Based on the findings, the study recommended that, the government of AkwaIbom State should increase its budgetary provision for the education sector in order to match its words with actions and sustain the current high relationship between the variables of study. The private sector should always partner with the government in the funding of public secondary schools for an increased and sustained development in the sector and to maintain the current high tempo between the variables of study.

Keywords: Education funding, Sustainable Development Goals, Public Senior Secondary Schools.

INTRODUCTION

Education constitutes the major instrument for sustainable human development and fulcrum around which every other activity revolves. Nations which have recorded tremendous feats in the world heavily relied on the instrumentality of education. Moreover, education has been referred to as the greatest force that can bring about changes and any investment in a nation's education can lead for the development of its economic, sociological and human resources. The only way the future of education can be secured is through effective funding.

The Oxford Dictionary (2023) describes funding as money provided, especially by an organisation or government for a particular purpose. Money is the key issue in the administration and management of the school system since finance is a life-wire in its organisational management at all levels. There are various ways through which financial assistance is provided for the education sector. The governments as well as other educational stakeholders are involved in the financing of the education system (Asodike, 2017). However, in Nigeria and in AkwaIbom State in particular, there seems to be a daily decline of educational funding.

This study focuses on the government sector and private sectors education funding. This area of study is chosen because previous researchers have neglected them. They were considered in respect of sustainable development

goals. United Nations, Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisations, UNESCO (2015) states that the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development is an ambitious aspirational and universal agenda to wipe out poverty through sustainable development by 2030. Adopting this new agenda in September 2015, the international community recognised that education was essential for the success of all the 17 of its goals (UNESCO, 2015). Thus, the sustainable development goal number 4 is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. It is closely linked to other sustainable development goals (SDGs) such as health, gender, equality, peace, and stability. Education helps the activities and successes of people in all works of life. The SDGs aim at ensuring access to early childhood development, increase the number of youths and adults with relevant skills for employment, achieve equal access for men and women to university education, ensure all youths achieve literacy and numeracy, and provide inclusive learning environments for all, regardless of gender and disability (Uche & Ajieka, 2018).

Elujekwute, Aja, Daburam, and Nyitar (2021) maintain that the primary role of every government today is to provide certain key services to its teeming population by responding with various supports through the state bureaucracy. In Nigeria, and in Akwalbom State, such services are executed through Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), all of which work within specified rules and regulations to achieve the government objectives by implementing public policies, as well as, executing projects and programmes. The success of such programmes and policies however depend on the effectiveness funding of the public senior secondary schools. The free and compulsory education policy of Akwalbom State is one of such policies that were implemented by the state civil service through the Ministry of Education and other affiliate departments and agencies. However, today, many public secondary schools in the state are in dilapidated condition, lacking basic amenities. In spite of the huge amount of money received yearly as 13% derivation fund by the state. Education in state has faced several setbacks, one of which is the poor funding. The government has not been providing adequate funds to stir up educational activities in the state to justify the declaration of the state of emergency (Aberu&Lawal, 2022).

Unfortunately, few literatures only focused on many of the sustainable development goals but the empirical relationship between education funding and sustainable development has been grossly understudied in public senior secondary schools in Akwalbom which is a crux for this study. It is against this background that this study was conducted to determine the relationship between education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in Akwalbom State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Government Sector Education Funding and Sustainable Development Goals:

It is believed that educational funding is the sole responsibility of government. Government through budgetary provision annually set aside huge sum of money in its appropriation for education sector. Government recruits teachers, pays their monthly salary, builds new schools, provides the needed facilities and maintains them throughout the years for sustainable lifelong learning and development for students in the present without compromising the future.

Moukwue and Obiagwu (n.d) assert that the effective funding of educational system in Nigeria will act as a first step toward the eradication of illiteracy and ignorance in a manner that will force parents to send their children and wards to government school under the Universal Free Education Scheme (Oshiomole, as cited in Moukwue and Obiagwu (n.d). Educational scholars affirm that such avenue of free education will stop the roaming of children in motor parks and market places where they are hawking one item or the other when they are supposed to be in their respective classes.

According to Elujekwute, Aja, Daburam, and Nyitar (2019) provision of building grants by government to renovate schools, provision of sufficient classroom furniture, government call for principals to submit budget estimates, and provision of science laboratory furniture, equipment and fixtures. However, Moukwue and Obiagwu (n.d) assert that, one possible solution to the problem of education is to provide proper fund. Whatever the case maybe, the federal government through the ministry of education can adequately fund the educational system by allocating certain amount of money to every school within the country. Such capital allocation can be used to purchase school bus for the children, renovation of schools that are old, and providing

of teaching materials like chalk, blackboard and chisel, wash hand basin or any other teaching materials needed by the school teachers (Omolade, as cited in Moukwue & Obiagwu, 2007). However, the federal ministry of education is now working with the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to fund most of the schools within the environment, particularly in the area of universal basic education. UNESCO as the case may be is providing about 40% of the school allocation, while the federal government is providing 60% of the fund. Under such ideology, UNESCO will assist government in providing desk and materials for learning, renovation of school system, while the federal government will only pay for the salaries of teachers in the federal government-owned schools (Okeoma, as cited in Moukwue & Obiagwu, 2007). All efforts of government are to achieve sustained development goals where every child education counts irrespective of gender (Nwachukwu, 2014, Olajide, & Aladejibi, 2019). Onojete as cited in Moukwue and Obiagwu (2007) maintains that, what is needed for free and compulsory education is adequate funding for education and training.

In the same vein, the Akwalbom State government declared a state of emergency in the education sector. “The state government spends N1.5 billion on a yearly basis on external examinations for students in public secondary schools in the state”(Etiebet as cited in Agency Report, para 3, 2021). Ekong (2009) as mentioned in Moukwue and Obiagwu (2007) reports that there is need for the government to properly manage school buildings as these infrastructures can no longer support the enormous enrollment emanated from the free and compulsory UBE policy of the state. Effective implementation of the free and compulsory education policy in Akwalbom State demands that school resources relevant for the success of the programme be made available in all Primary and Secondary Schools (Aberu & Lawal, 2022, Nwogu & Moses, 2020).

Simon (2022) contends that successive appropriation law of Akwalbom State between 2015 and 2021 points to the fact that the state government is aware of the dearth of seats in Akwalbom public secondary schools and the need to make available resources that would address the problem. The sage reveals, for example, from 2015 through 2022, the state government through the Ministry of Education, State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and State Secondary Education Board (SSEB) prioritised in its yearly budget provision of seats across its 1164 primary schools and 251 secondary schools. It budgeted a total of N510.7 million within these eight years. But this has not translated to the desired impact (Simon, 2022). Based on the summation of the identified scholars, it is obvious, that government sector education spending can enhance sustainable development goals. In Nigeria, basic education is financed through concurrent financing from the three tiers of government—federal, state, and local government authority, with distinct financing mandates and responsibilities for each tier. The federal government provides 50% and the state and local government as 30% and 20% respectively (Akpabio & Sammy, 2014, Nwosu, 2022).

Private Sector Education Funding and Sustainable Development Goals:

There is need for public sector-private partnership in educational funding, since only government cannot do it all. All educational stakeholders must work in collaboration to support government in provision of essential facilities in the sustenance of development goals in the educational sector. Secondary education can effectively be funded through Parents’ Teachers Association (PTA), alumni association, social clubs, Christian associations, international oil companies, community, etc. in providing monetary assistance (Moukwue & Obiagwu, 2007). Presently, the federal government relies on the Parents’ Teachers Association (PTA) for effective funding of the educational system as parents are forced to pay certain amount of money for the welfare of their children. Though nobody is against parents paying a particular amount of money as levy for children in school, there is need for government to fund education since it has proved to be a way to acquire knowledge or learning (Okotie, as cited by Moukwue & Obiagwu, 2007).

Similarly, according to Etiebet, Akwalbom State Commissioner for education as cited in Agency Report (2021) recalls “We are not just declaring a state of emergency in the education sector but also following through with tangible, visible and sustainable actions to massively revamp the sector. Today, education is free and compulsory in the state because it is the most powerful weapon which can be used to change the world. The commissioner called on individuals and corporate organisations to join hands with the government in its quest to provide quality education in the state” (Etiebet, as cited in Agency Report, 2021, para. 6).

Nwosu (2020) asserts that education is a key contributor to development and the crucial role of the private sector

in funding education cannot be overemphasised. The private sector refers to that sector of the economy not owned and controlled by the government. They include the wealthy private individuals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as UNESCO, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), and other oil companies, religious societies and organisations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Parents Teachers Association (PTA), Alumnus of schools etc. Some of these organised private sectors are playing active and valid roles in developing various programmes in the key focus area of education as well as complimenting the efforts of the government by participating in the funding of secondary education (Nwosu, 2020, Swiss Agency for Development and Corporation, SDC, 2020). This is because the greatest potential for development lies in education which spawn's manpower resources, economic and social development (Okoro, as cited in Nwosu, 2020).

Nwosu (2020) reveals that there is growing evidence that private sector participation in education can improve effectiveness in developing countries. The active participation of private sector could partially have the greatest impact of expansion of opportunities, improving cost effectiveness of educational delivery as well as improving the quality of education in AkwaIbom State, as well as Nigeria (Simon, 2022, Akpabio & Sammy, 2014). The privatisation exercise introduced by former president Chief Olusegun Obasanjo has been very effective in stimulating growth, access, quality improvement and investment in other sectors of the economy. Therefore, there is no reason, why the same effect cannot be expected in the educational level (Nwosu, 2020). If the private sector in Nigeria should think about education differently as an opportunity for entrepreneurship, innovation, competition and compensation based on productivity, it can bring to the educational sector high performance standards and private sector skills and help to address the problems mitigating the educational sector (Abubakar, 2014, Igbokwe & Oteh, 2018). However, there are numerous issues that have plagued the Nigerian educational system. And these issues need to be handled by both the private sector and the government. This is education as a whole is capital intensive and the government alone cannot adequately cater for it especially in the face of dwindling resources and increasing population (Nwosu, 2020, Simon, 2022). Hence private enterprises should highly be encouraged to adequately participate in the development of education, most especially, secondary education (Abubakar, 2014, Abdullahis & Abdulkareem, 2017).

The private sector participation in education funding is to guarantee the sustainable development goals, which is demonstrated in "human rights education", "gender equality in education", "global citizenship education", "peace education", and "cultural diversity education" for each respective country (UNESCO, 2018). Numerous evidences abound, revealing that private sector involvement in education funding in the secondary schools will facilitate the achievement of sustainable development goals in lifelong learning in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State.

Statement of the Problem

Education funding for sustainable development is believed to enhance lifelong learning for the present that do not impede the future. However, it appears that the huge amount received in the last two years of 2021-2022 into its coffers, amounting to N182.16bn as 13 per cent derivation by AkwaIbom State government has not witness corresponding actions on the part of government towards existing state of emergency declared by the state government in education sector (Simon, 2022).

Furthermore, the free and compulsory education policy launched in 2009 by AkwaIbom State government has not enjoyed commensurate implementation of policy to match actions with words to address all forms of infrastructural decay in public senior secondary schools. It is observed that most of the public secondary schools in the state lacked the basic facilities such as learning materials, desks for students and conducive sitting and learning environment for both teachers and students. There is no promotion of teachers of public senior secondary schools in the state.

This poor funding of education in AkwaIbom State has resulted in poor attitude of teachers towards their official duties, as most of them used their official hours for personal businesses, indulged in examination malpractice, hideous corruption, poor learning attitude of students, cultism and other social vices in the schools. The non-pragmatic actions of government towards the education has generally yielded low standard of education in the

state.

Can the poor funding of education affect sustainable development goals in secondary schools in AkwaIbom State? The answer to this question may not be in affirmative since many previous studies have not clearly stated the relationship between education funding and sustainable development goals. It is in view of this that this study was conducted to ascertain the relationship between education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State.

Aim and Objectives

This study examined the relationship between funding of education and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the relationship between government sector education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State.
2. determine the relationship between private sector education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between government sector education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State?
2. What is the relationship between private sector education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between government sector education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State.
2. There is no significant relationship between private sector education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted correlational survey design to determine the relationship between education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State. The population of the study was the 251 public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State. As at the time of this investigation the secondary schools had 251 principals, who were respondents for the study.

A sample of 142 principals was selected through multi-stage procedure and simple random sampling technique. The instruments for data collection were designed by the researchers and entitled Education Funding Scale (EFS) and Sustainable Development Goals Scale (SDGS) with a reliability coefficient of 0.83 and 0.96 respectively.

The research questions were answered with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r), while hypotheses were tested with corresponding test of significance of correlation coefficient (r) with special z_r -test at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between government sector education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State?

Table 1: School Sustainability Development Ratings on Government Sector Education Funding and Sustainable Development Goals in Public Senior Secondary Schools in AkwaIbom State.

Variables	n	ΣX	ΣY	ΣX ²	ΣY ²	ΣXY	r	Standard	Relationship
Government Sector Education Funding	142	61	66	167	190	161	0.89	0.7 – 0.8	High
vs. Sustainable Development Goals									

From the government sector education funding and sustainable development goals (table 1), there is a correlation coefficient (r- value) of 0.89. The result is that, there is a high and positive relationship between the government sector education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State. This is in agreement with the scale/standard of comparison and interpretation of the magnitude of r- value, that when correlation coefficient (r) falls within (0.7 – 0.8), the relationship between the variables is high.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between private sector education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State?

Table 2: School Sustainability Development Ratings on the Private Sector Education Funding and Sustainable Development Goals in Public Senior Secondary Schools in AkwaIbom State

Variables	n	ΣX	ΣY	ΣX ²	ΣY ²	ΣXY	r	Standard	Relationship
Private Sector Education Funding	142	68	80	221	282	240	0.96	0.9 – 1.0	Very High
vs. Sustainable Development Goals									

From the private sector education funding and sustainable development goals (table 2), there is a correlation coefficient (r- value) of 0.96. The result is that, there is a very high and positive relationship between private sector funding of education and sustainable development goals. This is in accordance with the scale/standard of comparison and interpretation of the magnitude of r- value, that when correlation coefficient (r) falls within (0.9 – 1.0), the relationship among the variables is very high.

Hypothesis H0₁: There is no significant relationship between government sector education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Government Sector Education Funding and Sustainable Development Goals

Variables	n	n-2	r-value	zr-Crit	zr-Cal	Result
Government Sector Education Funding	142	140	0.89	1.96	10.56	Significant (Reject H0 ₁)
vs. Sustainable Development Goals						

The data on (table 3) of hypothesis test between government sector education funding and sustainable development goals shows the z_r – calculated value of 10.56, is greater than the z_r – critical value of 1.960 at degree of freedom of $(n-2) = (142-2) = 140$ and at 0.05 level of significance for a two-tailed test. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result therefore is that there is a significant relationship between government sector education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State.

Hypothesis H0₂: There is no significant relationship between private sector education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Private Sector Education Funding and Sustainable Development Goals

Variables	n	n-2	r-value	zr-Crit	zr-Cal	Result
Private Sector Education Funding	142	140	0.96	1.96	11.4	Significant (Reject H02)
vs. Sustainable Development Goals						

The data on (table 4) of hypothesis test between private sector education funding and sustainable development goals shows the z_r – calculated value of 11.40 which is greater than the z_r – critical value of 1.960 at degree of freedom of $(n-2) = (142-2) = 140$ and at 0.05 level of significance for a two-tailed test. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result therefore is that there is a significant relationship between private sector education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in Akwalbom State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Government Sector Education Funding and Sustainable Development Goals

The result of data analysis on the relationship between government sector education funding and sustainable development goals showed a high and positive relationship between the two variables in public senior secondary schools in Akwalbom State. The finding of the current study is consistent with that of Elujekwute, Aja, Danburam, and Nyitar (2021) and Akpabio and Sammy (2014) who investigated government sector education funding and sustainable development goals. The findings of their studies revealed positive relationship between the variables of the study. Government is the major sponsor in terms of funding of public senior secondary schools particularly in Akwalbom State. However, the work of Igbokwe and Oteh (2018) was a little different, because the scholar advocated for collaboration between government and private sector for funding of secondary schools. The finding of this study indicated a significant relationship between government sector education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in Akwalbom State. This was because the z_r -calculated value was found to be greater than z_r -critical value.

Implicitly, high relationship of government sector education funding and sustainable development goals reveals that the more government spend its financial resources in funding construction, provision of facilities, and maintaining the facilities, the more there will be the sustained lifelong learning, gender equality, alleviation of poverty, and preservation of the environment in public senior secondary schools in Akwalbom State. However, low and poorly funding of secondary education by government will similarly compel poor and unsustain development in the public senior secondary schools in Akwalbom State, and vice versa.

Private Sector Education Funding and Sustainable Development Goals

The result of data analysis on the relationship between private sector education funding and sustainable development goals showed a very high and positive relationship between the two variables in public senior secondary schools in Akwalbom State. The finding of the current work is in consonant with that of Moukwue and Obiagwu (2007), and Nwosu (2020) whose studies also showed a positive and strong relationship between private sector education funding and sustainable development goals. Furthermore, the study of Abdullahi and Abdulkareem (2017) has similarities with the current study in the area of the study’s design; sample size; and method of data analysis. However, the educational scholars’ study was in funding basic education. These studies demonstrated high and positive relationship between private sector education funding and sustainable development goals. The studies advocated for public-private sector partnership through Parents Teachers Association (PTA), Alumni Association, Community, Companies, etc. to support the funding of secondary education. The finding of this study indicated a significant relationship between private sector education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in Akwalbom State. This was because the z_r -calculated value was found to be greater than z_r -critical value.

Implicitly, a very high and positive relationship between private sector education funding and sustainable development goals indicates that the more the private sector such as PTA, community, alumni association, and companies come in to fund secondary education in AkwaIbom State, the more sustained lifelong learning and development that will be recorded in education sector without compromising the future. On the other hand, poor and low funding or partnership from the private sector in funding secondary education will result in unsustainable development, which hampered lifelong learning, and compromised future of secondary education in AkwaIbom State, and vice-versa.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the investigation presented and discussed, there is a strong relationship between education funding and sustainable development goals in public senior secondary schools in AkwaIbom State. Thus, educational funding enhances sustainable development goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings presented and discussed above, the researcher offered the following recommendations.

1. The government of AkwaIbom State should increase its budgetary provision for the education sector in order to match its words with actions and sustain the current high relationship between the variables of study.
2. The private sector should always partner with the government in the funding of public secondary schools for an increased and sustained development in the sector and to maintain the current high tempo between the variables of study.

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