

Full Length Research Paper

Cost of University education at Delta State University, Asaba

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The direct cost of higher education keeps rising in the face of shrinking real budgetary allocation to education. In the absence of any documented evidence, the study sought to determine the cost of acquiring a degree from the Faculty of Management Sciences and Agriculture, at Delta State University, Asaba Campus. Data for this study was collected from a random sample of 320 final year students. Data was collected and analyzed using simple percentage frequencies due to the nature of the study. Analysis of the data shows that the expenditure profile is higher among female students while the cost component includes tuition, accommodation, feeding and transportation. The study recommends that male students be encouraged to live in campus hostels to reduce distractions and cost. The university is also advised to minimize upward review of fees since most students from the catchments area are from average socio-economic backgrounds.

Keywords: Education, Cost, Indigene, Non-indigene

INTRODUCTION

Educational costs keep rising while many state budgets to the sector stagnate or are shrinking in real terms. A university education is an investment that pays off overtime. There are strident calls for more enrollments into tertiary institutions in order to promote the production of middle level manpower managers. Some have argued that for increase in enrollment to occur institutions of higher learning would have to lower what it costs to produce their students.

In Nigeria, higher education enrolls a very modest 4% of the relevant age cohort. This compares poorly with economic competitors such as South Africa (17%), India (7%), Indonesia (11%) and Brazil (12%) (Task Force, 2000).

Hartnett (2000) found that while the value of government allocation for higher education declined by 27%, enrollment grew by 79%. The result has been the precipitous fall in the quality of university education and research as implied by the drop in the real value of

recurrent expenditure per student during the same period. According to Oni (2000) there has been a downward pressure on staff salaries, deteriorating working conditions and political repressions on university campuses which have generated a series of strikes by both academic and non-academic staff.

In May 2002, a set of legislative proposals designed to reform existing higher education laws and establish a permanent legal basis for these changes were approved by Federal Executive Council and forwarded to the National Assembly for deliberation. The proposals reportedly would give university councils the responsibility for setting institutional policies, hiring top management, and forwarding institutional budgets, give institutions control over their own student admissions, limit the role of the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) to quality assurance and system coordination, place curbs on the right of employees to strike, and legally delink the universities from the public service

remuneration and benefits (Guardian, 2002).

The problem

Any discussion of lowering the cost of education at the university level must start with a more fundamental question. What does it cost to earn a university degree? Experience has shown that some students of the institution drop out of their desired programmes because of financial incapability. Some of the affected students dropped out or temporarily deferred studies even in their final year due to a combination of financial difficulty and academic deficiency. It is possible that many students do not have idea of the financial implication of acquiring a university degree at Delta State University (Delsu), Asaba.

Consequently, this study sought to determine the direct cost of acquiring a degree from Delsu Asaba so that prospective students can make more informed decision before seeking to avail themselves of the educational opportunities in the institution.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study was to determine the cost of acquiring a four-year degree at Delta State University, Asaba. Specific objectives of the study were:

- i. To determine the cost components of a university degree;
- ii. To determine if gender affects cost of university education;
- iii. To determine if programme of study affects cost
- iv. Determine if place of residence (Campus/off campus) affect cost of education.
- v. Recommend strategies to guide policy makers in proposing fees for the university system.

Research questions

The following research questions to guide the study:

- i. What constitute the expenditure profile of students at Delsu, Asaba?
- ii. Does gender affect expenditure profile?
- iii. Does social class affect choice of admission to Delsu, Asaba?
- iv. Does place of residence affect students' expenditure profile?

Significance, scope and limitations of the study

Since there was no evidence of a study that highlighted the cost of education at Delsu, Asaba it is believed that the findings from the study will benefit prospective

students/parents and the university administration about the average cost components for a degree. For the prospective students and their parents the findings will constitute a benchmark for forecasting their sources of income before a decision to enroll in the university. For Government and university administration information from the study will serve as a guide in the determination of the rate of fees to be charged.

The study covered only the Asaba Campus of Delta State University. It was specifically targeted at the students of the Faculty of Management Sciences (FMS) and the Faculty of Agriculture (AGRIC) which are the only operational faculties on the Campus. The study only focused on what constitute the cost components for acquiring a four-year degree (five for Agric). Consequently, the findings of this study may not necessarily be replicated or applicable to other campuses of neither the university nor other degree awarding universities.

Literature review

Education is the greatest social leveler and most potent instrument for mental and social emancipation. Nations of the world, in recognition of this, seek to provide quality education for majority of their citizens in an equitable and accessible manner (Fafunwa, 1974). Knowledge has become the most important factor for economic development in the 21st century. According to the World Bank (1999) higher education in particular are fundamental to the construction of a knowledge economy and society in all nations. Yet the potential of higher education systems in developing countries like Nigeria to fulfill this important responsibility continue to be thwarted by the problems of funding, equity, access and contradicting policies and poor governance.

With a population of approximately 140million and ample natural resources, Nigeria seems to be Africa's sleeping economic giant. Because of its many distorted policies it may be described as a deformed giant. While one-third of its population pursues a life style oriented in various degrees towards Europe and North America, the other two-thirds struggle to survive on less than one dollar per day (World Bank, 1996).

In recent years, the economic success of newly industrializing nations such as the "Asian tigers" has been linked to substantial prior investment in human resources. According to Nelson (1993) strategic investments together with particular institutional and policy choices concerning the university system, and the extent of intellectual property protection as well as collaboration between universities and government in research and development (R & D) have helped to promote what he calls "national innovation systems". Stern (2003) also argues that countries that increased their innovative capacities have invested heavily in science and

Table 1. Enrolment Growth: Policy Norms and Rates of Increase between 1989/90 and 1998/99

Category	NUC Policy Norms	Actual Growth Rates
1 st generation universities	3%	9%
2 nd generation universities	10%	13%
3 rd generation universities	15%	21%

Source: HARTNETT 2000

Table 2. Students enrolment in Delsu, Asaba

Year	Faculty	
	Management Sciences	Agriculture
2003/2004	478	245
2004/2005	504	330
2005/2006	120	263
2006/2007	101	150
2007/2008	135	19
TOTAL	1338	1007

Source: Delta State University, Registry Department, 2008

engineering while promoting competition as a basis for innovation.

Does Nigeria possess the necessary elements to develop a national innovation system as argued above? Nigeria appears to have low investment in research which perhaps explains why the non-oil sector of the economy is sluggish. For example, Task Force (2003) noted that Nigeria's scientific publications for 1995 were 711 Compared to 3,413 for South Africa, 14,883 for India and 5,440 for Brazil. Nigeria's low research output probably reflects the low priority accorded to research and the university systems in general.

According to Hartnett (2000) rising student numbers have generated an enrollment ratio of 340 per 100,000 persons (Asia averages 650, and South Africa 2500) and an average staff/student ratio of 1:21 for sciences, 1:22 engineering, 1:25 Law, and 1:37 for education. Overall growth rate has far exceeded government policy guide lines has shown in table 3. According to NUC (2002) the sciences recorded more growth in 2000 from 54% to 59% but with much of this expansion centered in the South-East part of Nigeria. Efforts to expand enrollment and improve educational quality have been severely constrained by growing shortages of qualified academic staff. Ekenna (2009) found that while there are 27,394 academics on the university system an additional 19,548 will be required. Based on the above figures the Nigerian university system has only 58% of its required staffing needs while it suffers a shortfall of 42%. NUC (2002b) estimated the shortfalls as follows; 73% on engineering. 62% on medicine, 58% in administration and 53% in the sciences. (Table 1)

Background to the study

Delta State University, Asaba Campus is one of the three campuses of Delta State University, Abraka. Although the main campus at Abraka was a mini-campus of the former Bendel State University, Ekpoma. It was not until 1991 when Delta State was carved out of the then Bendel State that it became a full fledged university. For political exigency and the need to bring higher education closer to the people, Delta State University gave birth to three campuses, one in each senatorial district.

Since this study focuses on Delta State Asaba Campus, it is necessary to give brief background information about the campus. The Asaba Campus was established in 1995/1996 with only two faculties – Management Sciences and Agriculture. Under the Faculty of Management Sciences are the departments of Business Administration and Marketing, Accounting, Banking and Finance. On the other hand the Faculty of Agriculture is comprised of the departments of Agronomy, Fisheries, Animal Science, Forestry and Wildlife, and Agricultural Economics and Extension services. Student enrollment at the Asaba is presented in Table 2.

Being a State university, there have always been discriminatory fees between in-state (indigene) and out-state (non-indigene) as shown in Table 3.

Using N3500 and N6500 as the base tuition charged for Faculty of Management Sciences and Agriculture respectively in the period under study, Table 2 shows that tuition fees have increased 600 percent and 400 percent for indigenes in both faculties. On the other hand the increase for non-indigenes rose 500 percent and 400 percent respectively for both faculties.

Table 3. Tuition Fees

Year	FMS				FAG			
	Indigene		Non-indigene		Indigene		Non-indigene	
		%		%		%		%
2003/2004	3500		7500		6500		10,500	
2004/2005	5400	54.2	11,500	53.3	8400	29.2	14,500	38.0
2005/2006	11,600	148.1	15,500	34.7	14,600	73.8	18,500	27.5
2006/2007	11,600	NL	23,500	51.6	14,600	Nil	23,500	27.0
2007/2008	22,100	90.5	40,000		25,600	75.3	40,000	70.2
		292.8		209.8		178.3		162.7

Source: University Bursary Dept. 2008

Delta State University, Asaba Campus is located in Asaba, the Delta State capital. Delta State government owns six other tertiary institutions comprising the polytechnics and colleges of education all degree – awarding in the senatorial districts of the State. The polytechnics are located in Ogwashi-Uku, Ozoro and Oghara, while the colleges of education are located in Agbor, Warri and Mosogar. Since they are all owned by the state government, fees are regulated. For the 2009/2010 academic session, the polytechnics have their fees pegged at N18, 000 while those of the colleges of education are N15, 000. For the same academic session DELSU is charging N28, 600.

Brief history of higher education in Nigeria

The higher education system in Nigeria is composed of universities, polytechnics/monotechnics, and institutions of technology, colleges of education and professional, specialized institutions (IAU, 2000). They can be further categorized as state or federal universities, and as first, second or third generation universities (Harnett, 2006). According to the Association for the Development of Education on Africa (2008) there are 99 universities including 30 federal 27, state and 42 private universities. To gain admission into the first level of university education, prospective students must pass the competitive University Matriculation Examination (UME). Private universities and other tertiary institutions are a recent phenomenon, and are mostly located in the southern part of Nigeria.

The Nigerian higher education system, in spite of being Africa's largest higher education system with about 400,000 students, is unable to admit all qualified applicants every year (ADEA, 2000; Ajayi and Alani, (1996). Numerous clauses are applied in admission to some disciplines determined by the National Universities Commission (NUC) and conditioned by the availability of instructional facilities at the institution.

The participation rate on higher education is 395 per 100,000 persons and according Harnett (2000) women

accounted for 34 percent of total enrollment in 1998/1999 academic year.

The Federal Government controls universities and other higher institutions through the following organs: Federal Ministry of Education (FME), the National Universities Commission (NUC) which among other things allocates funds to federal universities and prescribes the spending formula; the committee of Vice Chancellors of Federal and state universities, which act as a coordinating body and offers advice to government and university governing councils on matters of general and specific concern to higher education. Each university is administered by a Council and Senate, and is headed by an appointed Vice Chancellor who is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) safeguards the interest of the academic staff in the Nigerian university system.

University funding

The cost of running the federal university system totaled \$210 million in 1999 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2001). However, because of enrollment growth and currency devaluation, recurrent allocation per university student in the federal university system fell from \$610 to \$360 million between 1990 and 1999. This will obviously have implications for quality. The Federal government maintains a policy of no tuition fees in Federal Universities. In May 2002, the federal government issued an order "forbidding" the charging of tuition fees in all federal universities when some of them were contemplating charging tuition fees as a cost recovery strategy (Kigotho, 2002).

Federal university revenues come from the federal government (84%), internally generated revenues (7%) and various student fees (9%) even though no undergraduate tuition fees are charged, unlike in state and private owned universities. Federal universities are made to adhere strictly to a budgeting and expenditure formula stipulated by the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) as follows: 60 percent for academic, 39 percent for administrative support, and 1 percent for

Table 4. Sex Distribution

	FMS		Agric		
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondent	Percentage	
Male	64	40	Male	30	33.33
Female	96	60	Female	60	66.77
Total	160			90	

pension and benefits. Direct teaching expenditure per student differed considerably among institutions. For example, in 1997/98 Hartnett (2000) found that direct teaching cost ranged from N137 (\$2) per student in Sokoto to ₦1, 683 (\$21) in Maiduguri. Although tertiary education receives a larger share of the education budget. The portion for education in the federal budget has continued to diminish. For example, while Callaway and Musone (1965) found that the budget for education represented 3.5% of GDP and 15.2% of total government expenditure, Hinchliffe (2002) estimated expenditure on the sector as equal 2.4% of GDP and 14.3% of government expenditure. World Education Report (2002) indicates that 19 other countries of sub-sahara Africa allocate an average of 5.1% of GDP and 19.6% of total budget to education, while Nigeria's funding is less than half even though tertiary education receives a much higher share than secondary and primary levels. The Education Tax Decree No.7 of 1993 enforces the payment of 2 percent of profits of limited liability companies registered in Nigeria as an education tax to be disbursed according to the ratio of 50: 40: 10 to higher, primary, and secondary education respectively. The share of higher education is further allocated to the universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education according to the ratio of 2: 1: 1 respectively (Ajayi and Alani, 1996).

It can be concluded that the federal government is not giving priority to education judging by the level of funding, and if state owned universities charge fees for obvious reasons, it means anybody aspiring to acquire a university education must be prepared to pay for it.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study sought to determine the cost of obtaining a degree after four or five years for the Faculty of Management Sciences (FMS) and Agriculture (AGRIC) respectively. At the time of this study, the full-time student population was as follow: FMS, 1338 and AGRIC 1007, making a total of 2345 (see Table 1). The target population for the study comprised all the final year and Extension (returning) students. A total sample of 320 sets of students was randomly selected for the study. Of the 320 questionnaire administered only 250 (71.4%) were returned.

Data analysis

The questionnaire containing twenty-four items were retrieved and vetted for correctness after which only 250 were deemed correct and usable for collation and analysis. The data were analyzed using relative frequencies and simple percentages due to the nature of the study. The analysis that follows is done under three broad sections: Demographic, socio-economic background of parents/sponsors, and the expenditure profile of respondents.

Demographic data

Only 250 of the returned questionnaires were used for the analysis of data. There were a total of 160 respondents from the Faculty of Management Sciences (FMS) compared to 90 from the Faculty of Agriculture (AGRIC). Of this number the male respondents were 94 (39.75%) while the female were 156 (60.25%). Further analysis show that FMS male respondents were 64 (53.2%) while their AGRIC counterparts were 30 (46.8%). On the other hand there were a total of 96 (62.25%) female respondents from FMS compared to 60 (37.75%) from AGRIC. Based on the above the female respondents were in the majority (see Table 4)

With respect to the age of the respondents majority of them fall within the 21-30 year age bracket. There were more female respondents within this age bracket. For example, while there were 62 (24.8) male respondents in both faculties, the female respondents within that age bracket were 128 (51.2%). This means that there were more mature female respondents in the study sample (See Table 5).

Since Delta State University, Asaba is a state owned university, this study also sought to determine the extent to which it meets the educational needs of other states of the federation.

Based on the data collected a total of 192 (76.8%) of the respondents were Delta State indigenes. Next were the students of other states who constituted 30 (12%) followed by Edo State (formerly part of the old Bendel State) with 28 or 11.2% of the respondents (see Table 6).

The study also sought to determine the preference of respondents for hostel accommodation. Based on the data collected 188 (75.2%) of the respondents live in

Table 5. Age distribution

	FMS		Agric		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
17-20 years	4	12	2	10	28	11.2
21-25 years	16	38	14	32	100	49
26-30 years	20	42	12	16	110	44
Over 30 years	4	4	2	2	12	4.8
Total	64	96	30	60	250	

Table 6. State distribution

State	FMS		Agric		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Delta	56	70	26	46	192	76.8
Edo	8	10	4	6	28	11.2
Others	10	6	6	8	30	12
Total	74	86	30	60	250	100

Table 7. Income of parents' respondents

INCOME (Per Annum)	FMS		Agric		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Below N200,000	36	66	20	24	146	58.4
N200,000 – N500,000	16	16	2	30	64	25.6
N600,000- N1,000,000	8	12	8	4	32	12.8
Above N1million	4	2	0	2	8	3.2
Total	64	96	30	60	250	100

hostel accommodation on campus, while 62(24.8%) live off-campus.

Socio-economic background of respondents

Based on the data collected approximately 146(58.4%) of the respondents come from families with combined income of less than ₦200, 000 (Two Hundred Thousand Naira). These were followed by respondents whose family income is between ₦200,000 – ₦500,000 while those from families with income over ₦1,000,000 (one million naira) constituted only 8(3.2%) of the respondents. It can be concluded that majority of the students of Delta Stat University Asaba are from average socio-economic background (Table 7).

Of the 250 respondents approximately 182(72.8%) are being sponsored by their parents, while only 8(3.2%) are on one form of scholarship or the other. Those under the sponsorship of relations were 30 (12%) while 30 (12%) were self-sponsored. It can be concluded that majority of the students at Delsu, Asaba are being sponsored by their parents (Table 8). A further analysis shows that

majority of the female respondents, 118 (47.2%) are sponsored by their parents.

The study also determined the amount of financial support students receive for their education, beside tuition fees. The study showed that 104 (41.6%) receive below ₦20, 000 (Twenty Thousand Naira) per academic session. Approximately 100 (40%) of the respondents receive between ₦21, 000 – ₦25, 000 in financial support, while only 8 (6.4%) of the respondents receive over ₦30,000 per session. A further analysis shows that only female respondents, 16 (6.4%) claim to receive over ₦30, 000 in financial support per academic session (See Table 9)

Expenditure profile

This study sought to determine the expenditure profile of the average university student at Delsu, Asaba. Investigation revealed that the cost component cover feeding, transportation, accommodation, telephone recharge cards, shopping, textbook, lecture handouts. A breakdown of students' expenditure profile is presented

Table 8. Sponsorship respondents

Sponsor	FMS		Agric		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Self	2	10	4	14	30	12
Parents	46	80	18	38	182	72.8
Elations	12	4	8	6	30	12
Scholarship	4	2	0	2	8	3.2
Total	64	96	30	60	250	100

Table 9. Financial support respondents

INCOME	FMS		Agric		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Below N20,000	50	24	18	12	104	41.6
N21,000 – N25,000	14	44	12	30	100	40
N26,000- N30,000	0	20	0	10	30	12
Over N30,000	0	8	0	8	16	6.4
Total	64	96	30	60	250	100

in Table 10

Analysis of the table show that 134 (53.6%) of the respondents spend below ₦12, 000 on accommodation per academic session while only 26(10.4%) spend over ₦21, 000. Approximately 90 (36%) respondents fall in the category of those who spend between N13, 000 and N20, 000 on accommodation per session. A further analysis show that while more male respondents 80(32%) spend below ₦12, 000, there were more female respondents 76 (30.4%) in the category of those who spend between ₦13, 000 – 20,000. Furthermore, there were no male respondents in the category of those who spend over ₦21, 000 on accommodation.

With respect to feeding, the table shows that approximately 126 (50.4%) respondents spend over ₦6,000 per semester. A further analysis show that 76(30.4%) of the respondents who spend between ₦3, 000-N5, 000 were females. The same result was found among respondents who spend over ₦6, 000 per semester.

With respect to shopping 158 (63.2%) of the respondents spend between ₦2, 000 – ₦5, 000 on shopping per semester. Only 60 (24%) believe they spend over ₦5, 000. A further analysis show 100 (40%) of the female respondents spend ₦5, 000 compared to 58 (23.2%) male in that category.

Transportation, like feeding is necessary for students. Based on the data collected approximately 122 (48.8%) of the respondents spend ₦5, 0000 per semester compared to 72 (31.2%) who spend below ₦2, 000. In the category that spends between N3, 000 – ₦5, 000, 84 (33.6%) respondents were females compared to 38 (15.2%) males. Furthermore, the table shows that 34 (13.6%) female respondents spend over ₦5, 000 per

semester while only 16 (0.06%) of their male counterparts fall in that category.

With respect to purchase of textbooks 130 (52%) of the respondents spend below ₦3, 000 per semester on books while 100 (40%) spend between ₦3, 000 – ₦5, 000 compared to 20(8%) who spend over N6, 000. An analysis show that more male respondents 72 (28.8%) constitute the majority of respondents who spend below ₦3, 000 while more females 78(31.2%) spend between ₦3, 000 – ₦5, 000 per semester. Only 2 (0.008%) male respondents believe they spend over ₦6, 000 compared to 14 (0.056%) of the female respondents who fall into that category. It can be concluded that majority of the students spend between ₦2, 000 – ₦5,000 on textbooks per semester.

The study also sought to determine what the respondents spend on recharging their phones per semester. A total of 138 (55.2%) recharge their phones once per week while 106 (42.4%) recharge once fortnightly. Of the number who recharge once per week, 118 (47.2%) were female while 20(0.08%) were male. In the category of respondents who recharge their phones once in two weeks 62 (24.8%) were males compared to 24(0.09%) female. Among the respondents who do not recharge their phones 10(0.04%) were females while 2(0.008%) were males. It can be concluded that the respondents recharge their phones at least once per week.

DISCUSSION

This study has sought to determine the financial implications of acquiring a Bachelors degree from Delta

Table 10. Expenditure profile of respondents

Expenses	FMS		Agric		Total	Percentage %
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Feeding						
Below N2000	8	4	2	4	18	7.2
N3,000-5,000	20	48	10	28	106	42.4
Over N6,000	36	44	18	28	126	50.4
Shopping						
Below N2000	16	4	8	4	32	12.8
N2,000-5,000	38	64	20	36	158	63.2
Over N5,000	10	28	2	20	60	24
Textbooks						
Below N3000	52	42	20	18	130	52
N3,000-5,000	12	40	10	38	100	40
Over N6,000	2	14	0	4	20	8
Lecture						
Handout	46	14	24	16	100	40
Below N1,000						
N2,000-4,000	16	70	6	42	134	53.6
Over N4,000	2	12	0	16	16	6.4
Transportation						
Below N2,000	30	20	10	18	78	31.2
N3,000-5,000	20	56	18	28	122	48.8
Over N5,000	14	20	2	14	50	20
Rate for Phone Recharge Card						
Once per week	8	70	12	48	138	55.2
Once per two weeks	46	26	16	8	106	42.4
Once per semester	0	0	0	0	0	0
Don't recharge	0	6	2	4	6	2.4
Accommodation						
Below N12,000	56	30	24	24	134	53.6
N13,000-20,000	8	60	6	16	90	36
Over N21,000	0	6	0	20	26	10.4

State University, Asaba Campus. At the time of this study, the campus had only two functional faculties: Faculty of Management Sciences (FMS) and the Faculty of Agriculture (FAG). Student population was 2345 from which a sample of 360 respondents was randomly selected. A structured questionnaire with twenty four items was administered, collated and analyzed using simple percentage frequencies.

Based on the data analyzed, the following conclusions are evident;

- i. Female respondents who comprised approximately 60.25% were in the 21-30 years age cohort and mostly Delta State indigenes.
- iii. Majority of the respondents come from average socio-economic background.
- iii. Expenditure profile is generally higher among the female respondents.

iv. Typical cost component for students include accommodation, feeding, transportation, shopping, textbook/handout and telephone recharge.

Table 11 presents a summary of expenditure profile of students at Delsu, Asaba.

Total cost implication was arrived at by finding the average between the lowest and the highest of each cost component. A degree program in FAG takes five years while it is four years in FMS. Consequently, the total cost of acquiring a degree in FAG for a female will be N755, 000 (N151, 000 x 5 years) while it is N520, 000 (N130, 000 x 4 years) in the FMS. Conversely, it is N495, 500 (N99, 000 x 5 years) and N348, 000 (N87, 000 x 4 years) respectively for FAG and FMS male students.

Based on the table, it is evident that expenditure profile is higher among the female students. High expenditure profile was more evident in accommodation, feeding, transportation, telephone, recharge and financial

Table 11. Cost components at Delsu, Asaba

	Cost Components	Faculty of management sciences		Faculty of agriculture	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
		₦	₦	₦	₦
1.	Accommodation	12,000	20,000	12,000	20,000
2.	Financial support	20,000	25,000	20,000	25,000
3.	Tuition fees	20,000	20,000	20,000	30,000
4.	Transportation	4,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
5.	Textbooks	6,000	10,000	8,000	14,000
6.	Lecture Handouts	2,000	8,000	4,000	10,000
7.	Feeding	12,000	16,000	12,000	18,000
8.	Shopping	8,000	14,000	8,000	16,000
9.	Telephone recharge	3,000	3,000	4,000	8,000
		87,000	130,000	99,000	151,000
		x 4	x 4	x 5	x 5
	Total expenses	348,000	520,000	495,000	755,000

Source: Data collected

support from sponsors. The expenditure profile which is higher among the female students does not come as a surprise because of what may be considered a cultural history. The girl-child have traditionally enjoyed more parental protection than their male siblings. Part of this protection is translated in form of bigger allowances in favour of the girl-child. Other forms of protection include personally driving the girl-child to school (while the male-child can ride in other forms of public transportation). It has also been observed that parents prefer to send the male child on errands even when the girl-child is available. One explanation may be the perception that the female child is not fully capable of self-defence as would the male child. This observation agree with Hari (2010) and Offorma (2009) who argued that because girls and women in general are considered physically weaker and less capable than men, they are often overtly protected and supervised to keep them from what is considered threatening to their safety, such as sexual, mental and emotional safety. Where schools are situated long distance away, parents also worried about their daughters' safety while traveling to and from school. Hari (2010) noted this factor as the reason why many parents were reported to be reluctant to allow their daughters to attend extra-tuition after school since in most cases the teachers involved are men and these sessions are usually held in the evening. It is also known that parents are reluctant to allow their daughters travel late. This implies that female students relatively spend more than the male students. Therefore, parents and sponsors should consider a more generous set of allowances for their female wards in order to enable them concentrate on their studies.

Some stakeholders in the education sector were interviewed to provide more insight into the study. The

interviews revealed that while students and parents/sponsors complained about the general upward spiral in tuition fees (see Table 2) at DELSU, the University management and officials of the State Ministry of Higher Education argued that although the fees are not economically viable they had to be sustained for political exigency. When compared to the fees charged in other universities in major cities such as Lagos or Abuja, the federal capital where fees are two or three time higher, the cost of education at DELSU is low. This perhaps explains one reason why the authorities are not motivated to review fees downward.

The data also reveal that more female students reside on campus hostels when compared to the number of male students on campus. For example, it was observed that the three female hostels on campus are more secure than the male students' hostels, even in aesthetics. The data revealed that female students spend more money purchasing textbooks/lecture handouts than their male counterparts. It can be argued that female students who live on campus are less likely to experience distractions and the stress associated with off-campus life. These two factors perhaps explain one reason why female students tend to achieve more, academically than their male counterparts.

CONCLUSION

This study has sought to determine what it will cost to acquire a degree at Delta State University, Asaba Campus. The study was motivated by the large number of students who are forced to temporarily withdraw from academic activities due to financial constraints. The cost components were determined by finding the average

between the highest and lowest of each cost component. The data was collated and analyzed using simple percentages. Based on the data, the female students incur higher expenditure profile and majority of the students come from average socio-economic backgrounds. The study further revealed that tuition, feeding, transportation and textbook/lecture handouts constitute the major cost components. The major conclusion that can be made is that it costs more to educate a female child at Delsu, Asaba. The study also revealed that it costs more to acquire a degree in the Faculty of Agriculture.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study it is obvious that higher education will continue to be co-financed between the governments and parents. The present global economic recession provides a good platform to advance arguments to promote cost sharing. The following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Male students should be encouraged to live in campus hostels like their female counterparts to reduce distractions and cost.
- ii. The University authorities are advised to provide more hostels with full complements of security to encourage male students to live on campus.
- iii. Although tertiary education is not a right, the University authorities are advised to minimize where possible, frequent upward review of tuition and sundry fee since most students from the catchments area are from average socio-economic backgrounds.
- iv. the overall security on the University campus should be increased and staffed with professionals to reduce cases of robbery; and
- v. Efforts should be made by the University authorities and State Government to vigorously pursue the provision of infrastructure and facilities to promote effective teaching and learning,
- vi. Based on the findings of the study parents and sponsors would need to become aware of the implication of acquiring a four-year (five for FAG) in order to minimize incidence of either dropout or deferment on financial grounds.

Suggestions for further studies

Since the average cost implication for acquiring a university degree by a regular (Full-Time) student at

Delta State University, Asaba Campus has been determined, it is suggested that a similar study should be extended to cover other campuses at Oleh and Abraka. It is also suggested that study to determine the cost implication for the programmes such as Weekend Degree and Continuing Education Programme (CEP) should be investigated.

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