

PARENTS' FINANCIAL DISPOSITION AND EDUCATIONAL SPONSORSHIP OF UNDERGRADUATES IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN OSUN STATE

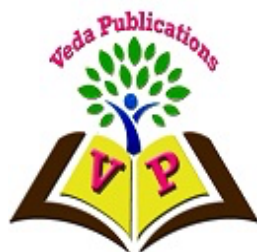
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Abstract



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This study investigated the relationship between parents' financial disposition and the educational sponsorship of undergraduates in public universities in Osun State. A mixed-method approach was employed, with 381 students and 50 parents providing data through questionnaires and interviews. Findings revealed that family income was the primary financial resource, with 81.7% of students relying on it as their main source of funding. Regression analysis showed that family income had a significant positive influence on educational sponsorship both in the short run ($t = 3.20, p < 0.01$) and long run ($t = 15.89, p < 0.01$). Despite strong parental prioritization of education (68.3%), economic instability, rising living costs, and low income constrained sponsorship capacity. Minimal reliance was found on student loans, scholarships, and grants. The study concludes that family income is critical to educational sponsorship, while limited institutional and governmental aid exacerbates financial strain. It recommends increased government funding, improved access to loans and scholarships, and streamlined aid processes to reduce reliance on parents and promote equity in higher education.

Keywords: *Parents' Financial Disposition, Educational Sponsorship, Family Income, Osun State, Undergraduates*

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Introduction

Education is generally regarded as the backbone of a nation's development. It can be convincingly said that without education, there can never be growth and development. The importance of education in nation building and improvement of citizens' welfare cannot be overstated. As observed, no nation in history has developed without quality and affordable education. In the developed countries like the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and across Europe, education is compulsory, qualitative, and made free from the elementary class to the high school level (Xiong, 2024). Tertiary education in the countries under reference is viewed as further investment in individual's capacity; hence, it comes at a premium (Ubogu & Israel, 2023).

Education, therefore, is widely recognized as a fundamental driver of personal and societal development, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. In this context, public universities serve as critical institutions for higher learning, providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to the economy and society at large. However, access to higher education in Nigeria is often influenced by various socio-economic factors, with parents' financial disposition playing a pivotal role in shaping educational opportunities for undergraduates. Studies such as those by Adedokun et al. (2023) and Aina and Salako (2022) emphasised bureaucratic inefficiencies and the scarcity of effective financial aid systems that hinder students' access to external funding opportunities.

Nigeria, as a country, has continually strived to ensure that education occupies an important place in the society. However, more than alluding to the greatness of education and its role in a nation's development, the place of proper planning and funding cannot be overstated. This view is in consonance with the declaration by the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) which states that "the success of any system of education is hinged on proper planning, efficient administration and adequate funding.

Educational sponsorship, which includes financial support from parents, guardians, and other stakeholders, is crucial for undergraduates in public universities. Many students rely heavily on their families for financial support, and the level of this support can determine their ability to enrol in and complete their studies. In Osun State, where public universities are often the primary option for higher education, understanding the dynamics of parents'

financial disposition is essential for addressing the challenges faced by students in accessing and completing their education as educational funding has become one of the most debated issues in Nigeria. This position has been variously maintained by different scholars over different space and time. There have been agitations by well-meaning Nigerians, non-governmental organisations, trade and academic unions on proper funding of education in Nigeria.

For instance, the Academic Staff Union of the Universities (ASUU) has constantly deployed multiple channels of engaging the Federal Government of Nigeria on the need for adequate funding of education in terms of infrastructural provisions, providing enabling and conducive environment for learning, providing adequate funding for research, and improving the quality of life for the academic and non-academic members of staff at the tertiary educational level. Although, the struggle of the ASUU has achieved marginal results over the years, the available evidence shows that government is lackadaisical about funding education in Nigeria. Meanwhile, the burden of increased educational funding has been passed to the parents without due cognizance of their financial means and disposition. Parents' financial disposition may be simply described as the ability of parents to be cheerfully and positively inclined to finance-related responsibilities, which includes but not limited to funding their children or wards' education. Although, parents' financial disposition may affect their children's educational funding and attainment, its efficacy may be undermined by some distant and near factors such as parents' occupation and household income, religious beliefs and inclination, family size, the level of parent's education and parents' commitment to children's education (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008).

Parents' financial disposition refers to the financial resources and attitudes that parents possess regarding the education of their children. This encompasses not only the direct financial support provided for tuition, books, and other educational expenses but also the broader financial literacy and planning that parents engage in to facilitate their children's educational pursuits. In Osun State, as in many parts of Nigeria, the economic landscape is characterised by a mix of formal and informal employment, varying income levels, and differing attitudes towards education as an investment. As opined by Adedapo et al, (2019, the identified factors may have significant impact on parents' ability and willingness to support their children/wards' education.

Furthermore, Adedapo, et.al (2019) identified a linkage between parents' financial capability and involvement in the educational sponsorship of their children, which they further perceived to be linked to academic performance among other benefits. In line with the opinion of the authors, the relationship existing between parents' financial disposition and educational sponsorship is multifaceted and could be influenced by some remote and near factors, such as cultural beliefs about education, socioeconomic characteristics of parents, and the availability of alternative sources of educational funding.

Considering the importance of education to national development alongside the challenges of inadequate funding, and the increasing parents' financial commitment to educational funding, this study investigated the impact of parents' financial disposition on educational sponsorship among the undergraduates in the public universities in Osun State. The study provided insights into how access to financial resources, spending attitudes, and the availability or otherwise of support mechanism influence students' educational experiences and performances. Understanding the complex relationship between educational funding and parents' financial disposition is important for policy formulation and implementation as it is capable of informing appropriate strategies for enhancing access to higher education in Nigeria and improving the overall educational architecture in the region under study.

Statement of the Problem

Formal education in Nigeria is broadly divided into basic and higher education. Basic education, comprising primary and secondary schooling, benefits from extensive government funding and support from the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA). However, higher education is less privileged in this regard, as funding relies heavily on both government and parents, with limited assistance from external organizations. This inadequate funding has been linked to declining educational standards and quality in public universities, while increasing the financial burden on parents. In many cases, the inability of parents to meet growing financial demands has made access to higher education increasingly difficult, especially in states like Osun, where most undergraduates depend on parental support for tuition and living expenses.

Despite the recognized importance of adequate funding to educational growth, higher institutions in Nigeria continue to suffer from chronic underfunding, receiving only about 7

percent of the national budget. This has resulted in persistent challenges such as industrial actions, delayed graduations, and growing costs for students and their families. Rising tuition fees, accommodation costs, and expenses on learning materials have stretched households already constrained by stagnant incomes. Consequently, the overreliance on parents for educational sponsorship poses a risk to the sustainability of higher education. There remains a significant research gap on how parents' financial disposition—encompassing income levels, financial literacy, and attitudes toward education—influences their capacity to sponsor their children's studies. Addressing this gap is essential for formulating evidence-based policies that can enhance equitable access and ensure the financial sustainability of higher education in Osun State and Nigeria at large.

Purpose of the Study

The main aim of the study is to examine the influence of parents' financial disposition and educational sponsorship among undergraduates in public universities in Osun State. In order to achieve this aim, the specific objectives are to:

- (a) examine the financial resources available to parents and their influence on the educational sponsorship of their children;
- (b) assess the parents' financial involvement in students' education in the study area; and
- (c) identify the factors affecting parents' financial disposition towards educational funding in the study area.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What are the financial resources available to parents, and how do they influence the educational sponsorship of their children?
- ii. What is the level of parents' financial involvement on their children's education in the public universities in Osun State, Nigeria
- iii. What are the factors affecting parents' financial dispositions towards educational funding in the study area.

Research Hypothesis

One hypothesis was formulated to guide the study

H₀: There is no significant influence of financial resources available to parents on the educational sponsorship of their children.

Methodology

The study employed a mixed-method design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of parents' financial dispositions and their influence on undergraduate educational sponsorship in Osun State public universities. The study population comprised 44,606 undergraduates across four public universities—Obafemi Awolowo University, Osun State University, University of Ilesa, and University of Health Sciences, Ila-Orangun. A total of 381 students were randomly selected, alongside 50 parents who were chosen through snowball sampling due to accessibility challenges. The study focused on two major universities—Obafemi Awolowo University and Osun State University—because the other two institutions were relatively new. Proportional sampling was used to select 60% of the student participants from OAU and 40% from UNIOSUN, while 35 parents were interviewed from OAU and 15 from UNIOSUN.

Data were gathered using two self-designed instruments: a questionnaire titled “Parents’ Financial Disposition and Educational Sponsorship for Undergraduates in Osun State Public Universities (PFDESUOSUPUQ)” administered to students, and an Interview Guide (PFDEOSUPU-IG) used for parents. Quantitative data were organized and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics through SPSS version 25 and EViews 12, with frequency tables, percentages, and simple linear regression employed to test the study’s hypotheses at a 5% level of significance. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, enabling the integration of numerical findings with contextual insights for a richer interpretation of results.

Results

Research Question One: What are the financial resources available to parents, and how do they influence the educational sponsorship of their children?

This research question was answered in two parts; firstly, the part of financial resources available to parents, and secondly, how they influenced the educational sponsorship of their children. To answer the first part of question raised above, five items which were assessed on a four-point Likert rating scale, where a rating of "1" indicated strongly disagree while a rating of “2” indicated disagree, rating scale “3” indicated agree and rating scale "4" indicated strongly agree. Percentage scores were used in the analysis.

Table 4.1 Financial Resources Available to Parents

ITEMS	(S A)	%	(A)	%	(D)	%	(S D)	%
Family income is the main financial resource available to my parents for funding my education	161	42.5	148	39.1	18	4.8	51	13.5
Private loan is the main financial resource available to my parents for funding my education	16	4.2	42	11.1	96	25.4	224	59.3
Family Support is the main financial resource available to my parents for funding my education	21	50.3	36	9.5	131	34.7	190	50.3
Educational Grant is the main financial resource available to my parents for funding my education	19	5	66	17.5	95	25.1	198	52.4
Inheritance is the main financial resource available to my parents for funding my education	32	8.5	121	32	102	27	123	32.5

Source: Field Work (2025)

Table 4.1 revealed that the predominant financial resource available to parents for sponsoring their children's education in Osun State public universities is family income, as 81.7% of respondents identified it as their main source of support. In contrast, private loans (15.3%), family support (15%), educational grants (22.5%), and inheritance (40.5%) were reported as less significant or largely unavailable sources of funding. These findings indicate that most students depend primarily on their parents' earnings to finance their education, with minimal reliance on external or alternative financial support such as loans, grants, or extended family

assistance. This underscores the central role of household income in sustaining educational sponsorship in the study area.

Research Question Two: What is the level of parents' financial involvement in their children's education in the public universities in Osun State, Nigeria?

In answering research question two, percentage scores were used in analysing the data collected from the respondents.

Table 4.2: Level of Parents' Financial involvement on Their Children's Education in Osun State Public Universities

	(VH)	%	(H)	%	(L)	%	(VL)	%	Total
My parents regularly provide funds for my tuition and other fees	93	24.6	159	42.1	25	6.6	101	26.7	378
My parents contribute to my accommodation and living expenses during my studies.	120	31.7	180	47.6	18	4.8	60	15.9	378
My parents or guardian prioritise my education when making financial decisions	96	25.4	214	56.6	23	6.10	45	11.9	378
My education is frequently affected by financial constraints at home	65	17.2	151	39.9	91	24.1	71	18.8	378
Financial difficulties have caused my parents to delay or reduce financial support for my education.	81	22	103	29	111	27	83	22	378

Source: Field Work (2025)

Findings revealed that most students in Osun State public universities enjoy strong and consistent financial support from their parents, particularly for tuition, accommodation, and

living expenses. About 66.7% confirmed regular provision for tuition and fees, while 79.3% acknowledged parental contributions toward accommodation and daily needs. Furthermore, 82% reported that their parents prioritize education in financial decisions, indicating a high level of commitment to educational investment. However, financial instability remains a challenge, as 57.1% stated that home financial constraints negatively affect their education, and 48.6% experienced delays or reduced financial support due to economic difficulties. Overall, while parental involvement in funding education is substantial and prioritized, irregular household income and economic hardship occasionally disrupt the consistency of this support.

Research Question Three: What are the factors affecting parents' financial dispositions towards educational funding?

To answer Research Question three, percentage scores were used in analysing the data collected from the respondents.

Table 4.3 Factors Affecting Parents' Financial Dispositions Towards Educational Funding

	(SA)	%	(A)	%	(D)	%	(SD)	%	Total
Income level affects my parents' ability to fund my education.	105	27.7	131	34.7	55	14.6	87	23.0	378
The rising cost of living has reduced my parents' ability to contribute to my education	111	29.4	141	37.3	64	16.9	62	16.4	378
My parents prioritize educational expenses over other household expenses.	122	32.3	136	36.0	30	7.9	90	23.8	378
Economic instability affects my parents' willingness to invest in my education.	94	24.9	100	26.5	91	24.1	93	24.6	378
The availability of sponsorship programs influences my parents' decisions on funding my education.	22	5.8	91	24.1	119	31.5	146	38.6	378

Source: Field Work (2025)

Table 4.3 shows that parents' financial dispositions toward educational funding in Osun State public universities are largely influenced by their income levels and the rising cost of living. A majority of respondents (62.4%) agreed that family income determines parents' ability to support their children's education, while 66.7% noted that increasing living costs have reduced such financial contributions. Despite these constraints, 68.3% affirmed that parents still prioritize educational expenses over other needs, reflecting a strong commitment to their children's education. However, economic instability was found to have mixed effects on parents' willingness to invest, as opinions were almost evenly divided. Notably, 70.1% disagreed that the availability of sponsorship programmes influences parental funding decisions, suggesting that most parents view education as a personal responsibility rather than one dependent on external aid.

Hypothesis Testing

To answer the question on Hypothesis testing, which examined the influence of sources of funding on educational sponsorship in the study area, a bivariate regression analysis was carried out using Autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL), which is capable of examining the short term and the long-term influence of sources of funding on educational sponsorship in the study area. Meanwhile, since there was no economic data on the other financial resources available to parents (private loan, family support, educational grant, and inheritance) besides family income, and coupled with the fact that family income was chosen by the highest respondents as financial resources for educational sponsorship, the study adopted family income as an independent variable to examine its influence on the annual cost of educational sponsorship in the study area.

Hypothesis One: Financial resources available to parents do not have a significant influence on educational sponsorship in the study area.

Table 4.4: Dependent Variable: Annual Cost of Education (ANCOSTED)

Variable	Coefficient	Std Error	t-Stat	Prob.	R-Sqd	Adj. R-Sqd	DW
D(ANCOSTED)	-0.340071	0.048270	-7.045132	0.0000	0.43	0.42	2.24
D(FIN)	0.009877	0.003091	3.195725	0.0015			
FIN	0.072634	0.004571	15.89058	0.0000			
CointEq(-1)*	-0.459903	0.056062	-8.203463	0.0000			

The results in Table 4.4 showed that while the annual cost of educational sponsorship has a negative and significant effect on itself (in terms of insufficiency), Family Income was found to have a positively significant influence on educational sponsorship both in the short-run and

in the long-run in a manner that $\text{N}1$ increase in family income will increase the cost of educational sponsorship by $\text{N}0.009$ ($t = 3.1957$, $p < 0.01$) and $\text{N}0.072$ ($t = 15.8906$, $p < 0.01$), respectively. The results further showed that the discrepancy between the errors between annual cost of education and educational sponsorship by family income can be corrected at the rate of 45% annually ($t = -8.2035$, $p < 0.01$). This study therefore, failed to accept the null hypothesis (H_0) that there is no significant influence of financial resources available to parents on the educational sponsorship of their children. For a bivariate study, the goodness of fit at 43% is statistically good. Furthermore, the Durbin Watson statistic at 2.24 showed that there is no problem of serial correlation in the model.

Discussion

The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses revealed that family income remains the most significant source of educational funding for students in Osun State public universities. Most students rely heavily on their parents' earnings to finance tuition and living expenses, as alternative funding mechanisms such as student loans, scholarships, and grants are largely inaccessible or insufficient in line with the submissions of Xiong (2024) and Adedapo et. al. (2019). This situation reflects broader systemic issues in Nigeria's higher education financing, where limited government expenditure—far below UNESCO's recommended benchmark—forces families to shoulder the burden of educational costs. Studies such as those by Adedokun et al. (2023) and Aina and Salako (2022) support these findings, emphasizing bureaucratic inefficiencies and the scarcity of effective financial aid systems that hinder students' access to external funding opportunities. Qualitative results further revealed that parents experience severe financial strain in sponsoring their children's education, with many relying on unstable sources of income such as small-scale business and seasonal farming. The majority expressed that their earnings were inadequate to meet educational expenses, while awareness and accessibility of sponsorship programmes remained very low. Challenges such as high tuition fees, economic instability, and complex application procedures for scholarships exacerbate the situation. Consequently, the study highlights the urgent need for policy interventions—including expansion of student loan schemes, improved awareness of scholarship programmes, and enhanced financial literacy among parents—to reduce the economic burden and promote equitable access to higher education funding in Osun State.

Conclusion

The study concluded that parents' financial disposition played a pivotal role in educational sponsorship of undergraduates in Osun State public universities and that there was a significant positive influence of financial resources available to parents on the educational sponsorship of their children. With most students depending on parental support due to limited access to scholarships, loans, and university-based aid. Despite parents' commitment to prioritizing education, economic challenges such as low income, rising living costs, and instability hindered consistent support, negatively impacting students' academic experiences. The scarcity of private and institutional sponsorships, coupled with low awareness and complex application processes, further limited students' access to alternative funding sources.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

The findings indicate that most parents in Osun State rely heavily on family income to fund their children's education, with limited access to external support such as loans, grants, or sponsorships. Therefore, government and educational institutions should diversify funding sources by establishing accessible student loan schemes, bursaries, and scholarship programmes. Public-private partnerships and institutional endowment funds should also be encouraged to provide alternative financial support for students and reduce excessive dependence on household income.

Given that parents' income levels and rising living costs significantly affect educational sponsorship, economic empowerment initiatives are crucial. The government should create employment opportunities, improve wages, and stabilize the economy to enhance household financial capacity. Similarly, promoting financial literacy among parents through training on budgeting, savings, and investment planning would help them make informed decisions about educational spending despite economic challenges.

To ensure sustainable educational financing, universities and policymakers should regulate tuition and other school-related costs, while offering subsidies on essential academic services such as accommodation, research materials, and internet access. Awareness of available sponsorship and loan programmes should also be expanded through targeted campaigns and transparent application systems. These measures would collectively strengthen parents'

financial disposition, sustain students' education, and enhance the stability of higher education funding in Osun State.

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