

Effects of Increase in Tuition Fees in the Tertiary Institutions of Learning

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KEYWORDS Government. Students Protest. Tuition Fees. Universities Management

ABSTRACT The effects of increase in tuition fees in the tertiary institutions of learning in South Africa are not well known and have infrequently and fitfully been addressed nationally. The objective of this paper was to identify the effects of increase in tuition fees on students' in the higher institutions of learning in South Africa. This paper used a literature review methodology and presented vibrant findings pertaining to the effects of increase in tuition fees in the tertiary institutions of learning in South Africa and provided measures or government action that should be taken to protect the rights of students in ensuring that they all have equal access to study universities. The findings from previous studies revealed that the majority of students felt the effects of the increase in at tuition fees raised by the government. The review confirmed that the majority of students in higher institutions of learning will be adversely affected by the increase because they are from less privileged households. The paper also identified the need to prevent the increase in tuition fees in the higher institutions of learning in South Africa by providing an insight into further study regarding the institutional weaknesses and policy issues. The paper recommends that the government should collaborate with other governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and educate them on their needs to support her order to be able to effectively finance the tertiary institutions of learning in South Africa resourcefully and professionally.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays an important role particularly in improving, enhancing and uplifting the socio-economic growth and development of a nation. A nation without educational background seems to have lost its source of origin. Education serves as the backbone of a nation in order to attain success and meet both its internal and external obligations (Bejan et al. 2015; Tabish and Syed 2015). It should also be noted that a country without education is just like an empty barrel. Education is the life wire of all nations and as a matter of fact, it is the key to improve national socio-economic growth and development.

Globally, education in the higher institution of learning, particularly university education, is undoubtedly seen as final stage or the highest

level of study in all the countries across the globe. Learning in the tertiary institutions, nationally and internationally has been enhanced by the quality of services rendered by many qualified lecturers from different fields of studies (Leibowitz et al. 2015; Ashraf et al. 2016). This is to say that, the tertiary institutions cannot operate in vacuum or attain success in service delivery without good support of many qualified lecturers.

It is a general phenomenon that once there are no students at any academic environment such as: schools, colleges, universities and polytechnics, there would be no establishment of any institutional places of learning in any nation (Banya 2015; Hall et al. 2015). If fortuitously there are established academic institutions without students or learners, there operations would be futile, meaningless and valueless. This is to say that, students in any established educational institutions, not only from tertiary institutions, but also from primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, polytechnics, in fact in all registered or legal institutional places of learning, play crucial role in contributing to the

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nation's socio-economic growth and development. There are lots of things that still need to be done in order to improve the quality of education and to encourage or attract more students into the higher institutions of learning in African and international countries (Aderonmu 2012; Catherine 2015; Chea 2015). Observably, the educational system in South Africa, particularly the tertiary institutions, has been seen as one of the highest rated or best among the universities in African countries. Most of the South African students are usually on bursaries or scholarships (Mazibuko 2000; Woodhall 2004; Badat 2010), they are not only studying in South Africa to acquire local skills but they are often found studying in some country overseas in order to be internally recognized and to acquire international skills so as to be able to come back home and develop their fatherland. The researcher of this paper is therefore advocating to the government and its policymakers that, for this country to tremendously progress and really reach the peak of its citizens expectations, achieve development goals or attain its maximum level of achievements socially and economically, there is still a need to look at the issues of the effects of increase in tuition fees of students in the tertiary institutions in South Africa. South Africa is one of the best among African countries where democratic system of government operates effectively and successfully (Alden and Schoeman 2015; Habtezion 2015). This has given all South African citizens great opportunity to demonstrate, protest and express their opinions and anger once their rights have been violated by the government or once they are denied their rights and privileges. Increase in tuition fees in the tertiary institutions in South Africa is one of the recent issues that escalated in the educational system (Karodia et al. 2015; Singh 2015) as the majority of the students emphasized that they cannot afford to pay for the increase in tuition fees the following year, precisely the academic year 2016, because most of them come from poor homes and as a result, their parents will not be able to pay for the increased tuition fees in the next academic year 2016. This has caused a pandemonium, hubbub and mayhem between the university management and students in South Africa prior to their final examination in November 2015. The researcher of this paper has therefore made several attempts to project what the effects of increase in tuition fees would cause to students in the tertiary institutions in South Africa and finally made rec-

ommendations to the government and her policymakers concerning these effects of increase in tuition fees as the majority of students stress it that education should be made free because late Nelson Mandela also pronounced that education is for all citizens and also emphasized free education in South Africa.

Problem Statement

Despite the fact that education brings opportunities to organizations (both governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)), societies and communities, government is still not doing her best in reducing the tuition fees in the tertiary institutions. This manifests in many protests and demonstrations in tertiary institutions. It is important for the government to build their own capacity and competency in such a way that it would be able to provide quality education and good facilities for students in the higher institutions of learning so that they will be able to improve on their performance, and have equal right or access to education. The decrease in tuition fees in the higher institutions of learning in South Africa will bridge the educational gaps between the poor and rich parents in supporting their children and finally enable each student to have equal and quality education. In other words, an increase in tuition fees will result in withdrawal of the majority of the students from schools. This can be caused by lack of financial support from their parents. As it is often seen from most of the higher institutions of learning in South Africa that the majority of these students come from poor homes and in fact their parents cannot even provide them with at least two square meals in a day. This is a big disaster to most of the poor families in South Africa. The effects of increase in tuition fee in the higher institutions of learning will be assessed in this paper. Given the scenario of assessment of the role of government in reducing the tuition fees in the tertiary institutions and ensure that each student has equal access to financial support in order to complete their studies and secure a better job in future, there is a need to examine the problems and reasons behind the effects of increase in tuition fees in the higher institutions of learning in South Africa. To what extent can the increase in tuition fees affect the majority of students in order to complete their studies? What are the challenges facing the majority of students in the higher in-

stitutions of learning? Can the students fight these battles alone by themselves in order to achieve what they want? What possible guidelines could be provided to facilitate the effective and successive introduction of *fee must fall* policy to ensure that all students are well treated and enjoy equal education benefits from the governments without any fear or worries of being maltreated or cheated by any institutions of learning?

Objectives

- ♦ To analyse the effects of increase in tuition fees on students' in the tertiary institutions of learning in South Africa.
- ♦ To assess the effects of increase in tuition fees in the higher institutions of learning in South Africa.

Research Question

- ♦ What are the effects of increase in the tuition fees on students in the higher institutions of learning in South Africa?

METHODOLOGY

This paper used a systematic review of literature from journals, books, conference reports, and internet sources. Also, the researcher's intuitive experience and knowledge in Business Management and Public Administration, discourses on issues pertaining to the effects of increase in the tuition fees in the higher institutions of learning in South Africa were used.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Significant Needs for Preventing Increase in the Tuition Fees in the Tertiary Institutions of Learning in South Africa and Other Countries

Early Drop out of Newly Admitted Students into the Higher Institutions

The prevention of several attempts by government to increase the tuition fees in the higher institutions of learning in any countries, neither within African countries (Shizha and Kariwo 2012), in which South Africa is not excluded nor internationally, will drastically and undoubtedly

reduce the number of newly admitted students into such institutions and in fact, increase the rate of drop out of students.

The Needs to Enable and Encourage More High School Students Gaining Admission into Higher Institutions

Unquestionably and undeniably, as observed from many studies conducted by different authors, literature had revealed that increase in tuition fees served as a barrier to ensure adequate continuity in education. If the government could try all her efforts to prevent the increase in the higher institutional tuition fees, numerous students from high schools will be encouraged to further their studies (Vossensteyn 2013).

The Needs to Encourage a Huge Number of Students to Focus Effectively on their Academics Careers in the Higher Institutions

Reduction in tuition fees by the government will encourage more students into higher institutions (Leslie and Brinkman 1987; Dynarski 2003; Luo and Mkandawire 2015; McCaig 2016). The researcher of this paper is of the opinion that many students will not be able to complete their studies if there is increase in tuition fees. In fact, there are many students who are victims of this circumstance. Therefore, there is a need for government to ensure that a large number of students are encouraged to continue and complete their studies in order to obtain their degrees, get better jobs and achieve their future ambitions.

Need to Motivate the Less Privileged Students to Further their Studies

Observably, the majority of registered students at the tertiary institutions and high schools in South Africa are often not motivated either by the government or school authorities and as a result of this, most of them are discouraged from continuing their studies. It will be disheartening for the majority of the students whose parents cannot pay the registration fees to discover that tuition fees increases on yearly basis. Therefore, to avoid or prevent this increase in the tuition fees and encourage the less privileged children in South Africa to attend higher institutions and continuing their studies, Tucker (2012), Peshkopia (2014) and Bentley and Cazaly (2015), emphasized that there is a need for government

and its other stakeholders to reduce or stop spending excessively on unproductive projects.

Effects of Increase in Tuition Fees in the Tertiary Institutions of Learning

Effects on Students

One of the adverse effects of increase in tuition fees in the tertiary institutions of learning is high rate of dropouts of promising students whose parents cannot afford to pay the increased tuition fees (Shizha 2013). Increase in tuition fees of students attending higher institutions of learning in South Africa, will lead to high rate of dropouts of many brilliant, able and deserving students who are willing to further their studies. As instinctively and intuitively observed from various higher schools of learning, many students in South Africa have brilliant ideas which some students from the developed and other developing countries do not possess to make their countries proud, hence increase in tuition fees will undoubtedly prevent most of these students from achieving all their positive dreams or utilizing all their potential or brilliant ideas effectively and efficiently by not furthering their studies, completing their degrees and receiving degree certificates as the majority of these students, complain that their results are been withheld because they could not afford to pay their tuition fees or balance their tuition outstanding fees. It is on this note that the author of this paper is sounding it loud, at this crucial moment, to the government and its policymakers that increase in tuition fees will eventually have adverse effects on the standards of education in South Africa. Many students will be discouraged from continuing their studies and this will finally deny them their fundamental human right (free education) in South Africa.

Effects on the Economic Development of South Africa

Despite the fact that South African economy is rated as the second best among African countries as a result of her educational attainment, both nationally and internationally, while Nigeria economy is currently rated as the first, yet, standard of education in higher institutions of learning in South Africa is still below expectation. As it has been vividly and carefully observed in the country that most of the students

often complain that their parents are unemployed which invariably affect their studies because their parents do not have the financial capacity to sponsor them so as to achieve their future ambitions in life (Barbarin and Richter 2013; Lam et al. 2014).

Observably, South Africa is one of the African countries with high poverty levels and is also seen as a country where people are economically poor. Many parents of these students are in rural areas without being engaged in any kind of job but only live on their children's grants and little pensions received from the government. In fact, these parents are economically poor or live in poverty. They cannot afford to buy their basic needs because of little or no income. Also, it is evidenced that in trends in poverty and inequality levels between 2006 and 2011, there were few people living in poverty in South Africa (Mail and Guardian 2014). In fact, the statistician also stressed that "four million South Africans are living in poverty as measured in upper bound poverty line. In other words, twenty three (23) billion people lived in poverty in 2011 compared to 27 million in 2006." In addition, the current statistics of South Africa also revealed that 12 million people live in extreme poverty in South Africa as a whole (Nicolson 2015). It is on this note that the researcher of this paper is emphasizing that there is a need for the government to urgently develop a functional and appropriate strategy to curb or avoid the increase in tuition fees in the higher institutions of learning. In fact, if adequate care or measure is not taken, it might lead to total higher institutional collapse in South Africa as it has been observed that many students' demonstrations often lead to large scale violence, wanton destruction of lives and properties, police arrest or brutality. If this continues, what will be the joy of the government and her citizens? What type of comments will the international observers pass on the educational system of South Africa? Would it be negative or positive comments? This is because the researcher of this paper believes that there is no employer that will accept a certificate from a country whose educational system is unstable. If crises in the educational system in South Africa is not thoroughly checked, it will undoubtedly affect the students particularly when some graduates will be searching external or international employment opportunities.

Effects on Parents

As the aforementioned discussions revealed that the majority of the parents of these students in the higher institutions of learning in South Africa are poor as clearly observed from the level of poverty in South Africa, many parents still believe and hope that the government must provide all the necessary financial support for their children in order to achieve their future ambition (Barbarin and Richter 2013). Of course, the joy of all parents is to see their children working after receiving good education through government of their country. It is also observed that most of these parents believe that if these students graduate and are working, they will be useful to their families and contribute positively to the socio-economic growth and development of their nation. In fact, they will be nationally and internationally recognized. They will also be good ambassadors of their country. Evidently, the majority of the parents also stress that there are many brilliant and talented children in the higher institutions in South Africa who come from poor families (Harry and Klingner 2014). Some are orphans, others have some special problems that their parents could not afford to pay attention to, yet, they want to continue their education and complete their studies in the higher institution. The argument according to the researcher of this paper is that if the parents of these academically brilliant students with some ailments and weaknesses cannot afford to pay for the increase in tuition fees to study in the higher institution of learning in South Africa, should country or government just keep quiet?

Another important observation concerning this situation is that, although there are many bursaries such as; *National Student Financial Aid Scheme* (NASFAS), PHUMZA bursary scheme in South Africa, etc. and different scholarships awarded to South African citizens, Lam et al. (2013), Moloi and Motaung (2014), Du Toit et al. (2014), Badat (2015) and Ziderman (2013) therefore emphasized that there are some students who often complain that these opportunities do not reach them. Despite the fact they are trying or struggling to study, the government is not appreciating their contributions to the socio-economic growth and development of the nation. This and other internal issues between the universities management in South African and students were major reasons why many students boycotted classes and their final year ex-

aminations. This led students to destroy properties and burn tyres at various strategic locations in the universities in order to violently demonstrate and express their angers particularly against the recent increase in the tuition fees for the next academic year 2016.

Inequality among Students

According to Mdepa and Tshiwula (2012), Lam et al. (2013) and Whiteford et al. (2013), other effect of increase in tuition fees is that it will lead to rivalry between the poor students who cannot afford the increase in tuition fees in the higher institutions because of their parental poor financial background and if some of them manage or try to, they may not be able to complete their studies because of some other future financial problems that may likely occur during the course of their studies in their various universities while the students from rich families would be able to pay because of their parents good financial background. Therefore, for the government to maintain the 'principle of good quality education for all students' in South Africa, the increase in tuition fees should be avoided and concentrate on how to ensure that all children from poor parents have equal opportunities to attend the same universities as their counterpart from rich homes.

CONCLUSION

Increase in the tuition fees in the higher institutions of learning has been observed as a major cause of havoc that needs to be annihilated if ever South Africa as one of the African countries is going to address herself as a state of 'education for all students' by considering the poverty levels among the parents of the students in tertiary institutions. The government needs to show kindness, helpfulness and goodwill through the top leadership embracing the culture of good aptness. Indubitably, education plays a vital role in driving the countries' economy. Importantly, all governmental organisations and NGOs should actively participate and ensure that they support the government by shouldering the responsibilities of awarding scholarships and bursaries to students in tertiary institutions in South Africa every year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study revolved around the effects of increase in tuition fees in tertiary institutions of learning in South Africa. Therefore, the following improvements are recommended and could be implemented in South Africa.

Support and Co-operations from Governmental Organisations and NGOs

All governmental organisations and NGOs should endeavor to assist and support the government financially in order to effectively and efficiently finance the higher institutions of learning in South Africa. If this is effectively and thoroughly done by these organisations, government will be relieved of some of her financial burdens faced in order to ensure that all her citizens have equal opportunity to education in South Africa. They should see themselves as partners in progress in order to improve the economy of the country, relieving the majority of the parents who are economically poor. They should be quite well aware that by investing into the tertiary institutions of learning, they are building a nation and contributing to the success of those students. They are indeed, supporting and improving the future leaders of their country who will in turn improve the nation's socio-economic growth and development. They should not think that it is the responsibility of the government alone to finance higher institutions in South Africa but they should be government's partners in progress.

Support from All Vibrant Registered Business Organisations and Other Financial Private Organisations

All registered and vibrant business organisations who are capable and financially buoyant should visit some of these tertiary institutions to inform them about their intention to sponsor some of them if not all. This will be a task undertaken by various organisations in an attempt to support the government in financing the students in the tertiary institutions.

Holding a Round Table Meetings and Seeking Pieces of Advice from Managements of Tertiary Institutions in South Africa

It will be very unfair by the government of a country to suddenly make a decision to increase

the tuition fees in higher institutions of learning without involving the management of each tertiary institution. The adverse effect of this is that if the management implements any unpopular/harsh policy, students are bound to react negatively which will definitely lead to pandemonium and chaos. Therefore, to avoid all these negative reactions from the students of various higher institutions of learning in South Africa, the government should always embrace dialogues and probably seek opinions of all stakeholders on how students' issues, such as grievances and angers, can be managed or nipped in the bud.

Seeking External Support from Other Foreign Organisations

The government in her potential and prospective power can negotiate within her capacity and partner with some other international organisations to invest in her education sectors as this would also generate employment opportunities for students from both countries after their graduation.

Education by Government

The government of South Africa should try to inform students on various losses that the country suffers at any period of their protests and demonstrations. The government should always inform them that they should not take laws into their hands. They should always engage in constructive dialogues with her. The government should promise the students that she will always attend to their grievance on time. The government should also create awareness by informing the students about the consequences of boycotting their classes and examinations. Students' demands should be considered on time. The government should also inform the students about their quick response and provide adequate securities to protect their lives and properties in the campus.

The researcher of this paper will like to emphasize that if all aforementioned solutions are strictly made use of, there would be no demonstrations and protests among students in all the tertiary institutions in South Africa and there will be cordial relationship between the students and managements in all universities in South Africa.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, the researcher would like to thank the Almighty God. It would not have been possible to complete this paper without his guidance and protection. The researcher would like to express his gratitude to Mr. Adetokunboh Abayomi Adepoju for his valuable support, advice, enthusiasm and encouragement when carrying out this study. The researcher is also indebted to his parents for their patience and guidance. Their supports have been immense. The researcher also appreciates the University of Fort Hare. This paper would not have been possible without their funding.

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Paper received for publication on July 2016
Paper accepted for publication on December 2016