

The Expansion of University Education in Nigeria and Resultant Managerial Problems

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Introduction

University education in Nigeria is a recent development dating from 1948. Its existence is only three quarters of a century old. Its introduction to Nigeria remains a highly cherished phenomenon both by the government and people of Nigeria because university education is an instrument of change and development. It develops skills and expands the technical knowledge of the people. The first primary school was established in 1842 in Lagos, Nigeria, and the first secondary school was established in 1849, but university education came much later in 1948 when the University College was established in Ibadan in 1948, one hundred and six (106) years after the establishment of the first primary school. The point being made here is that, if the establishment of university education came concurrently with the establishment of primary education in 1842 in Nigeria, the development of Nigeria would have been much faster than it is now (Mgbekem 2003).

University education was slow in coming to Nigeria, but when it came, the expansion was very rapid. It started with one university at Ibadan in 1948 and by 2003 it had increased to 51 universities, with 24 Federal Universities, 24 state universities and 5 private universities. This high number of universities in Nigeria, within 55 years of its existence, has created problems of university management. The problems include:

- 1) Manpower demand
- 2) Funding or financial demand
- 3) Accommodation demand

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- 4) Facilities demand
- 5) Enrolment and students' management demand
- 6) Examination malpractice
- 7) Cult practices, etc.

Abdulkadir (1995) and Longe (1991) have observed that the rapid growth in the number of universities has obvious implications on university management, because, student-enrolment, staffing, graduate-output and resources are involved and these present problems of significant dimensions. Olaniyi and Adepoju (1999) also observed that university education was increasing or expanding far more rapidly than the Ashby commission report of 1960 had projected and expected. The report recommended four autonomous universities by 1970, but by 1962, there were already five universities. Political consideration was responsible for this multiplication of universities. Becket and O'Connel (1977) also stated that, the gaps and imbalances between demand and supply of university education have continued to widen.

The same sentiment has been expressed by Yusuf (1973), Todore (1977), Fulton (1981), Ojo (1983, 1986), Akinwuniyu, Agabi (1973, Paritchpakeh (1973), Todara (1977), Fafunwa (1971), and Longe (1986), who have also alluded to imbalances afflicting university education in Nigeria. They have all emphasized the existence of problems such as the lack of accountability in university education and the nexus between university education and power in Nigeria. The opinions of some of the scholars mentioned above are utilized in this article. The aims and objectives of this study include among others: to examine Nigerian university education expansion and its implication on management, to examine the expansion rate of university education in Nigeria and its relative impact on resources in the universities, to identify problems of expansion of university education in Nigeria, to propose strategies and recommendations that could surmount or overcome problems associated with university education expansion in Nigeria and to present a conclusion based on findings in the study.

Procedures for Carrying out the Study

This is a historical research. It is proper to adopt a descriptive and discursive method in carrying out the study and obtaining the results. The expansion of university education is examined from 1948 to 2003. Statistical figures are supplied on the number of universities, the number of students, the number of lecturers, capital and recurrent grants as figures for university financing. The five statistical tables presented in this study are to ease interpretation and discussion of results. The instrument used in this study is the oral interview technique. The respondents or subjects were Vice Chancellors of 25 of the 51 universities. This means that the sample size is 25 out of 51, made up of 10 Vice Chancellors of Federal universities, 10 Vice Chancellors of State universities

and 5 Vice Chancellors of privately owned universities in Nigeria. Three critical questions were to be answered by respondents:

1. Vice Chancellors were asked to identify and enumerate various management problems experienced by them as a result of the rapid expansion of university education in Nigeria.
2. They were also asked to suggest management methods or strategies they can use to administratively handle problems, which they experience in their respective universities in Nigeria.
3. As Vice Chancellors, did they find it easy to contend with the problems of expansion of university education in Nigeria? If not, they should explain why they were not making headway in solving such management problems.

Answers to these questions are discussed under the section on findings and discussion of Results". A tape recorder was used to record the responses made by Vice Chancellors during the oral interview. Responses by the Vice Chancellors were later used for analysis of data of results and findings.

The following universities were sampled for the study:

Federal Universities

1. University of Ibadan
2. University of Nigeria, Nsukka
3. Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife
4. University of Lagos
5. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
6. University of Calabar
7. University of Uyo
8. Federal University of Technology, Owerri
9. Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi
10. Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto

State Universities

11. Abia State University, Uturu
12. Cross River State University of Technology, Calabar
13. Delta State University, Abraka
14. Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko
15. Lagos State University, Ojo
16. Kano University of Technology, Kano

17. Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki
18. Adamawa State University, Mubi
19. Nassarawa State University, Keffi
20. Imo State University, Owerri

Private Universities

21. Igbinedion University, Okada, Benin City
22. Babcock University, Ilisan-Remo
23. Madonna University, Okija
24. Benson Idahosa University, Benin City
25. Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State.

Statistical Presentation of Data on University Education Expansion in Nigeria

Table 1: Number of universities in Nigeria and the rate of expansion between 1948 and 1992

Year	No. of universities	Expansion	%
1948	1		
1960/61	2	1	100
1962	5	2	150
1972	6	1	20
1979	29	23	23.3
1989/92	17	8	27.6

The above table indicates that as university education expands, judging from the number of Federal universities in 1979 in Table 1 above which stands at 29 as the highest, so do problems of staffing, funding, enrolment, accommodation, facilities etc. increase. Table 1 above is demanding efficient management solutions.

TABLE 2: Shows increased number of students, but inadequate staff to match the number.

Year	Total Student Enrolment	Academic Staff	S.SR
1962/63	3646	670	5.1
1963/64	5106	670	7.1
1964/65	6707	1079	6.1
1965/66	7709	1208	6.1
1966/67	8888	1366	6.1
1967/68	7058	1148	6.1
1968/69	8588	1288	6.1

1969/70	14468	1475	6.1
1970/71	14468	2255	6.1
1971/72	17093	2245	7.1
1972/73	20889	2655	7.1
1973/74	23228	3459	6.1
1974/75	26448	3560	7.1
1975/76	32286	4055	7.1
1976/77	40914	5058	8.1
1977/78	46684	5190	8.1
1978/79	48698	5575	8.1
1979/80	577742	5739	10.1
1980/81	77791	6669	11.1
1981/82	90751	8470	10.1
1982/83	104774	8736	11.1
1983/84	116822	9785	11.1
1984/85	126285	1038	12.1
1985/86	135783	11016	12.1
1986/87	151967	11237	13.1
1987/88	160767	11501	13.1
1988/89	174133	12124	14.1
1989/90	179494	12352	14.1
1990/91	200774	13508	14.1
1991/92	232483	12927	17.1
1992/93	265772	14271	18.1

Source: *National Universities Commission, Abuja.*

Explanatory Notes on the Tables Presented

Table 2 shows, an astronomical increase in the number of students in universities in Nigeria. But the number of academic staff does not match the increase in students' enrolment. This increase in Nigerian universities was utterly inadequate. Table 2 also shows the relevant year, students' enrolment and available academic staff. The table indicates that the students' population in Nigerian universities is growing rapidly. Thus, the number of academic staff must also increase to match the student-population; otherwise there will be deficiency in maintaining academic standards in universities as a result of inadequate staffing. The need for adequate staffing becomes paramount and imperative. Table 3 shows percentage growth rate in student-population and Academic Staff during the period 1962/63 – 1992/1993. Table 4 shows graduate output and university financing. Table 5 shows problems of admission of students in Nigerian universities.

Table 3: Shows % growth in the number of Students and Academic Staff (1962/63 – 1992/93)

Year	Total No. of Students	Growth Absolute	%	Total No. of Academic staff	Growth Absolute	%	SSR
1962/63	3646	-	-	670	-	-	5:1
1972/73	20889	1720	472.0	2655	1985	296	7:1
1982/83	104744	4016	401.6	8736	6081	229	11.1
1992/93	265772	154.0	154.0	14271	5535	91	18.1

Source: *National Universities Commission Abuja.*

Table 4: Shows graduate output, recurrent and capital grants to Nigerian Universities 1962/63 – 1992/93

Year	Graduate output	% Increase	Recurrent Grant	Capital
	Grant	₦	₦	
1962/63	425	-	4,891.600	3,150,000
1972/73	3915	821.2	56,085.167	29,000,000
1982/83	21447	447.8	434,701,156	210,575,000
1992/93	N.A.	-	2082,454,980	71,470.808

Source: *National Universities Commission, Abuja.*

Table 5 shows the problem of admission of students in Nigerian universities with high demand for university education, but with low supply of places to learn. The growth and emerging problems of university education in Nigeria (1948-1992)

Table 6 Shows the *Joint Admission and Matriculations Board*, Summary of Yearly Average of application statistics & provisional admission into First Degree by States 1978/79 – 1993/94

States	Total application statistics 1978/79 - 1993/94	Yearly average application statistics	Total provisions admission 1978/79- 1993/94	Yearly mean provision admission	Yearly average provisional admission over yearly average application	CE
A.	B	C	D	E	F	G
1. Akwa Ibom	71292	11.882.00	35866	5978.00	50.31	2:1
2. Anambra/Enugu	347708	21.732.00	62939	3934.00	18.10	6:1
3. Bauchi	27708	1.731.00	6491	406.00	23.45	4:1
4. Edo/Delta	571559	35.722.00	80334	65021.00	14.06	7:1

5. Benue/Kogi	96440	6.028.00	18557	1160.00	19.24	5:1
6. Borno/Yobe	27676	1.730.00	7727	483.00	27.92	4:1
7. Cross River	132101	8.256.00	30325	1895.00	22.95	4:1
8. Gongola	31152	1.947.00	8294	525.00	26.96	4:1
9. Imo/Abia	566338	35.396.00	74419	4651.00	13.14	8:1
10. Kaduna	72779	4.549.00	12335	771.00	16.95	6:1
11. Katsina	14928	2.488.00	1806	301.00	12.10	8:1
12. Kano/Jigawa	36161	2.260.00	10616	664.00	29.38	3:1
13. Kwara/Kogi	190967	11.936.00	33434	2090.00	17.51	6:1
14. Lagos	142437	8.902.00	24846	1553.00	17.45	6:1
15. Niger	26312	1.645.00	7413	463.00	28.15	4:1
16. Ogun	272833	17.052.00	2548	2548.00	14.94	7:1
17. Ondo	300626	618.789.00	2990	2990.00	15.91	6:1
18. Oyo/Osun	448332	28.021.00	3976	3976.00	14.19	7:1
19. Plateau	46421	2.901.00	642	642.00	22.13	5:1
20. River	178747	11.172.00	1756	1756.00	15.72	6:1
21. Sokoto/Kebbi	29562	1.285.00	609	609.00	47.39	2:1
22. Foreign	31019	1.939.00	376	376.00	19.39	5:1

Source: *National Universities Commission, Abuja*

Findings and Discussion of Results

The problems of university expansion are embodied in the data presented in the five tables of this study and are discussed below. The discussion is based on the statistical data provided in the 5 tables presented in this paper. The discussion is also based on the tape-recorded responses of the 25 out of 51 Vice Chancellors on Nigerian Universities sampled for the study who were interviewed. The Vice Chancellors were asked to give their candid opinions about the following university problems arising from the expansion of university education in Nigeria and, they tendered opinions and suggestions, which are designed to improve the quality of University Education in Nigeria. One of the prominent issues discussed is the poor staffing situation. Shortage of academic staff is as a result of the expansion of universities. This has called for the employment of first-degree holders to teach, which is not ideal for the maintenance of quality. Senior lecturers should form the basis of the standard or ideal university teaching staff. When these are not available, university teaching appointment are made at levels which are meant to be training positions such as lecturers grade two and lecturers grade one. The situation is worsened, when lecturers go on sabbatical leave to foreign universities, they hardly return to their home universities. Shortage of qualitative academic staff is therefore experienced in Nigerian universities.

The Vice Chancellors who were interviewed opined that the solution is that more

qualitative academic staff should be employed to cope with expanding university demands. The problem of brain drain should be addressed by all stakeholders. This trend could be reduced through giving lecturers relevant incentives to restrain them from leaving home universities for overseas universities and other greener pastures. In-service or on-the-job training to upgrade the quality of lecturers is highly recommended for effective lectureship in universities.

The Vice Chancellors also admitted that financing university education is a real problem because the Federal Government allocation of funds to universities is inadequate to handle all the requirements in the universities. Table 4 shows recurrent and capital grants from the Federal Government. This is fairly inadequate. Alternative or complementary sources of funding are advocated. It was also emphasised that classrooms, lecture rooms, auditoria, lecture theatres, workshops, academic offices, hostels, staff residential quarters, etc are in short supply in Nigerian universities. Some students receive lectures by standing at windows and doors, since there is inadequate space inside lecture rooms to sit and write. Accommodation for lectures and for practical research and experiments is a real problem. The provision of these facilities enhances effective teaching and learning. When supply is inadequate, teaching and learning become ineffective and non-rewarding.

Thousands of students apply to study in universities every year through the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), but only a fraction of the total number that apply, are admitted. For others, it is not that they do not obtain the required admission marks for admission; it is that the demand by applicants is higher than the supply. Thus, many Nigerian youths who seek university education are frustrated. They cannot find universities to study and obtain degrees. The policy of admission through cut-off point is counter-productive, because, those who are denied admission might have done as well in the universities if they were admitted. Some who are admitted could have done so through fraudulent means. The increase in student population calls for a matching increase in university funding, staffing and provision of facilities. The growth trend results in students engaging in criminal practices e.g. examination malpractices, cult activities, etc. Therefore, increased student population calls for an increase in academic staff strength to create an equitable balance of student – staff ratio. For now, this balance is not there, and the gap must be bridged.

Vice Chancellors explained that as a result of the increase in the number of universities, student population, lecturers, and existing teaching and learning facilities in Nigerian universities are inadequate. This inadequacy calls for increased funding of universities, for effective teaching and learning. Without the provision of materials, teaching and learning become deficient and non-rewarding. Moreover, academic excellence, which is the goal of university education, cannot be achieved. University education thus becomes a curse rather than a reward because falling standards in universities mar the quality of products, skills and performance capacities.

As a result of large number of applicants, admission is given to both academic

misfits and hopeful academic achievers. Admitted academic misfits orchestrate examination malpractice, which they learnt while in secondary school and perfect in universities. Examination malpractices in universities destroy academic quality, damage skills acquisition and job performance and reduce the integrity and image of universities. Some, who claim that they have degree certificates, are found wanting in their places of work and are disgraced because they cannot perform creditably in spite of the certificates, which they claim to possess. This is a disgrace to employment and productivity.

Vice Chancellors are of the opinion that secret cultism is a problem that comes along with university expansion. Cult activities began at the University of Ibadan in 1948. At that time, it was a decent organization void of criminal tendencies. But, in recent times, cult practices involve killings, destruction of property, maiming people through machet cuts and gunshots. This is an antithesis of university education. It is anti-progressive. It should be eradicated from all universities so as to bring about a peaceful atmosphere to ensure progressive teaching and learning for national achievement. Cult practices should be outlawed through legislation in Nigerian universities.

Strategies for Overcoming Problems Associated with Expansion of Universities

Through this study, some strategies and recommendations have been proposed to surmount the expansion problems in universities and these will be discussed in this section. The study recommends the establishment of more universities in Nigeria to satisfy the expanding desires of Nigerian youth for university education. Also, university funding should be a shared responsibility between government and the private sector; wealthy Nigerian citizens should assist government in shouldering the cost of university education in Nigeria. Alternative and complementary sources of funding of universities are proposed since government alone cannot fund university education and still allocate funds to other sectors of the country. To solve accommodation problems in universities, uncompleted buildings initiated between 1979 and 1983 during President Shehu Shagari's regime should be completed without further delay. Doing this will minimize the problem of accommodation in universities. In addition, new structures e.g. lecture theatres, auditoria, lecture rooms, workshops and offices, should be built to make teaching and learning easier and more rewarding.

Examination mal-practices and cult-practices should be outlawed through legislation in all universities. Those who are caught engaging in these illicit activities should be expelled outrightly. Academic staff should be increased in number through recruitment. Training and retraining, through a policy of staff development should also be put in place. Universities should insist on maintaining a high standard for teaching effectiveness and goals attainment. Establishment of universities should be based on relevance of courses and the needs of society and not on political considerations. Distribution of courses should be based on areas of need and balance between Arts, Humanities and the Sciences. It should avoid lopsided distribution e.g. more Arts courses and less science

courses. Universities of Agriculture in the country should be given priority attention for increased food production because Nigeria has a favourable environment for the development of agro-based industries.

The astronomical growth rate involving size, number, programmes, enrolment and responsibilities show that management responsibility is enormous. Vice Chancellors should brace up to the challenge of managing these problems by using astute managerial skills, adroit administrative techniques and ingenuity to achieve excellence in their various universities. Biobaku (1965) once remarked that the wisest investment which a developing country can make lies in the field of higher education. Radical change in a developing country can be achieved through university education. This awareness is responsible for the expansion of university education in Nigeria. This explains why further expansion, adequate funding and provision of human and material resources are necessary and emphasized in this study.

Conclusion

This study reveals that university education in Nigeria has been expanding in geometric proportions. There are gaps or imbalances between the demand and supply of university education in Nigeria. There has been a rapid growth rate, which has created problems of staffing, increase in students' enrolment, inadequate funding, a lopsided students/staff ratio etc. These factors have grave management implications. Vice Chancellors see these factors as real management challenges.

It is observed that in spite of the numerous universities in Nigeria, many Nigerian youths who apply for admission to study are not privileged to be admitted. This is a paradox of the whole story of expansion of university education in Nigeria. Demand is far higher than supply of universities. This explains why there is need to establish more universities in the country and peg the number at a hundred, as recommended by the author of this study. If the recommendations proposed in this study are implemented, university education in Nigeria will be very rewarding socially, politically, economically and academically. The country will benefit greatly from it. This study has a multi faceted significance as enumerated below:

1. It has educational, social, economic, political, moral and developmental dimensions that affect university education in Nigeria. The study provides a management framework to assist Vice Chancellors to acquire managerial skills and techniques for dealing with education problems at university level as adumbrated in the study.
2. Politically, universities cater to the education needs of Nigerians spread across all states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This explains the notions of the quota system; the geographical spread in admissions, scholarship award, educationally advantaged and disadvantaged areas in Nigeria.

3. Socially, university education upgrades the status of Nigerians.
4. Economically, university education enhances and attracts job-opportunities for Nigerians.
5. Morally, the study provides methods for eradicating cult practices and examination malpractices.
6. Developmentally, university education introduces changes, innovations and national transformation from crude methods of doing things to sophisticated methods of accomplishing them.

The study will benefit administrators of higher education institutions in Nigeria such as Vice Chancellors of Nigerian universities and the *National Universities Commission (NUC)*. Managers of Business organisations are also likely to benefit from strategies proposed to overcome problems of expansion. Academically, students will benefit, while staffing, accommodation and study facilities will be improved. If cult practices and examination malpractices are eliminated, a peaceful environment for teaching and learning will be engendered. The building of more universities to reach the target of one hundred (100) will ease the expanding desire of Nigerian youths to have places to study and obtain degrees and diplomas.

The proposals made in this study, if implemented, will enhance and facilitate faster development in Nigeria and could lead Nigeria to compete with the advanced countries of the world.

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