

Planning and Funding of Higher Education in Nigeria: The Challenges

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Received: April 12, 2012 Accepted: April 24, 2012 Online Published: June 25, 2012

doi:10.5539/ies.v5n4p86

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ies.v5n4p86>

Abstract

Higher education remains the pivot of national development in Nigeria. This is because the stock of highly-educated individuals produced by higher education institutions plays an important role in the innovation and the sustainable development of any society. However, over time, these institutions have experienced increase in enrolments and yet the number of candidates seeking admission into these institutions outpaces the available spaces in the institutions. Inadequate fiscal resources have also eroded the desired qualitative higher education and the needed national development. In this paper, challenges facing planning and funding of qualitative higher education in Nigeria are examined. The paper therefore infers the need for proper planning of higher education system to ensure qualitative higher education so as to reduce educational wastages and enhance effective utilization of the available educational scarce resources.

Keywords: planning, funding, higher education, challenges, Nigeria

1. Introduction

The role of higher education as essential to national development cannot be over emphasized. This is due to the contribution of higher education in producing higher-level skills and competencies as essential to national development particularly in the context of globalization and the shift towards knowledge economies. For these reasons, countries all over the world, Nigeria inclusive are giving higher education the needed policy attention.

Higher education includes all types of study, training or trainings for research at post-secondary level, provided by the universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by competent state authorities (UNESCO, 2003).

Also Johnstone (2006) opines that higher education as an agent of change, national growth and instrument for the realization of collective aspiration should contribute to the development of the entire education system through teacher education, curriculum development and educational research thereby providing the crucial mass skills and educated populace needed by any country to ensure genuine endogenous sustainable development.

Meanwhile in the Nigerian Education system, Higher education is the education given after secondary education. It constitutes Federal universities, State Universities, University of technology, University of Agriculture, polytechnics and Colleges of education. They are often referred to as either Post Secondary Education, Tertiary Institutions, or Institutions of Higher learning owned either by the Federal Government, State Government or Private Agencies as provided by the National Policy on Education.(NPE,2004)

Globally, UNESCO (2006), on world enrollment of the number of tertiary students per 100,000 inhabitants in the world bank countries confirms that over six fold increase in students' enrollment worldwide rose from 13 million in 1996 to 102 million in 2003. UNESCO (2006) also reports that a widening gap has been observed between industrially developed, developing countries; particularly the least developed countries with regards to access and resources for higher learning and research leading to increase socio-economic stratification and greater difference in education opportunity within countries.

According to the Global Education digest (2009), the number of students pursuing tertiary education has skyrocketed over the past 37 years, growing five-fold from 28.6 million in 1970 to 152.5 million in 2007. This translates into an average annual increase of 4.6. The Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced the highest average regional growth rate with student enrolments that have risen by an average of 8.6 percent each year. Yet, in spite

of this achievement, the region still lags behind other regions in terms of total tertiary student enrolments. Today, there are 20 times more students than in 1970, with an additional 3.9 million enrolment (GED, 2009). In the same vein, UNESCO (2003) reports that many countries with higher education system have higher expansion rates and increase in students enrolment than anticipated.

Sommers (2006) in his study of higher education funding and enrollment observes that there are three kinds of demand for higher education which include:

- 1) Students seeking access to higher education;
- 2) Employers seeking to hire appropriately skilled graduates since the labour market depends on the products of higher education who when employed, help create wealth which enhances the individual and national development.
- 3) Regions seeking the presence of higher education that will catalyze development.

Context-globalization has also influenced the demand for higher education by making both employers and students to demand acquisition of higher skills. This is because higher education is believed to offer the individual with new opportunities relating to technologies that help improve the ways in which knowledge can be produced, managed, disseminated, accessed and controlled.

Besides, Higher education helps integrate learners into the global knowledge society where the educated workers are able to perceive technological change clearly and adapt to it more effectively through improved knowledge and skills. Globalization is said to allow for knowledge sharing, international co-operation, new opportunities that will help reduce the gap between separating the developing from the least developed countries from the industrially developed countries. Hence, international cooperation and exchange are the major avenues for advancing higher education worldwide.

On the African scene, John (2006) who is the world bank chief economist for developing countries and the African region confirms that Africa has made a near progress in social outcome although economic outcomes are still diverse; that sixteen (16) African countries have sustained their annual gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate in excess of 4.5% since the mid 1990's and that primary enrollment rate has significantly risen across the continent. For example gross primary enrollment rate shot up to 93% in 2004 from 72% in 1990, thereby raising literacy rate from 50% to 65% in 2002. Reports on increase in enrollment were not recorded in secondary and tertiary levels of education.

Banya (2001), on Sub-Saharan Africa, also confirms that increase in students enrollment is one of the major areas of crisis in higher education as the available limited resources (physical and human) have not been able to meet the enrolment needs thereby having implications for low quality education. Gobin (2006) attributes the tangible progress in Africa on delivering better health, education, growth, trade and poverty reduction outcome to the impact of education in Africa.

In Nigeria, NUC (2006) reports that the Nigerian education system has expanded from one University in 1948 (University of Ibadan- University College London) to eighty (80) in 2005 of which include 27 Federal, 26 State, 24 private and four (4) Inter- universities.

The importance and contribution of higher education to the development of any society cannot be overemphasized as it is believed to be unique and vital helping to illuminate the individual's mind through the knowledge acquired who in turn contributes meaningfully to the society. Due to this attached importance to higher education, the universal declaration on human right states in article two (2) paragraph one (1) that "everyone has access to education and that higher education should be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit and individual capability and ensure that the values and ideals of a culture of peace prevail and is sustained; and suggests that the development of higher education should be considered, its quality and relevance enhanced."

Furthermore, Obanya (2004) reports that high enrolments in higher institutions also known as 'massification' has greater challenge in ensuring quality since the available resources have not matched this increase in the number of students. According to *The Economist* (2005), Chevailler (2000), and Adu and Orivel (2006), the overcrowding of lecture hall, laboratories, libraries amongst result in deterioration of physical facilities and wearing out of the equipment.

Nevertheless, tertiary education systems in the Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Nigeria are under considerable strain as these higher growth rates have posed more challenges. To begin with, higher education in Nigeria is faced with the challenges of high demand for admission places leading to escalated enrolments, insufficient funds and physical facilities, inadequate qualified academic staff, and the unemployment of the higher education

graduates all of which have led to high cost of education. There is therefore the need for proper planning of higher education system as this will help in reducing educational wastages, enhancing proper allocation of scarce resources and tackling the problem of unemployment of higher education graduates.

Planning is an important project management and time management techniques which involves the process of setting goals, developing strategies, and outlining tasks and schedules to accomplish the goals. According to Amokaye (2004), "Planning as a concept is a terminology that is very difficult to define but it has been agreed to involve a very complex management activity that requires integrating the physical and biological resources in compatible use, and coordinating social, cultural, economic, legal and political demands and constraints. Olayemi (2000) sees planning as the preparation and construction of plans in accordance with which growth and extension of a tow, is to be regulated so as to make the most of the natural advantages of the site, and to secure the most advantageous conditions of housing and traffic.

Educational planning therefore, is concerned with the problems of how to make the best use of limited resources allocated to education in view of the priorities given to different stages of education or different sectors of education and the need of the economy. Adeleye (2008) has identified three types of Planning Education (PE) in Nigeria to include: Educational Training, Professional Training and NITP/TOPREC Training

This paper therefore examines the challenges in planning and funding higher education in Nigeria with a view to suggesting ways by which these problems can be curbed.

2. Challenges

2.1 Low Enrolment/Low Participation Rates

The Nigerian higher education is faced with the global challenge of institutional expansion, high demand for admission places and low enrollments. According to National Universities Commission (2010), the Nigerian university education system has expanded from one University College in 1948 to 113 in 2010 which consist of 36 Federal, 35 State and 41 private universities. In spite of this upsurge in the number of universities, there has been a wide gap between demand for admission and supply of admission. This is reflected in the Table 1 below.

Table 1. Total application and enrolments in all Nigerian universities (2003/2004- 2007/2008)

Year	Application Into Nigerian Universities (1)	Federal Universities A	State Universities B	Private Universities C	Total A+B+C (2)	Diff. (1)-(2)	% admitted
2003/04	1,046,940	62,242	37,434	3,360	103,036	943,904	9.84
2004/05	838,051	55,505	47,236	3,214	105,955	732,096	12.64
2005/06	917,960	33,931	30,452	2,370	66,753	851,207	7.27
2006/07	912,350	33,803	34,275	4,110	72,188	840,162	7.91
2007/08	1,054,078	20,716	21,517	5,243	47,476	1,006,602	4.50

Source: Adapted from JAMB (2009) and National Bureau of Statistics (2009)

In Table 1, a total of 1,054,078 applications were made for admission into the Nigerian Universities in 2007/2008 session. Out of this total, only 47,496 enrolments resulting in 4.50 percent were made. This shows a drop by 6.51 percent over the previous enrolment (2006/2007). By implication, less than 20 percent of those who sought access into Nigerian universities actually got admitted in the years under study. This problem is also applicable to other forms of the Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Table 2. Total enrolment in all Colleges of Education in Nigeria by year (2004-2008)

Year	Number Enrolled	% Increase in Enrolment
2003/2004	328156	-
2004/2005	355560	5.35
2005/2006	244569	-30.62
2006/2007	255926	4.17
2007/2008	225362	-11.94

Source: National Statistics Bureau (2009)

From Table 2, enrolment figures into the Nigerian colleges of education reveal a downward trend from 2005 with 2006 and 2008 having negative enrolments of -30.62 per cent and -11.94 per cent respectively. This downward trend could be attributed to: (i) individual preference for degree certificates from degree awarding institutions such as universities to the National certificate of education (NCE) awarded in colleges of education and (ii) the low social status accorded the teaching profession in Nigeria therefore, prospective students tend to opt for studying other disciplines at the university level of education.

Table 3. Total enrolment in all Monotechnics and Polytechnics in Nigeria by year (2001-2005)

Year	Monotechnics		Polytechnics	
	Number Enrolled	% Increase in Enrolment	Number Enrolled	% Increase in Enrolment
2000/2001	15,003	0	180,395	0
2001/2002	17,727	18.16	259,450	43.82
2002/2003	18,779	5.88	285,345	9.98
2003/2004	19,869	5.86	226,682	(-20.56)
2004/2005	20,853	4.95	311,844	37.57

Source: National Statistics Bureau (2009)

2.2 Staffing

Staffing policy is another challenge facing higher education in Nigeria

Table 4. Number of Teachers in Federal Universities by Major Disciplines, 2001/2002 - 2005/2006

Discipline	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006
Administration	1,141	890	1,181	982	773
Agriculture	1,757	1,979	2,317	1,533	1,428
Arts	1,417	1,719	1,434	1,598	1,660
Education	1,418	1,559	1,370	1,515	1,552
Engineering Technology	1,966	1,907	2,171	1,992	1,886
Environmental Science	696	820	682	769	889
Law	424	350	433	523	538
Medicine	1,780	2,004	1,996	2,041	2,027
Pharmacy	253	410	290	400	376
Science	3,153	3,872	3,495	3,099	2,986
Social Science	1,130	1,272	775	1,283	1,398
Veterinary Medicine	290	379	515	381	377
Total	15,425	17,161	16,659	16,116	15,890

Source: National Universities Commission

Table 4 reveals only marginal increase in the number of university teachers from 15,425 in 2001/2002 to 15,890 in 2005/2006. This is ridiculous. There has been a downward trend in the number of university teachers from 2003/2004 to 2005/2006. This could in part be attributed to the departure of some university teachers to other countries in search of greener pastures due to poor condition of service and facilities (physical and financial) which are inadequate compared to the raising increase in enrolments in the Nigerian higher education institutions.

Table 5. Student/Teacher Ratio in Federal Universities, (2001-2006)

DISCIPLINES	YEAR					NUC Guideline
	2001/2002	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
ADMINISTRATION	1	33	38	49	38	30
AGRICULTURE	11	14	13	17	15	15
ARTS	22	18	25	24	20	30
EDUCATION	24	22	35	32	31	30
ENGR/TECHNOLOGY IN VETERINARY MEDICAL SCIENCE	24	27	24	30	30	30
LAW	34	40	36	35	30	15
MEDICINE	15	13	14	15	12	30
PHARMACY	23	14	21	14	12	15
SCIENCES	19	19	23	32	25	15
SOCIAL SCIENCES	40	30	70	41	40	20
VET MEDICINE	12	9	14	10	10	30
TOTAL	266	257	325	324	288	10

Source: National Universities Commission. (2010).

NOTE:*NUC guideline implies Students/Teacher Ratio (as Standard)

The Student/Teacher ratio as shown in table 5 is high for all disciplines except for Agriculture, Arts, Medicine and veterinary Medicine when compared to the required standard by the National Universities Commission.

2.3 Funding

Funding is the life wire of any organization; however it is one of the challenges facing higher education in Nigeria.

Table 6. Summary of Education Trust Fund Allocations to Institutions, 2003 - 2007

Age Group	Total	Educational Attainment								
		None	Nursery	Primary	JSS/Modern School	SSS/SEC/TTC	OND/NCE	University Graduate/HND	Post Graduate	Other
06-Sep	13,642,012	5,251,369	8,233,381	15,7262	-	-	-	-	-	-
Oct-14	16,115,528	4,963,254	5,986,104	4,419,589	744,888	1,693	-	-	-	-
15 - 19	14,899,419	3,552,684	5,97,395	3,342,376	5,464,661	1,699,725	150,952	24,010	0	67,616
20 - 24	13,435,079	3,562,625	61,318	771,209	3,254,607	4,505,014	781,666	365,294	44,520	88,826
25 - 29	12,211,426	3,641,219	67,195	958,734	976,337	4,378,367	1,163,827	828,518	96,617	100,612
30 - 34	9,467,538	3,278,838	59,573	894,167	314,542	3,076,233	847,667	770,453	132,154	93,911
35 - 39	7,331,755	2,471,327	47,521	74,5631	259,572	2,305,282	693,677	599,168	134,586	74,991
40 - 44	6,456,470	2,625,025	41,652	646,244	201,706	1,650,918	561,979	515,477	136,763	76,706
45 - 49	4,591,293	1,775,001	32,390	538,637	156,533	1,111,634	409,163	401,397	113,344	53,194
50 - 54	4,249,219	2,090,642	30,500	479,022	133,301	799,564	272,290	293,254	90,446	60,200
55 - 59	2,066,247	936,933	15,813	263,685	81,192	410,974	133,119	148,163	48,055	28,313
60 - 64	2,450,286	1,440,136	19,721	256,699	87,757	323,662	111,482	130,215	43,534	37,080
65 - 69	1,151,048	663,752	15,261	154,331	54,649	110,343	52,920	62,767	21,457	15,568
70 - 74	1,330,597	884,783	14,814	146,770	49,072	97,401	43,940	52,923	18,709	22,185
75 - 79	579,838	371,666	7,245	68,416	25,314	47,840	19,440	23,304	8,375	8,238
80 - 84	760,053	532,798	9,193	74,594	25,092	51,880	21,173	24,605	8,184	12,534
85 +	715,225	492,923	8,780	70,967	25,071	52,260	21,820	24,974	8,539	9,891
Total	111,453,033	38,534,975	15,247,856	13,988,333	11,854,294	20,622,790	5,285,115	4,264,522	905,283	749,865

Source: National Statistics Bureau (2009)

Table 6 reveals that out of total amount of ₦31,934,530,920 allocated in the year 2005, the total sum of ₦5,640,000,000 resulting in 17.7 percent was allocated to tertiary institutions. In the year 2006, ₦4,107,000,000 was allocated to tertiary education out of the total amount of ₦63,566,217,470, and this represents 6.46 percent. This allocation was reduced by ₦1,533,000,000. Similarly, a total sum of ₦4,934,000,000 representing 9.64 percent was allocated to tertiary education out of ₦51,177,582,116. There was a slight increase but it was insignificant.

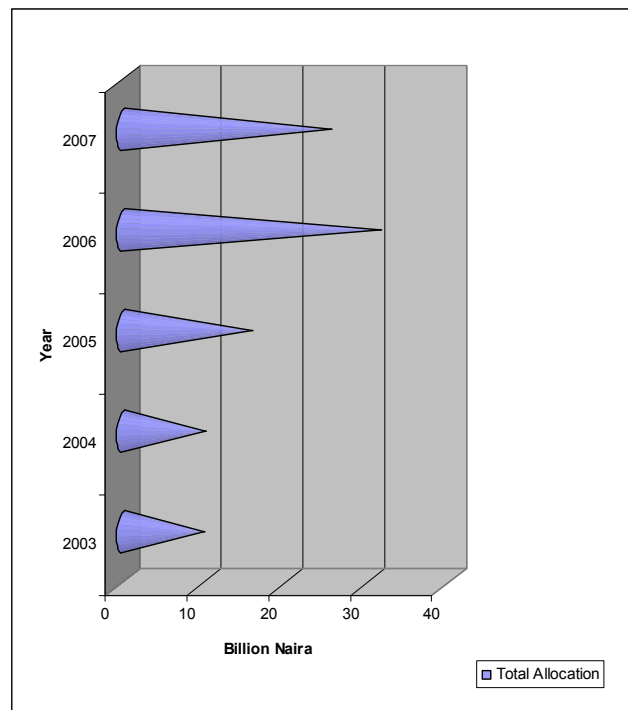


Figure 1. Education Trust Fund Allocations to Institutions, 2003 - 2007

2.4 Unemployment Rate

In spite of efforts being made to widen access to higher education in Nigeria, particularly university education, many prospective graduates are still unemployed. Graduate turnout still outpaces graduate employment in Nigeria. This is a serious issue to be addressed by the Nigerian governments.

Table 7a. Unemployment Rates by Educational Group, Age Group and Sex (March 2009)

ITEMS	Urban	Rural	Composite
All Groups	19.2	19.8	19.7
Educational Group			
Never Attended	20.6	20	20.1
Below primary	18.4	22.9	22.3
Primary	15.1	4.7	14.8
Secondary	21.4	25.3	23.8
Post secondary	13.9	26.4	21.3

Source: National Statistics Bureau (2009)

Table 7b. Graduate Turn-Out of Bachelor's Degree, Post-Graduate Diploma, Master's Degree and Doctorate Degree Combined, 2001 – 2005

Discipline	Year									
	2001		2002		2003		2004		2005	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Administration	10,247	4,600	9,080	4,998	12,670	6,843	7,777	5,116	5,315	3,215
Agriculture	1,558	689	2,058	908	1,939	1,073	1,882	987	690	284
Arts	3,885	2,771	4,242	3,403	4,433	4,310	3,538	3,154	2,104	1,725
Education	5,370	5,150	5,575	4,783	5,313	4,713	3,958	4,405	3,031	2,634
Engineering Technology	5,215	637	5,665	832	6,199	1,028	4,989	819	1,824	188
Environmental Science	1,343	444	1,347	464	1,488	699	1,335	487	1,105	397
Law	1,797	1,130	2,459	1,939	3,099	2,797	2,233	1,644	1,043	638
Medicine	1,316	605	1,890	775	1,821	1,074	1,776	868	448	284
Pharmacy	269	86	340	154	245	172	433	277	25	17
Science	6,020	3,154	5,781	3,279	6,715	4,593	5,375	2,978	5,092	1,610
Social Science	7,633	4,056	12,708	6,201	10,693	6,662	8,853	5,269	4,170	3,113
Dentistry	29	12	46	22	67	30	57	22	2	-
Veterinary Medicine	98	21	152	53	190	64	86	32	48	13
Others	832	423	1,278	512	1,152	497	681	269	280	211
Total	45,612	23,778	52,621	28,323	56,024	34,555	42,973	26,327	25,177	14,329
Grand Total	69,390		80,944		90,579		69,300		39,506	

Source: National Universities Commission

3. Assessing the Levels of Tertiary Skills among the Population

Assessing the level of tertiary skills in the population is another challenge facing the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Tertiary graduates considered as the stock of highly-educated individuals play an important role in innovation and the sustainable development of a society. However, it takes a relatively long time for a society to build up its stock of highly-skilled individuals.

Table 8. Population Distribution of Age 6 And Above by Sex, Age Groups and Educational Attainment (Both Sexes) – National, 2006

Discipline	Year									
	2001		2002		2003		2004		2005	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Administration	10,247	4,600	9,080	4,998	12,670	6,843	7,777	5,116	5,315	3,215
Agriculture	1,558	689	2,058	908	1,939	1,073	1,882	987	690	284
Arts	3,885	2,771	4,242	3,403	4,433	4,310	3,538	3,154	2,104	1,725
Education	5,370	5,150	5,575	4,783	5,313	4,713	3,958	4,405	3,031	2,634
Engineering Technology	5,215	637	5,665	832	6,199	1,028	4,989	819	1,824	188
Environmental Science	1,343	444	1,347	464	1,488	699	1,335	487	1,105	397
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Medicine	1,316	605	1,890	775	1,821	1,074	1,776	868	448	284
Pharmacy	269	86	340	154	245	172	433	277	25	17
Science	6,020	3,154	5,781	3,279	6,715	4,593	5,375	2,978	5,092	1,610
Social Science	7,633	4,056	12,708	6,201	10,693	6,662	8,853	5,269	4,170	3,113
Dentistry	29	12	46	22	67	30	57	22	2	-
Veterinary Medicine	98	21	152	53	190	64	86	32	48	13
Others	832	423	1,278	512	1,152	497	681	269	280	211
Total	45,612	23,778	52,621	28,323	56,024	34,555	42,973	26,327	25,177	14,329
Grand Total		69,390		80,944		90,579		69,300		39,506

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2009)

As indicated in table 8, in the year 2006, out of the total population of 111,453,033, the higher education graduate population was 4,264,522 which represents 3.83% of high skilled labor in the country. This is considerably small to make for meaningful development.

4. Policy Options

To ensure qualitative higher education in Nigeria, the following policy options could among others be adopted:

- 1) There should be improved institutional management through strategic planning. This involves adopting total quality management principle towards utilization of allocated resources in an efficient manner. This reduces wastages. This option also embraces revision of higher education curricular to include programs that are more responsive to societal needs.
- 2) Funding to higher education should be increased and adequate facilities be provided by the government and private organizations. Unless the funding of Federal and state tertiary institutions is properly and frontally addressed, the higher education sector is doomed. All tiers of government from the local council to Federal government should be part of funding process. Private sector should also be allowed to have active and increased participation in funding tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- 3) Improving the welfare of teaching and non-teaching staff to ensure their maximum performance should be a priority in our tertiary institutions.

4) Enrolments in higher education institutions should be on available vacancies.

In addition to the aforementioned options, Okebukola (2010) has identified the following initiatives amongst others, to improve higher education participation rates in Nigeria:

- a) Provision of admission spaces in regular universities matching the resources available in such institutions
- b) Need to achieve at least 10 percent annual growth in enrolment through a planned and phased expansion with six major components which include: massive upgrading of physical facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, workshops, library and offices in existing universities to take at least additional 1,000 students per year; to add 300,000 more spaces through a gradual increase in the number of universities. Thirty additional universities can be licensed in 10 years by NUC. Fifteen of these should be under private proprietorship and the other fifteen will emerge from upgrades of selected polytechnics.
- c) Equivalence granted HND with Bachelor's degree holders and the implementation of the teacher's salary scale are some of the strategies that will make polytechnics and colleges of education attractive to candidates.

5. Conclusion

Higher education remains the pivot of national development in Nigeria. Despite the increase in enrolment and Governments' continuous expenditure; the financial and human resources available have not been able to match this demand due to competitions from other sectors of the economy. It is therefore suggested that to ensure qualitative higher education in Nigeria, there should be improved institutional management through strategic planning which consists of the revision of the higher education curricular to include programs that are more responsive to societal needs, increase funding and facilities by government and private organization, improving the welfare of teaching/non teaching staff to ensure their maximum performance on their job, accountability and enrolments into higher education institutions should be on available vacancies.

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