

Admission Policies and the Quality of University Education in Nigeria

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The population of Nigeria is 140 million according to the last 2006 census. Only 75 Universities are available to cater to this population with one University for 1,866,000 people. The inability of the available Universities in Nigeria to cope with the high demand for University education has put much pressure on University admissions. In order to satisfy some interests the Government of Nigeria adopted such admission policies as the quota system, catchment areas, backwardness factor, and discriminatory fees. Following the observed fall in the standards of University education in Nigeria it is speculated that the admission policies are responsible for the situation. To confirm this an opinion survey involving 384 respondents sampled from eight (8) Universities in the South-South zone of Nigeria was conducted. An instrument known as 'Admission Policies and Effect on University Education Quality (APEUEQ)' was used for gathering data after validation. The correlation coefficient reliability of the instrument was found to be 0.73. The chi-square data analysis method was applied. The finding showed that all the parameters of interest have contributed to the reduction of the quality of University education in Nigeria. The paper recommended a complete review of the admission policies and the establishment of more universities to meet the increasing demand for university education.

Introduction

Nigerian youths, in particular, and the adult population in general, attach much premium on University education. Most people in Nigeria who have the potential for University education show desperation in their efforts to gain admissions into the highly limited available spaces. This obsession and preference for University education as against other forms of higher education such as Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Monotechnics which also offer degree programmes has placed enormous pressure

on the placement and management of Universities in Nigeria. Consequently, standards are often negatively affected.

No law in Nigeria makes university education compulsory. The National Policy on Education (2004, p. 36) lists the goals of tertiary education which includes University education thus: To,

- (a) Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
- (b) Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society.
- (c) Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
- (d) Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.
- (e) Promote and encourage scholarship and community service
- (f) Forge and cement national unity; and
- (g) Promote national and international understanding and interaction.

The National Policy on Education (1981, p. 22) specifically states that the above goals will be pursued by the Universities through:

- (i) Teaching;
- (ii) Research;
- (iii) The dissemination of existing and new information;
- (iv) The pursuit of service to the community; and
- (v) Be a storehouse of knowledge.

Ajayi (1988) and Wokocha and Okujagu (1999) have respectively tried to place Universities above other tertiary institutions. However, such views do not provide reasons for the preference of University education by many Nigerians to other tertiary institutions. In the view of Ajayi (1988):

A University is a storehouse of retrievable knowledge and has functions which include authorship and publication of standard texts, self-sustenance, creation of a model community in efficiency, probity and tolerance, honest and enlightened commentary on public affairs in order to impartially educate and to inform.

In their own view about a University, Wokocha and Okujagu (1999, p. 120) state thus:

A University is different from other academic institutions because its preoccupation is not only in the diffusion of knowledge but in its extension. The university yearns for truth and subjects existing body of knowledge to critical examination and analysis to see if it needs revision. As centre for excellence Universities are also expected to set the pace for the large society in the efficient and effective management of human and material resources.

The Problem

Nigeria has a population of about 140 million (Daily Sun, January 15, 2007) with a total of 75 Universities. Table 1 shows a list of some selected countries with their populations and number of Universities. The table shows that Nigeria has the least number of Universities serving a high population when compared to other countries. For examples, Japan with the population of 127 million people has 1,223 Universities, the United States of America (USA) has a population of 290 million people with 5,758 Universities.

The observed inadequacy in the number of Universities in Nigeria coupled with the high demand for University education have created the problems of admissions into the available Universities and the sustenance of good standards. An effort to check these problems prompted the Federal Government of Nigeria to establish the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) in 1978 to handle all admission matters with respect to Universities at the first instance and later other tertiary institutions were

included. The JAMB has not been able to solve the admission and quality of education problems. Babalola (2005) and Eluemunor (2005) believe that many unqualified candidates have been offered admissions into Nigerian Universities through JAMB thereby lowering standards in these institutions. The issue of quality in Nigerian Universities is also confirmed as being low by the World Universities Ranking Project for 2005 which placed Nigeria's best University (the University of Ibadan which ranked 59th in Africa) as 6,320th in the world (Daily Sun, November 21, 2005, p. 8).

Table 1: Access to University Education in Some Selected Countries

Country	Population	Number of Universities
Nigeria	140 million	75
India	1 billion	8,407
USA	290 million	5,758
Argentina	38.7 million	1,705
Spain	40.2 million	145
Mexico	10.9 million	1,341
Bangladesh	138 million	1,268
Indonesia	238 million	1,236
Japan	127 million	1,223
France	60.1 million	1,062
China	1.2 billion	1,054
South Africa	43.6 million	26

Adapted from Ehiemetalor, E. T. (2005) *Issues of Access, Equity and Private Sector participation in the Deregulation of Education*, P. 261.

The problems of admissions into Nigerian Universities and the maintenance of adequate standards have been associated with some unpopular policies adopted by the Federal Government of Nigeria to address the inadequacy in the number of admission places in the University system. Among the unpopular policies included:

- (a) Catchment areas policy which provided that a certain percentage of admission places must be reserved for the indigenes of the areas in which universities are located.
- (b) Backwardness factor policy ensured that a certain percentage of admission chances was reserved for the indigenes of States considered to be educationally disadvantaged or backward.
- (c) Quota system policy provided the allocation of certain percentages of admission places into Nigerian Universities based on populations, ethnic considerations and States of Origin.
- (d) Discriminatory fees policy provided for lower fees to be paid by the indigenes of the localities where Universities are established.

Akani (1996) believes that the above policies resulted in the reduction of admission standards and this allowed poorly qualified candidates to be admitted into Nigerian Universities. This is because the policy conferred on the various categories of persons the rights of admission whether qualified or not. Furthermore, Akani (1996) believes that the quality of University education in Nigeria has consequently been lowered as a result of the Federal Government admission policies which apparently de-emphasize quality. Ndiomu (1989) also expressed disenchantment for the admission policies of the Federal Government which prompted him to state thus:

The quota system of admitting candidates into Federal Government institutions gives room for inequality which affects the much talked about standards in education. It seems there is no definite cut-off line for all candidates. A candidate from State Y may score 65% and may not be offered admission because there are many others from the same State with higher scores; while another candidate from State X who scored 45% is admitted because only a few candidates from that State scored above 45%. The system seems to negate some of the major national

objectives such as free and democratic society; just and egalitarian society (p.43).

The points highlighted so far indicate that the process of admitting students into Nigerian Universities has some in-built problems that prevent the most qualified candidates to be offered admissions. This situation consequently affects the quality of University education in these institutions. In order to confirm this thesis the following hypotheses have been proposed.

1. There is no significant relationship between catchment area policy of admission and the quality of university education in Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between backwardness factor policy of admission and the quality of university education in Nigeria.
3. The relationship between discretionary policy of admission and the quality of university education in Nigeria is not significant.
4. The discriminatory fees policy of admission does not significantly relate to the quality of university education in Nigeria.
5. There is no significant relationship between admission policies and the quality of University education in Nigeria.

Related Literature

Admissions into Nigerian universities have become a big issue over the years because of the ever increasing demands for University education and the availability of only 75 universities in the country. Prior to 1978 each University conducted its placement examination and admitted its students in line with available spaces. On realizing that very intelligent candidates obtained admissions into a number of Universities but settled for one while denying many of opportunities the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced Central placement examination body. This body known as the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) was established by Decree No. 2 of 1978 (Nwadiani & Igineweka, 2005).

In order to regulate admissions into the institutions of learning in Nigeria the Federal Government initiated and promoted a federal character policy which gave rise to the concept of equalization of opportunity in university education. The federal character policy implies that public authorities, Semi-government agencies, institutions of learning and even the private sector should ensure fair and effective representation of states or local government areas or ethnic groups in positions of power, authority, placement in enrolment into schools and so on (Adejo, 2005, p. 277). The political Bureau Report (FRN, 1987) refers to the federal character policy as how fair and equal representation can be given to the various component units and communal groups in the country's institutions of learning, agencies and positions of power, status and influence. Furthermore, the Federal Character Commission (FRN 1996) states that Federal Policy involves lowering the entry and promotional qualifications of states considered to be disadvantaged in educational opportunities. The rationale of this policy, according to Adejo (2005), is that by a proper application of the doctrine of Federal Character, all ethno-regional areas, groups and communities will be given equal opportunity to participate in the Socio-economic and political life of Nigeria.

Yoloye (1989) identifies three areas that form parts of the principles of the federal character policy as; number of students admitted; the staff appointment from each state as well as the even spread of Universities across the various geo-political zones of the country. According to Yoloye (1989) these principles are the necessary guide in the application of the Federal Character Policy in all Universities and other educational institutions.

Equalization of Opportunity and Admission Placement

The practice of the policy of equalization of opportunity covers all aspects of the life of Nigerian people. However, the focus of this study is on the practice of this policy in University education with particular attention to admission and its effect on the University system. Onyeoziri (1989) notes that the principle of equalization which derive from the federal character policy has become most

important consideration in admissions, establishment of universities, recruitment and promotion of staff in federal educational institutions.

The quota system is the formula used in the equalization of educational opportunity through its influence on admission matters.

Onwuka (1991) believes that the quota system which stipulates the number of candidates which should come from each State whether qualified or not is one of the euphemisms that has to be practiced in the equalization process in education. Yoloje (1989) opines that the form of quota system in practice in Nigeria is one borne out of a “reasoned compromise”. According to him this is based on four elements namely: academic merit, educationally disadvantage state, catchment areas, and discretion.

Academic merit, according to Yoloje (1989), is determined by the scores in the University Matriculation Examination (UME) conducted by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), WAEC/NECO or London/GCE A – level examination. The policy on educationally disadvantage states” is seen as another euphemism in the application of admission policy under the federal character concept. According to a Federal Government Circular (FME/S/518/VO/01/99 of 2nd September 1983) in Okwori (2003, pp. 55 – 56) educationally disadvantaged States in Nigeria are Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Cross-River, Gongola, Kaduna, Lagos, Niger, Plateau, Rivers and Sokoto.

“Catchment Area” is another phrase in the admission policy to promote equalization of educational opportunity. “Catchment area’ refers to the locality in which federal universities are established. This policy stipulates that the states in the immediate vicinity of each University should derive special preferences in terms of admissions. The admission policy of “discretion” opportunity is given to universities to cater for good candidates that would be adversely affected in the process of applying the various quota system guidelines. The most current guideline on admission approved by the Federal government of Nigeria through the National Universities Commission (NUC, 1999) is as follow: Merit = 45%, Catchment area = 35%; disadvantaged states = 20% (NUC 1999, P. 5). In the application

of these criteria it is important to note the following proviso by the Federal Government through the NUC (1999, p.68).

- (i) If because of the pattern of applications and the range of courses offered by universities cannot fill all the places allocated to some States, Universities are to consult the second choice lists of candidates.
- (ii) In any given university no state shall benefit from both the criteria of locality and educationally disadvantaged.

Methodology

The purpose of the investigation was to find out the effect of the federal character policy of admission on the standards of Nigerian Universities. The study was conducted in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Population

The South-South zone of Nigeria comprised of ten Universities made up of four Federal universities, four state Universities and two private universities. The private Universities are excluded from this study because they are not bound by the policy of federal character. Consequently, only eight Universities provided the population which comprise of eight 8 Vice-Chancellors, 8 Deputy-Vice Chancellors, 8 Registrars 40 Deans of Faculties (each University has five Deans), 160 Heads of Departments (each University has 20 Heads of Departments and 160 Senior lecturers (20 from each University). This gave a total population of 384 persons deemed suitable to provide the required data for this investigation. It should please, be noted that in this study Vice-Chancellors, Deputy-vice Chancellor, Deans and Heads of Departments are collectively referred to as administrators while senior lecturers are referred to academic staff.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study population of 384 was considered manageable and was therefore adopted as the study sample. In view of this a sampling technique was therefore not necessary.

Research Design

The design used for the study was a survey method which involved administering copies of a questionnaire to the respondents and retrieving same after completion.

Instrument for Data Collection

The main instrument used for the investigation was a questionnaire known as “Admission Policy and Effect on University Education Quality” (APEUEQ) designed by the researcher. The instrument considered the influence of the following admission criteria on the quality of University education in Nigeria: Catchment area, educationally disadvantaged, discretion, academic merit and discriminatory fees. The APEUEQ was designed after the likert modified four point type scale with response options of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; disagree (DA) = 2; and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was subjected to a test of validity. Some of my colleagues with expertise in measurement and evaluation assisted to ensure that the instrument contained relevant items capable of eliciting the relevant data for the study. By this measure both the face and content validity of the instrument were assured.

Reliability of the Instrument

A test for reliability was conducted to determine the consistency of the instrument to elicit the required data over time. A pilot study involving 20 respondents drawn from Universities outside of the South-South zone was conducted. The test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The correlations between the test-retest method were calculated using the formula:

$$r = \frac{N\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{N\sum X^2 - (\sum x)^2} \sqrt{N\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2}}$$

Where $\sum x$ = sum of the x scores

Σy	=	sum of the y scores
Σx^2	=	sum of the squared x scores
Σy^2	=	sum of the squared y scores
Σxy	=	sum of the products of paired x and y scores
N	=	number of paired scores

The calculation produced a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.73$ and this was found acceptable for the study.

Administration of the Instrument

The post-graduate students of the researcher who are from the South-South states served as research assistants for the purpose of administering the questionnaire. Three weeks were used for administration and retrieval of the instrument.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data obtained through the questionnaire were analyzed through frequency counts and weighting of the responses. The chi square statistical method was used to test the hypotheses of the study. The formula for chi square is provided below:

$$X^2 = \frac{\Sigma[(fo - fe)^2]}{fe}$$

Where

fo	=	the observed frequencies
fe	=	the expected frequencies (Best, 1981)

Results

The results of the study are presented below. All calculations are based on the chi-square statistical method. A total of 384 copies of the questionnaire were administered but responses were obtained from 374 of the subjects. This figure comprised of 219 administrators and 155 academic staff.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between

catchment area policy of admission and the quality of University education.

Table 2: Distribution of Responses

S/N	Parameter	SA	A	DA	SD
1.	The admission of students based on catchment area policy often compromises entry standards and therefore lowers the quality of university education.	130	180	40	24
2.	Catchment area policy encourages mediocrity in education and stagnates development generally	110	230	24	10
3.	Catchment area policy has precipitated many ills, such as examination frauds, Cult problems, drug abuse, etc and consequently reduced the quality of education	95	198	80	31

Table 3: Summation of Responses (Observed Frequencies)

Responses	Administrators	Academic Staff	Total
Agree	196	118	314
Disagree	23	37	60
Total	219	155	374

Table 4: Calculation of X^2 Value

Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo - Fe	(fo - Fe) ²	(Fo - Fe) ² ÷ Fe
a.	196	183.9	12.1	146.41	0.796
b.	118	130.1	-12.1	146.41	1.125
c.	23	35.1	-12.1	146.41	4.171
d.	37	24.9	12.1	146.41	5.880
	374	374			11.972

Number of Cells = 4; $X^2 = 11.97$

degrees of freedom (df) = $(r - 1)(k - 1) = (2 - 1)(2 - 1) = (1)(1) = 1$
df = 1

X^2 critical table value of 1 degree of freedom at 0.05 = 3.84

Decision: Since the calculated X^2 value, 11.97 > the X^2 critical table value, hypothesis No. 1 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between backwardness factor policy of admission and the quality of University education.

Table 5: Distribution of Responses

S/N	Parameter	SA	A	DA	SD
1.	Backwardness factor policy lowers admission criteria and, so reduce the quality of university education	88	160	72	54
2.	As a result of backwardness factor consideration many academically weak candidates are often admitted thereby lowering the quality of university education	85	199	65	25
3.	Backwardness factor policy reduces the quality of university education and national development also suffers.	92	187	58	37

Table 6: Summation of Responses (Observed Frequencies)

Responses	Administrators	Academic Staff	Total
Agree	170	100	270
Disagree	49	55	104
Total	219	155	374

Table 7: Calculation of X^2 Value

Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo - Fe	(fo - Fe) ²	(Fo - Fe) ² ÷ Fe
a.	170	158.1	11.9	141.61	0.896
b.	100	111.9	-11.9	141.61	1.266
c.	49	60.9	-11.9	141.61	2.325

d.	55	43.1	11.9	141.61	3.286
					7.773

Number of Cells = 4; $X^2 = 7.77$

degrees of freedom (df) = $(r - 1)(k - 1) = (2 - 1)(2 - 1) = (1)(1) = 1$

df = 1

X^2 critical table value of degree of freedom at 0.05 = 3.84

Decision: Since the calculated X^2 value, $7.77 >$ the X^2 critical table value, hypothesis No. 2 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Hypothesis 3: *The relationship between discretionary policy of admission and the quality of University education is not significant.*

Table 8: Distribution of Responses

S/N	Parameter	SA	A	DA	SD
1.	Discretionary admission policy gives room for the admission of unqualified or low quality candidates and thereby lowering University standards.	65	173	89	47
2.	Discretionary admission policy encourages injustice in University education and also reduces quality	72	195	70	37
3.	Discretionary policy of admission violates the constitutional provision of equality of opportunity for all citizens and can generate social disharmony in the society with its attendant negative implications for education	88	198	55	33

Table 9: Summation of Responses (Observed Frequencies)

Responses	Administrators	Academics Staff	Total
Agree	189	75	264
Disagree	30	80	110
Total	219	155	374

Table 10: Calculation of X^2 Value

Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo - Fe	(fo - Fe) ²	(Fo - Fe) ² ÷ Fe
a.	189	154.6	34.4	1183.36	7.654
b.	75	109.4	-34.4	1183.36	10.817
c.	30	64.4	-34.4	1183.36	18.375
d.	80	45.6	34.4	1183.36	25.950
					62.796

Number of Cells = 4; $X^2 = 62.80$

degrees of freedom (df) = $(r - 1)(k - 1) = (2 - 1)(2 - 1) = (1)(1) = 1$
df = 1

X^2 critical table value of degree of freedom at 0.05 = 3.84

Decision: Since the calculated X^2 value, $62.80 >$ the X^2 critical table value, hypothesis No. 3 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Hypothesis 4: The discriminatory fees policy of admission does not significantly relate to the quality of university education in Nigeria

Table 11: Distribution of Responses

S/N	Parameter	SA	A	DA	SD
1.	Discriminatory fees keep away good but indigent students out of the university	62	170	80	62
2.	Discriminatory fees encourage students with low intelligent quotients but have good financial background and this reduces standards.	70	187	68	49
3.	Discriminatory fees are universally acceptable and have no negative effects on academic standards.	35	84	175	80

Table 12: Summation of Responses (Observed Frequencies)

Responses	Administrators	Academics Staff	Total
Agree	130	73	203
Disagree	89	82	171
Total	219	155	374

Table 13: Calculation of X^2 Value

Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo - Fe	(fo - Fe) ²	(Fo - Fe) ² ÷ Fe
a.	130	118.9	11.1	123.21	1.036
b.	73	84.1	-11.1	123.21	1.465
c.	89	100.1	-11.1	123.21	1.231
d.	82	70.9	11.1	123.21	1.738
					5.470

Number of Cells = 4; $X^2 = 5.47$

degrees of freedom (df) = $(r - 1)(k - 1) = (2 - 1)(2 - 1) = (1)(1) = 1$

df = 1

X^2 critical table value of degree of freedom at 0.05 = 3.84

Decision: In view of the fact that the calculated X^2 value, 5.47 > the X^2 critical table value, hypothesis No. 4 is consequently rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Hypothesis 5: *There is no significant relationship between admission policies and the quality of University education in Nigeria.*

Table 14: Distribution of Responses

S/N	Parameter	SA	A	DA	SD
1.	The catchment area policy of admission into Nigerian Universities affects educational quality adversely	60	186	89	39
2.	The backwardness factor that usually affect the trend of admissions in Nigeria does not have an adverse effect on quality	39	98	123	114

	of university education				
3.	The policy of discretion on admissions has some negative effects on the quality of university education	74	169	88	43
4.	When universities charge discriminatory fees in consideration of the ethnic status of students no harm is done to the quality of education	42	77	165	90

Table 15: Summation of Responses (Observed Frequencies)

Responses	Administrators	Academics Staff	Total
Agree	97	89	186
Disagree	122	66	188
Total	219	155	374

Table 16: Calculation of X² Value

Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo - Fe	(fo - Fe) ²	(Fo - Fe) ² ÷ Fe
a.	97	108.9	-11.9	141.61	1.300
b.	89	77.1	11.9	141.61	1.837
c.	122	110.1	11.9	141.61	1.286
d.	66	77.9	-11.9	141.61	1.818
					6.241

Number of Cells = 4; $X^2 = 6.24$

degrees of freedom (df) = $(r - 1)(k - 1) = (2 - 1)(2 - 1) = (1)(1) = 1$
df = 1

X^2 critical table value of degree of freedom at 0.05 = 3.84

Decision: The calculated X^2 value, $6.24 >$ the X^2 critical table value, therefore hypothesis No. 5 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Discussion of Results

The result of the study rejects hypothesis No. 1 and confirms a

relationship between catchment area policy of admission and the quality of university education,. The study clearly showed that catchment area admission policy compromised standards expected in Nigerian Universities. The policy encouraged the admission of less qualified candidates which later resulted in many problems such as examination malpractice, cult problem, drug abuse as well as other anti-social behaviour. Akani (1996) is in agreement with this finding.

The study also established a significant relationship between backwardness factor admission policy and the quality of University education. Hypothesis No. 2 was rejected through a confirmation that when backward factor policy is applied for the consideration of University admission many weak or unqualified candidates are offered admissions. This results in the lowering of the standards or quality of university education. The after effect of low quality of University education is the hindrance of national development. Ndiomu (1989) had cause to worry over the situation which negated the principles of justice and equity.

The rejection level of hypothesis No.3 with a calculated X^2 value of 62.80 as against the critical table value of 3.84 implies that the use of discretionary policy in the admission of students has a high negative value. In other words this policy encourages the acceptance of many unqualified candidates into Nigerian universities and consequently reducing their operational standards. Babalola (2005) and Eluemunor (2005) expressed views which are in tandem with this finding.

The result on the policy of discriminatory fees follows a similar pattern as those above. It shows a significant relationship between the quality of University education and the policy of discrimination in charging school fees. The result showed that this policy keeps away good but indigent students out of the University while it encourages students with low intelligence levels but have good financial base to enjoy University education. The resultant effect of this policy is the reduction in University standards.

The Minister of Education in Nigeria, Mrs Chinwe Obaji and the Pro-Chancellor of the University of Lagos on Separate interviews expressed opinions that are in agreement with these

results (Oyekanmi, 2005, p. 47; Sotade 2005, p. 15).

Finally, hypothesis No. 5 was also rejected because the admission policies adopted by Nigerian Universities as discussed above have a significant relationship to the quality of University education. This could not have been otherwise having confirmed same position as shown by hypothesis No. 1 to hypothesis No. 4.

Conclusion

The findings of this study have given rise to the following conclusions.

1. The policy of catchment area which allocates an agreed percentage of admission places to candidates from the locality of the University is a factor for the reduction of the quality of University education. This is so because some of the candidates admitted based on this policy do not usually meet the minimum admission requirements.
2. The policy that reserves an agreed percentage of admission opportunities for communities or states that are educationally backward gives room for the acceptance of intellectually deficient candidates as students. This results in the reduction of standards.
3. The use of discretionary policy for the admission of University students can often lead to abuse by facilitating the acceptance of low quality candidates as students. The effect of such a practice will be the reduction of the quality of education.
4. The admission policy that permits a discriminatory charging of school fees based on state of origin is a potential factor for the reduction of standards. This is true because some academically good candidates are usually unable to afford the financial costs of their education. On the other hand, some academically weak candidates are usually financially strong and therefore offered admission opportunities even when they may not be qualified. Educational quality will consequently be affected.

5. The study has unequivocally shown that the quality of University education in Nigeria is low as a result of the admission policies in vogue.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the results of the study to assist Universities in Nigeria particularly and developing countries in general adopt more acceptable admission criteria with the potentials to enhance educational standards.

1. The catchment area policy of admission should be de-emphasized. Rather than compromise the quality of education through substandard admissions universities should design programmes for the physical development of their immediate communities through the extension of social services within the limits of available resources.
2. Educationally backward States should develop remedial programmes for their indigenes to prepare them for competitive University admissions. The special quota for backward States should be stopped for the interest of qualitative university education.
3. Discretionary policy of admission is very unprogressive and subject to a tremendous abuse. It should be totally discontinued as such a policy should have no place in the university system.
4. The policy on discriminatory fees may be difficult to stop completely as there are always stakeholders and sponsors of various universities. There are both Federal and State universities. Most State Universities will always see it fit to charge their indigenes less fees compared to others. At best this policy can be moderated to ensure that too wide a gap is not created between the rich and the poor.
5. All policies especially those that affect admissions that reduce the quality of University education should be reviewed without delay.
6. More Universities should be established to meet the needs of those yearning for University education. Only this

measure will reduce the pressure on university admissions and assure good quality.

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