

Chapter Five

THE GROWTH OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES, AND THE WAY FORWARD

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Introduction

Any nation's strength and degree of growth are determined by the strength and development of its human resources. Efficient human resources are produced through such a nation's education systems, particularly its higher education institutions.

Education is the totality of a person's experiences. Higher Education is defined by the National Policy on Education (2004) as the Post-Secondary Section of the National Education System, which includes courses offered by Colleges of Education, Advanced Teachers Training Colleges, Correspondence Colleges, and other institutions that are affiliated with them. According to Adeyemi (2001), Higher Education refers to a system that encompasses much of the country's research capacity and reproduces the bulk of the qualified professionals needed in the labor market.

Marketing higher education in Africa is a developing study area, and there is a lack of understanding regarding how African higher education institutions sell themselves to prospective scholars (Mogaji, et al., 2017). Despite limited financing for current tertiary institutions, there is an increasing number of Universities to match the demand for higher education.

While acknowledging that there are numerous nations on the continent with diverse higher education systems, this study focuses specifically on Nigeria; possibly knowledge of the Nigerian higher

education system might serve as a beginning point for research into higher education systems in other nations.

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country, with a population of over 200 million people and a median age of 17.9 years; it has the largest higher education sector in Sub-Saharan Africa, and demand is expanding. As a result, the purpose of this study is to describe the conceptual trend of higher education in Nigeria to date, what the program has been, and its challenges over time.

Objectives of the Study

The study's main objective is to examine the development impact of higher education in Nigeria. More specifically, the study will:

- a) identify the purposes of higher education in Nigeria;
- b) describe the concept and definition of higher education in Nigeria;
- c) discuss the brief history of the Nigerian education system
- d) analyze the challenges that higher education faces in Nigeria.
- e) identify the way forward to the improvement of higher education.

Scope of the Study

The article will concentrate on the role of higher education in national development as it relates to education in Nigeria.

Education Definition

Education is the act or process of transmitting or gaining broad information, improving thinking and judgment abilities, and generally cognitively preparing oneself or others for mature life (dictionary.com). According to Wikipedia, education is the process of assisting learning, or the acquisition of information, skills, values, morals, beliefs, habits, and personal growth. Education began with the transfer of cultural legacy from one generation to the next (Jaja, J. M. 2014). It is a universal element of all cultures. Although it is a ubiquitous element of society, educational systems differ according to organizational structures, instructional techniques, and

philosophical and cultural groups (Kunle and Rotimi, 2006). Education is a valuable instrument that is beneficial in everyone's life. Education is what distinguishes us from other living beings on the planet. It elevates man to the status of the most intelligent species on the planet. It empowers people and prepares them to confront life's problems effectively. Having said that, education remains a luxury in our nation rather than a need (Jaja, J. M. (2014). To make education more accessible, educational awareness must be extended throughout the country. However, without first examining the significance of education, this remains incomplete. Only when people know how important it is will they consider it necessary for a happy existence. In this Education essay, we will look at the value of education and how it may lead to success (Jaja, J. M. 2014).

Nigerian Higher Education; Concept and Description

Higher education refers to many forms of education provided in postsecondary institutions of learning that often result in a titled degree, diploma, or certificate of higher studies after a term of study. Higher-educational institutions include not just universities and colleges, but also a variety of professional schools that offer training in subjects such as law, theology, medicine, business, music, and art. Higher education also includes teacher-training institutions, junior colleges, and technological institutes. Most higher-education institutions require completion of secondary school, and the typical admission age is around 18 years. (same as college; the university).

The system of higher education originated in Europe throughout the Middle Ages, with the establishment of the first universities. In contemporary times, the models developed in prominent nations such as France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States have mainly defined the form of higher education across the world.

Higher education is intended to achieve the following goals:

- a) Contribute to national growth by providing high-quality relevant manpower training.
- b) Establish and instill appropriate values for the individual and society's survival.

- c) Improve an individual's intellectual capacity for understanding and appreciating their local and external environments.
- d) Developing both physical and intellectual abilities that will enable individuals to be self-sufficient and helpful members of society.
- e) Enable research, innovation, renewing structural system implementation.
- f) Promote and encourage scholarship and community service.
- g) Develop and consolidate national solidarity; and
- h) Encourage understanding and engagement on a national and worldwide scale.

Types of Higher Education Institutions

- Universities
- Research Universities
- Specialized higher education
- Independent colleges
- Higher Education Structure

Universities

The University is a higher education institution that teaches students in at least three of the four basic domains of science - humanitarian, natural, social, and technological - for the degrees of "bachelor," "master," and "doctor" in the corresponding basic spheres of science. This higher education school contributes significantly to the development of important public areas through top scientific research and has high research results, as measured by objective indicators (such as the number of published and referenced scientific articles in international databases, the number of applications for international patents filed, and the number of citations in refereed and indexed journals by other authors in international databases), is deterred.

Research Universities

A research university is a higher education institution that, in addition to its other qualities, provides a major contribution to the development of vital public areas through cutting-edge research. Its outcomes are evaluated using objective metrics outlined in a Council of Minister's statute.

Specialized higher schools

The specialized higher education establishment shall conduct scientific and research activity, as well as artistic and creative work, and shall provide instruction in one of the basic fields of science, art, and physical culture, and shall fulfill high education act (HEA) standards. Its name must reflect the specialized field in which it trains professionals. Except for the "bachelor" degree, this higher education institution may also educate in educational qualification degrees "Master" and educational and scientific degrees "Doctor."

Independent colleges

The independent college shall educate to obtain a professional qualification of educational-qualification degree "bachelor," for which no less than 180 credits with a term of education of not less than three years are required following the curriculum - "professional bachelor in".

There are now 478 tertiary institutions in Nigeria. A breaks down is presented below:

Nigeria's university education system comprises both public and private universities. As seen in Figure 1, public universities are operated by both the federal and state governments, whereas private universities are owned by various religious groups, individuals, and organizations.

introduced in Nigeria. A few years later, in 1854, several Christian missionaries established CMS Grammar School in Lagos, which became Nigeria's first secondary school.

There was an increasing demand for schools in Nigeria when Lord Lugard merged the northern and southern regions of the country in 1914. Although Nigeria as a nation came into being in 1914, it was not until 1934 that the first form of higher education institution, Yaba Higher College, was established in the country. Its establishment was a sequel to a realization by Mr. E.R.J. Hussey who was the country's colonial Director of Education. Indeed British personnel was performing duties that already in other countries in Africa were being performed by Africans. It was necessary to start an institution that in the first instance would be a "Higher College" and develop in due course into a University.

The rapid expansion of education led to the foundation of the University of Ibadan in 1948, the country's first university. Private schools, in addition to public schools, were established by individuals and organizations in the private sector. Nigeria's educational industry includes both public and private schools at all levels.

The Nigerian government commissioned an inquiry (Ashby Commission) in April 1959 to advise it on the new nation's higher education requirements during its first two decades of independence. Before submitting the report on September 2, 1960, the Eastern Region administration built its institution in Nsukka, the University of Nigeria Nsukka, 1960. Among the Ashby report's recommendations are:

- a) The Federal Government of Nigeria should promote the establishment of new institutions.
- b) A university should be created in the North, with its headquarters at the former Nigerian College in Zaria.
- c) A university should be constructed in Lagos to handle business, commerce, and economics studies.
- d) University College Ibadan's curriculum should be expanded and expanded into a complete university.

e) A National Universities Commission should be established to have unquestioned authority over university issues, including financing, employees, and curriculum.

As a result, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was created in 1960, while the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (previously the University of Ife) was founded in 1961. Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and the University of Lagos were both founded in 1962, and the University College was turned into a formal university in the same year. In 1970, the newly constituted Bendel State established the University of Benin. As a result, the six institutions founded between 1960 and 1970 were known as first-generation federal universities. In addition, seven new institutions were formed between 1975 and 1977 to mirror the then-19 state organization. The University of Calabar (1975), the University of Ilorin (1976), the University of Jos (1975), the University of Sokoto (1977), the University of Port Harcourt (1977), and Bayero University, Kano (1977) were among the second generation universities (1977). Under Decree 46 of 1977, which authorized the Federal Government's takeover of all institutions in Nigeria, these universities became federal universities (Jubril, 2003).

The 1979 constitution moved university education from the exclusive legislative list to the concurrent legislative list, allowing state governments to construct state-owned colleges if they so desired. Between 1979 and 1983, several universities were founded on this foundation. Bendel State University (now Ambrose Alli University) in Ekpoma; the Anambra State University of Technology in Enugu; Imo State University in Owerri; Ogun State University in Ago-Iwoye; Ondo State University in Ado-Ekiti; Rivers State University in Port Harcourt; Cross River State University in Uyo; and Lagos State University in Ijanikin are among them.

The Role of Federal Government Established Agencies

The Federal Government of Nigeria has created the following agencies to serve as external supervisory authorities for the country's numerous higher education institutions:

- a) National Universities Commission,
- b) National Commission for Colleges of Education
- c) And, The National Universities Commission

The Commission was created in 1962 to develop and manage university education in Nigeria. Its functions include the following:

- ✓ awarding approval for all academic programs in Nigerian universities;

- ✓ approving the formation of all higher educational institutions offering degree programs; and;
- ✓ guaranteeing the quality assurance of all academic programs in universities through regular accreditation.

The role of the National University Commission (NUC) in system success cannot be overstated. It serves the following functions as an external quality assurance organization for the Nigerian University System:

- ✓ Advising the federal government on the formation and placement of universities, as well as the development of new facilities and postgraduate programs in universities.
 - ✓ Advise the government on the basic requirements of universities.
 - ✓ Executing periodic plans on the overall program to be pursued by university employees.
 - ✓ Creating periodic plans for the overall program that the institutions will follow.
 - ✓ Receiving and distributing federal money to federal universities
 - ✓ Establishing and upholding minimum academic standards
- The NUC's auditing and monitoring activities have helped to improve the quality and sustainability of higher education in Nigeria.

Challenges Facing Higher Education In Nigeria

Nigeria's education system is beset by significant challenges. Indeed, education in Nigeria has experienced tremendous neglect over the years, exhibited by insufficient financing, inconsistent policy changes, a lack of infrastructure, and disruption of the

educational system. These issues in the educational system have been quite upsetting. Indeed, budgetary allocations to education in Nigeria have been grossly inadequate, leading to agitations by lecturers and students about obsolete equipment, old and outdated textbooks, and journals, as well as poor remuneration for lecturers, particularly at the tertiary level, which has exacerbated the country's brain drain as many of them moved to different parts of the world in search of greener pastures.

The following are the challenges confronting Nigerian higher education:

i. Strike: Since 1986, students in Nigerian educational institutions, particularly universities, have been more absent than present. This is due to ongoing strikes by either the academic or administrative staff, or both." Currently, as of writing this article, ASUU has embarked on an indefinite strike. The union had earlier gone on a month warning strike on February 14, 2022, and extended it by another eight weeks which comes to an end on Monday, May 9, 2022. The union finally embarked on an indefinite industrial action, due to this fact. It is time for us, as teachers of these students, to confront the issue of strikes head-on (warning, impending, and solidarity). There is a need for the Federal Government to tackle the issue of the strike in our educational sectors.

ii. Poor and Inadequate Curriculum: Poor and insufficient curriculum is a major role in stemming the tide of unemployed and underemployed graduates. There are no provisions for courses that address market developments, such as new marketing techniques, crime prevention and investigative and online skills, e.t.c.

iii. Inadequate Funding: Inadequate funding is one of the key issues confronting higher education in Nigeria. The government of Nigeria does not sufficiently finance higher education institutions. The main problem in educational progress is a lack of funding. Udida et al. (2009) agree that one of the most important threats to the viability of educational institutions is declining public financing in the face of increased demand and, consequently, rising higher education costs.

This lack of funding has an impact on job performance and the institution's growth. Without finance, higher education institutions cannot function properly. This circumstance necessitates more funding effort on the part of both the government and educational stakeholders to maintain the pace and expansion of the education industry.

On this issue, Udida et al. (2009) on the financing situation stated, "Our higher institution education systems are in desperate need of money....to provide for both their capital and recurring demands." The federal government has been cutting the budget from year to year in recent years. This reduction has impacted both capital and recurring spending. Many capital projects begun in higher education institutions a few years ago have yet to be finished owing to a lack of necessary financing." The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) is not adequately distributed to all higher institutions, especially the privately owned institutions. However, it is encouraging to note that the policy of grants for research in all higher institutions is positively under review to favour all qualifying higher institutions.

iv. Inadequate Lecturers: Inadequate lecturers are a severe concern in Nigeria's higher education institutions. Many higher education institutes do not have enough professors to teach at their numerous institutions. The lack of lecturers is to blame for the low quality of teaching and learning in most Nigerian higher education institutions. The summary report of the needs assessment was given to the Federal Government in November 2012. It cited a lack of people as one of the reasons Nigerian colleges have struggled to compete competitively with institutions in other areas of the world. According to the research, the steep fall in scholarships in Nigerian colleges is due to a mix of infrastructure and staffing difficulties.

v. Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities: Classrooms, lecture halls, staff offices, hotels, sports grounds, power, a strong road network within the institution, and so on are examples of infrastructure facilities. The majority of the country's higher

education institutions lack appropriate facilities. The sufficiency of these facilities will promote successful teaching and learning, whereas the lack of these facilities will impede effective teaching and learning, resulting in low educational quality.

According to Adejomo (2017), there is a widespread view that the state of a school's learning environment, particularly its infrastructure, has a significant impact on student's academic achievement and effectiveness. Enough electricity and water supply, a good communication system, an upgraded transit system, and adequate classrooms, libraries, labs, and furniture are all required to promote successful learning in an educational institution.

Subair et al. (2012) observed that infrastructure plays an important role in preserving quality in Nigerian colleges. As a result, it is suggested that the government enhance financing for infrastructure development. It is also suggested that colleges adhere to acceptable infrastructure maintenance requirements and enroll only students for whom they have suitable facilities.

vi. Unstable Academic Calendar: Another issue confronting Nigerian higher education institutions is the issue of an irregular academic calendar. The different trade union groupings inside the schools also contribute to an unstable academic schedule. They frequently go on strike because they disagree with the government on welfare concerns. Strikes inevitably disrupt school academic programs, increasing costs and lengthening student programs. Strikes at tertiary educational institutions have posed a severe danger to effective learning. It has impacted a poor image of the education system when compared with other nations.

Protracted strikes can be avoided if required actions are done to develop a strong connection between both sides, the policy makers and trade unions. The government must always endeavor to fulfill whatever agreement is reached and agreed upon.

vii. Academic Corruption: Corruption has infiltrated Nigeria's higher education institutions. The little money made available by the government for program creation, research, and infrastructure

development winds up in private hands or is diverted for personal benefit. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), according to Premium Times (2020), has accused academics throughout the country's public tertiary schools of diverting research money to construct homes, buy automobiles, and indulge in other frivolous activities. This comes only days after the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) made public an accusation of personnel budget inflation leveled against various academic and healthcare institutions, including the University of Ibadan (Chinyere&Chukwuma, 2017).

Corruption is not just a monster in this region of the world; it is also becoming the norm and part of the culture. Even though few resources are allotted to the industry, they are rarely utilized wisely. The government established the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System, IPPIS, in an attempt to stop the flood, but it is akin to creating a larger monster while attempting to tame a little one.

viii. Insecurity: Another difficulty impeding efficient administration and management of higher education institutions in Nigeria is the country's insecurity. Insurgents in Northern Nigeria have targeted several higher education institutions, interrupting academic programs, murdering students, and damaging infrastructure essential for teaching and learning. Insecurity in Nigeria, particularly in the Northeast, has wreaked havoc on educational infrastructure. The insurgency has damaged several school facilities ranging from elementary to higher education. Insecurity has led to the inadequate deployment of ICT facilities and management in Nigeria's northern educational institutions.

Mr. Abubakar (2016) observed that during crises, these facilities were either burned down or destroyed by militants because most of our schools lack adequate security. This is per UNESCO's recommendation for the Nigerian government to provide additional protection and improve school safety and security training in northeast Nigeria. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Boko Haram has

killed 2,300 teachers in Nigeria's northeast since the conflict began in 2009.

In the southeast region, the activities of the unknown gunmen had led to the loss of lives and properties in the region. Some of these activities include the sporadic shooting of unarmed and innocent citizens, burning of police stations, and the mandatory sit-at-home (Every Monday) imposed on the citizen due to the capture of the Indigenous people of Biafra commander in chief (Mazi Nnamdi Kanu).

Kidnapping, rape, armed robbery, political problems, murder, and damage of oil installations by Niger Delta militants, as well as assaults by Fulani Herdsmen on specific towns in the North and South, have all contributed to the country's instability. The recent incident in Owo, Ondo State, has created dread of the unknown, which has hampered the mobility of students and other citizens in the country.

ix. Brain-drain: The term "brain drain" refers to the large movement of professionals from poor countries to affluent ones in search of better working conditions. Many of the country's higher education institutions have lost many of their teachers to overseas colleges as a result of the brain drain problem. The enormous transfer of these teachers is producing a significant lecturer shortage in Nigerian higher education, particularly in the sciences department.

x. Weak Leadership: Many of the school administrators assigned to lead Nigeria's higher education institutions are inept and lack the capacity and competence to handle higher education administration and management. According to Udida et al. (2009), certain persons selected as vice-chancellors of various universities are weak, incompetent, and lack administrative potential; such appointees must exhibit administrative abilities and must lead by example. The leader must be honest, informed, and employ current management leadership approaches. He or she must be imaginative and adaptable to changing system conditions. The administrator's performance should be sustained via appropriate usage of material.

and human resources in the attainment of institutional goals and objectives. The Nigerian Higher Educational System requires leaders who can propel it to an enviable level of achievement and advancement, therefore contributing to society's goal of self-sufficiency (Udida et al., 2009).

xi. COVID-19 Problem: Since the outbreak of COVID-19 and the closure of Nigerian educational institutions. COVID-19 has harmed Nigeria's higher education program. According to Adesina Wahab (2020), the recent outbreak of COVID-19 exposed how terrible the situation in the sector is. While many countries found means of averting a total shut down of the sector, Nigeria is still groping in the dark. Some higher institutions rose up to the challenge by a pragmatic recourse to virtual teaching and learning. The various techniques of online learning were being adopted, pursued and sustained to keep the system afloat.

xiii. Poor Research: Higher education's second most important program is research. The importance of research in societal evolution cannot be overstated. Research is generally undertaken in higher education settings to solve societal problems. Inadequate financing in Nigerian higher education institutions is to blame for the country's inadequate research program. Nigerian higher education institutions do not do research in the same way that higher education institutions in other nations, particularly industrialized countries, do.

According to Yusuf (2012), the importance of higher education research in national growth cannot be overstated. However, research in Nigeria's institutions of higher learning, which include universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education, has yet to have a significant influence on the country's technical growth and the socioeconomic well-being of its citizens. Inadequate and irregular financing, insufficient motivation, bad or outmoded research infrastructure, brain drain, and increased workload due to deteriorating staff/student ratios are all barriers to achieving research goals in higher education. These limits have also resulted in relatively poor research output.

Moreover, the interactive principle of 'Town and Gown' has poorly been utilized. Higher institutions will do well and be more effective if their researchers are prolem targeted. For example, issues on afforestation, waste management, agricultural production and industrialization, ethics and civil society, insecurity, web-crimes, etc will be an attractive motivation for positive network between universities and established corporations and between education principle and society.

xiii. Poor Staff Development: One of the issues confronting Nigerian higher education institutions is a lack of staff development. Many higher education institutions do not sponsor staff development programs due to insufficient financing. As a result, proper financing for staff development and policies that promote staff development are recommended as essential for increased performance.

xiv. Cultism: This has been a thorn in the Nigerian higher education as many youths are prone to be exposed to be in cult groups; which are largely brought about by the influence of peer groups; parental background; societal decadence; erosion of education standards; militarization of the Nigerian polity; lack of recreational facilities; the quest for power and protection among others (Ajayi et al., 2010).

Way Forward

The following recommendations have been made for the growth and sustainability of higher education in Nigeria. They include adequate funding, hiring more lecturers, providing adequate infrastructure, ensuring a stable academic calendar, combating academic corruption, providing adequate security, motivating lecturers, appointing competent school administrators, and providing adequate ICT facilities to allow higher institutions to switch to online education to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on higher education.

ii) Adequate Financing: The government should boost the country's funding for higher education. This will allow higher education institutions to tackle other critical demands, such as

creating research programs.

b) More Lecturers: The government should direct higher education institutions in the country to hire more academic and non-academic employees to improve the country's educational quality.

c) More Adequate Infrastructural Facilities: The realization of higher education is, to some extent, dependent on the availability of infrastructural facilities in various schools.

d) Stable Academic Calendar: The government should direct the National Universities Commission to harmonize the calendars of the country's higher education institutions, and the government should be proactive in responding to the requests of various trade union groups in the country's higher education institutions.

e) Combat Institutional Corruption: The government and various higher education management teams should deploy anti-corruption agencies to combat academic and institutional corruption in higher education institutions around the country.

f) Adequate Security in Higher Education: To maintain security in the various school environments, the school management team should interact with various security authorities in the country.

g) Lecturer Motivation: The government should raise professors' wages and offer a pleasant working environment for them to keep them from leaving for greater opportunities in other nations.

h) Provide Appropriate ICT in Schools for Online Education: The government should provide adequate ICT facilities to all higher education institutions so that they may transition to online education and lessen the impact of COVID-19 on the country's higher education institutions.

i) Appointment of Competent School Administrators: To realize the goals of higher education in Nigeria, the government should guarantee that qualified school administrators are recruited to lead the country's numerous higher institutions.

j) The curriculum in higher institutions of learning should reflect on the need and engage courses in entrepreneurial studies / skill acquisition to enable an increase in employment ratios. The development of a skill by a student must be a requirement for students

to get a certificate at a higher education institution prior to graduation.

Conclusion

The main focus of this article is the growth of higher education in Nigeria, although the origins of education in Nigeria were also covered. In any case, education is a critical aspect of the process of nation-building and national growth. Education has been viewed as a tool for accomplishing the goals of unity, political stability, economic advancement, and equality of opportunity, as well as avoiding conditions that may lead to conflict. Through education and its application to living and interacting, the human race has accomplished so much. Education has made a significant contribution to human growth and development.

Unfortunately, this higher education is plagued with many challenges. This article identified Strike action, inadequate funding, inadequate lecturers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, unstable academic calendar, academic corruption, insecurity, brain drain, weak leadership, COVID-19 challenge, poor research, poor staff development, and cultism as the challenges facing the higher institutions in Nigeria. To address these challenges, the article recommended that the government should provide: adequate funding for higher institutions, employment of more lecturers, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities, ensure a stable academic calendar, fight academic corruption, provide adequate security, motivate lecturers, and appoint competent leadership.

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