

Policy of Carrying Capacity and Access to University Education in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward

Dr (Mrs.) Chinyere Amini-Philips and Mukoro, Samuel Akpoyowaire
Department of Educational Management
University of Port Harcourt

Abstract. Education is considered by many people as the panacea for national development. This explains the reasons many nations emphasize the need for educational policy in designing their plan for accelerated development. Thus, various programmes have been launched in Nigeria aimed at universalizing access and promoting equity in educational opportunity for the citizenry. Access to education is equally given a place in the National Policy in education. Furthermore, also enshrined in the Nigeria constitution is equity, as contained in section 18 of 1999. However, the demand for education especially at the university level has grown higher than supply, making the university system to outgrow the resources available to it to continue offering high quality education. In an effort to maintain quality and standard, the National Universities Commission (NUC) adopted the policy of carrying capacity. Unfortunately this policy poses an impediment to access. Therefore, this paper examined the meaning of carrying capacity and having university education. The work under consideration also highlight the quest and availability of education at the tertiary level in Nigeria, matters carried in the policy that directs carrying capacity and its impediments vis-à-vis having university education in our country. Finally, the paper provides the way forward to enhance university carrying capacity and make having university education expensive. Suggestions include improved funding, facilities/infrastructure, dual mode universities, amongst others.

Keywords: Policy of carrying capacity, access, demand and supply of university education, issues and challenges.

Introduction

Universities are major forces for the growth and development of individuals and the nation. This is because through universities, skilled competent and high quality manpower are trained to meet the need of the society at large. Thus, universities are the highest citadel of learning where human beings are trained to discover new knowledge and pass it on in order to produce quality

professionals in all facets of human endeavours. As noted by Ibiem and Okunnamiri (2007) investment in this level of tertiary education is a sine qua non of an appreciable level of human power development. As viewed by them, such investment becomes high priority as countries all over the world both developed and developing alike, steer in the direction of a knowledge society. The awareness of the importance of university education as “knowledge industry” for individual and national growth and development has made the demand for university education to grow higher than supply. Ehiamentolor (2005) affirmed that the demand for university education will not only continue but may even accelerate and twice more than what is obtainable now will be needed to suitably tackle the current demand for university education. In fact students’ enrolment in 141 licensed universities in Nigeria is over 1.7 million (The Nation, 2015). As at October 2015, out of the 141 universities, 40 are Federal Universities, 40 are state universities, and the remaining 61 are private universities.

Admittedly, the high rate of demand for university education has over-stretched the limited resources available thereby affecting the quality of programmes in the universities. Hence, Okebukola (2008) described the Nigerian university education as being at disequilibrium, matching student enrolment against available resources, which are now obsolete and inappropriate. The problem is further compounded by the low ranking of Nigerian Universities among the first fifty universities in Africa. In 2015, it was revealed by online rating that five Nigerian universities obtained the 20th, 23rd, 38th, 41st and 43rd positions among the fifty universities in Africa. These include the University of Lagos, Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, University of Ibadan, University of Ilorin and Covenant University respectively (Channels Television May 18, 2015). In order to maintain quality and standard of university education, the NUC in 2004 officially introduced and adopted the policy of carrying capacity. The policy states the total number of students a university should admit in a year on the basis of available facilities, staff and other resources. This is to ensure that the universities offer high-quality education.

However, the sections (1) (4c) and (5c) of the NPE emphatically states that there should be equal right to education by all children in the country without exception (FRN, 2004). The policy further emphasized the need for equal access to educational touch of the entire citizenry at all levels irrespective of level of education, within and outside to formal system. Successive governments in Nigeria are ensuring that the policy of education for all is implemented. These efforts among others include increasing the establishment of higher institutions, formulation of admission guidelines as well as issuance of certificate of participation to private individuals and the establishment of Open and Distance University in Nigeria. In spite of these steps taken by the government to expand the provision of university education in the country, it is still obvious that many do not still have access to it. Okebukola in Agboola (2011) remarked that social pressure for expanded access are strong with only about 13 percent of qualified candidates obtaining admission to university to study in spite of the establishment of more universities. With this in mind, although the policy of carrying capacity is to ensure quality but it seems to impact negatively on the

level of access to university education in Nigeria, knowing quite well that all effort geared towards the expansion of access through increased supply appears not to have yielded the desired level of access. This is probably why Emenalo (2009) averred that although the principle of carrying capacity is meant to enhance the quality and standards of university education in Nigeria so as to measure up with the world standard, but we must not lose sight of access to university education considering its enormous benefits. It is, against this backdrop that this paper focuses on the terms: carrying capacity and undertaking university education. In addition, the paper stressed the quest for university education and its provision in Nigeria. It also treats the issues in the policy of carrying capacity, challenges to carrying capacity vis-à-vis access to university education in Nigeria and the way forward.

Concept of Carrying Capacity

The policy of carrying capacity means the highest number of learners that a particular institution will be able to effectively manage for qualitative education, considering the human and material resources at our disposal as a nation (NUC, 2004; Kanyip, 2013) This suggests that the admission of learners at this level is in accordance with the facilities available and human resource on ground in each university in Nigeria. These facilities comprise good staff/student ratio, accommodation, required number of lecture rooms, libraries stocked with the appropriate books, renowned national and international journals among others and the human resource includes quality and qualified teaching and non-teaching staff in the right number and mix. According to Adewale (2014:321) the policy of carrying capacity introduced by NUC tell us how many students each and every university can take based on available facilities. In this respect, Nigerian universities have limits to their intake their respective carrying capacities in relation to available resources and staff strength. The model below depicts the criteria for deciding a university carrying capacity:

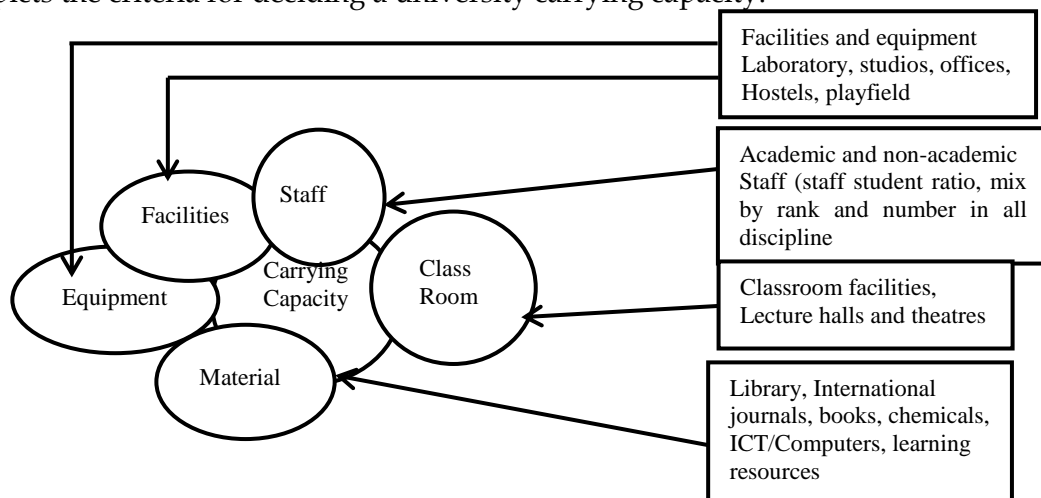


Figure 1: University carrying capacity model

Source: Adapted from Imogie A. I. & Imogie, O.A. (2008) Learning System as Correlate of effective teaching and learning in Nigerian Universities.

From the model, it means that each of the components is crucial to deciding the carrying capacity quotas for a university. As such all the components must be taken care of in the required quantity and quality. This influence the number of students NUC approves for each faculty in the universities in Nigeria. Table 1 below shows the enrolment and carrying capacity of Nigeria universities.

Table 1: Enrolment and Carrying Capacities

System	Enrolment	Carrying Capacity	Over Enrolment
Universities	1,096,312	715,000	381,312
National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)	35,000	100,000	-65,000

Source: Okojie, J.A. (2015) Innovative funding in the Nigeria university system

Concept of Having University Education

Generally, having education refers to the right or ability to gain entrance into a learning institution (Anumnu, Babalola & Taiwo in Zwalchir, 2007). According to them in the Nigerian context, it means enrolment in or entrance into any educational level. It also implies participating in education, whether formal or otherwise (Ehiamentolor, 2005) and the mandate, privilege or avenue of putting education in place for all in a nation (Enaowho, 2009). Thus, getting in touch with education suggests that education should be within the reach of every individual in a nation irrespective of gender and age. Hence (FGN, 2004) presented access as ensuring that everyone who is entitled to education receives it.

Furthermore, UNESCO in Moti (2010) advanced that obtaining university education means making sure that university education is a function of performance, capacity, hard work and persistence. Okeke, (2009) views obtaining university education from a broad spectrum denoting free education at this level and encompassing all to achieve the curriculum content at this level, which will immensely enhance societal development. In this regard, there should be no form of discrimination or negative attitude towards education in the fulfillment of the right to university education. Depriving any person or group of persons covertly or overtly of access to education in any form is a violation of the right of the individual to education and against the declaration of human rights (Anho & Onojetah, 2007).

The Demand and Supply of University Education

In Nigeria, the quest for university admission far outweighs the provision of same. The data in table 2 clearly confirms this claim.

Table 2: Demand and Supply of University Education in Nigeria 1999-2009

Academic Session	Number of Applicants	Number Admitted	% Admitted	Number of Unplaced Applicants
1999/2000	418,292	64,368	15.39	353,924
2000/2001	416,381	45,766	10.99	370,615
2001/2002	714,548	90,769	12.7	623,779
2002/2003	994,380	51,845	5.21	942,535
2003/2004	1,046,950	105,157	10.04	941,793
2004/2005	841,878	122,492	14.54	719,386
2005/2006	916,371	65,609	7.16	850,762
2006/2007	803,472	123,626	15	679,846
2007/2008	911,653	119,195	13	792,458
2008/2009	1,054,060	127,082	12	926,978

Source: Okeke, E.A.C. (2009). Access in Nigerian Education

The above table shows that there is continuous craving for education at the level of education under consideration. It also shows that about 84.7% to 94.8% of qualified students who apply to be admitted into Nigerian universities were denied admission on yearly basis. Atanda (2013), claims that the opening of more institutions of this magnitude was a direct reaction to the increased craving of same. He averred that although there was growth in the number of universities established, the figure for students admitted annually is quite low in comparison with the demand for university education. This situation has partly been implicated in the policy of carrying capacity.

Issues in Policy of carrying Capacity in Universities

Denial of Admission: The policy of carrying capacity pose constraints to university admission because universities have their upper limits in terms of admission and failure to comply may attract sanctions from the National University Commission (Abdulkareem & Muraina, 2014). According to Stasisense (2014) although most universities exceed approved carrying capacity quotas, students still denied admission yearly clock 70%, despite the fact that most of them meet the requirements. In this respect, the Nation (2015) reported that in the 2010/2011 academic session, cumulatively, Nigeria had 112 universities and 1,493,611 applicants. Out of this number, the carrying capacity was only 450,000 or 30.13 percent of applicants. We should note that most of the applicants that were rejected have the necessary entry qualification to gain admission. The report further indicated that for the 2011/2012 session, Nigeria had a total of 117 universities with 1,503,933 applicants, carrying capacity rose marginally to 500,000 translating to 33.25 percent. For the 2012/2013 session the figure stood at 128 universities, 1,735,729 applicants with 520,000 carrying capacity. Continuing, the report showed that for the 520,000 chances for admission, 1.7 million candidates applied. This implies that about 1.2 million candidates were denied admission in 2012/2013 academic sessions. As noted by Emenalo (2009) the worry is, if this insignificant percentage of very high JAMB applicants into universities are given admission in accordance with the carrying

capacity, what happens to the greater percentage of candidates not admitted? Of course those candidates denied admission will be frustrated and discouraged about the admission process in Nigeria universities. This portends danger for a country trying to attain economic growth, technological and scientific advancement. The consequence of this is that those who cannot secure admission roam the streets frustrated and because they are idle constitute nuisance to the society. Table 2 below shows university, applicants and carrying capacity in Nigerian Universities.

Table 3: University, Applicants and Carrying Capacity

Year	University Cumulative	Applicants	Carrying Capacity	Capacity: Applicants
2010/11	112	1,493,611	450,000	30.13%
2011/12	117	1,503,933	500,000	33.25%
2012/13	128	1,735,729	520,000	29.96%

Source: StatiSense (2014) Carrying Capacity of Nigeria Tertiary Institutions

As evident from the above table, although there was yearly increase in the carrying capacity quotas of universities, unfortunately, candidates who want to gain admission into universities each year increased geometrically, thereby making the increase in the carrying capacity quotas of each university not to be felt.

Inadequate Provision of University Education in Nigeria: Adewale (2014) stated categorically that “Carrying capacity affects access to university education in that not all the candidates sent by JAMB to a University for admission can be offered admission because of inadequate facilities” in her own view Emenalo (2009) stated that:

Bearing in mind that Nigeria has a very high population density with inadequate land mass for expansion and the continual cultivation of these sparse lands due to heavy population density leads to infertility of the soil, which makes meaningful agricultural production for both consumption and commercialization difficult, access to university education in Nigeria should not be toyed with but addressed without delay (p.209).

The implication of this according to her is that Nigeria relies heavily on her human resources for productivity. The human capacity requires proper and adequate development and refinement of the potentialities and capabilities through university education to be able to make effective, functional and positive contributions to the advancement of the society. It is the human resource in Nigeria that is being toyed with by not being given the opportunities of university education vis-à-vis the principle of carrying capacity. Since university education is a key contributor to economic, technological and scientific growth and advancement as noted by Mohammed and Gbenu (2007), how possible is it for our country Nigeria to realize that with this low or poor access to university education? This situation portends poverty among the

youths, which may stimulate belligerent nationalism and crime such as kidnapping, terrorism, militancy and organized crime.

Competitive Admission: Due to the policy of carrying capacity which states that the total number of students each faculty in a university admits should be based on available human and material resources, admission into universities has become very cumbersome and competitive because of inadequate carrying capacity quota. One significant outcome of this competitive admission into Nigeria universities is increase in number of students studying abroad. Currently, according to Osinowo (2006) it is estimated that about 71,000 Nigerian students are studying in universities in Ghana, 30,000 in Great Britain and 7,000 in the USA. As a result of this, parents are now prepared to pay huge amount of money to ensure that their children are admitted to any university in Nigeria. It has equally resulted in examination malpractice during UTME and post-UTME entrance examination which may have adverse effect on quality of graduates.

Deviation from Carrying Capacity: This is a major and common issue in carrying capacity in Nigeria universities. It is obvious that majority of universities do not stick to the carrying capacity quotas (meaning that most universities exceed their admission quotas). This is why students in most cases stand outside lecture halls to receive lectures. This may negate the quality issues for the adoption of the policy of carrying capacity by the NUC. However, the reason for over enrollment may be due to large number of applicants that apply for admission and equally qualified. Table 4 shows instances of deviation from carrying capacity.

Table 4: Deviation from Carrying Capacity

Institution	NUC Quota	Admission	Difference	Deviation
Afe Babalola	1,200	2,372	1,172	97.67%
KWASU	725	1,257	532	73.38%
Redeemers	800	1,290	490	61.25%
FUA, Makurdi	2,133	3,350	1,217	57.06%
Babcock	2,337	3,561	1,224	52.37%
UNN	5,970	8,267	2,297	38.48%
UNILORIN	5,514	7,098	1,584	28.73%
UMYU	1,600	1,996	396	24.75%
NSU	2,500	3,113	613	24.52%
UNILAG	6,500	7,527	1,027	15.80%
KASU	1,400	1,591	191	13.64%
CRUTECH	2,500	2,778	278	11.12%
ABU	6,688	7,397	709	10.60%
UNIMAID	5,600	5,699	99	1.77%

Source: StatiSense (2014) Carrying Capacity of Nigeria Tertiary Institution.

The table below shows some universities and their carrying capacity (admission quotas) during the 2011/2012 academic session that was released by NUC, but

many of the universities gave admission to students above their approved quotas.

Table 5: Some Universities and their Carrying Capacity for 2011/2012 Academic Session

OWNERSHIP OF INSTITUTION	INSTITUTION	NUC QUOTA	ADMISSION	DIFFERENCE
Federal	ABU	6,688	7,397	-709
"	UNILAG	6,500	7,527	-1,027
"	UNN	5,970	8,267	-2,297
"	UI	5,720	2,989	2,731
"	UNIMAID	5,600	5,699	-99
"	UNIPORT	5,522	3,820	1,702
"	UNILORIN	5,514	7,098	-1,584
"	FUA, MAKURDI	2,133	3,350	-1,217
"	UMYU	1,600	1,996	-396
"	FULOKOJA	500	443	57
"	FUEBONYI	500	150	350
"	FUBAYELSA	500	498	2
"	FU OYE-EKITI	500	384	116
State	LASU	5,294	1,103	4,191
"	EKSI	3,500	1,300	2,200
"	ANSU	2,500	1,408	1,092
"	CRUTECH	2,500	2,778	-278
"	NSU	2,500	3,113	-613
"	KASU	1,400	1,591	-191
"	AISU	800	484	316
"	OSUSTECH	800	397	403
"	KWASU	725	1,257	-532
Private	TASUED	3,500	2,898	602
"	COVENANT	2,500	2,162	338
"	BABCOCK	2,337	3,561	-1,224
"	BENSON IDAHOSA	1,260	867	393
"	AFE BABALOLA	1,200	2,372	-1,172
"	AJAYI CROWTHER	1,000	474	526
"	REDEEMERS	800	1,290	-490

Source: StatiSense (2014) Carrying Capacity of Nigeria Tertiary Institutions.

From the above table it is obvious that most universities exceed their recommended carrying capacity. However, it is very glaring that over 70% candidates were not given admission, despite the fact that they were qualified.

Inability of Private Universities to meet their Quotas: Available evidence indicates that there is so much pressure on the public universities which obviously affected their carrying capacity. This has been attributed to the inability of private universities to meet their carrying capacity quotas. As disclosed by the Registrar of JAMB, Prof. Dibu Ojerinde, the private universities admitted 19,254 candidates as against 67,009 allocated quotas in 2013 (The Nation, 2015). One of the cogent reasons responsible for this may be inability of parents to provide the financial resource to sustain their children in private universities in Nigeria given the expensive fees charged by these institutions. As noted by Osinowo (2006) the high fees being charged by private universities put them beyond the reach of most students.

Challenges to Carrying Capacity Vis-à-vis Access to University Education

Poor funding: Poor funding is a major challenge that affect carrying capacity and in turn access to university education in Nigeria. This is probably why Ajayi and Adeniyi (2009) argued that the challenge of poor funding is common to all universities in Nigeria. The phenomenon of low level of financial allocation to education which is below the recommended UNESCO's 26% of the total budget pose challenges to the implementation of the policy of carrying capacity vis-à-vis access. This is because the introduction of the policy of carrying capacity without proper funding had brought about poor and decaying resources, facilities and shortage of human resources. Table 8 below shows government allocation to education from 1999-2014.

Table 6: Government Annual Budgeting Allocation to Education 1999-2014

Year	Allocation (Billion)	Percentage (%)
1999	23	11.2
2000	44.2	8.3
2001	39.9	7
2002	100.2	5.1
2003	64.8	11.8
2004	72.2	7.8
2005	92.6	8.3
2006	166.6	8.7
2007	137.5	6.1
2008	210	13
2009	183.4	7.2

2010	249.1	6.4
2011	356.49	7.5
2012	-	8.4
2013	426.53	8.7
2014	-	10.7

Sources: Adapted from Ebisine, S.S. (2014). *Quality Education in Nigeria and Ezeanya, S.A.* (2015). *Democratization of Education in Nigeria.*

Table 6 indicate clearly that Nigeria have never met the UNESCO recommended 26% of annual budgetary allocation to education in developing nations. A comparison of some African countries with Nigeria's spending on education as a percentage of Gross National Product (GNP) brings out clearly the picture of Nigeria's poor financing of education as indicated in table 7 below:

Table 7: Spending on Education (% GNP) for Some African Countries in Comparison to Nigeria

Country	% GNP	Ration in Nigeria
Angola	4.90	7.00
Cote D'Ivoire	5.00	7.14
Ghana	4.20	6.00
Kenya	6.50	9.29
Malawi	5.40	7.71
South Africa	7.90	11.29
Tanzania	3.40	4.86
Uganda	2.60	3.71
Mozambique	0.76	5.86
Nigeria	4.10	1.00

Source: *The African Debt Report by Jubilee 2000 in Ede (2010) University Education improvement and commensurate distribution in Nigeria.*

Table 7 shows that Nigeria spends the lowest percentage of its GNP on education compared to other nine African countries. The implication is that education in Nigeria is not appropriately and adequately funded and the universities are no exception. An evidence of this is the trends in funding for Federal Universities in Nigeria where the focus is more on recurrent expenditure as against capital expenditure as shown in Table 8 below:

Table 8: Trends in Funding of Federal Universities in Nigeria 1999-2011

Year	AMOUNT RECEIVED (₦)	
	Recurrent	Capital
1999	10,362,430,271	1,469,500,000
2000	28,206,218,865	1,936,785,632
2001	28,419,719,502	4,226,691,359
2002	30,351,483,193	0.00
2003	34,203,050,936	0.00
2004	41,840,735,050	9,462,455,178
2005	47,290,489,886	9,397,660,000
2006	73,161,996,247	5,760,105,402
2007	78,482,540,961	7,184,637,934
2008	94,552,983,733	13,197,505,486
2009	103,008,978,422	9,995,998,748
2010	163,729,239,325	20,429,524,422
2011	167,667,580,574	15,956,588,967

Source: Adapted from Shu'ara, J. (2010) *Nigerian Higher Education Data and Uvah, I.I. (2015). Academic Planning and Orderly Development.*

From table 8 above it is very clear that Federal government provides a budget cap based on projected earnings and not on the needs of the universities. In this way many universities have budget provisions well below their needs (Uvah, 2015). These funding patterns of universities have implications for the policy of carrying capacity and access to university education due to lack of qualified staff, incentives, dilapidated facilities and other material resources (Akpochofa, 2006) and inability to expand facilities and equipment, thus increasing lecturer-students ratio. In effect the poor funding of universities has resulted in slow physical growth and the required number of facilities to encourage the introduction of new departments in line with societal need. In this way only small percentage of the qualified thousands of students are given admission in relations to the material and human resources in all the licensed conventional universities.

Infrastructure/Facilities: Poor and outdated infrastructure, equipment and library facilities had been critical challenges to the implementation of the policy of carrying capacity and access to university education. In much the same way, the Federal Ministry of Education, (2009) reported that about 15-30% of the books, facilities, materials and equipment are outdated. Furthermore, Okebukola (2008) revealed that the general environment, laboratory and the lecture rooms of all public universities are far below the standard that will ensure optimal teaching and learning and conduct of quality research. With regard to infrastructure, the committee on Needs Assessment of Nigerian Public Universities (NANPU) in Nwachukwu and Okoli (2015) revealed that public universities were bereft of teaching and learning facilities and that the ones provided were getting dilapidated or improvised. It also discovered that many Nigerian universities suffered inadequate facilities such as old laboratories, workshops in addition to lack of proper furnishing and erratic power and water supply among others. According to the report, no Nigerian university has any

place among the first 1000 universities in the world. This is quite worrisome. The implication is that university education in Nigeria is facing serious challenges. This is what informs the criteria stipulation with regards to carrying capacity.

Academic Staff Inadequacies: The shortage of teaching staff in Nigerian universities is a major factor in increasing carrying capacity to enhance access. UNESCO in Okebukola (2008) reported that there are evidences that among the so many school variables, teachers quality and encouragement are worthy of note aside enrolment, students participation and achievements in the university. This is consistent with the Nation (2015) that we are facing enormous challenges as there is a dearth of qualified lecturers. Federal Ministry of Education (FME) in Aluede, Idogho and Imonikhe (2012) revealed that the university system in Nigeria as at 2006 needed 50,000 academic staff strength but only had 27,394 academic staff. This situation meant ineffectiveness in course delivery in all the disciplines. According to Nwana and Babatope in Kanyip (2013) there are universities where only one lecturer teaches between 1000 to 1500 students. In some cases, such lecturers are without any public address system. Sometimes some of the lecture halls are smaller than the number of students to be taught. Therefore, some students stay outside the classroom to listen to the lecturer. These shortages of academic staff affect the carrying capacity quotas vis-à-vis access to university education in Nigeria.

Lack of Proper Maintenance of Available Facilities: Nigerian universities do not only lack the required facilities but have not equally developed the culture of maintaining the existing ones. This has resulted in the deterioration of facilities which have impacted negatively on the quality of teaching and learning, as well as, reduced admission capacity due to insufficient facilities to accommodate students. In effect government failure to appropriately fund university education for efficiency and effectiveness and maintain existing structure for improved quality and standard equally have multiplier effects as regards expansion to accommodate the millions of candidates seeking admission yearly in Nigeria.

The Way Forward

Improved Funding: The minimum expenditure of 26% of annual budget recommended by UNESCO for developing nations should be our base line. To do otherwise will be contrary for our avowed statement as found in the national document directing all issues concerning education in Nigeria, in which education is deemed paramount for national development and as tool for change. Therefore, the government should endeavour to make available at least 26% of its annual budget to education. Also, Nigeria universities should look up to other non-statutory sources of funding such as corporations, dividends from investments, foundations, alumni, endowment for funds. After all, Nigerian universities by law are to generate up to 10% of the annual budget while in Ghanaian universities it is 30% for infrastructural development and expansion. In this way, the institutional managers have to be prudent in management of funds to avoid wastage. This is because available data indicated that financial budgetary allocations to universities in Nigeria are inadequate. For instance, the

Federal Ministry of Education in Aluede, Idogho and Imonikhe (2012) reported that in 2004, the sum of ₦216, 622, 706, 206 (216 billion naira) was requested by the federally funded universities. According to the Federal Ministry of Education report, the Federal government however released the sum of 53, 466, 287, 848.61 (54 billion naira) representing the budget request from the universities. In effect the improved funding of the existing conventional universities will enable the building of new structures/facilities, renovation of old ones in order to increase their carrying capacity. When this happens, more students' will have access to university education in Nigeria. After all it was due to dearth of facilities/structures that the NUC introduced the policy of carrying capacity that eventually impeded access.

National Open University of Nigeria: There is the need to expand the activities of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) to accommodate more candidates. This will solve the problem of high cost of establishing more universities in Nigeria. Besides the cost and long gestation interval required in getting a university properly established, it might take about ten years or more for the impact to be felt. But allowing NOUN to promote online study programmes in affiliation with some international institutions, many students will avail themselves the opportunities provided to access highly reputable foreign universities. In this way, universities in Nigeria will have the number of candidates seeking admission not too far exceeding their carrying capacity.

Operation of 24 Hours Campus Model: All Nigerian universities should be allowed to operate 24 hours campus model where there will be the normal day study and night study mode. This will increase the carrying capacity of the universities vis-à-vis improved access. As noted by Osinowo (2006) virtually all Nigerian universities at present operate for only eight to ten hours daily. The facilities remain idle for the rest of each day. According to him, the introduction of night study on these campuses has the potential of increasing enrollment by 50% to 100) with minimal additional investment in solar panels or diesel generators, pending improvement in power supply through the national grid.

Improved Facilities/Infrastructure: All the licensed conventional universities should be expanded with the required facilities and infrastructure commensurate with the number of students approved by NUC. There should be adequate provision of classrooms, laboratories, expansion of libraries, and other relevant materials in the existing conventional universities to ensure that more students access university education.

Improved Human Resource: Adequate staff and facilities are crucial in the management of the university/educational institutions and admitting fresh candidates. In order to increase the carrying capacity level and access capacity for qualified and competent applicants in universities in Nigeria, universities need to employ more lecturers.

Dual Mode Universities: The government should allow universities (especially older universities) to operate dual mode to accommodate students for both regular and part-time or open and distance learning programmes. This is to create room to admit more students. This is in line with what is obtainable in the

University of India in New Dalhi, where the excess of up to 10 million students are admitted into a virtual university (Adesulu in Vanguard, 2014).

Conclusion

Education is the fulcrum for societal progress and development of individual for survival and sustainable economic development. Through university education, one is prepared to develop his full capacities to live and work, improve the quality of one's live and one's taste and attitudes are fine-tuned. In this way everyone that is qualified should be given equal access to high quality education at this level in Nigeria. In order to achieve quality, every university has to admit candidates based on their carrying capacity. However, in implementing the policy of carrying capacity there are some challenges that were identified. Until we appreciate and overcome the challenges to carrying capacity vis-à-vis access, more qualified candidates shall continue to be denied the privilege of having university education in Nigeria. Therefore, it is recommended that the challenges militating against carrying capacity vis-à-vis access should be handled properly through improved funding, facilities, dual mode universities, and so on to enhance universities carrying capacity and increase access to university education in Nigeria.

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