



**A REVIEW OF FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMISSION CRISIS IN NIGERIAN  
HIGHER EDUCATION AND WAY FORWARD**

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**Abstract:** The Nigerian higher education is the largest in Africa. Higher education in Nigeria are established with the main aim of producing manpower for the development of the country. Nigerian higher education is faced with many problems. It has been observed that every year millions of people applied for admission and placement in the various higher institutions but only few were finally admitted. This problem have caused many young Nigerian to seek foreign higher education. This paper discussed the factors responsible for the admission crisis in the Nigerian higher institutions. Among other factors discussed were the concept of higher education, admission crisis and the factors responsible for the admission crisis in the Nigerians' higher institutions. The paper concluded by given some recommendations. Secondary and primary data were used in the paper. The paper used social demand theory.

**Keywords:** Admission, Admission crisis, Higher education, Universities.

### **Introduction**

Higher education is an organized educational system designed for global community of people with the aims of carrying out teaching, research and community service activities (Ogunode, Akinjobi & Abubakar 2022). Ogunode, (2020) viewed Higher education as the post-secondary school education designed for the production of manpower. Higher education is an education that awards certificates after the completion of the programme. Higher education is the education that deals with teaching programme, research programme and community service programme. Higher education is the peak of educational institutions and it is an organized educational system that is meant to support the social, economic and political development of the country (Ogunode, 2020; Ogunode, Iyabode & Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2022). In the view of Olatunde-Aiyedun (2021a) higher education includes post-secondary institutions such as the polytechnics and colleges of education. "Higher Education" includes all forms of professional institutions drawing from the available pool of persons who have completed a various forms of secondary school education: Institution of the military, the police, nurses, agriculture, forestry, veterinary workers, catering services, tourism, secretarial services and other possible combinations of programme. Higher education deals with teaching, researching and providing community services. Higher education in Nigeria include Colleges of education, polytechnics, mono-technics, advance professional institutions and the universities. National Policy of Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) defined Tertiary Education is the education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-University Centres such as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such

as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI).

The goals of Tertiary Education according to National Policy of Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) shall be to: Contribute to national development through high level manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; provide high quality career counseling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work; reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market; promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service; forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction (NPE, 2013; Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2021b). With over 900 higher institutions in Nigeria, the Nigerian higher education is still with the problem of admission crisis. Ogunode (2020); Musa (2018) and Obi (2017) agreed that higher institutions do not have adequate space to grant admission to all applicant in the country. Aiyedun et al stated that with 197 public and private universities, Nigeria is still grappling with the problem of being ranked among the top 500 universities, globally.

Statistics obtained from the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) showed that over 1,662,762 candidates wrote 2018/2019 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), of which only 585,498 gained admission into the tertiary institutions. Of the 1,157, 977 candidates who sat for UTME in 2019/2020, about 612,557 were offered admission into various tertiary institutions. Between 2018 and 2020, over three million of the candidates who applied for admission into Nigerian tertiary institutions were unable to secure placement in the universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. In 2020 over 2.1 million candidates registered for the UTME and Direct Entry programmes. However, a total of 1,456 candidates who scored 300 and above out of the possible score of 400 in the entrance examination failed to secure admission to Nigerian tertiary institutions for the 2020/2021 academic session (Allafrica, 2021; Thenigerialawyer 2021). This paper is aimed to discuss the factors responsible for admission crisis in the Nigerian higher institutions.

### **Concept of Admissions Crisis**

Admission crisis is an education terminology that describes a situation where qualified applicants who are ready for educational programme cannot secure it due to shortage of educational institutions. Admission crisis in higher institution is a situation whereby young persons who are willing and ready for higher education cannot secure admission at a particular time. Admission crisis in higher institution is an educational problem within the educational system whereby the system cannot admit all applicants into the system because of lack of facilities. Ogunode, Akinjobi & Abubakar (2022) submitted that many Nigerians are faced with admission problems in Nigeria. Every year millions of Nigerians are not admitted into the higher institutions because of limited space. The Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) is a Nigerian entrance examination board for tertiary institutions. The board conducts an examination that determines if a student will be admitted into a university, the result from the examination is valid for only a year. The grade range is between 0-400. The general pass mark for most universities is 200/400. Students have to meet the pass mark to continue the admission process. Students with scores less than the pass mark are automatically disqualified from the admission process for most universities (Stearsbusiness, 2021).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is hinged on social demand theory. The Social Demand Approach requires the education authorities to provide schools and find facilities for all students who demand admission and who are qualified to enter. Aghenta (1987) opined that this approach looks on education, as service demanded by people just like another social services. Politicians in developing countries often find the approach expedient to use because of its appealing nature. This approach was used in the Robbins Committee Report on Higher Education in Britain. In India too, this approach is a popular one while opening new schools and colleges in particular. The steps involve in the theory are: (1) To estimate the proportion of

students completing school education and are likely to enter into higher education. (2) To estimate how many of these successful school leaving students would actually apply for admission to colleges. (3) To determine how many of the applicants should be given admission to higher education. (4) To determine the length and duration of the study (Ekpo & Aiyedun, 2020). Thus, the major issue involved in this approach is to forecast future demands for seats keeping in mind social and educational trends as well as demographic changes. The underlying assumption in this approach is that expansion of education is beneficial to the economy and thus, additional expenditure on education would not create a burden too heavy to bear. The implication of this theory to this paper is that education is the right of every Nigerian. So the government should adopt an approaches to provide accessible and quality education for the people.

### **Factors Responsible for Admission Crisis into Nigerian higher education**

In Nigeria, there are many factors responsible for the admission crisis, this paper would focus on the following; inadequate higher institutions, poor funding of higher education, poor planning of higher education, increase in population, corruption, policies instability and poor implementation of plan actions on higher education as factors responsible for admission crisis in the Nigerian higher education (Olamoyegun, Olatunde-Aiyedun & Ogunode, 2022).

#### **Inadequate Higher Institutions**

Inadequate higher institutions in Nigeria are responsible for the admission crisis that is making many youth Nigerians not to get admitted even though qualified and merited the admission. The space available for the higher education is not adequate for the teeming youths. The inability of young Nigeria to secure admission have made to seek for foreign higher education. Ogunode, Akinjobi and Abubakar (2022) confirmed this when they noted that inadequate higher institutions are a major reason why many young Nigerians are seeking foreign higher education. Every year millions of Nigerians that applied for domestic higher institutions are not given admission due to inadequate space in the available higher institutions in the country. The inability of these young Nigerian to secure admission in the domestic higher institutions is a factor pushing them out to neighboring countries like other Africa countries, Asia and Europe to seek higher education.

#### **Poor Funding of Higher Education**

Inadequate funding of higher education in Nigeria is a major problem responsible for the admission crisis in the Nigerian higher education. The budgetary allocation for the administration of public higher education in Nigeria is not adequate to expand and develop the higher education to the level that the various higher institutions will have space to admit all the students. Ogunode (2020) observed that the university system requires a lot of funds for effective administration to be able realized its goals. Ogunode and Onyekachi, (2021) submitted that the budgetary allocation for education for ten years as follows: 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 had N293 bn (7.19%), N393 bn (9.31%), N453 (9.15%), N499 (10.15%), N494 (10.54%), N434 (10.71%) and 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 with N4.31 (7.52%), N551 (7.41%), N605.8 bn (7.04%), N620.5 bn (7.02%) and N671.07bn (6.7%)(CBN, 2021) the budgetary allocation for education for ten years is below the UNESCO 26% recommendation for education. The poor funding of public universities in Nigeria is responsible for the poor quality of education and decay infrastructural facilities. Ogunode (2020); Ogunode and Onyekachi, (2021); Ifeanyi,, Ogunode and Ajape 2021) stated that the factors responsible for inadequate funding of public higher institutions in Nigeria include lack of political will, corruption, increase in population, inflation, fall in national revenue and poor financial planning and the implications of underfunding of the public higher institutions include; inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of academics staff, poor quality of education, brain-drain and strike action.

#### **Poor Planning of Higher Education**

Educational planning in Nigeria started before Nigeria got her independent. Higher education also started pre-independent too. Educational planning in Nigeria have been faculty from the onset. This problem continued to affects all the forms of educational system in Nigeria. Higher education which is

the peak of education in Nigeria is not exempted. The major crisis in the higher education in Nigeria which include admission problem can be linked to poor planning and funding. Moja, 2000), Oluebe (2013) and Ogunode (2020) have also identified the problem of poor planning of education which include the university education as a major obstacle to the effective implementation and development of educational programme (University education) in Nigeria. Ogunode and Omenuko (2021); Onyeike and Owuama (2012) listed inadequate funding, inadequate data, corruption, political instability, policies instability, poor capacity development of planners, shortage of planners, inadequate planning facilities and political influence as problems hindering effective planning of public universities in Nigeria.

### **Increase in Population**

The increment in the population of students graduating from secondary schools to higher education is another factor contributing to the admission crisis in the various higher institutions in the Nigeria. The population in the Nigerian universities in the 1980's and 1990's were less than five hundred thousand but presently the population of students in the Nigerian universities are 2.1 millions. The population of students graduating from the secondary schools yearly and coming to seek placement in the various higher institutions is increasing every year. Ogunode, Akinjobi and Abubakar (2022) noted that every year more one million students writes Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) to seek for higher education admission. The increase in the population of students is responsible for the admission problems because the available higher institutions do not have the capacity to admit them all. It is observed that the current schools can only accommodate 25 per cent of the over one million candidates seeking admission in Nigeria's tertiary institutions of learning every year (Orji, Ogar & Aiyedun, 2018).

### **Corruption**

Corruption in the political system of Nigeria is affecting the development of education especially the higher education which is among the factors responsible for admission crisis in the various higher institutions. Priye (undated) observed that corruption began to affect education seriously in the middle and late 1980s as the psychosocial beast beclouded the minds of those who ruled Nigeria. The scrambled to loot as much as possible by those in a position of power resulted in the neglect of the educational sector. Suddenly, education that was considered being the cornerstone for the development and modernization of Nigeria was ignored, neglected, and starved of the funds and policy initiatives needed to move it forward. Increasingly, national and state governments started cutting educational funds, creating the impression that education was no longer an important strategic tool in directing the country's growth. With this development, the looting of educational funds became acceptable. Thus, it became fashionable to loot funds allocated for academic enhancement, capacity building, infrastructural development, modernization, and rehabilitation of educational institutions. The looting involved educational policymakers, bureaucrats in various educational ministries, and school officials responsible for administering the schools (primary and secondary schools and universities). Recently, Dailytrust (2022) reported that the Nigerian government blamed Nigeria's *poor revenue* generation on leakage and *corruption* in the nation's tax system. .

Funds that are supposed to be used for the development of education sectors have been looted and mismanaged by officials and political office holders. Ajemba, Ahmed, Ogunode and Olatunde-Aiyedun (2021) noted that corruption coupled with economic and political mismanagement has led to instability and gross abuse of power, led to the decaying infrastructure, inadequate staffing, poor and failing education standards, the disappearance of grants, trust funds, loans and of the entire project without a trace. Dawood (2012) confirms this and observes that the problem of corruption is further compounded by the culture of waste and recklessness in which they abandoned public projects without an explanation to the public. For instance, some capital projects invested in by the Federal and State Government amounting to billions of Naira in the Educational Sector have not been commissioned. The above scenario highlights a very clear picture of waste, lack of accountability and transparency propelled by corruption with devastating consequence on the educational system entirely (Ekpo &

Aiyedun, 2019). Corruption has brought about the underdevelopment of the Educational sector. Corruption has also penetrated the internal administration of higher institutions. Ebehikhalu & Dawam (2017) observed that many of the stakeholders in the university system in Nigeria are also responsible for the rot in the university system. ASUU has struggled to force the government to fund the universities properly, but these funds are managed poorly, embezzled and stolen. This high level of corruption is a practice common among the universities' administrators. The corrupt practices in higher institutions are similar to what is obtainable in the civil service and in the political world. Godwin (2017) and Ogunode, Isaiah and Ajape (2021) stated that the effects of corruption on the public university administration in Nigeria include the following: reduction of funds for administrative functions, shortage of infrastructural facilities, shortage of academic staff, poor quality of education, resources wastage, increase in administrative cost, hampering development of public universities and resulting to poor image of public universities in international communities (Ojelade, Aiyedun & Aregebesola, 2019).

### **Political Instability**

Political instability another factor responsible for the higher education admission crisis. Sound policies and programme designed to develop the higher education and expand them were terminated because of changes in government. Ogunode & Omenuko (2021) and Ogunode & Ajape (2021) observed that that political instability is another problem facing planning of higher education in Nigeria. The change of political leaders and political party affects the planning process and planning implementation. The former administration in Nigeria from 2011 to 2015 came up with a plan of mega universities in Nigeria, the expiration of the tenure led to the termination of that plan document. WENR (2017) submitted that in 2013, the federal government announced plans to create six regional „mega-universities“ with the capacity to admit 150,000 to 200,000 students each. Akpan, (2014) observed that in Nigeria the leader in power even changed educational policies and plans. Therefore, we have not given our educational plans enough time as pacified in the plan to mature before they are terminated. The success of any plan or policy cannot be ascertained until its implementation and evaluation. Ogunode, Eyolorunse-Aiyedun and Olatunde-Aiyedun (2021) stated that the most serious problem in the Nigerian educational system is premature termination of plans and policies and this affects educational planning.

### **Poor Implementation of Plan Actions on Higher Education**

Poor implementation of plan actions on education is a major problem responsible for the admission crisis in the higher institutions. In bid to develop the higher education the Nigerian government formulated action plans to accelerated the development of the various higher institutions in the country. For instance, In 2016, the Federal Ministry of Education prepared the *Ministerial Strategic Plan 2016-2019* (MSP), the MSP aims to prepare Nigeria's youth to take competitive advantage of the 21st century knowledge-driven economy within and outside the country; address the issues of quality and access to higher education and improve the global ranking of Nigeria's tertiary institutions; and, resolve the skills gap by deploying a workable and comprehensive technical and vocational education and training policy (Aiyedun, Olatunde-Aiyedun & Ogunode, 2021). Ogunode & Ahaotu (2020) identified inadequate funding, poor planning, poor relationship between planners and implementer, weak administrators, inadequate infrastructural facilities, lack of political will, institutional corruption, inadequate personnel and insecurity.

### **Recommendation**

Based on this challenges identified, the following were suggested;

1. The government should come up with a strategic plan for the expansion of higher education in Nigeria and more public and private higher institutions should be establish and licensed. Existing higher institutions should be expanded.
2. The government should increase the funding of higher education in Nigeria. This will help in the higher education expansion plans and programme.

3. The government both at the federal and state should be serious with the planning of higher education. More resources should be provided for educational planner to carry out their plans.
4. The government should embark on a national programme to create awareness on the need for family planning.
5. The government should use all the anti-corruption agencies to fight corruption in the country.
6. The government should develop the political will to ensure policies and programme continuity in the educational sector.
7. The government should implement all the plans action and policies designed to develop the higher education in Nigeria.

### Conclusion

The provision of quality and accessible higher education for the citizen is the key for a better society and human capital development. Higher education is the education that unlock the social-economic and technological advancement and development of a country. So, it is expected that the Nigerian government and educational manager should do all things possible to address all factors responsible for admission problem in the higher institutions. Issues such as inadequate higher institutions, poor funding of higher education, poor planning of higher education, increase in population, corruption, policies instability and poor implementation of plan actions on higher education should be addressed through better funding and expansion of the existing schools, especially the universities to enable them take in more applicants.

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