Managing School Carrying Capacity for Effective Teaching and Learning in Public Universities in Nigeria

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Abstract
The study explores management of school carrying capacity and effective teaching and learning in public universities in Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was used for the study. A sample of 200 subjects was randomly selected from five universities in southern Nigeria. Instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire titled: Carrying Capacity and Effective Teaching/Learning Questionnaire (CCETLQ) validated by experts. Split-half method of reliability was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The estimates range from 0.68 – 0.74, and were considered good enough to have the capability to measure effectively the intended variables. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to analyze the data. The result of the analysis revealed a significant (strong positive) relationship between availability of physical/material facilities, the level of student enrolment and academic staff strength and effective teaching and learning when tested at 0.05 level of significance. It was recommended that managers of institutions and government should as the matter of urgency improve and expand on the facilities in our tertiary institutions to accommodate the growing enrolment.

Keywords: Carrying capacity, teaching and learning, universities.

1. Introduction

The fundamental mission of universities is to promote the life of the mind through intellectual inquiry and to generate, store and transmit specialized knowledge and sophisticated expertise, higher forms of culture and ethical basis of conduct (Brubacher, 1982).The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) while outlining the objectives of education sees the university performing as hereunder:

1. The acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and society.

2. The development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environments.
3. The acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community.
4. The acquisition of the detached view of local and external environments.

In practical terms, universities are established to carry out tripartite role of teaching, research and community service thereby contributing meaningfully to the social and economic development of the nation. They are supposed to impart high level of skills to a reasonable proportion of the workforce, develop intellectual capability of individuals and engage in training of competent and responsible professionals needed virtually in all aspects of human endeavours.

University education remains one of the most viable instruments of national development. In Nigeria, university education seems to have had a good beginning right from colonial times and was effective up to the 1970s until its nature changed following mass admission from the 1980s. The quality fell as an effect of the greater number of students in the face of diminishing resource input due to poor economy and poor leadership. According to FME (1990) report, as student enrolment in federal universities grew from 97,631 in 1982/83 to about 134,532 (138%) in the 1988/98 academic session, the overall result was the fall of the quality of university education. Government is aware that education generally is in a state of decay and that this situation portends danger for the country particularly as most of the graduates are said to be unemployable (Obanyan, 2012). The decay manifests in dilapidated facilities, poor remuneration and poor service conditions, enrolment expansion beyond the capacity of facilities, incessant industrial actions, etc.

At the early stages of university development in Nigeria, there were adequate classrooms, offices, hostel accommodation, and large auditoriums for university wide activities. The campuses were student-friendly. In fact, the blue print for establishment of new universities indicated that the universities were planned to have large campuses, grandiose buildings and expensive municipal facilities (FME, 2003). But with a radical increase in student enrolment that were not matched with corresponding facilities and funding, the existing facilities became overstretched and ill maintained. They can no longer support the programmes of the university (Ogbodo, 2011).

In spite of the growing enrolment of students, there is yet no strong political will to correspondingly increase the necessary facilities. Okojie (2013) mentioned that over one million candidates scramble for just over 200,000 spaces available annually for admission into the universities. The number of candidates who sat for the Unified Tertiary Matriculations Examination (UTME) into tertiary institutions for public and private universities in 2019 was about 1.99 million while the available spaces for admission were 750,000. Of this number about 1.240 million were denied admission, not because they do not qualify but for lack of space. They will be left with no other choice than repeat the recurring circle in the coming year. In the face of inadequate and obsolete infrastructures and equipment, poor library facilities, inadequate academic staff in number and quality, low level of funding, unstable university calendar, particularly in unionized federal and state universities, most universities still go beyond the carrying capacity allotted to them.

Carrying capacity remains one of the major challenges to access to universities in Nigeria. The universities need to be expanded according to the demand to avoid being over-populated and facilities being overstretched. The term carrying or absorption capacity refers to the maximum number of students that the institution can conveniently sustain for quality education available based on human and material resources. Carrying capacity is indicated by how well enrolment of the university matches available human and material resources (NUC, 2005; Akpotu & Akpochafo, 2009). The carrying capacity means that students are admitted based on the facilities available. These facilities include adequate lecture rooms, well-stocked libraries, good staff/student ratio, accommodation, etc.

Carrying capacity of universities in Nigeria is not high enough and that is very disturbing. There are candidates who want university education but are denied access because of the low carrying capacity. Admission is not meant to go beyond the number of cubicles available – course by course,

department by department, faculty by faculty. Carrying capacity is a component of quality assurance. But increasing student enrolment in the universities has compromised this measure and over-enrollment has become the common norm.

Table 1:   Deviation from carrying capacity

Institution	NUC Quota	Admission	Differences	Deviation
CRUTECH	2,500	2,778	278	11.12%
BABCOCK	2,337	3,561	1,224	52.37%
UNILAG	6,500	7,527	1,027	15.80%
ABU	6,688	7,397	709	10.60%
AFE BABALOLA	1,200	2,372	1,172	97.67%
UNN	5,970	8,267	2,297	38.48%
UNILORIN	5,514	7,089	1,584	28.73%
REDEEMERS	800	1,290	490	61.25%
FUA, MAKURDI	2,133	3,350	1,217	57.06%
KASU	1,400	1,591	191	13.64%

Source: Micaiah (2011) Carrying Capacity of Nigeria Tertiary Institutions

Table 1 above shows that most universities in Nigeria exceed the allotted admission quota. For instance, in 2011/2012, University of Lagos (UNILAG)'s admission quota was 6,500 but admitted 7,527; Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) was given 6,688 but admitted 7,397, just as University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) was given 5,970 but admitted 8,267. The above analysis of these federal universities' admission quota explains why most of our universities are over-crowded and lack facilities for students to the extent that some students sit outside lecture halls and some on the windows in order to receive lectures.

Table 2:   Number of Universities in Nigeria

Year	Federal	State	Private	Total
2010	27	35	40	102
2011	36	36	44	116
2012	36	38	49	123
2013	40	39	49	128
2014	40	39	49	128
2015	40	40	59	139
2016	40	44	67	151
2017	40	46	73	159
2018	43	47	74	164
2019	43	48	78	169
2020	44	48	79	171

Source: National Universities Commission (2020)

Today the number of Universities in Nigeria as at the last count comprise of about 171 universities (Table 2: 44 Federal, 48 State, 79 Private). With 171 universities in 2019/2020, the carrying capacity of Nigeria tertiary institutions was 510,957 with 1,157,977 applicants.

The table 3 below shows that with the best effort only 44.12% of total applicants could only be accommodated during that academic session. This figure continues to fluctuate each academic session. While there is yearly increase in the carrying capacity quota and most institutions exceed recommended quota, the geometric increase in the number of candidates seeking admission, leaves over 70% of the applicants denied admission yearly due to lack of enough space, even though they are qualified.

Table 3: Number of Universities, Applicants and Carrying Capacity

Year	University Cumulative	Applicant	No. of admission	No. not admitted	Carrying Capacity	Capacity Applicant
2010/11	112	1,493,611	423,531	1,070,080	450,000	30.13%
2011/12	117	1,503,933	417,341	1,086,592	500,000	33.25%
2012/13	128	1,735,729	447,176	1,288,553	520,000	29.96%
2013/14	128	1,644,110	463,395	1,180,715	520,000	31.63%
2014/15	139	1,785,608	437,704	1,347,904	415,500	23.27%
2015/16	151	1,428,379	485,338	943,041	389,631	27.28%
2016/17	152	1,579,027	506,837	1,072,190	500,000	31.69%
2017/18	164	1,736,571	566,719	1,169,852	506,837	29.18%
2018/19	169	1,662,762	586,498	1,076,264	586,962	35.30%
2019/20	171	1,17,977	612,557	545,420	510,957	44.12%

Source: Micaiah (2011) Carrying Capacity of Nigeria Tertiary Institutions
National Universities Commission (2020).
Ajikobi (2017, April 17). Factsheet: Nigeria's matriculation results between
2010 & 2016. Africa Check

Table 4: Student enrolment, number of teaching staff and student/teacher ratio

University	Number of Teachers	Number of students	Student/Teacher ratio
University of Abuja	514	62,528	122
University of Ibadan	1,304	33,481	26
University of Nigeria, Nsukka	1,755	23,815	14
University of Benin	1,418	56,501	40
University of Calabar	1,035	29,357	28
University of Uyo, Uyo	773	19,126	31
Federal University of Technology, Akure	588	22,964	39
Federal University of Technology , Owerri	940	26,139	27
Federal University of Technology, Mina	755	14,258	19
University of Jos, Jos	1,001	37,340	37
Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto	876	26,167	30
University of Ilorin, Ilorin	975	29,040	30
University of Lagos, Lagos	1,052	49,179	47
University of Port Harcourt,	1,561	53,288	34
University of Maiduguri	1,196	42,423	35
Amadu Bello University, Zaria	1,815	49,436	20
Bayero University, Kano	1012	28595	28
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife	737	23,100	31
Cross River University of Technology, Calabar	464	10,388	22
Adamawa State University, Mubi	276	6,049	22
Ladoke Akintola University, Ogbomosho	706	26,141	40

Source: NEEDs Assessment Committee Report (2012)

The recommended student-to-lecturer ratio according to NUC guidelines is 15:1 for agriculture and engineering-technology faculties, 10:1 in human and veterinary medicine faculties and 10:1 in science and pharmacy faculties, while law, social sciences and arts should be 30:1. Table 4 above shows that there is a high increase in student enrolment beyond the recommended benchmark for student/teacher ratio in most of Nigerian universities.

Physical/material resources are predicators to effective teaching and learning. Ene (2007) said that inadequate physical and material resources as well as infrastructural facilities due to poor funding has resulted in the formulation of the principle of carrying capacity which stipulates that admission should be based on available facilities. This affects both access and equity in university education. Admission is not only difficult but competitive as a result of limited spaces. Adeogun (2001)

discovered a very positive significant relationship between physical resources and students' performance. He concluded that schools endowed with adequate physical/material facilities performed better than schools that are less endowed, and it also increase teachers' effectiveness. In the same vein, Nwagu (2004) and Ehiametalor (2005) maintained that physical/material resources are the operational inputs which enable a teacher to achieve some level of instructional efficiency and effectiveness and their availability or lack bear direct relevance to the quality of education students receive. Osifila (2004) found a significant relationship between adequacy of physical plant and teachers' effectiveness and students' academic performance. He concluded that good physical facilities provide a good learning environment for students' success. Adeogun and Osifila (2008) gave a report on a study conducted on the impact of overcrowded conditions on students' achievement and teachers' efficiency. According to the report, overcrowded classes are noisier, and create more non-instructional duties and paper work as well as inhibit teaching and learning.

Ololube and Egbezor (2011) concluded that to achieve the mission and goals of university education, adequate educational facilities are critical. This is because no meaningful teaching and learning can take place without adequate facilities in quantity and quality. Facilities like classrooms, buildings, equipment, workshops, lecture theatres, libraries, technology systems, etc. are purposefully needed to house and propel the various university programmes. They added that a good university environment and well-designed and maintained facilities have positive impact on attendance, success rate and teaching and learning delivery.

The demand for university education is increasing by the day. In spite of National Universities Commission (NUC) regulation on carrying capacity there is a growing over population and outright overstretching of available facilities in most Nigerian universities, due to increase in the for demand for access. According to Efe (2013), the increase in enrolment is not commensurate with the available teachers/lecturers in the public universities. The total student population and the mean teacher/student ratio continue to increase beyond the NUC approved Minimum Academic Standards. The teacher-students ratio in most departments in our universities is very high to the extent that there is no good interaction for proper guidance and monitoring. Efe (2013) and Obayan (1999) posited that the student overpopulation leads to deficit in number of lecturers/teachers, overstretching of facilities, poor academic performance and downward turn in the standard of education as teachers worry about meeting the needs of more students with limited resources. Babalola (2008) also noted that overcrowding resulting from increased enrollment leads to increase in teachers' workload, inadequate teaching and learning space and increase in problems of indiscipline in class and school.

Teachers are the cornerstone of the educational system. Their qualification and experience are prerequisites to the teaching and learning process. Adesina (1980) noted that inadequate teaching staff is a bane to successful implementation of quality education. Teachers are a major factor and important resource in student learning, and upon their number, quality and devotion depends the success of any educational system (Ukeje, 1986). According to UNESCO (2007, cited in Okebukola, 2008) there is a plethora of evidence suggesting that teacher quantity, quality and motivation exert noteworthy effects on a host of school variables. Such school variables include: enrolment, participation and achievement of students. The implication of the shortfall in number of academic staff may include high academic staff/student ratio and severe stress on the academic staff on ground. This can further lead to low productivity and decline in the quality of teaching in Nigerian university system (FME, 2009)

In spite of the government effort to expand enrolment and improve educational quality, universities are severely constrained by shortages of qualified academic staff. Academic staff strength has continued to decline in the face of rising enrolment. The rapid increase in the number of tertiary institutions without a commensurate increase in the number of academic staff in number and quality has persisted in our educational system. There are still disturbing statistics of severe shortfall in academic staff in our universities. Out of the 50,000 academic staff needed in Nigerian Universities there is still a shortfall of 19,548 representing 39.1%. Over 60% of academic staff in the Nigerian University System are in the category of Lecturer 1(Shu'ara, 2010, FME, 2009). The Needs

Assessment Committee Report (2012) showed that majority of the universities in Nigeria are grossly under-staffed, have under-qualified academics and have very high teaching staff-students ratio. Effective teaching and learning as an input manifest in qualitative performance in internal and external examinations. Adeogun (2001) suggested that if additional teachers are recruited to meet up with the increase in enrolment, it will help to improve educational quality and students' academic performance.

2. Statement of the Problem

There has been an upsurge in the student population without a corresponding improvement in accommodation and other student services. The average Nigerian university has a carrying capacity of 4,500. But the number of candidates scrambling for admission outweighs the just over 500,000 spaces available annually for admission into the universities. The pressure on the available facilities has led to rapid deterioration and undue congestions and overcrowding. The first hand situation report on universities by the NEEDs Assessment Committee (2012) indicated that, in most of Nigerian universities physical facilities are used beyond the original capacity, many lecturers, including professors share offices, which are poorly ventilated, illuminated, furnished and ill-equipped. Lecture rooms, theatres, laboratories and workshops are shared by many programmes across different departments and faculties, thereby overcrowding/overstretching them. Studio spaces and equipment are often insufficient and sometimes obsolete; poor electricity and water supply; dearth of learning resources like books and journals and poor ICT facilities. This has translated into poor result, overcrowding and overstretching of available facilities and thus negatively impacting educational outcomes. Open-air sports pavilion, convocation arenas, old cafeteria and even uncompleted buildings are used for lectures. Teaching staff–student ratio is very high. In 2017 some 1,736,571 candidates sat for the UTME examination more than the total current enrolment. This number outweighs the carrying capacity of the nation's higher institutions. While crisis of access remains, quality has also become the major challenge. Some pundits and observers of the public university situation in the country insist that the squalid state of infrastructure apart from being a product of poor funding is also a reflection of the level of corruption, social and intellectual decay within and outside. This paper aims at finding out the relationship between school carrying capacity and effective teaching learning delivery in public universities in Nigeria.

3. Research Questions

1. What is the extent to which availability of physical/material facilities relate to effective teaching and learning delivery?
2. How does the level of students' enrolment relate to effective teaching and learning delivery?
3. What is the extent to which academic staff strength relate to effective teaching learning delivery

4. Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between availability of physical/material facilities and effective teaching and learning delivery.
2. There is no significant relationship between the rate of students enrolment and effective teaching and learning delivery
3. There is no significant relationship between academic staff strength and effective teaching learning delivery.

5. Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey. The study involved students of University of Calabar, Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH), University of Port Harcourt, University of Uyo, and Federal University, Otuoke. The population of the study comprised all year three (regular) students of the named universities for 2019/2020 session. Simple random sampling was employed to select two hundred students, which is 40 students from each of the selected schools. Out of this number, 95 were females while 105 were males. All the respondents completed and returned the questionnaire titled Carrying Capacity and Effective Teaching/Learning Questionnaire (CCETLQ). The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A – dealt with the respondents demographic data such as sex, age, school, and educational qualification. Section B had - 15 questionnaire items in a four point modified Likert–type scale model to measure school carrying capacity and effective teaching and learning. The questionnaire was constructed by taking into consideration of all the variables. Each variable was measured using four (4) items and each had four options ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree. The reliability of the instrument was tested using the split-half method of reliability. The estimates ranged from 0.69 – 0.74, and are considered good enough to have the capability to measure effectively the intended variables.

6. Results

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis on relationship between availability of physical/material facilities and teaching learning delivery

variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	r-val	crit.-r
Physical/material facilities	200	14.24	2.36			
				198	0.660	0.138
Effective teaching and learning		14.73	2.35			

r (200) = 0.660, p<0.05

The result of Table 5 revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between availability of physical/material facilities and effective teaching and learning. r (200) = 0.660, p<0.05. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and alternate retained. This implies that the adequate provision of physical/material facilities will result in effective teaching and learning.

Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis on relationship between the rate of students' enrolment and teaching learning delivery

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	r-val	crit.-r
Students enrolment	200	14.76	2.25			
				198	0.647	0.138
Effective teaching & learning		14.72	2.40			

r (200) = 0.647, p<0.05

The result of this table 6 revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between the rate of students' enrolment and effective teaching and learning. r (200) = 0.647, p<0.05. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and the alternate retained. The finding implies that the rate of students' enrolment influence teaching and learning delivery.

Table 7: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis on relationship between academic staff strength and teaching learning delivery

Variables	N	x̄	SD	df	r-val	crit.-r
Academic staff strength	200	14.48	2.78	198	0.507	0.138
Effective Teaching and learning		14.72	2.36			

r (200) = 0.507, p<0.05

The result of this table 7 revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between academic staff strength and effective teaching and learning. r (200) = 0.507, p<0.05. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and the alternate retained. This implies that academic staff strength relate to effective teaching and learning delivery.

7. Discussion

The study looked at the relationship between carrying capacity and effective teaching and learning in public universities. The result of hypothesis one indicated a significant relationship between availability of physical facilities and effective teaching and learning. This result agrees with Adeogun (2001) who concluded that schools endowed with adequate physical/material facilities performed better than schools that are less endowed, and it also increases teachers' effectiveness. It also agrees with Ehiametalor (2005) that physical/material resources as operational inputs enable a teacher to achieve some level of instructional efficiency and effectiveness. The result is further strengthened by the finding of Osifila (2004) that established a significant relationship between adequacy of physical plant and teachers' effectiveness and students' academic performance.

The result of hypothesis two revealed a significant relationship between student enrolment and effective teaching and learning. This result is in line with the views of Efe (2013) that increase in enrolment is not commensurate to the available teachers/lecturers in the public universities and this affects good interaction for proper guidance and monitoring. It also supports Babalola's (2008) view that overcrowding resulting from increased enrollment leads to increase in teachers' workload, inadequate teaching and learning space and increase in indiscipline in class and school.

The result of hypothesis three revealed that there is a significant relationship between academic staff strength and effective teaching and learning. This result agrees with the view that availability of teachers as input in the school system manifest in qualitative performance in internal and external examinations. It also agrees with Adeogun (2001) suggestion that recruitment of more teachers will help to meet up with the increase in enrolment as well as improve educational quality and students' academic performance.

8. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between school carrying capacity and effective teaching and learning in public universities in Nigeria. The results of this study revealed that academic staff strength, student enrolment and availability of physical/material facilities relate to effective teaching and learning. Carrying capacity as a quality assurance measure is a critical element in realization of the goals of university education. Managers of tertiary institutions should show commitment in following the policy which states that the total number of students each faculty in a university admits should be based on available human and material resources to avoid exceeding the capacity of their institutions with high margins.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings the followings recommendations were made:

1. Government should as the matter of urgency improve on and expand the facilities in our tertiary institutions to accommodate for the growing enrolment.
2. The government should recruit more academic staff so that workload will be reduced and student performances enhanced.
3. Government through its regulating agencies should ensure universities abide by the carrying capacity policy. Those who exceed the approved margins should be properly sanctioned.

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