



**EKITI**  
STATE UNIVERSITY  
P. M. B. 5363, ADO-EKITI, EKITI STATE



Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2024

**THE FUTURE OF THE  
NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY  
System**

*Delivered by:*

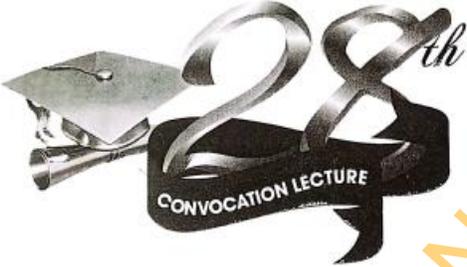
**Abel Idowu Olayinka**

*Professor of Applied Geophysics &*

*Former Vice-Chancellor, University of Ibadan, Ibadan*



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28<sup>th</sup>  
CONVOCAION LECTURE

Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2024

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Page | ii

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## **Abstract**

The Nigerian University System (NUS) currently comprises a total of 264 Universities, 53 of which are owned by the Federal Government, 62 owned by the various State Governments while the remaining 149 are Privately owned. The total student population is in the region of Two Million and Five Hundred Thousand. In this lecture, we have examined the issue of access, quality, funding and governance as they affect the NUS. Interrogating data published by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) over the period 2017 to 2023 we present quantitative, verifiable and objective assessment of addressing the question of equity in the adoption of Educationally-Less-Developed-States (ELDS) as a criterion for the selection of candidates for admission into undergraduate programmes in Nigerian Federal Universities.

A trend analysis of contemporary events shows that the Nigerian University System will continue to grow, rather haphazardly and in an unplanned manner, in leaps and bounds especially in terms of student enrollment. Without a concomitant strengthening of leadership and governance, a substantial increase in funding for teaching and learning facilities, conduct of advanced research that is locally relevant and globally competitive (including but not limited to issues of food security, lagging economic development, climate change, reduction of carbon emission, natural resources degradation, insecurity), payment of decent wages to the knowledge workers amidst the continued exodus of the best and the brightest from the country, quality and relevance of the Universities in ensuring sustainable socio-economic development might suffer.

A major feature of the Public Universities (Federal- and State-owned) which currently accounts for about 95% of the total student enrollment is incessant strikes by members of the various staff unions which has led to a cumulative loss of six years and three months in the last 32 years. Funding has been implicated as the root cause of these strikes. In order to be competitive there should be synergy between the Governments as university proprietors for a moratorium on these disruptive strikes. Conscious efforts should be made to internationalise in terms of student enrollment and the recruitment of academic staff.

Some of the States on the current list of ELDS, in particular Kwara and Kogi, have posted excellent results and are now in the First Quartile justifying that they ought to be taken off the list. The same applies to Nasarawa which is in the Second Quartile. On the other hand, Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory are in the Fourth Quartile and if the ELDS is to be retained both should be included in the list. The National Council on Education should take a closer look at this recommendation with a view to implementing same.

To the extent that the absence of a Governing Council hampers the proper functioning of a University and is an anathema to University Autonomy, it is our considered recommendation that the National Assembly should as a matter of urgent national importance amend the Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Amendment) Act, 2003 in Section 2A as to provide that if the Council of a Federal University is dissolved, a new Council shall be constituted not later than three months.

**Keywords:** Access, Equity, Funding, Union Strikes, Leadership, Governance

## Introduction

The Vice-Chancellor of Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Professor Edward O. Olanipekun, FCSN, FRAN, IION, a much respected colleague and friend of many decades first broached the idea of inviting me to present this year's Convocation Lecture of his University some weeks back. I accepted his kind invitation as someone who has been a University man all my entire adult life. Moreover, I admire what goes on in this University and the tremendous progress that the institution has recorded since it was established some four decades ago. I was engaged as an Adjunct Lecturer here as part of a Linkage Programme between the Faculty of Science University of Ibadan and its counterpart in this University during the tenure of the late Professor Peter Bodunrin, the eminent Professor of Philosophy as the Vice-Chancellor. By a letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 duly signed by the Registrar of Ekiti State University, Mr. Ife Oluwole, I was formally invited to deliver the 28<sup>th</sup> Convocation Lecture of University scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024. I must confess that I felt humbled and flattered by the generous words deployed by the Registrar in his letter. He declared *inter alia* "Having considered your contributions to the expansion of the frontier of knowledge and your worth as a great scholar who has contributed immensely to the task of guiding the present and inspiring the future, the Senate and Management of the University are pleased to invite you to deliver the 28<sup>th</sup> Convocation Lecture of the University.....The Entire University Community would be honoured to learn from your store of knowledge as an eminent and accomplished academic who has distinguished himself as a leader of thought at a historic moment while you held sway as the Vice-Chancellor at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan". I thank the Senate, Management, staff and students of Ekiti State University for inviting me. I do not take this privilege for granted.

According to dictionary.com, Convocation is a formal assembly at a college or university, especially for a graduation ceremony. Its synonyms include confab, assemblage, concourse, conference, congregation, congress, convention, council, meeting, synod, turnout and get-together. In the North American tradition the term Commencement is typically employed as a ceremony marking the beginning of (a) stage. It is essentially a graduation, ceremony, initiation, signaling the kick off, outset, onset, curtain raiser, a new dawn. The students taking part in the series of events for this year's Convocation here at Ado Ekiti were admitted into their respective degree programmes (whether undergraduate or postgraduate) a few years ago and after successfully completing their programmes and found to be worthy in character and learning by the University Senate you will now be expected to take part in the ritual of Convocation before setting out to conquer our world. I join your teachers, family members and other well-wishers in heartily congratulating you on this milestone, recognizing the simple truth and fact that achievement is, like gold, very precious. While the Convocation itself is a simple and straight forward event, it is obvious that reaching this stage must have required the ingenuity, honest hard work, grit and perseverance of the graduands. It is in order to warmly felicitate with you. The training and exposure you have had while studying here have contributed to what you are at this point of exist as skilled and employable graduates, contributors to the generation of new knowledge, responsible citizens who are ready to contribute to the economic and social development of the state, country and the entire world.

Ekiti State University has been a huge success and without any iota of doubt it has more than justified the dreams of the founding fathers. This is partly reflected in the array of former students of its citadel of learning who hold various positions of responsibility in different walks of life. Some of the eminent alumni/alumnae of Ekiti State University include His Excellency 'Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji, Governor, Ekiti State and the Visitor to his alma mater; His Imperial Majesty, Oba Ajibade Gbadegesin Ogunoye, the Olowo of Owo Kingdom; Engineer Dipo Bamisaye, Global President, Ekiti State University Alumni; Prof. C. O. O. Kolawole, Vice-Chancellor, Trinity University, Lagos; Prof. Nelson Fashina, Head, Department of English, University of Ibadan, Mr. Ganiyu O. Saliu, Registrar, University of Ibadan; Mr. Ife Oluwole, Registrar, Ekiti State University; Mrs. Adenike Adeusi, Registrar, Bamidele Olumilua University of Science, Education and Technology, Ikere Ekiti; Mr. Omololu Adegbenro, Registrar, Elizade University, Ilara Mokin; Mr. Gboye Adegbenro, Former Commissioner in Ondo State; Dr. Ralph James, a Lagos based Publisher and Philanthropist; Mr. Tope Fasua, Special Adviser to the President (Economic Affairs) in the Office of the Vice-President, Federal Republic of Nigeria; Right Honorable Taofeek Olawale, former Speaker, Ondo State House of Assembly; Prof. Isaac Adanlawo, Ekiti State University; Prof. S. O. Olatunji, Ekiti State University; Prof. T. T. Olofintoye, Ekiti State University, Professor Michael Adeyinka Oladunjoye (UI), Professor Olugbenga Boboye (UI), Professor Wale Akinmosin (UNILAG), and Ronke Awopetu, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna.

In the remaining part of this Convocation Lecture, we have attempted a concise presentation of the establishment of university education in Nigeria over the last 92 years in Section 2. The issues of access to university education in Nigeria is discussed in Section 3. The contemporary situation with the Nigerian University System is addressed in Section 4. The future outlook is examined in Section 5. Issues of governance and leadership in the Nigerian University System is addressed in Section 6. The final section comprises discussion, conclusions and recommendations.

### **Brief history of the development of university education in Nigeria**

Both the Asquith and Elliot Commissions set up in 1943 by the colonial British Government reported on the urgent need for the promotion of higher education in British West Africa in 1945. The majority and minority reports of the Elliot Commission agreed on the establishment of a University College in Nigeria. The Asquith Commission emphasized the principles of a *residential university college* in a special relationship with the University of London, with high academic standards in admissions and staffing, and autonomy. The Asquith Commission concentrated on the fundamental principles that were to guide the development of institutions of higher education similar to the University College subsequently established at Ibadan. Both the Elliot and Asquith Commissions, which exchanged information, agreed that the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies (later Overseas) was to advise the new University Colleges on how best to attain the objectives for which they were established.

Consequently, the University College Ibadan (UCI) opened in 1948 with three Faculties, namely Arts, Science and Medicine, with a total of 104 students. The institution became an autonomous University in 1962, with a new Act, which, with subsequent amendments in 1972, 1976 and 1993, has remained the basic constitution.

The Act of the University of Ibadan provides for:

- The Council;
- The Senate;
- The Congregation;
- The Convocation;
- Such officers as the Visitor, the Chancellor, the Pro-Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar, the Bursar and the Librarian.

From its humble beginnings with only one University College in the pre-independence era, the Nigerian University System has since grown in leaps and bounds with the establishment of more Federal Universities to a total of 53 as of March 2024. With education being on the Concurrent Legislative list under the 1979 Constitution, the first State University in Nigeria (the Rivers State University, Port Harcourt) was established in 1979. Other State Governments have since followed so much so that there are now 62 State-Owned Universities in the country. There was a further opening up (liberalization) of university education in Nigeria by 1999 with the licensing of three Private Universities namely Babcock University at Ilisan Remo in Ogun State owned by the Seventh Day Christian Mission, Madonna University, Okija in Anambra State owned by the Catholic Mission and Igbinedion University, Okada, Edo State, owned by a private entrepreneur. There are now 149 Private Universities in the country. This brings the total number of Universities in Nigeria to 262 (Figures 1 to 4). It should be noted that Moshood Abiola University of Science and Technology, Abeokuta, Ogun State, listed under State Universities and established in 2017 going by the information available on the website of the National Universities Commission (<https://www.nuc.edu.ng>) is yet to take off as of March 2024.

The student enrollment is nonetheless skewed in favour of the public-owned universities (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: Breakdown of Full-Time Undergraduate Enrollment by Ownership of University and Gender (Source: NUC Statistical Digest, 2019)

	Number of Universities	Male	Female	Total	% of Total	% Male	% Female
Federal	43	697,833	508,992	1,206,825	<b>65.1</b>	57.8	42.2
State	48	297,997	246,939	544,936	<b>29.4</b>	54.7	45.3
Private	79	52,515	49,985	102,500	<b>5.5</b>	51.2	48.8
Total	170	1,048,345	805,916	1,854,261	<b>100.0</b>	56.5	43.5

Table 2: Number of State-Owned Universities in Nigeria as of March 2024

Number of State-Owned University/Universities	States	Total
1	Abia, Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Cross River, Ebonyi, Jigawa, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Plateau, Taraba, Yobe, Zamfara	19
2	Edo, Ekiti, Enugu, Gombe, Niger, Ogun, Osun, Rivers, Sokoto	18
3	Bayelsa, Imo, Kogi, Kano, Lagos, Ondo, Oyo	21
4	Delta	4
TOTAL		62

The private universities do not receive funding from Government. Their main sources of funding comprises funding from the proprietors and fees charged to students. Consequently, the financial burden on the students is expectedly higher than what obtains in the public universities. This cost consideration is largely responsible for the lower student enrollment in the private universities. Only the professional courses like Medicine, Nursing, Law, Accounting, Mass Communication, and Computing are able to attract many students in the private universities in comparison to the basic Sciences and Arts/Humanities disciplines.

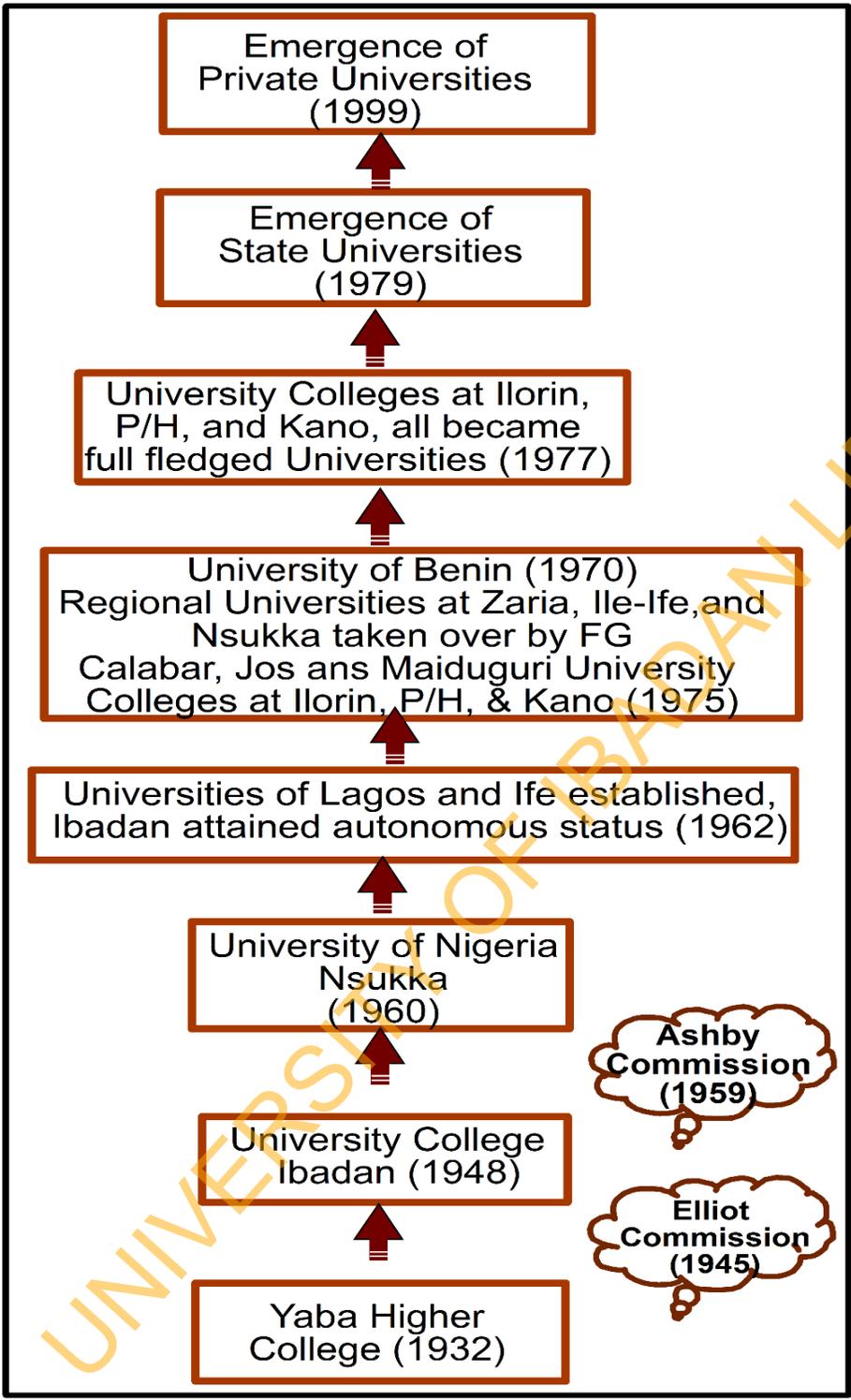


Figure 1: Historical Development of University Education in Nigeria, 1932-2024

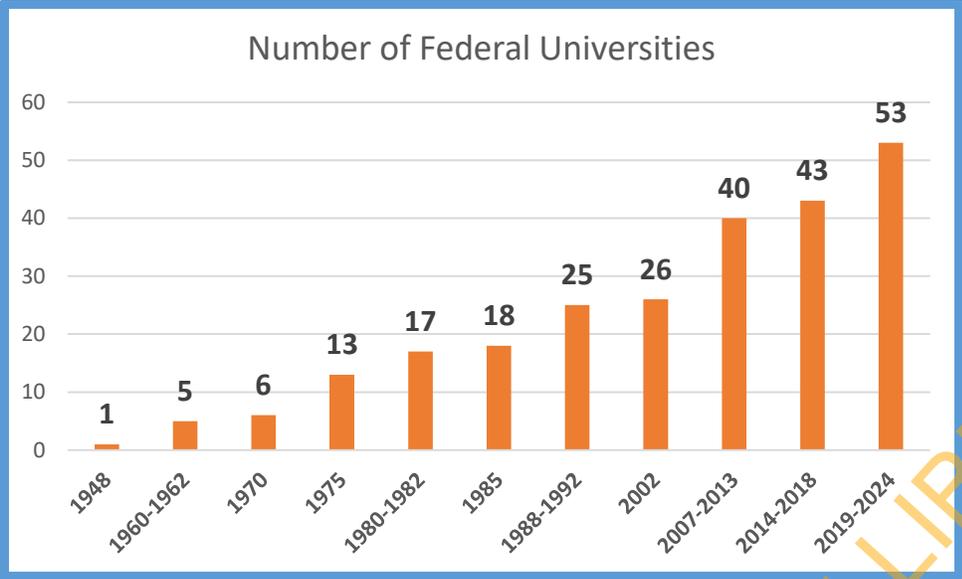


Figure 2: Establishment of Federal Universities in Nigeria, 1947-2024

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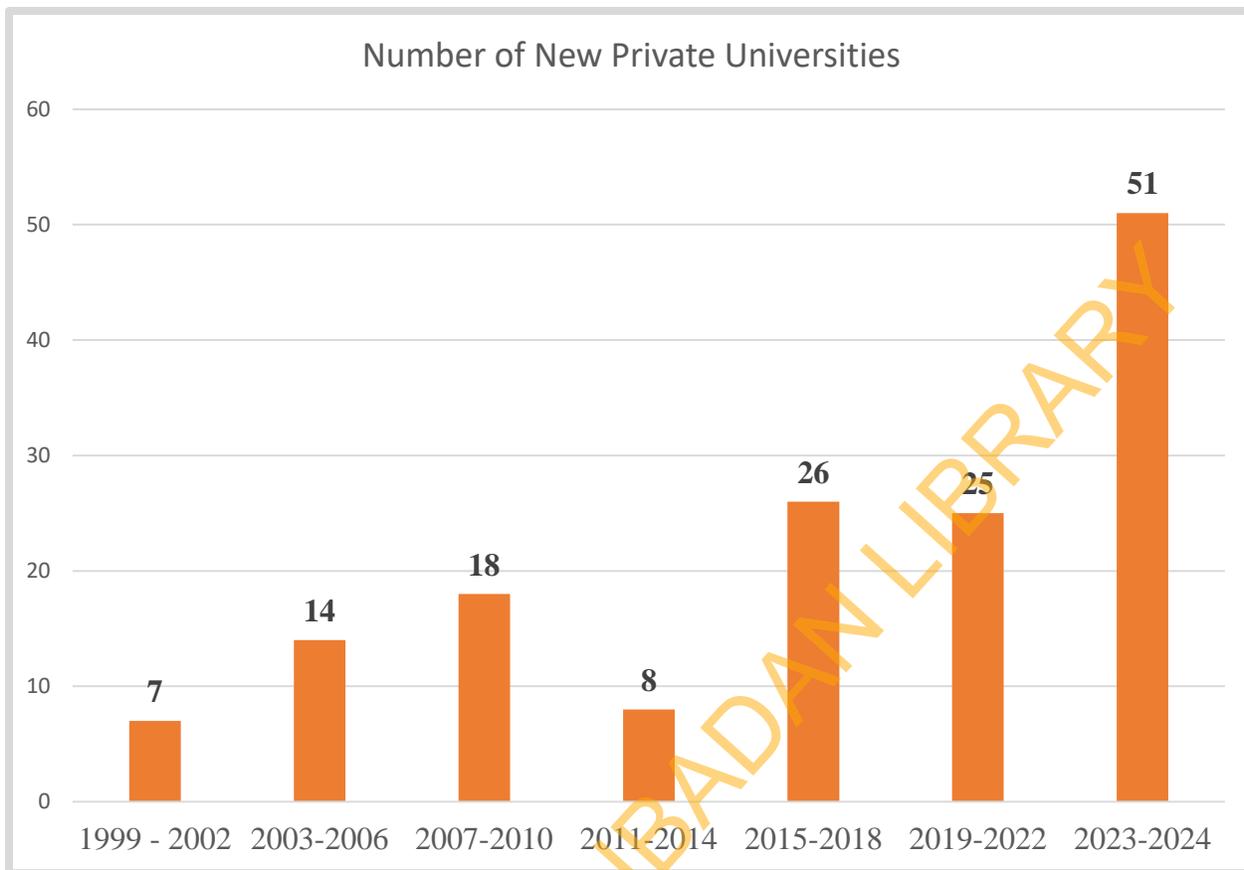


Figure 3: Establishment of new Private Universities in Nigeria (1999 to 2024) as at February 2024 (Source: <https://www.nuc.edu.ng>; accessed 17<sup>th</sup> February 2024)

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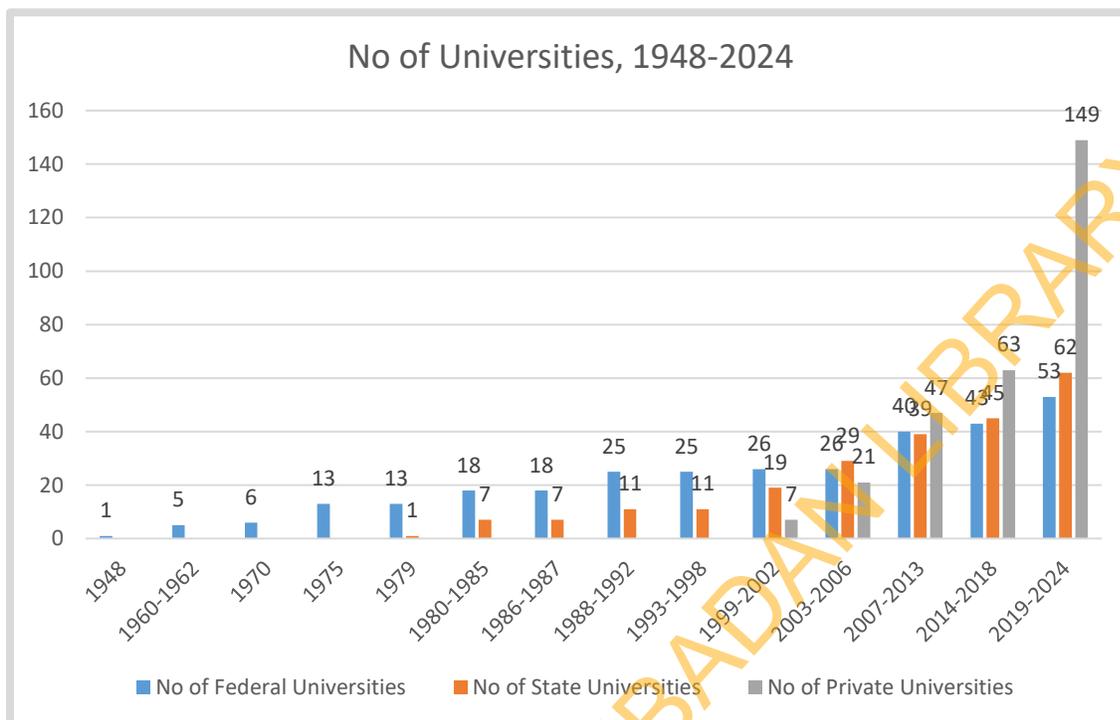


Figure 4: Establishment of Federal, State and Private Universities in Nigeria, 1948-2024 (Source: <https://www.nuc.edu.ng>; Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024).

### Access to University education in Nigeria

There are three primary types of admission criteria employed in selecting admission candidates into Nigerian Federally-owned universities (Omeje et. al., 2016). These are Merit, Catchment areas and Educationally-Less-Developed States (ELDS) with the following characteristics:

(i). Merit-based Admission: This criterion prioritizes the admission of the most qualified students based on academic performance and examination scores. Merit is assigned a weight of 45% during the selection process.

(ii). Catchment-based Admission: Catchment areas are specific geographical regions surrounding universities or colleges. Catchment-based admission ensures that students from the immediate and neighbouring States in which a university is situated have a sense of belonging in terms of access to higher education opportunities. As of the time the ELDS was introduced as one of the criteria for university admission in the late 1970s, there were only six first generation universities in the country, namely Ibadan, Nsukka, Lagos, Ile-Ife, Zaria and Benin City, while the second generation universities were just being established namely Calabar, Jos, Maiduguri, Ilorin, Port Harcourt, and Kano. Happily, there is now a widespread geographical distribution of Federal Universities,

totaling 53, with each state having at least one Federal University. In the same way, it is gratifying that the various States have risen to the challenge of widening access to University admission places. There are currently 62 State Universities with each state owning at least one state university. Catchment is assigned a weight of 35% for selecting admission candidates.

An analysis of the 2017 UTME Admission Statistics in 13 Selected Federal Universities by JAMB is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Analysis of 2017 UTME Admission Statistics from Selected Federal Universities by JAMB (Source: <https://www.jamb.edu.ng>)

S. No	University	% UTME Admitted from Catchment Area	% UTME Students Admitted from Outside the Catchment	Catchment Area
1	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	92.72	7.28	All the 19 Northern States plus FCT
2	University of Lagos	65.22	34.78	The six SW States
3	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	88.24	11.76	The five SE States
4	Bayero University, Kano	65.02	34.98	The seven NW States
5	University of Maiduguri	88.29	11.71	The six NE States
6	Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka	95.05	4.95	The five SE States
7	University of Calabar	74.62	25.38	The six SS States
8	University of Jos	69.87	30.13	The six NC States
9	University of Ilorin	52.3	47.7	The six NC States
10	University of Port Harcourt	61.74	38.26	The six SS States
11	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi	53.32	46.38	The six NE States
12	University of Ibadan	76.31	23.69	The six SW States
13	University of Abuja	100	Not applicable	The entire country

In terms of diversity of students on the basis of their State of Origin, the University of Abuja for which the entire country is the catchment had the best performance. On the other hand, the proportion of UTME students admitted from outside the catchment varies from about 5% at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka for which the South East is the catchment, to about 48% for the University of Ilorin for which the North Central is the catchment (Figure 5).

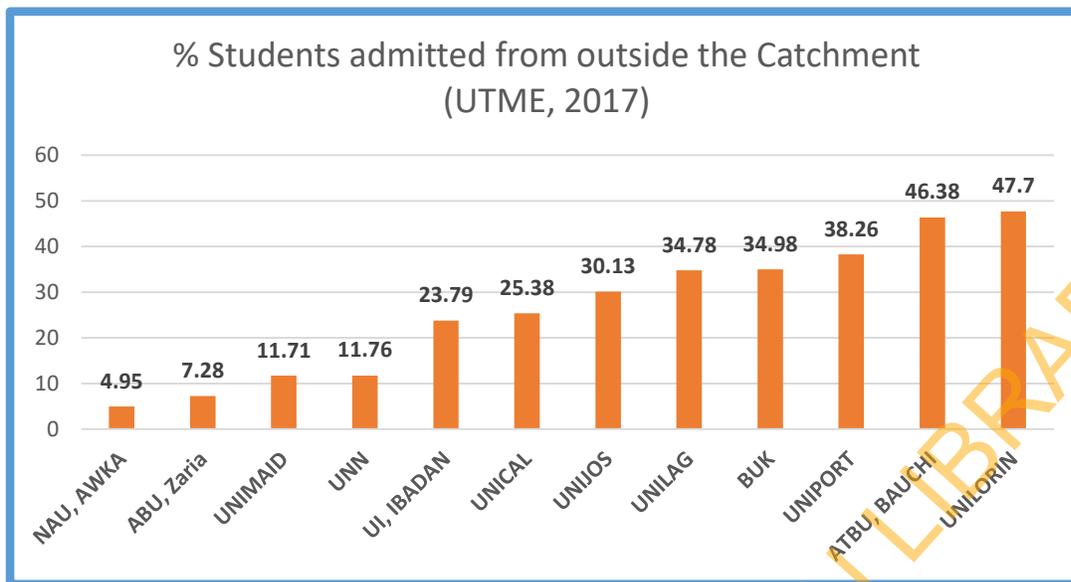


Figure 5: Percentage of UTME Students admitted from outside the Catchment of Selected Federal Universities in 2017 (Source: <https://www.jamb.edu.ng>)

There are no published data from JAMB on Diversity in admission of candidate in subsequent years.

(iii). ELDS-based Admission: ELDS-based admission is driven by the goal of promoting equity, diversity, and social inclusion. It seeks to create a more diverse and inclusive student body and enhance social mobility. ELDS carries a weight of 20% during admission. It is a sort of affirmative action meant to address the perceived disadvantage suffered by some States thus promoting equity in the nation. The following 23 states are listed among the ELDS in the country (Table 4):

Table 4: Current list of ELDS

S. No	State	S. No	State
1	Kano	13	Gombe
2	Adamawa	14	Plateau
3	Niger	15	Borno
4	Jigawa	16	Kwara
5	Bauchi	17	Kaduna
6	Rivers	18	Cross River
7	Nasarawa	19	Benue
8	Bayelsa	20	Ebonyi
9	Katsina	21	Taraba
10	Kogi	22	Kebbi
11	Zamfara	23	Yobe
12	Sokoto		

There is no empirical data to ascertain how the list of ELDS was arrived at. Moreover, it is not likely that whichever parameters were employed when the idea was first mooted would have remained constant over time. We have attempted to look at current data for University Admission as published by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). In terms of the number of applications received by JAMB during the period from 2018 to 2023, the outlook is as shown in Table 5.

There is not much change in the total number of UTME applications from the top states such as Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Imo and Delta over the period from 2018 to 2023. The same trend was observed for the states at the lower part of the ladder such as the FCT, Zamfara, Sokoto, Yobe, Kebbi, Jigawa and Bayelsa.

A spatial distribution of the ranking of the number of UTME applicants for the 36 States and the FCT in 2022 is shown in Figure 6.

Table 5: Statistics of the Number of UTME Application by States of Origin, 2018 to 2023

(Source: <https://www.jamb.edu.ng>)

2023	State	Number of Applications in 2023	Position of States in the respective years			
			2021	2020	2019	2018
1 <sup>st</sup>	Oyo	106,295	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Osun	98,300	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Ogun	98,173	3 <sup>rd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
4 <sup>th</sup>	Imo	80,851	4 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
5 <sup>th</sup>	Delta	79,794	5 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
6 <sup>th</sup>	Kogi	74,762	6 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>
7 <sup>th</sup>	Kwara	65,158	13 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup>	Edo	63,973	11 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
9 <sup>th</sup>	Anambra	63,245	9 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
10 <sup>th</sup>	Benue	62,907	8 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>
11 <sup>th</sup>	Ondo	62,885	10 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
12 <sup>th</sup>	Kaduna	60,741	7 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
13 <sup>th</sup>	Enugu	56,791	14 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>
14 <sup>th</sup>	Akwa Ibom	51,138	15 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>
15 <sup>th</sup>	Kano	47,935	12 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>
16 <sup>th</sup>	Ekiti	44,322	17 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>
17 <sup>th</sup>	Rivers	42,701	19 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>
18 <sup>th</sup>	Lagos	41,527	20 <sup>th</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>
19 <sup>th</sup>	Abia	40,209	18 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>
20 <sup>th</sup>	Plateau	37,044	16 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>
21 <sup>st</sup>	Nasarawa	30,720	21 <sup>st</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Cross River	29,837	24 <sup>th</sup>	22 <sup>nd</sup>	22 <sup>nd</sup>	22 <sup>nd</sup>
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Ebonyi	25,142	26 <sup>th</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>	27 <sup>th</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>
24 <sup>th</sup>	Katsina	24,548	22 <sup>nd</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>
25 <sup>th</sup>	Bauchi	21,562	25 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>
26 <sup>th</sup>	Borno	21,042	23 <sup>rd</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>
27 <sup>th</sup>	Gombe	20,478	27 <sup>th</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>	27 <sup>th</sup>
28 <sup>th</sup>	Niger	20,148	28 <sup>th</sup>	27 <sup>th</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup>
29 <sup>th</sup>	Adamawa	19,141	29 <sup>th</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup>	30 <sup>th</sup>
30 <sup>th</sup>	Taraba	18,181	30 <sup>th</sup>	30 <sup>th</sup>	30 <sup>th</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup>
31 <sup>st</sup>	Bayelsa	16,387	31 <sup>st</sup>	32 <sup>nd</sup>	32 <sup>nd</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup>
32 <sup>nd</sup>	Jigawa	16,177	32 <sup>nd</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup>	32 <sup>nd</sup>
33 <sup>rd</sup>	Kebbi	15,205	33 <sup>rd</sup>	34 <sup>th</sup>	34 <sup>th</sup>	34 <sup>th</sup>
34 <sup>th</sup>	Yobe	13,052	34 <sup>th</sup>	33 <sup>rd</sup>	33 <sup>rd</sup>	33 <sup>rd</sup>
35 <sup>th</sup>	Sokoto	12,053	35 <sup>th</sup>	35 <sup>th</sup>	35 <sup>th</sup>	35 <sup>th</sup>
36 <sup>th</sup>	Zamfara	6,420	37 <sup>th</sup>	36 <sup>th</sup>	36 <sup>th</sup>	36 <sup>th</sup>
37 <sup>th</sup>	FCT	6,203	36 <sup>th</sup>	37 <sup>th</sup>	37 <sup>th</sup>	37 <sup>th</sup>

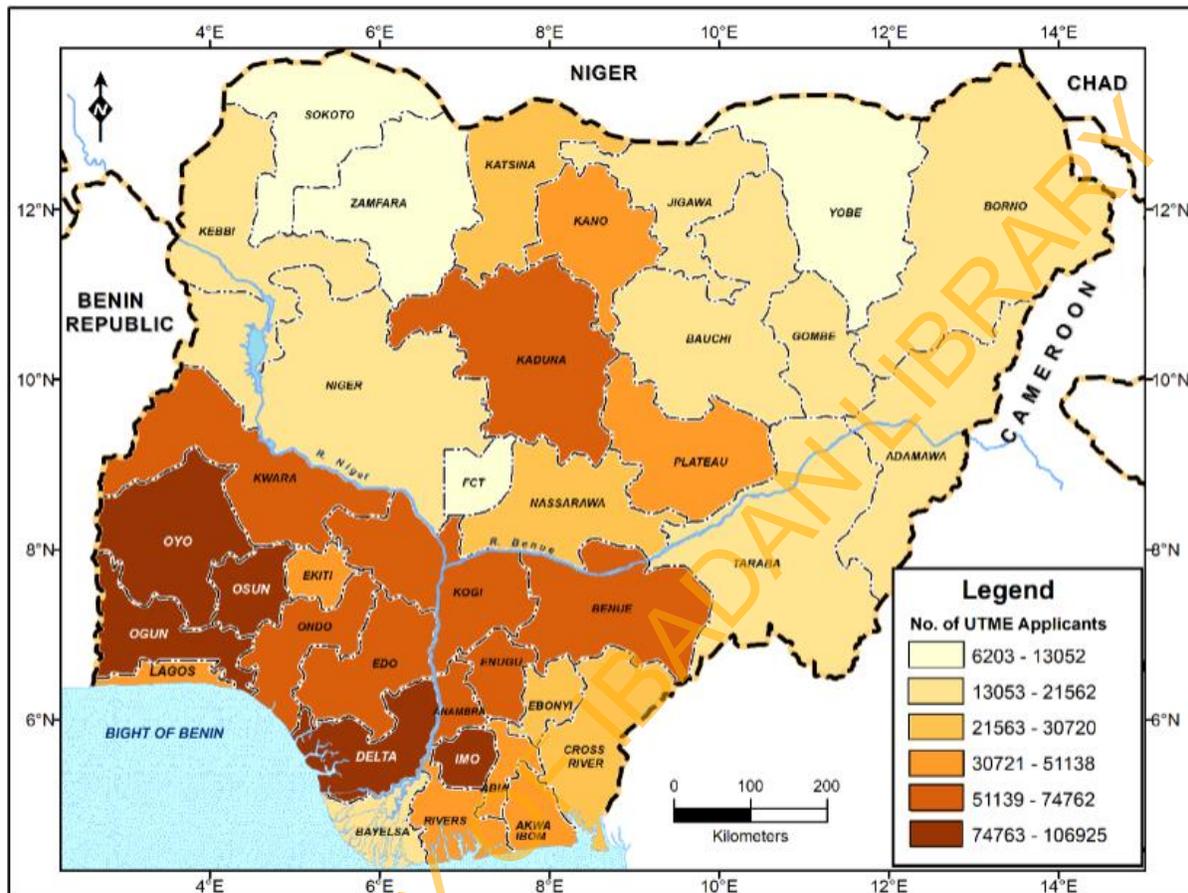


Figure 6: Map showing ranking of Number of Applicants for UTME per State in 2022 (Source: <https://www.jamb.edu.ng>)

Rather than using the raw figures of the number of applications in ranking the States on the basis of number of UTME applicants per State, we have gone a step further by considering the population of the various States (sub-nationalities) which would be a fairer basis for comparison. The National Bureau of Statistics published the sixth edition of its Demographic Statistical Bulletin population projection for the country for the period 2016 to 2019 in 2020 although only the 2018 and 2019 figures fall within the period of the current work. The total population in the various states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) for 2018 and 2019 have been based on the 2006 population census figures, as well as their 2019 projected populations. The respective 2019 population figures for the 36 States and the FCT were used for 2020 and 2021 in the absence of any other available population figures. If it is assumed that the annual population growth rate is fairly constant this should not introduce too much error into the analysis presented here. The latest

official population figures available for 2022 (<https://www.citypopulation.de/en/nigeria/cities/>) were adopted for 2022 and 2023.

The ranking of the various States and the FCT when the number of UTME applicants is normalized in respect of the population is shown in Table 6. A comparison of Tables 5 and 6 shows that the ranking of the States has changed somewhat. A summary of the normalized ranking of the States from 2018 to 2023 is shown in Table 7.

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Table 6: Normalised Ranking of States on the basis of Number of UTME Applicants per Million of Population in 2022

(Population figures from <https://www.citypopulation.de/en/nigeria/cities>; Accessed 27th January 2024)

Ranking	State	2022 Official Population Projection	Number of UTME Applicants	Number of UTME Applicants per Million of Population
1 <sup>st</sup>	Osun	4,435,800	98,300	22,160
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Kwara	3,551,000	65,158	18,349
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Kogi	4,466,800	74,762	16,737
4 <sup>th</sup>	Ogun	6,379,500	98,173	15,389
5 <sup>th</sup>	Imo	5,459,300	80,851	14,810
6 <sup>th</sup>	Delta	5,636,100	79,794	14,158
7 <sup>th</sup>	Oyo	7,976,100	106,925	13,405
8 <sup>th</sup>	Edo	4,777,000	63,973	13,392
9 <sup>th</sup>	Ekiti	3,592,200	44,322	12,339
10 <sup>th</sup>	Enugu	4,690,100	56,791	12,109
11 <sup>th</sup>	Ondo	5,316,600	62,885	11,829
12 <sup>th</sup>	Nasarawa	2,886,000	30,720	10,644
13 <sup>th</sup>	Anambra	5,953,500	63,245	10,623
14 <sup>th</sup>	Akwa Ibom	4,979,400	51,138	10,270
15 <sup>th</sup>	Benue	6,141,300	62,907	10,243
16 <sup>th</sup>	Abia	4,143,100	40,209	9,705
17 <sup>th</sup>	Plateau	4,717,300	37,044	7,853
18 <sup>th</sup>	Ebonyi	3,242,500	25,142	7,754
19 <sup>th</sup>	Cross River	4,406,200	29,837	6,771
20 <sup>th</sup>	Kaduna	9,032,200	60,741	6,725
21 <sup>st</sup>	Bayelsa	2,537,400	16,387	6,458
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Rivers	7,476,800	42,701	5,711
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Gombe	3,960,100	20,478	5,171
24 <sup>th</sup>	Taraba	3,609,800	18,181	5,037
25 <sup>th</sup>	Adamawa	4,902,100	19,141	3,905
26 <sup>th</sup>	Yobe	3,649,600	13,052	3,576
27 <sup>th</sup>	Borno	6,111,500	21,042	3,443
28 <sup>th</sup>	Kano	15,462,200	47,935	3,100
29 <sup>th</sup>	Lagos	13,491,800	41,527	3,078
30 <sup>th</sup>	Niger	6,783,300	20,148	2,970
31 <sup>st</sup>	Kebbi	5,563,900	15,205	2,733
32 <sup>nd</sup>	Bauchi	8,308,800	21,562	2,595
33 <sup>rd</sup>	Katsina	10,368,500	24,548	2,368
34 <sup>th</sup>	Jigawa	7,499,100	16,177	2,157
35 <sup>th</sup>	FCT	3,067,500	6,203	2,022
36 <sup>th</sup>	Sokoto	6,391,000	12,053	1,886
37 <sup>th</sup>	Zamfara	5,833,500	6,420	1,101

Table 7: Normalised Ranking of States on the basis of Number of UTME Applicants per Million of Population in the period from 2018-2023

2023 Position	State	Number of UTME Applicants per Million of Population	Position of States in the respective years			
			2021	2020	2019	2018
1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Osun</b>	<b>22,160</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Kwara</b>	<b>18,349</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Kogi</b>	<b>16,737</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Ogun</b>	<b>15,389</b>	6 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>
5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Imo</b>	<b>14,810</b>	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
6 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Delta</b>	<b>14,158</b>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Oyo</b>	<b>13,405</b>	8 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Edo</b>	<b>13,392</b>	7 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Ekiti</b>	<b>12,339</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>
10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Enugu</b>	<b>12,109</b>	9 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
11 <sup>th</sup>	Ondo	11,829	11 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
12 <sup>th</sup>	Nasarawa	10,644	12 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
13 <sup>th</sup>	Anambra	10,623	13 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
14 <sup>th</sup>	Akwa Ibom	10,270	16 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>
15 <sup>th</sup>	Benue	10,243	14 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>
16 <sup>th</sup>	Abia	9,705	15 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>
17 <sup>th</sup>	Plateau	7,853	17 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>
18 <sup>th</sup>	Ebonyi	7,754	18 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>
19 <sup>th</sup>	Cross River	6,771	22 <sup>nd</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>
20 <sup>th</sup>	Kaduna	6,725	19 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>
21 <sup>st</sup>	Bayelsa	6,458	20 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Rivers	5,711	23 <sup>rd</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Gombe	5,171	21 <sup>st</sup>	22 <sup>nd</sup>	22 <sup>nd</sup>	22 <sup>nd</sup>
24 <sup>th</sup>	Taraba	5,037	24 <sup>th</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>
25 <sup>th</sup>	Adamawa	3,905	25 <sup>th</sup>	27 <sup>th</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup>
26 <sup>th</sup>	Yobe	3,576	28 <sup>th</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup>	27 <sup>th</sup>	27 <sup>th</sup>
27 <sup>th</sup>	Borno	3,443	26 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>
28 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Kano</b>	<b>3,100</b>	27 <sup>th</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>
29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Lagos</b>	<b>3,078</b>	33 <sup>rd</sup>	36 <sup>th</sup>	36 <sup>th</sup>	34 <sup>th</sup>
30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Niger</b>	<b>2,970</b>	29 <sup>th</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup>
31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Kebbi</b>	<b>2,733</b>	34 <sup>th</sup>	32 <sup>nd</sup>	32 <sup>nd</sup>	32 <sup>nd</sup>
32 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Bauchi</b>	<b>2,595</b>	30 <sup>th</sup>	30 <sup>th</sup>	30 <sup>th</sup>	30 <sup>th</sup>
33 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Katsina</b>	<b>2,368</b>	31 <sup>st</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup>
34 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Jigawa</b>	<b>2,157</b>	35 <sup>th</sup>	33 <sup>rd</sup>	33 <sup>rd</sup>	33 <sup>rd</sup>
35 <sup>th</sup>	<b>FCT</b>	<b>2,022</b>	32 <sup>nd</sup>	34 <sup>th</sup>	34 <sup>th</sup>	35 <sup>th</sup>
36 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sokoto</b>	<b>1,886</b>	36 <sup>th</sup>	35 <sup>th</sup>	35 <sup>th</sup>	36 <sup>th</sup>
37 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Zamfara</b>	<b>1,101</b>	37 <sup>th</sup>	37 <sup>th</sup>	37 <sup>th</sup>	37 <sup>th</sup>

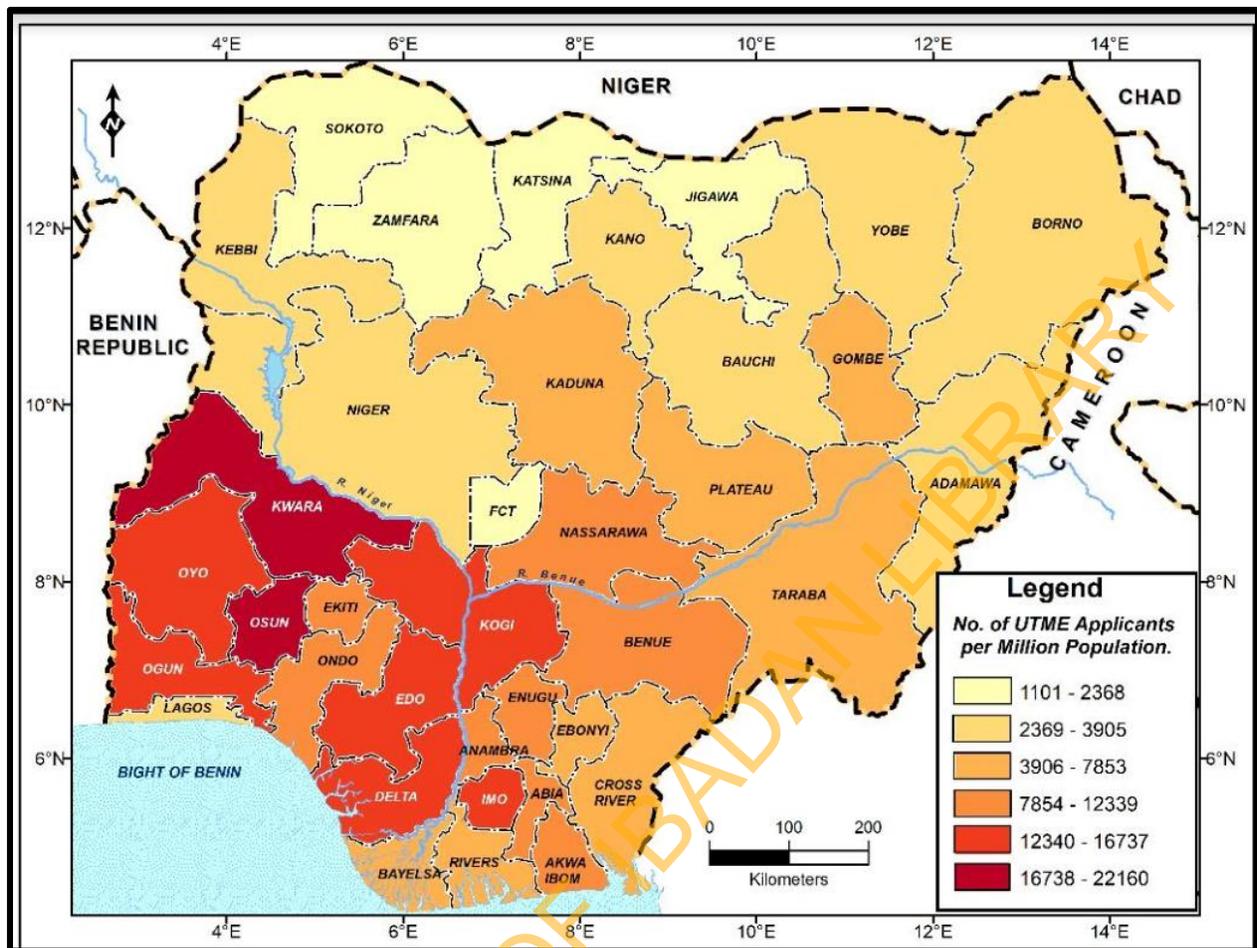


Figure 7: Map showing Normalised Ranking of the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory on the basis of the Number of Applicants for UTME per Million Population in 2022

The spatial distribution of the Normalised Ranking of the States and the FCT (Figure 7) shows that Osun and Kwara States are the best performers, followed by Kogi, Ogun, Imo, Delta and Oyo States. Similarly, the worst ranked States comprises Zamfara, Sokoto, the FCT, Jigawa and Katsina.

Based on the analysis reported here, an attempt has been made to group the 36 States and the FCT into four quartiles (Table 8).

Table 8: The Revised list of State Performance from the Normalised Ranking of UTME applicants (as derived from this paper)

S. NO	State	Quartile
1 <sup>st</sup>	Osun	First Quartile (Best Performers)
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Kwara	
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Kogi	
4 <sup>th</sup>	Ogun	
5 <sup>th</sup>	Imo	
6 <sup>th</sup>	Delta	
7 <sup>th</sup>	Oyo	
8 <sup>th</sup>	Edo	
9 <sup>th</sup>	Ekiti	
10 <sup>th</sup>	Enugu	Second Quartile
11 <sup>th</sup>	Ondo	
12 <sup>th</sup>	Nasarawa	
13 <sup>th</sup>	Anambra	
14 <sup>th</sup>	Akwa Ibom	
15 <sup>th</sup>	Benue	
16 <sup>th</sup>	Abia	
17 <sup>th</sup>	Plateau	
18 <sup>th</sup>	Ebonyi	
19 <sup>th</sup>	Cross River	Third Quartile
20 <sup>th</sup>	Kaduna	
21 <sup>st</sup>	Bayelsa	
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Rivers	
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Gombe	
24 <sup>th</sup>	Taraba	
25 <sup>th</sup>	Adamawa	
26 <sup>th</sup>	Yobe	
27 <sup>th</sup>	Borno	
28 <sup>th</sup>	Kano	Fourth Quartile (Lowest Performers)
29 <sup>th</sup>	Lagos	
30 <sup>th</sup>	Niger	
31 <sup>st</sup>	Kebbi	
32 <sup>nd</sup>	Bauchi	
33 <sup>rd</sup>	Katsina	
34 <sup>th</sup>	Jigawa	
35 <sup>th</sup>	FCT	
36 <sup>th</sup>	Sokoto	
37 <sup>th</sup>	Zamfara	

Osun, Kwara and Kogi States emerged in the overall first, second and third positions, respectively. Kwara and Kogi States in particular have done very well, as both States are up till now classified with the ELDS. Along with Nasarawa State which now occupies the 12<sup>th</sup> overall best position these three States should no longer remain on the list of ELDS States. Instead, the three states of Kwara, Kogi and Nasarawa should be replaced by Lagos State and the Federal Capital Territory

among the ELDS. Both Lagos State and the Federal Capital Territory are cosmopolitan with most of the residents not probably being indigenes of the State. Alternatively, the concept of grouping some States as ELDS could be scrapped altogether as it has, probably outlived its usefulness. The National Council of Education should interrogate this matter and decide appropriately, as part of data-driven policy making at the national level.

Table 9: Competitiveness of UTME Admission into Various Undergraduate Programmes by comparing the total number of First Choice Applications to the available quota (Source: JAMB Policy Meetings, 2020, 2021 and 2023)

Ranking in 2022 UTME Applications	Programme	(Total number of Application/Quota) X 100	Ranking in 2020 UTME	Ranking in 2019 UTME
1 <sup>st</sup>	Law/Legal	1,263	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Medicine/Pharmacy/Health Science	614	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Administration	359	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4 <sup>th</sup>	Social Sciences	294	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
5 <sup>th</sup>	Engineering/Tech./Environment. Sciences	264	5 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
6 <sup>th</sup>	Sciences	187	6 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
7 <sup>th</sup>	Arts/Humanities	184	7 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup>	Agriculture	86	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>
9 <sup>th</sup>	Education	68	9 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>

The available information from JAMB indicate that the most sought-out academic programmes in Nigerian Universities include Law and Medicine/Pharmacy/Health Sciences in which the number of first choice applicants typically outstrips the admission quota. It can be seen from Table 9 that in the 2022 UTME Application, there were nearly 13 candidates seeking admission into Law for every available space.

Similarly, there were six admission candidates for Medicine/Pharmacy/Health Science for every available space. Most of the candidates who made those courses their first choice would apply for change of course through JAMB for consideration into other courses for which they satisfied the entry requirements.

It needs to be pointed out that the group Medicine/Pharmacy/Health Science in Table 9 is neither homogeneous nor monolithic. It comprises at least five broad disciplines as contained in the NUC Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standard (CCMAS) document, namely Allied Health Sciences, Basic Medical Sciences, Medicine and Dentistry, Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Veterinary Medicine. In this group, experience has shown that Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy/Pharmaceutical Sciences are the most competitive largely on account of the very

large number of applications and the admission quota imposed by the respective professional bodies.

On the other hand, the least competitive courses are Agriculture and Education. For the 219, 2020 and 2022 admission exercises, there were fewer candidates who made these two courses their first choice than the number of admission slots available. Ironically apart from these two programmes being available in most of the conventional public universities they are also offered in a number of specialized universities. In the case of Agriculture, the Universities of Agriculture include the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta established in 1988, Joseph Sarwuan University Makurdi (1988), Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (1992), Federal University of Agriculture, Zuru, Kebbi State (2020) and the State-owned University of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Umagwo, Imo State (2019).

Similarly, the oldest University of Education-Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu Ode was established by the Ogun State Government in 2005. Since then five new Universities of Education have been established including Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni Port Harcourt in 2010 (former Rivers State College of Education), Lagos State University of Education in 2022 Ijanikin (formerly Lagos State College of Education), Shehu Shagari University of Education, Sokoto in 2022 (formerly Sokoto State College of Education), Emmanuel Alayande College of Education Oyo in 2023 (Formerly Emmanuel Alayande College of Education) and Sa'adatu Rimi University of Education Kano (2023). The various types of Universities in Nigeria are outlined in Table 10.

Table 10: Classification of Universities in Nigeria on the basis of types of programmes offered

S. No	Type of University	Number of Universities		
		Federal	State	Private
1	Conventional	30	40	131
2	Technology/Science & Technology/Technical	6	12	4
3	Agriculture	4	1	
4	Education		6	
5	Health/Medical Sciences	4	3	7
6	Transportation/Aviation & Aerospace	2		
7	Petroleum Resources/Petroleum & Energy Studies	1		1
8	Police Academy	1		
9	Military (Defence Academy; Air Force Institute; Nigerian Army University)	3		
10	Maritime	1		
11	Sports			1
12	University of Economics			1
13	Open	1		4
	TOTAL	53	62	149

It remains to be seen whether there would be increased enrollment into Agriculture and Education disciplines as a result of the establishment of these specialized universities.

There are also specialized Universities of Science and Technology, and Universities of Medicine/Health Sciences. Many State Governments are converting their Polytechnics to Universities of Science and Technology. Considering that Polytechnic education is not generally as attractive to many Nigeria youths as reflected in their preference for University education, it is highly likely that most of the existing Polytechnics, Monotechnics and Colleges of Education would be converted into Universities by their proprietors in the foreseeable future.

The conventional mode of instruction in the universities is face-to-face although there has been an increase in the mainstreaming of technology into teaching and research, especially in the Post COVID-19 era. Moreover, many universities have Distance Learning centres. There is a National Open University owned by the Federal Government while four Privately-owned Universities were recently licensed.

It has been reported that as of November 2023, no less than 24 Polytechnics and Colleges were converted into Universities during the period 2020-2023 (Lawal, 2023). It is to be expected that many of the currently existing 608 Polytechnics, Monotechnics and Colleges would be converted into Universities in the coming years. According to Wikipedia.org, by definition, University means a high-level educational institution in which students study for degrees and academic research is done. Polytechnic on the other hand was identified as a technical education of engineering or a diploma in engineering courses that is focused on practical and skill-oriented training

Looking at what happened in another jurisdiction, under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 Polytechnics in the United Kingdom became fully fledged universities. After 1992, the former polytechnics ("new universities") awarded their own degrees. Most sub-degree qualifications have been phased out of the new universities, and transferred to colleges of further education. This was during the Prime Ministerial tenure of Margaret Thatcher. Her political philosophy and economic policies emphasised greater individual liberty, the privatisation of state-owned companies, and reducing the power and influence of trade unions.

With the Police and Military being on the Exclusive Legislative List in the 1999 Constitution (as amended), it is not surprising that the Police and Military Universities are all Federally-owned.

Table 11: Number of Non-University Higher Educational Institutions in Nigeria (Source: <https://web.nbte.gov.ng>; <https://ncceonline.edu.ng>. Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024)

Non-University Higher Educational Institutions in Nigeria	Total Number as at March 2024
Federal-Owned Polytechnics	41
State-Owned Polytechnics	54
Privately-Owned Polytechnics	87
Federal-Owned Monotechnics	86
State-Owned Monotechnics	55
Privately-Owned Monotechnics	50
Accredited Colleges of Education (Federal; State and Private)	235
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>608</b>

The number of candidates admitted by JAMB in the respective years from 2008 till 2022 is shown in Figure 8. There was a general increase in the number of candidates admitted from 361,805 in 2008 to a peak of 513,207 in 2013. There was a slight drop the following year (2014) followed by a rise in 2015 and 2016. The highest figure was recorded in 2019 which was 619,397, shortly before the onset of COVID-19. From this all-time high the figure dropped in the next two years namely 2020 and 2021. It is perhaps very difficult to predict what the trend would look like in the next few years.

By comparing Figures 8 and 9 it can be seen that only one-third of the candidates who applied for admission during the period 2015 to 2022 were eventually admitted. In other words, the global picture suggests that the acceptance rate is of the order of 33% although the acceptance rate would vary widely from one university to another and for each university it would vary from one discipline to another.

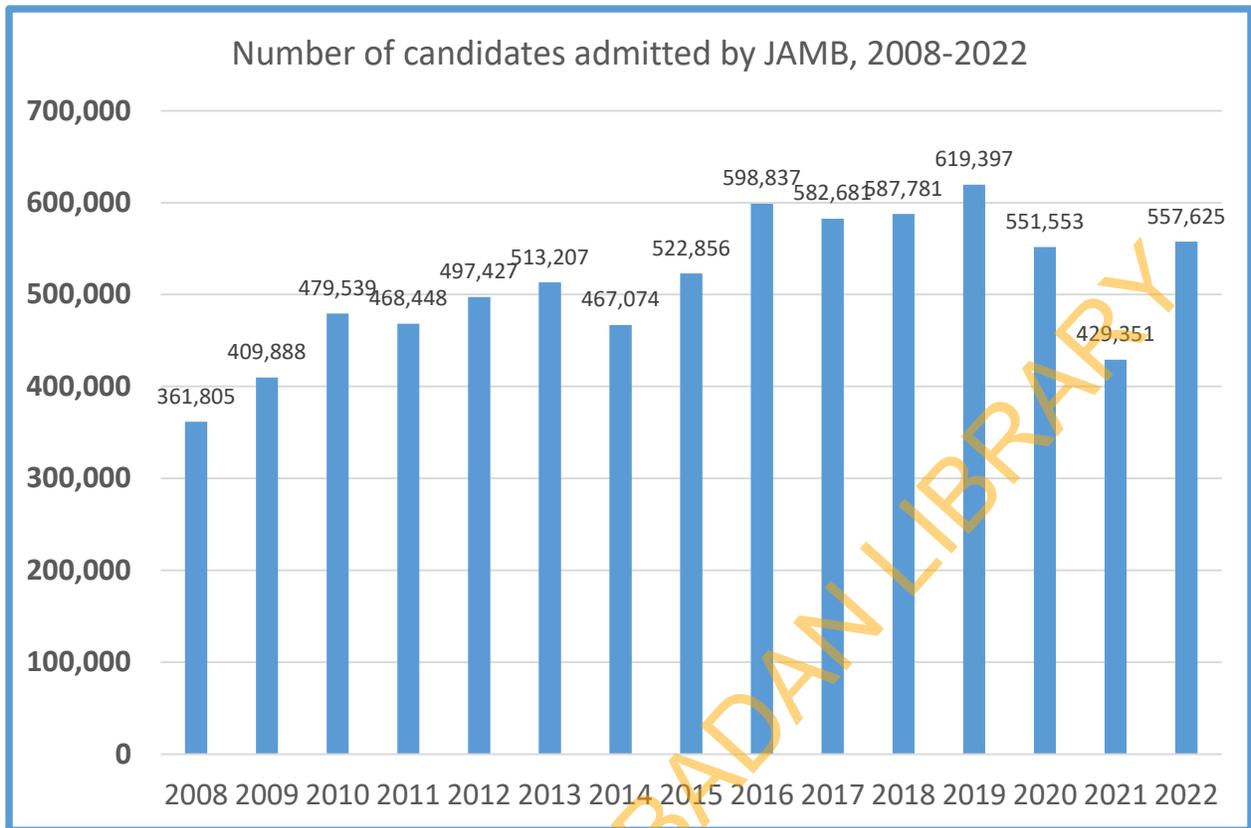


Figure 8: Summary of Admissions by JAMB, 2008-2022

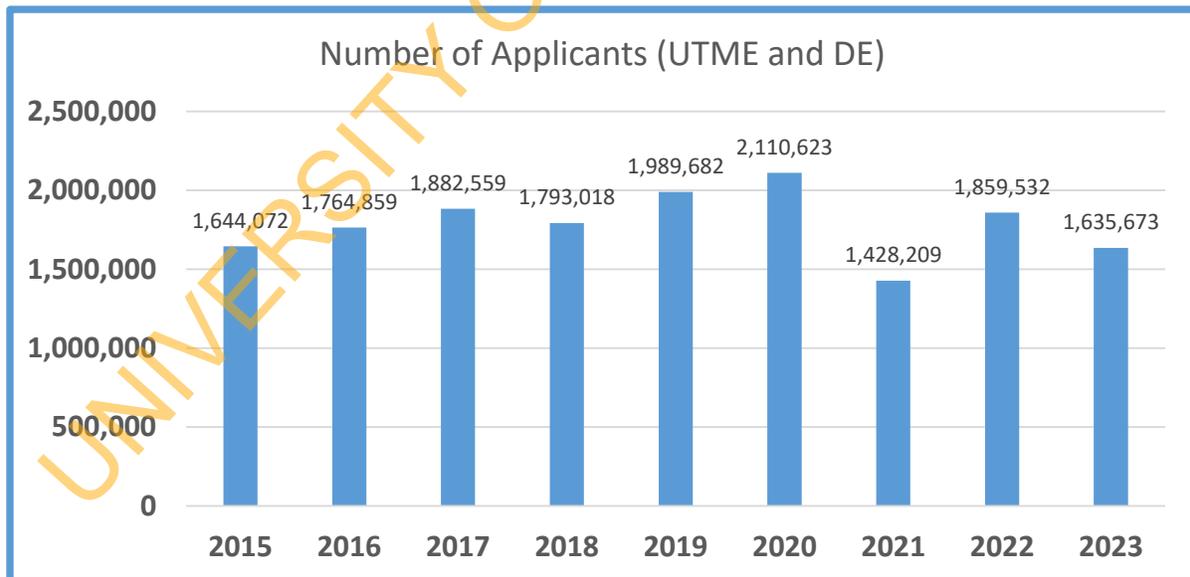


Figure 9: Number of Applicants to JAMB (UTME and Direct Entry), 2015 to 2023

JAMB has always maintained that no UTME score is a Cut-off mark for the purpose of admission. Instead, JAMB in its 2023 Policy Meeting alluded to what it christened a National Tolerable Minimum UTME Score (**NTMUS**) below which no institution should go in selecting candidates. This is currently set at 140 for Universities, 100 for Polytechnics and 100 for Colleges of Education. The minimum cut-off marks were arrived at following votes by Vice-Chancellors of Universities, Rectors of Polytechnics, and Provosts of Colleges of Education. With the Private Universities comprising the majority of the Universities at 149 out of 264 (56.4%) while the public Universities are in minority (115 or 43.6), a situation in which there would be a clamour for a reduction of the current NTMUS may not be far-fetched.

JAMB also defined a Realistic Institutional Admittable Minimum UTME Scores (**RIAMUS**) which it expressed as the minimum that the Senate of each University approved for consideration for admission. Experience has shown that the Tier 1 institutions have always used 200 marks out of the maximum 400 marks in the UTME as their RIAMUS, to be followed by rigorous Post-UTME screening. The five institutions in this category are coincidentally all First Generation Universities include the University of Ibadan, University of Lagos, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, University of Benin, Benin City and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

It is gratifying that JAMB realizes that the admission of candidates is a core function of the Senate of each institution; hence the flexibility in allowing each university to specify its RIAMUS is to be applauded. It is in this vain that while some universities base their admission on only WAEC/NECO grades and the UTME scores some other Universities insist on POST-UTME screening as another way of filtering the large number of applications for admission. At the University of Ibadan, our records indicate that the quality of our undergraduate intakes has increased considerable since the POST-UTME screening was introduced in 2005/2006. This is reflected in a considerable reduction in the proportion of students advised to withdraw from the University at the end of their first year of study from an all-time high of 12% previously to less than 2% in recent years. Our academic staff have attested to the very high quality of our students at entry level. This has also been corroborated by the outstanding performance of the graduates in external examinations such as the Final Bar Examinations of the Nigerian Law School where the graduates from the University of Ibadan have consistently posted excellent results (Unini, 2024).

For some years now, JAMB has been giving cash prizes to those Universities which admit the highest numbers of candidates. This is commendable insofar as those universities are contributing to solving the access (Quantity) problem. However, I probably speak the mind of many concerned stakeholders who are of the view that those institutions that set a relatively high bench mark for admission (Quality) in consonance with their carrying capacity should equally be recognized and acknowledged in one form or the other. With an ever increasing number of universities (Federal, State and Private) and increasing number of candidates seeking admission one can foresee a situation in which those institutions that are unable to meet their admission quota would continue to mount pressure during the annual Policy Meetings to lower the NTMUS. Having attended some of those Policy Meetings during my stint as Vice-Chancellor it is obvious that the Private

Universities are more in number than the Public Universities and in the spirit of democracy the views of the former would always predominate over the latter in deciding on the NTMUS.

### **Contemporary situation with the Nigerian University System**

After 64 years of independence, the Nigerian education system has witnessed the succession of several governments, produced a relatively large number of graduates for the labor markets, and various policy changes. A careful evaluation of the current system reveals critical prospects and challenges confronting the educational system of the African giants.

Gateway out of generational poverty: Despite the numerous challenges facing the Nigerian education system, it has successfully produced graduates who have leveraged their skills and knowledge for the betterment of themselves and their families. Many first-generation graduates have emerged from the nation's monotronics, polytechnics, and universities. While the focus on white-collar jobs must now be discouraged to make room for an out-of-the-box entrepreneurial mindset, the Nigerian education system has trained manpower that currently drives the nation's economy.

Another potential impact that the Nigerian education system has contributed to the nation's development is in driving innovation, invention, and consequently societal development. Research is the pivot of nation-building. The Nigerian tertiary educational system has the potential to leverage the large student population in the country's educational institutions to drive economic growth. This will require adequate training of lecturers to serve as mentors in designing novel research problems and guiding their supervisees in proffering sound scientific ideas to solve such problems. Efforts must be ensured to promote strong synergy between relevant government agencies (policy makers) and the research institutions to ensure that novel research findings have direct impacts on nation-building. This development across all departments and faculties will significantly advance economic growth in no time.

Notwithstanding the pessimistic view surrounding the massive exodus of Nigerians to developed nations, one valid prospect of this "Japa syndrome" is that the Nigerian Educational System is significantly contributing to the global human resources in driving novel research ideas across different continents of the world. The fact that our graduates are hired as Research Students, Doctoral Candidates, and Postdoctoral Researchers across the globe underscores the potential of the Nigerian Educational System to be a major player in the global knowledge exchange market.

Universities are citadels of learning and development, which exist primarily to produce high-quality and excellent graduates, create and advance the frontier of knowledge, develop standards for judging the merit of ideals, and advance civilisation. The faculty members of a university are engaged in three distinct but interconnected principal functions: teaching, research and innovation, and community service. Through these functions, knowledge is generated and disseminated to students, peers and external audiences, and societal problems are addressed accordingly. Also, the interplay of these core functions of a university determines the quality of education offered by the university. The quality of higher education a nation provides to its citizens is the primary tool for national development. Every country can develop and advance technologically by prioritising quality higher education. Nigeria has yet to make meaningful progress in national development

and technological advancement, partly due to the poor quality of education offered by the national educational system, particularly the Nigerian University System (NUS).

In general, the quality of graduates produced by a university is its main distinguishing element. The quality of graduates produced by a university depends, on the one hand, on the quality of the input (mainly intakes and the enrollment process) and, on the other hand, on the quality of teaching, research and innovation, and community service engaged in by its faculty members, which are critical elements of the process domain. Consequently, universities are rated or ranked based on the quality of the graduates they produce, which measures the university's quality delivery of teaching, research, innovation, and service.

Available data indicates that gross enrollment in higher education in Africa, and Nigeria by extension, is about 13% compared to >70% in the USA and >24% in Europe. Thus, Nigeria's enrollment and access to university education are far less than the global average. Also, available statistics show that the quality of Nigerian universities graduates has continued to deteriorate. There is a consensus of opinion that present-day graduates from universities in Nigeria need to gain the necessary and requisite skills and competencies to function productively in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many of the graduates can neither secure choice employment in multinational companies nor generate employment. These quality indicators of university education attest to the weakness or failure of the Nigerian University System.

There is no doubt that the Nigerian University System has been faced with several constraints that inhibit its ability to deliver on its core mandate of teaching, research and innovation, and community service, which will enhance the quality of graduates produced from Nigerian universities and thus engender national development and technological advancement. As reflected in the world university rankings, these constraints have made it almost impossible for Nigerian universities to compete favourably with universities in developed countries, particularly in terms of the quality of graduates produced, which can be measured using various key performance indicators (KPIs), research quality and research environment, volume of publications in high-impact journals, and ability of the Nigerian University System to respond to and solve local and national problems with global relevance through community service. One may attribute the constraints limiting the Nigerian University System to several interrelated and interdependent factors; some of the factors are presented in the following sections.

### **Curriculum**

It is important to note that the NUC, as the national regulatory body of the Nigerian University System, introduced the content-based Minimum Academic Standards (MAS) curriculum for Nigerian universities in 1989. In 2007, the NUC revised the MAS curriculum to the content- and outcome-based Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) curriculum, which is still in operation in Nigerian universities. The NUC has recently (2023) transformed the BMAS curriculum into the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS), which is intended to be centred on the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and competencies regarding its delivery and learning outcomes (Figure 10).

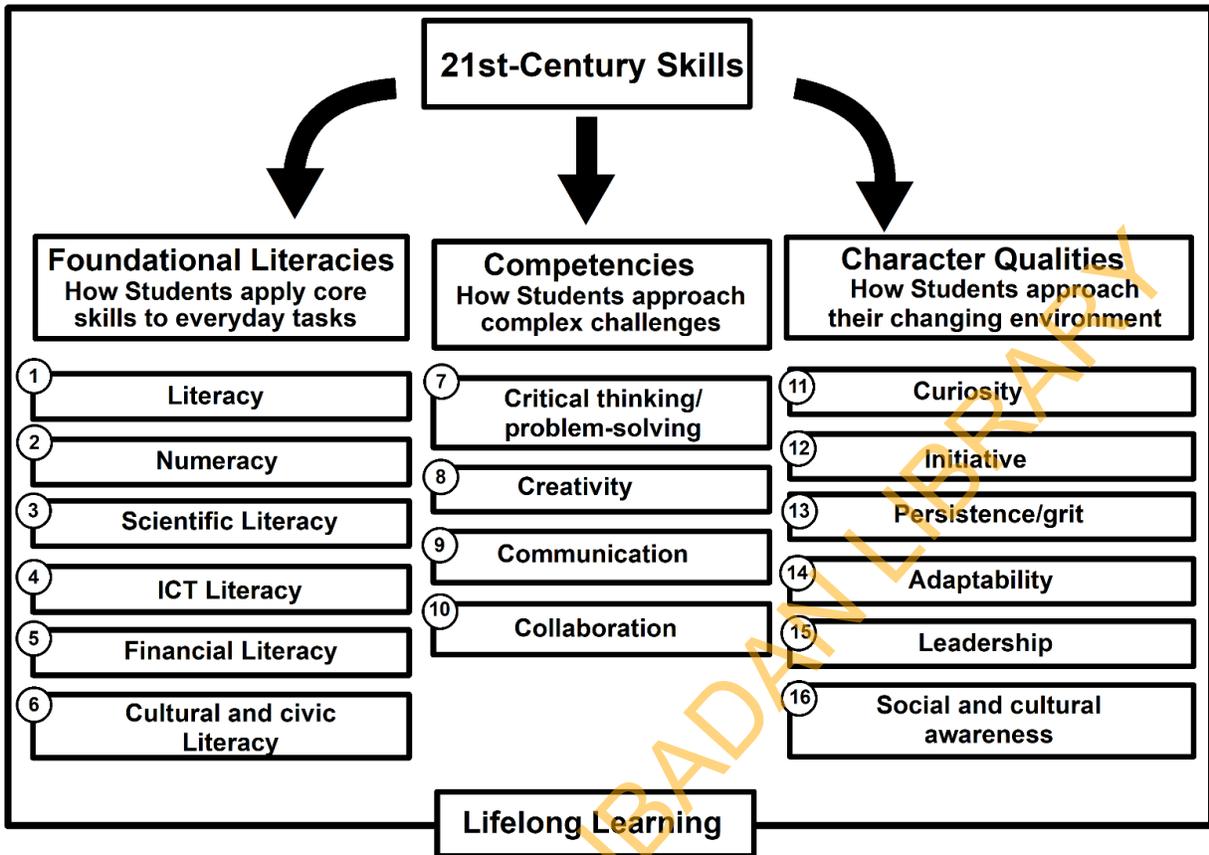


Figure 10: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (Source: World Economic forum New Vision for education-Unlocking the potential of Technology)

In general, the curriculum offered by a university or any higher education institution is a critical element in the input (intakes and enrollment processes) elements and process (teaching, research and innovation, and service) domain, and thus determines the quality of the output (graduates and community impact). Therefore, the curriculum and its effective implementation are central to attaining quality education and national development. The curriculum that defines the content of the knowledge imparted to the students by the university. The ability of the Nigerian University System (NUS) to meet national development needs is dependent on the availability of a dynamic curriculum aimed at imparting the right skills and competencies, which today should be 21<sup>st</sup> century-centred, to the students.

Focus on theoretical rather than experiential and practical learning: Focusing predominantly on theoretical learning in tertiary education poses significant dangers that can hinder the overall development of students. While theoretical knowledge forms the foundation of academic understanding, an exclusive emphasis on this aspect neglects the importance of experiential and practical learning. Theoretical learning often exists in a vacuum, divorced from real-world

applications, leaving students ill-equipped to address the complexities of professional environments.

Practical experience is crucial for honing problem-solving skills, fostering creativity, and promoting adaptability—qualities essential in today's dynamic workforce. Relying solely on theoretical frameworks may produce graduates who lack the ability to translate knowledge into practical solutions. Moreover, an overemphasis on theory can contribute to a disconnect between academia and industry, leading to a workforce that struggles to bridge the gap between what is learned in classrooms and what is demanded in the real world. To ensure the holistic development of students and their readiness for the challenges of the professional realm, a balanced integration of theoretical, experiential, and practical learning is imperative in tertiary education.

Unfortunately, the curriculum that the Nigerian University System through the National Universities Commission (NUC) has operated over the years is believed to be generally fashioned after the colonial legacies and was designed to produce a workforce rather than impart the right skills and competencies towards the attainment of national development and technological advancement. However, the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) introduced by the NUC attempts to address this apparent weakness of the curriculum of the Nigerian University system.

University and research institutes in Nigeria and most African nations are grossly underfunded. Only a few African countries provide research facilities and funding for research and innovation in their universities and research institutes. Several factors are responsible for the poor funding of universities in Nigeria; we may broadly group these factors into political and economic factors.

The professional bodies such as the Council of Legal Education (CLE), the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN), the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN), the Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN), the Council of the Nigerian Mining Engineers and Geoscientists (COMEG), and the Architects Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON) are also involved in the professional regulation of various courses in the Universities. I was recently engaged recently by COMEG as the Chairman, Council of Nigerian Mining Engineers and Geoscientists (COMEG) Committee on the Review of NUC Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standard and Development of COMEG Minimum Academic Standard for First Degree programmes in Geology; Applied Geophysics; Geological Oceanography; Mining Engineering; Metallurgy and Materials Science; Remote Sensing and Geoscience Information System. The group has submitted its report through the Registrar of COMEG, to the Honourable Minister of Solid Mineral Development.

Here, I wish to elaborate on the development of a new Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm. D) degree programme at the University of Ibadan. The University of Ibadan mounted a Bachelor of Pharmacy programme in 1980 which has turned out to be highly successful in contributing to producing highly trained professionals for health care delivery in the country and beyond. In September 2016, the NUC approved a new Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm. D) degree programme, as a more clinically intensive program as the minimum benchmark for pharmacy programmes in Nigeria. The Pharm.D. degree is to be the entry-level qualification for pharmacists and a way of improving

patient care and public wellness. The University of Ibadan had no difficulty in keying in to this laudable initiative.

The general philosophy of the Doctor of Pharmacy programme is to produce Pharmacy practitioners worthy in character, capable of critical thinking, and possessing adequate knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to render optimal care in an evolving healthcare system. The program is to provide the students with the tools to practice as patient-centered healthcare professionals who understand and apply the value of life-long learning to enhance the pharmacy profession.

The Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN) had earlier advised Schools of Pharmacy to stop admission into the Bachelor of Pharmacy programme from 2017 and commence admission into Pharm. D. Both the PCN and the NUC gave the ultimatum that Pharm. D shall become the minimum requirement for fresh registration with PCN as a Pharmacist from 2024.

The Vice-Chancellor approved the sponsorship of 15 senior academics of the Faculty, including the Dean of Pharmacy and other Professors, to undertake the one-year Special Pharm. D Conversion program, which was jointly organized by the PCN, Nigerian Association of Pharmacists and Pharmaceutical Scientists in the Americas (NAPPSA) and the University of Benin, Edo State. This was to enable the Faculty to be fully prepared for the take-off of the Pharm. D program at the University of Ibadan, by providing a sizeable number of academic staff in the Faculty to obtain the Pharm. D degree as recommended by the PCN. The training took place in two batches comprising seven staff in the Batch 1st batch during the 2018/2019 academic session and eight academic staff members in the 2nd batch during the 2019/2020 session.

The Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm. D) program curriculum was approved by the University Senate on 3 March 2019. In preparation for the commencement of the Pharm. D program, the Faculty of Pharmacy organized a two-day workshop for the academic staff of the Faculty and the preceptors from the University College Hospital, Ibadan, and selected community pharmacies involved in the training of Pharmacy students. The workshop took place between 18th - 19th November 2020 at the University of Ibadan Center for Sustainable Development (CESDEV). The program was sponsored by the West African Health Organization, WAHO, through a \$5000 grant. The training focused on teaching methods, team building, problem-solving, and professional competencies.

The NUC Resource Verification for the Pharm. D program took place from 27 to 29 November 2019. The Faculty of Pharmacy received the NUC approval to commence the Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm. D) program in the 2019/2020 academic session. The Senate of the University also approved establishment of a Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology in the Faculty of Pharmacy. The first set of students on the Doctor of Pharmacy programme at the University of Ibadan are currently in the 400 level and are expected to complete their six-year programme in 2026.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Teaching refers to imparting knowledge and skills from a teacher to a learner. It encompasses the activities of educating or instructing a learner. Teaching is an act that has a formative effect on the learner's mind, character or physical ability. Teachers help students to learn by imparting knowledge to them and creating an environment for effective learning. Since teaching is one of

the core functions of a university (Coaldrake and Steadman, 1999), it is central to addressing the primary educational mission of universities. Through teaching, university faculty members disseminate and impart basic or applied knowledge to students and assist them with the learning process and in applying the knowledge.

Paradoxically, advancement in academic career depends more on success in research and innovation than teaching. Also, university rankings bodies emphasise research and citations parameters rather than teaching parameters. These realities have led most university managers and faculty members to give greater priority to research at the detriment of teaching. To address the declining learning outcomes due to poor teaching delivery, some Western universities engage two classes of faculty: teaching and research faculty.

The quality of teaching in a given university is, to a large extent, dependent on the quality and content of the curriculum. Again, it is generally believed that teaching and learning under the colonial curriculum operated by the Nigerian University System is largely teacher-centred rather than student-centred. The Nigerian University System must refrain from paying lip service to the teaching role of a university if it desires to compete favourably with other universities across the globe, particularly in terms of the quality of graduates it produces. The Nigerian University System must deliberately pay close attention to the quality of pedagogic practices and the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the universities.

The heart of teaching in the university is the imaginative acquisition of knowledge. A university education is nothing if it does not inspire and fire up a burning desire to learn in the students. Teaching and learning in our universities must challenge the students to cultivate critical and creative thinking by improving the quality of teaching delivery. Quality teaching leads to effective learning, i.e. a thorough and lasting acquisition of the knowledge, skills, competences, and values that the instructor and the institution have set out to impart. Quality teaching is the most vital way of producing graduates who can reason and act for themselves, applying theories to solving practical problems. These are precisely the skills any 21<sup>st</sup>-century graduate employer will want to see in the graduates. Improved teaching quality enhances the learning outcomes and increases internal efficiency by drastically reducing the failure rate.

**Rigid modes of instructions and assessment:** The rigid modes of instruction and assessment in the Nigerian education system have significantly impacted the overall standard of education in the country. The traditional emphasis on rote memorization and a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching often hinders the development of critical thinking and practical skills among students. The education system's focus on examinations that prioritize memorization over comprehension tends to discourage creativity and innovative thinking. Additionally, the rigid structure may not cater to diverse learning styles and individual talents, leading to a potential loss of untapped potential. As the global landscape evolves, a more flexible and dynamic approach to instruction and assessment is crucial to better prepare Nigerian students for the challenges of the modern world and enhance the overall quality of education in the country.

## Research Quality and Research Environment

The research climate of the universities in Nigeria and Africa is also plagued with several constraints, including huge research infrastructure deficit, inadequate funding, poor training in the art and science of research, lack of motivation, and poor or absence of research incentives from government and institutions. In addition, most researchers in Nigerian and African universities need to be made aware of available funding opportunities or cannot write competitive research grant proposals to fund research. These constraints have resulted in poor quality research and poor research output, as only a few research publications authored by researchers in Nigerian and African universities get published in high-impact journals.

Several factors may be responsible for the poor research climate and poor quality research in the Nigerian University System; some of the factors include the following:

- i. *Inadequate Research Infrastructure*: The facilities and infrastructure that would enhance high-quality and excellent research, which are publishable in high-impact journals, are generally unavailable in most Nigerian universities. The lack of adequate research facilities is mainly attributed to poor funding and misplaced priority by the government, proprietors and funding agencies. In cases where basic research facilities exist, the facilities usually are not maintained, either as a result of a lack of funding or the absence of a maintenance plan. Usually, the end users of the facilities are not involved in procuring research facilities; the vendors and/or political office holders involved in such procurement may procure sub-standard, obsolete or incomplete (with no essential accessories) facilities that may eventually become useless to the end users.
- ii. *The Volume of Research Publications*: Available statistics indicate that the quality of research in Nigerian universities is relatively poor and below global average. Hence, the researchers usually cannot successfully scale their research articles, which report poor-quality research, through the rigorous peer review process of high-impact journals. Usually, some researchers whose manuscripts have suffered rejection by editors of high-impact journals after peer review typically get discouraged and are reluctant to submit their manuscripts to high-impact journals for peer review and publication. The poor research quality in Nigerian universities is a direct consequence of inadequate research infrastructure and insufficient funding coupled with poor training in the *art and science* of research on the part of the researchers.
- iii. *Remuneration and Incentives for Research*: Apart from inadequate research facilities, remuneration and incentives for research suffer significantly due to poor funding. In general, remuneration for researchers and academics in Nigerian universities is very poor but could be better and made attractive; incentives for research may not even exist in most Nigerian universities, particularly private universities. Many first-degree holders in corporate organisations receive better remuneration than most professors in Nigerian universities. Despite the poor remuneration and absence of research incentives, many researchers still fund their research from their grossly inadequate salaries. This self-research funding usually impacts heavily on the overall quality of the research. Consequently, the Nigerian University System is therefore unable to attract and retain quality teaching and research faculty to the universities.

- iv. *Research Grants and Fellowships:* Apart from research grants and fellowships solely designated for researchers and academics in Africa, most researchers and scholars in Nigerian and African universities find it extremely difficult to attract research grants and fellowships. Because of the peculiar circumstances prevailing in universities and research institutes in Nigeria and Africa, many researchers and academics cannot write quality and competitive research grant proposals that would enable them to compete favourably for research grants and fellowships with researchers in the developed world. Also, there is the apparent fear by the grant and funding bodies that the researcher would not deploy and utilise the research funds effectively deployed for the purpose they are meant for. Whereas the Nigerian government has established trust funds to intervene and provide grants for research at one time or another, the trust funds have needed to be more effective in providing research grants to a critical mass of researchers in Nigerian universities. Also, the extant laws setting up such trust funds exclude private universities from benefitting from the funds.
- v. *Motive for Research and Publications:* Although this may be obscure, the motive for conducting research or writing research articles for publication can significantly influence the overall quality of the research and publication outlets selected by the researchers. Many researchers in Nigerian universities may not conduct research because of the desire to contribute to the body of knowledge by solving local and national problems that have global relevance; they conduct research with goal of writing “quick papers” that would earn them promotion so that they can get a raise in their salaries. Such researchers who are only motivated by their desire to be promoted and get a raise in their wages usually sacrifice the quality of the research for quick publications. They are generally unwilling to wait during the long period of time that the peer review process usually takes in high-impact journals. Such researchers prefer to send their manuscripts to journals with less rigorous review processes and a large turnout of articles within a short period of time.
- vi. *Research Training and Mentorship:* There is also the challenge of poor research training and inadequate or absence of research mentorship. Supervisors and senior academics must properly train and adequately mentor postgraduate students and early career researchers in Nigerian and African universities. The inadequate training and mentorship of doctoral students and early career researchers may be attributed to several factors, including lack of interest in research, poor research funding, lack of adequate research facilities, and poor remuneration and research incentives that would motivate the supervisors and mentors. In some cases, the supervisors and mentors are not adequately trained and mentored in the *art and science* of research and research supervision and mentorship; consequently, they cannot provide adequate research training, supervision and mentorship to their research students and early career researchers.

### **Community Service**

Community service is one of the principal functions of a university. It is critical to address the primary educational mission of universities. Universities respond to and solve local and national problems with global relevance through community service. The research focus of the Nigerian universities should be guided by local and national issues together with the United Nations

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and African Union Agenda 2063, otherwise referred to as “the Africa we want” for effective community service delivery. Such research focus will have a direct impact on our immediate community, nation and society at large. Also, the Nigerian University System should foster a robust partnership with the industry players and other stakeholders to address critical industry-related challenges through research.

### **Future Outlook of the Nigerian University System**

The future in the context in which it is employed here is a relative term. There is the future in time, usually the next second, hour, week, month, year, etc. There is the future in success and achievements, traditionally referred to as “tomorrow”, i.e. the tomorrow of our expectations, which may be discoveries, innovations and inventions. In general, the future is a cumulative effect of today’s decision. The future we desire is only a thought away and an event that can happen. We can consider the following quotations:

The most effective way to ensure the value of the future is to confront the present courageously and constructively (Rollo May).

The only way to predict the future is to create it (Peter Drucker).

For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it (Luke 14:28).

These quotations suggest that the Nigerian University System can create the desired future for Nigerian universities by courageously and constructively confronting its present challenges and constraints to bridge the gap between the current state of the university system and the future we desire. Creating the Nigerian University System of our dreams would require careful, deliberate and intentional planning, formulation and development of a framework of action and implementation of the framework for Nigerian universities. There is a need for the NUC to carefully outline the mission and objectives of the Nigerian University System and the necessary actions to achieve them, as well as improve on the key performance indicators of Nigerian universities in the framework of action.

To address the numerous challenges confronting the Nigerian University System, all stakeholders need to take a comprehensive view of the various components of the problems and contributing factors and address them holistically. Any solution proffers should involve the various stakeholders of the Nigerian university system, including the government and proprietors, donors and funding bodies, universities and university managements, academic and non-academic unions of Nigerian University Systems, students, parents/guardians, employers of labour, and alumni bodies. The following sections present the steps stakeholders could take to holistically address the Nigerian University System's problems.

### **Curriculum Design and Review**

Whereas the National Universities Commission (NUC) should continue to regulate the Nigerian University System and ensure quality assurance of all academic programmes in Nigerian universities, it is my view that each university should be allowed to design its programmes and curricula based on its mission, vision, and the needs of the students and society. The university

must review the programmes' curricula periodically, say on a five (5) years cycle. Relevant stakeholders, including students, employers and industry partners, should be allowed to make input to the design and review of programmes' curricula. The NUC must continue to strengthen and develop appropriate Standards and Guidelines for the Nigerian University System to benchmark programmes' curricula and policies of the Nigerian universities.

Also, there is a need for the NUC to facilitate and encourage universities in Nigeria to map and benchmark their academic programmes against those of reputable international qualification frameworks, such as the Framework for Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (Brussels, 2015), commonly referred to as the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). The mapping and benchmarking of programmes will allow universities to demonstrate international equivalents to all stakeholders. In addition, NUC should encourage international accreditation, both programmes and institutional, for all universities in Nigeria. Accrediting the universities and their programmes by international regulatory bodies would make the Nigerian university system globally competitive.

### **Increase in Funding**

Poor funding results in poor educational infrastructure, inadequate laboratories and classrooms, and insufficient quality lecturers. Inadequate financial support often results in a lack of essential resources such as textbooks, teaching materials, and updated technology. This hampers the overall learning experience for students and limits their exposure to current knowledge and advancements. Lack of funding can lead to the deterioration of educational infrastructure, including buildings, libraries, and recreational facilities. This not only affects the physical environment but also the motivation and morale of students and teachers. The absence of proper classrooms, libraries, and study spaces can hinder the learning process.

Overcrowded classrooms and insufficient facilities can create a challenging environment for effective teaching and learning. Inadequate educational infrastructure can limit students' access to information, restricting their ability to engage in independent research and broaden their knowledge base. Insufficient laboratories and classrooms give rise to a lack of practical learning. Insufficient laboratory facilities can impact science and technology education, hindering practical learning experiences. Without hands-on training, students may struggle to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world scenarios, affecting their overall understanding of the subject matter. Overcrowded classes resulting from a shortage of classrooms can reduce teacher-student interaction and make it challenging for educators to address individual learning needs.

Insufficient Quality Lecturers - Inadequate funding may lead to a shortage of qualified and experienced educators. This affects the quality of instruction and mentorship provided to students, impacting their academic performance and overall educational experience. Limited financial support for professional development programs can result in educators not staying updated with the latest teaching methodologies and subject knowledge. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach involving increased funding, strategic resource allocation, and a commitment to the professional development of educators. Improving the educational system in Nigeria will not only enhance the learning experience for students but also contribute to the country's overall development by producing a skilled and knowledgeable workforce.

There is a need for government, proprietors and funding bodies to deliberately and intentionally increase funding of the university system and provide adequate teaching and research infrastructure in the universities and research Institutes. The government should grant universities both academic and financial autonomy. Full university autonomy would allow each university to be creative and innovative in generating internal revenue to support itself without necessarily transferring the cost of university education to the students through tuition fees.

Adequate funding of the universities would enhance good-quality and excellent teaching and quality research and innovation that would significantly improve the quality of graduates from Nigerian universities. Good quality research would generate research income for the university and increase research output in high-impact journals. Good quality and excellent manuscripts will successfully scale through high-impact journals' rigorous peer review process. Also, university policies should guarantee realistic remunerations and adequate incentives for the university system's faculty members and non-teaching staff.

### **Research Collaboration and Industry Partnerships**

Funding bodies and all stakeholders in the Nigerian University System should deliberately encourage interdisciplinary research and research collaboration, including inter-university partnerships and collaboration between researchers in the developed world and those in Nigeria and Africa. Such collaboration and partnerships can be incorporated as part of the criteria for awarding research grants, both locally and internationally. Also, Nigerian universities and research institutes should foster strong research partnerships with the industry, particularly multinationals. The research partnership with industry would better position the universities to address local and national problems relevant to the industry, thus increasing funding, enhancing research quality and volume of publications in high-impact journals, and enhancing teaching and learning quality. Therefore, research collaboration and industry partnerships will significantly improve the quality of research in the Nigerian University System and greatly enhance the university's community service function.

### **Research Grants and Fellowships**

Grants and funding bodies should deliberately increase research grant awards for researchers in Nigerian and African universities. However, there should be effective strategies for proper monitoring and evaluation of such research grants. Research fellowships that would allow researchers, especially early career researchers and postgraduate students in Nigerian and African universities, to visit research laboratories in the developed world for a specified period should be highly encouraged and increased. Also, exchange programmes should allow researchers in the developed world to visit universities and research institutes in Nigeria. Such exchange programmes would significantly enhance the quality of research in Nigerian universities and increase the volume of publications in high-impact journals.

### **Special Issues in High-Impact Journals**

The Nigerian University System should collaborate with editors of major journals to have special journal issues periodically devoted to researches and researchers in Nigeria and Africa. The editors

could develop different evaluation metrics for the peer review process of such special journal issues, which would be favourable to many researchers in Nigeria and Africa.

The Nigerian University System of our dream should be such that it can produce high quality and excellent graduates with the right skills, competencies and values; conduct good quality and outstanding research that addresses local and national problems with global relevance; contribute significantly to the global body of knowledge by disseminating knowledge and research outputs in top rated journal outlets; self-sufficient by generating internal revenues through grants, endowment, research income and community service; and compete favourably with the very best universities in the world in all rankings tables. All stakeholders require a concerted effort to reposition our universities to such an enviable height.

#### **Other Challenges of Nigeria Universities include the following**

- (i) **A lack of Clear and Concise Vision.** Vision in this context is ability to see into the future and know what is obtainable in the nearest future. The vision of most of the visionaries of Nigeria University is not clear. Many Universities were born out of political will and unhealthy rivalry plus selfish desires and egos. There are no clear vision and no good understanding of the purpose of establishing such university, many were born for societal status while many were born solely for financial gain and therefore the purpose does not march the original and fundamental purposes of creating University Education.
- (ii) **Poor Financial Commitment.** Due to the lack of understanding or adequate knowledge of running of university system, some proprietors commit so little to the budget of the University, therefore cutting corners on many grounds. This eventually results into poor standard of education. When the system lacks financial power to run most of its activities, the system therefore will nosedive automatically.
- (iii) **There is a Lack of Culture and Values.** Every society is guided by its strong culture and values that they have established over time. Most Nigeria University lack culture and values. If indeed you did not stand for anything you will fall for all things. There is an academic culture which can not be thrown away. Each society is guided by their cultural values, believes and norms if not well uphold will affect stability and overall productivity of the system. The University System is a very conservative institution even while always at the leading edge of innovation. The concept of better established universities mentoring newly established universities should be strengthened by the NUC.
- (iv) **Poor Infrastructure.** Lack of adequate infrastructure is one of the major challenges pulling the Nigeria University backward. Poor/ inadequate water and light to mention a few. These are basic necessity for life in a university community. Imagine doing research were there is no electricity supply, you can imagine the quality of research that will be conducted at a place where there is epileptic supply of electricity, your guess is as good as mine.

- (v) **Gap between Research and Industry.** Inability of university system to link with industries for research and productivity which leads to research ending at publication level and no implementation. This has eroded the purpose for establishing universities in Nigeria. We sincerely look up to a time when the researches in Nigeria Universities will not end at the level of publication, But the relevant industry will pick up and utilized therefore establishing strong relationship between researchers and Industry which will lead to financial sponsor of research and overall development of the nation.

Incessant strike action: The Nigeria Educational System has witnessed a disturbing trend of incessant strike actions, particularly in universities and other tertiary institutions. These strikes, often initiated by academic and non-academic staff unions, have far-reaching consequences on the overall standard of education in the country. One of the primary ways in which incessant strike actions affect the standard of education in Nigeria is the disruption of academic calendars. These strikes result in prolonged closures of institutions, causing delays in the completion of academic programs and the graduation of students. As shown in Figure 11, about six years and three months have been lost to these union strikes over the last 32 years.

The interrupted academic schedules also impact the curriculum delivery, hindering the thorough coverage of course content. As a result, students are left with knowledge gaps and a compromised understanding of their respective fields of study. Furthermore, the continuity of research activities is severely hampered during strike periods. Faculty members, who play a crucial role in advancing knowledge through research, are often unable to carry out their scholarly pursuits, leading to a decline in the quality and quantity of academic publications.

This not only hampers the reputation of Nigerian public universities on the global stage but also limits the contribution of the country's academic community to the advancement of knowledge. Incessant strikes also contribute to the brain drain phenomenon, as talented and qualified academics seek better opportunities abroad due to the unstable and uncertain working conditions in Nigerian universities. The loss of skilled educators further depletes the academic resources available for students, negatively impacting the quality of education.

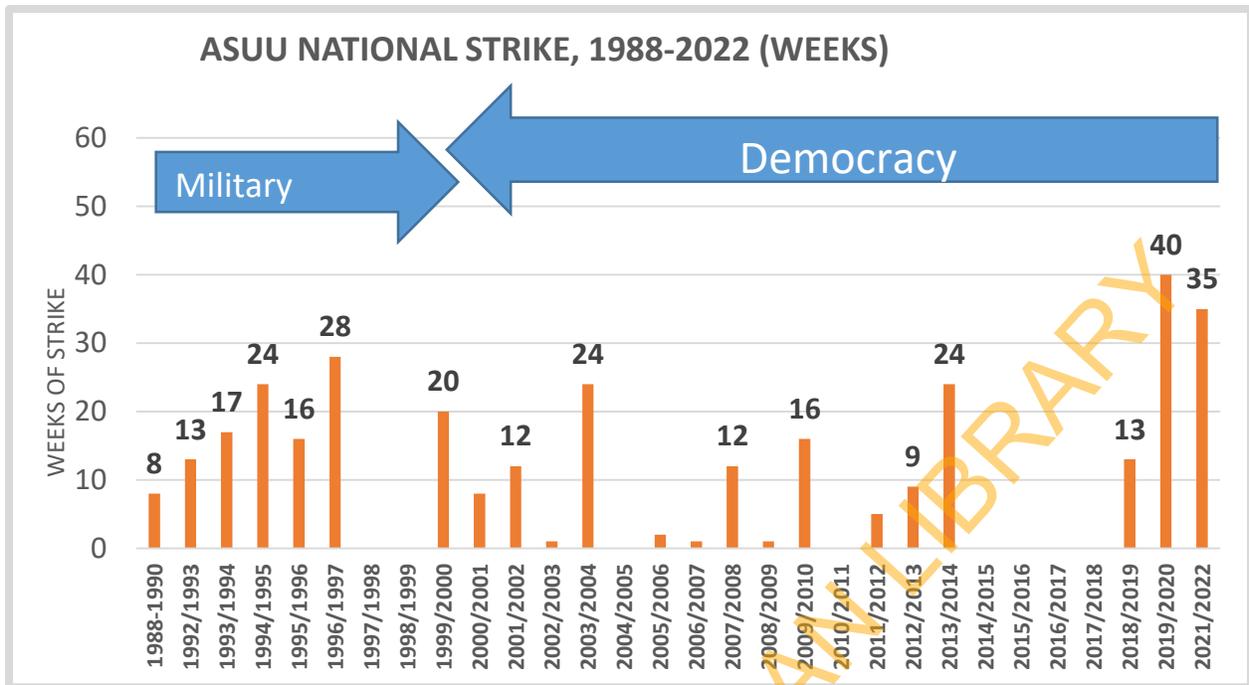


Figure 11: Total Time Lost to ASUU National Strike, 1988-2022 (6 years 3 months):  
 (Source: From Literature and Author’s compilation)

Massive evolution of private universities: As shown earlier in this paper, some 102 new private universities have been licensed for operation in the last five years alone, at a time that most of the existing private universities are undersubscribed in terms of student enrollment. While the expansion of higher education opportunities is generally seen as a positive development, the proliferation of substandard private institutions jeopardizes the overall quality of education in the nation. These institutions often prioritize profit over academic excellence, leading to compromised educational standards, inadequate facilities, and poorly qualified teaching staff. One major consequence of the rise of these low-quality private universities is the diminishing credibility of Nigerian degrees. It would greatly help if the role of affiliating these new private universities to more established mentoring institutions could be strengthened as part of quality assurance.

With employers and industries expressing skepticism about the competence of graduates from these institutions, the value of a Nigerian education is at risk of being eroded. This does not only affect the employability of graduates but also tarnishes the reputation of the entire educational sector. The lack of stringent regulatory mechanisms and oversight has allowed these institutions to thrive, exacerbating the challenge. Furthermore, the accessibility of education should not come at the cost of quality. The rapid expansion of substandard private institutions often outpaces the government's ability to enforce educational standards. As a result, students may find themselves enrolled in programs that lack proper accreditation, leaving them with degrees of questionable validity.

This not only hampers the personal and professional development of students but also undermines the long-term competitiveness of the Nigerian workforce. Addressing this challenge requires a comprehensive approach that involves strengthening regulatory frameworks, enhancing accreditation processes, and ensuring that institutions adhere to established quality standards. The government must play a proactive role in monitoring and regulating the establishment and operations of private universities and polytechnics, enforcing strict compliance with educational standards. By fostering a culture of quality assurance and accountability, Nigeria can navigate the challenges posed by the massive evolution of low-quality private institutions and safeguard the integrity of its educational system.

The massive exodus of Nigerian youth to other countries can have several negative implications for the education system in Nigeria, potentially contributing to a lowering of education standards. First, this brain drain results in the loss of talented individuals who would have otherwise contributed to the development of the education sector. Second, the departure of qualified teachers, researchers, and professionals weakens the overall educational infrastructure. The migration of qualified educators to other countries can lead to a shortage of experienced and well-trained teachers in Nigeria. This shortage can negatively impact the quality of education as less-experienced or underqualified teachers may have to fill these vacancies. Third, successful individuals in various fields often serve as role models for younger generations. When many of these role models leave the country, there could be a lack of inspiration and motivation for Nigerian youths. This can contribute to a decline in academic aspirations and achievement. Fourth is the loss of investment in education: Families often invest significant resources in the education of their children. When these well-educated individuals leave the country, it can be viewed as a loss of the country's investment in their education. This loss of human capital can have long-term consequences for the nation's development. Fifth is diminished research and innovation. Many young professionals and researchers who leave Nigeria are often involved in cutting-edge research and innovation. The departure of these individuals can result in a slowdown of research activities and a reduction in the development of new ideas and technologies within the country.

Finally, universities and other higher education institutions may suffer as a result of the emigration of both students and faculty. The loss of students may lead to reduced funding for these institutions, affecting their ability to maintain high standards and invest in necessary infrastructure. It is important to note that while the massive exodus of Nigerian youth is a significant factor, it is not the sole contributor to challenges in the education system. Other factors such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, and governance issues also play a role in shaping the state of education in the country. Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires comprehensive efforts from government, educational institutions, and other stakeholders.

## **Leadership and Corporate Governance**

The importance of a strong leadership team in any organization cannot be overemphasized. Within the context of the Nigerian University System, the main organs of governance include the Visitor, the Chancellor, the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, the Senate, Congregation and

Convocation. While the Visitor appoints the Chancellor, the Pro-Chancellor and some members of Council, his direct role is largely limited to empaneling a Visitation Panel once in every five years. The role of the Chancellor is largely ceremonial in terms of admitting graduates to their respective degrees. He/She can also attract much goodwill to the University. On the other hand, the Council and Senate have crucial roles to play in the affairs of a University. The Council of a University is expected to be free in the discharge of its functions and exercise of its responsibilities for the good management, growth and development of the university. The Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Amendment) Act, 2003 in Section 2A provides as follows:

The Council so constituted shall have tenure of four years from the date of its inauguration provided that where a Council is found to be incompetent and corrupt, it shall be dissolved by the Visitor and a new Council shall be immediately constituted for the effective functioning of the University.

Unfortunately, it has been observed with dismay that this provision in the Act is not often adhered to. To drive this point home, it can be seen from Table 12, no Council of the University of Ibadan since 1999 has had a full complement of an uninterrupted four-year tenure. Yet the only two conditions specified for dissolution of a University Council are incompetence and corruption and even in such instances a new Council should be immediately constituted. In the case of Deacon Gamaliel Onosode (1935-2015), he had earlier served as the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council of the University of Uyo, in Akwa Ibom State, a Federal University before coming to Ibadan. He had spent barely two years as the Pro-Chancellor at the University of Ibadan, before his Council along with the Council of other Federal Universities were dissolved in one fell swoop. He was later appointed the Pro-Chancellor of the University of Lagos by the Federal Government and in the process led a Federal Government –ASUU Negotiation Team. If he had been found wanting in his previous tour of duty he obviously could not have been given the same task of serving as the Pro-Chancellor of three Federal Universities in succession.

In the absence of a Governing Council, the proper functioning of a very complex institution such as a University is severely curtailed and hampered, including the appointment of Vice-Chancellor and other Principal Officers, as well as meeting of many crucial Committees of Council including but not limited to the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Appointments and Promotions Committee, Staff Disciplinary Committees, etc. In many instances routine matters have to be referred to the Minister of Education for intervention and approval as required. This negates the tenets of University autonomy,

It is our considered recommendation that the National Assembly should as a matter of urgent national importance amend the Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Amendment) Act, 2003 in Section 2A as to provide that if the Council of a Federal University is dissolved, a new Council shall be constituted not later than three months. If such an amendment is made, many State Houses of Assembly might be emboldened to adopt such laws for State Universities.

In the same context, one has observed with dismay that the National Universities Commission has not had a Governing Board for some three years now. And this is happening at a momentous period when the NUC is forcing its highly controversial Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic

Standards (CCMAS) down the throat of the ever expanding Nigerian University System while simultaneously licensing numerous private universities and encouraging transnational higher education. Such huge bureaucracies should not have been left to operate without a Board which would have been expected to perform the necessary oversight functions.

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Table 12: Tenure of Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council at the University of Ibadan, 1999-2024

Period	Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council	Remarks
1992-1999	Prof Iya Abubakar	
1999-2000		Non-constitution of a new Council delayed the process for appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor following expiration of tenure of the out-going Vice-Chancellor. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), Prof Olufunso Olorunsogo was appointed Acting VC and he served in that capacity from March till September 2000.
2000-March 2004	Mr Felix Ohiwerei	The new Governing Council commenced and completed the process for appointment of the 9 <sup>th</sup> Vice-Chancellor. Prof Ayodele Falase, assumed office 25 <sup>th</sup> September 2000.
2004-2005		No Council. The delay in constituting the Council led to inability to conclude the process for appointing the 10 <sup>th</sup> Vice-Chancellor.
2005-2008	Mr Gamaliel Onosode	The sitting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), Professor Olufemi Bamiro, was named Acting VC and he served in that capacity for two months before he became the substantive VC. Before being appointed as Pro-Chancellor at the University of Ibadan, Deacon Gamaliel Onosode had previously served in the same capacity at another Federal University (Uyo). The Pro-Chancellor was unable to complete his tenure at Ibadan. After Ibadan he was appointed as Pro-Chancellor at the University of Lagos and he led the Federal Government negotiation team with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in 2009.
2008-2009		No Council
2009-2013	Chief Wole Olanipekun	Appointed Pro-Chancellor February 2009; Council was dissolved in October 2011, along with those of other Federal Universities. This delayed the process for the appointment of a new Registrar. An Acting Registrar had to be appointed effective January 2012 following the end of tenure of the substantive Registrar. The dissolved Council was reinstated in February 2012 and then served out the uncompleted part of the term till early 2013.
2013-2017	Major General Adeyinka Adebayo (Retired)	April 2013 – April 2015. Council was not dissolved but the serving Pro-Chancellor was removed half-way into his tenure and a new person appointed to serve out the unexpired tenure of the former Chairman.
	Dr Umar Musa Mustapha	Appointed Pro-Chancellor in April 2015. A few months into his tenure, Councils of all Federal Universities were dissolved on 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2015 by the new Federal Government of President Muhammadu Buhari, who was sworn in on 29 <sup>th</sup> May 2015. The Councils were reinstated after about a month and the Chairman and his members completed the unexpired part of their tenure by April 2017.
2017-2021	Nde Joshua Mutka Wakle	May 2017 till February 2021. The Council was directed to suspend its activities <i>sine die</i> in February 2021; barely two months to the end of its statutory four year tenure.
2021-2023	Chief John E. K. Odigie-Oyegun	Appointed in April 2021; all Councils of Federal Universities, including the University of Ibadan, were dissolved in June 2023 by the new Government of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu who was sworn in on 29 <sup>th</sup> May 2023.

Happily, the Federal Ministry of Education (FME), in 2014 has produced a template to guide Federal Universities in the appointment of Vice-Chancellors (Table 13) and this template has been adopted by many State Universities in advertising for vacancies of their Vice-Chancellor.

Table 13: Assessment Criteria in Appointment of a Vice-Chancellor (Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja, 2014)

S. NO	Criteria	Description
1	Qualification	Must be a professor of at least 10 years experience
2	Age	Must not be older than 65 years at the time of assumption of duty
3	Evidence of academic and administrative leadership	
4	Evidence of Professional Standing/Honours	
5	Proficiency in ICT (Packages and Capabilities)	
6	Societal Linkages	
7	Evidence of Funds/Research Grants Attracted	
8	Report of Medical Fitness (from a Government Hospital)	
9	Confidential Report from Three Referees	

The FME also published scoring criteria that could guide in scoring applicants for the position of Vice-Chancellor. This is presented in Table 14

Table 14: Scoring Guidelines for the Appointment of Vice-Chancellor  
(Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja, 2014)

Guideline	Breakdown	Maximum Score
Qualification		
(Professor for 10 years; 1 point for each extra year)		5
Academic/Administrative Leadership		
(i). University Teaching Experience (1 point per year)		15
(ii). Administrative Experience		
DVC	2.5 points per year	10
Dean/Director	1.5 points per year	6
Head of Department	1 point per year	4
Professional Standing/Honours		
(i). Membership of Learned Societies	1 point for each society subject to a maximum of 4	4
(ii). Honours/Fellowships of relevant learned/ professional societies	(2 points for each international society; 1 point for each local professional society, subject to a maximum of 6 points)	6
Proficiency in ICT		5
Societal Linkages		5
Ability to attract funds/research grants		5
Contribution to knowledge (academic publications, Inventions, etc)		10
Interview Performance		
	(i). Candidate's vision of the University	12
	(ii). Articulation/Personality	5
	(iii). General Knowledge	5
Referees Reports		3
TOTAL		100

The reality is that a University must at all times be led by a Vice-Chancellor who is the Chairman of the Senate, which has the general functions to organize and control the teaching at the university and the admission and discipline of students and to promote research at the university. The Vice-Chancellor as the Chief Executive Officer of the University shall in relation to the university take precedence before all other members of the university except the Chancellor and, except the Pro-Chancellor (except when the Vice-Chancellor is acting as the Chairman of Congregation and Convocation) any other person for the time being acting as Chairman of the Council. The relevant

laws in the Establishment Act of each University has copious provisions for the appointment of an Acting Vice-Chancellor in the even that there is no substantive Vice-Chancellor. Having a university without a Vice-Chancellor (whether in substantive or acting capacity would be a gentle invitation to chaos on account of the strategic position of the office. A complete list of all the 16 individuals who have had opportunity to serve as Principal/Vice-Chancellor of the University College Ibadan/University of Ibadan over the past 77 years is presented in Table 15.

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Table 15: University research and administrative experience before appointment as Principal University College Ibadan & Vice-Chancellor University of Ibadan, 1947-2023 (Adapted and Modified from Adeoye, 2015)

S, No	Name/Date of birth/Age on appointment	Period of Service	University research and administrative experience before appointment
1	Kenneth Mellanby <sup>1</sup> (1908 - 1993) (Appointed Principal at age 39)	July 1947 to September 1953	Reader in Medical Entomology London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine University of London; Sorby Research Fellow of the Royal Society London.
2	John Tennant Saunders (1888 - 1965) (Appointed Principal at age 65)	September 1953 to October 1956	Secretary General of all faculties, University of Cambridge and Master of Christ's College, Cambridge.
3	John Horace Parry (1914-1982) (Appointed Principal at age 42)	September 1956 -1960 (Principal)	Professor of Modern History at the University College of West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica and Visiting Professor of History Harvard University.
4	Keneth Onwuka Dike (1917 - 1983) (Appointed Vice-Chancellor at age 45)	1960-1962 (Principal); 1962 - 1967 (Vice-Chancellor)	Professor and Head of History; Dean of Arts; Vice-Principal and later Principal University College Ibadan.
5	Thomas Adeoye Lambo (1923 - 2004) (Appointed at age 45)	February 1968 to February 1971	Professor and Head of Psychiatry, Neurology and Neurosurgery, University of Ibadan & University College Hospital Ibadan; Dean of Medicine University of Ibadan.
6	Horatio Oritsejolomi Thomas (1917 to 1979) (Appointed at age 55)	July 1972 to November 1975	Senior Lecturer in Surgery University College Ibadan; Foundation Professor and Head of Surgery University of Lagos; Dean and Later Provost College of Medicine University of Lagos.
7	Tekena Nitonye Tamuno (1932-2015) (Appointed at age 43) (The first Alumnus of the University of Ibadan to head the institution)	December 1975 to November 1979	Professor and Head of History; Dean of Arts; Chairman Committee of Deans University of Ibadan; Foundation Principal University College Ilorin.

<sup>1</sup> When Mellanby arrived, there were no buildings, no staff and no students. His organisational and human qualities were demonstrated in that, by the time he left, in 1953, the college was a going and growing concern with an excellent and carefully chosen staff and several hundred students. He has been described as a talented all-round scientist and administrator. (<https://www.independent.co.uk>; accessed 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024)

8	Samson Olajuwon Olayide (1933-1984) (Appointed at age 46)	December 1979 to November 1983	Professor and Head of Agricultural Economics; Dean of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Science; Chairman Committee of Deans; Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
9	Ladipo Ayodeji Banjo (Date of birth: 2 May 1934) (Appointed at age 50)	December 1984 to November 1991	Professor and Head of English; Co-Director and later Director of the Reading Centre; Dean of Arts; Chairman Committee of Deans; Deputy Vice-Chancellor; Acting VC December 1983 to November 1984
10	Allen Bankole Olukayode Oladunmoye Oyediran (Date of birth: 16 May 1939) (Appointed at age 52)	December 1991 to November 1995	Professor and Head of Preventive and Social Medicine; Senate Representative on the Governing Council.
11	Omoniyi Adewoye (Date of birth: 27 October 1939) (Appointed at age 56)	March 1996 to March 2000	Professor and Head of History; Senate Representative on the University Council.
12	Ayodele Olajide Falase (Date of birth: 4 January 1944) (Appointed at age 56)	September 2000 to September 2005	Professor and Head of Medicine; Dean of Clinical Sciences and Dentistry; Chairman Committee of Deans; Provost College of Medicine.
13	Olufemi Adebisi Bamiro (Date of birth: 16 September 1947) (Appointed at age 58)	December 2005 till November 2010	Professor and Head of Mechanical Engineering; Dean of Technology; Director Management Information Services; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration); Acting VC from 25 September 2005 till 30 November 2005
14	Isaac Folorunso Adewole (Date of birth: 5 May 1954) (Appointed at age 56)	December 2010 till November 2015	Professor and Head of Obstetrics and Gynaecology; Dean of Clinical Sciences and Dentistry; Provost College of Medicine; Senate Representative on the University Council.
15	Abel Idowu Olayinka (Date of birth: 16 February 1958) (Appointed at age 57)	December 2015 till November 2020	Professor and Head of Geology; Dean Postgraduate School; Senate Representative on the University Council; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).
16	Kayode Oyebode Adebowale (Date of birth: 11 January 1962) (Appointed at age 59)	November 2021 till date	Professor of Chemistry; Dean Faculty of Science; Director Special Duties (Office of the Vice-Chancellor); Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration).

There has been an increase in the age at the point of assumption of duty by Vice-Chancellors at the University of Ibadan over the period from 1962 till date. For the first seven Vice-Chancellors appointed between 1962 and 1991, the age ranged from 43 to 55 years with an average of 48.0 years; on the other hand, for the last six Vice-Chancellors appointed thereafter, the age ranged from 56 to 59 years with an average of 57.1 years, which is 9.1 years higher than in the earlier era. By coincidence, each of the last six Vice-Chancellors turned 60 years old while in the saddle. Some reasons can be adduced for this. First, the progressive increase in the mandatory retirement age of Nigerian academics from 60 years hitherto to 65 years in the early 2000s to the current 70 years effective year 2012 offer explanation for this observation. Second, the Federal Ministry of Education in 2014 proposed a minimum of 10 years experience as a Professor for eligibility for the Vice-Chancellorship position. The Council of the University of Ibadan has adopted this proposal in recruiting a new Vice-Chancellor during both the 2015 and 2021 exercises. Third, with the expansion of the Nigerian University System, the number of Professors has increased over the period.

A summary of the administrative positions held by the occupiers of the Office of Vice-Chancellor is presented in Table 16. It can be observed that 12 out of the 13 (92.3%) had been Head of Department while 11 (84.6%) had been Dean of Faculty. Other less occupied positions include Deputy Vice-Chancellor, elected Member of Council (representing either Congregation or Senate) 4 no (30.8%), and Director of Centre/Institute, Chair Committee of Deans and Provost of the College of Medicine with 3 each (23.0%).

Table 16: Previous administrative positions held by Vice-Chancellors of the University of Ibadan at the point of their appointment, 1962-2023

S. No	Administrative Position	Frequency	%
1	Head of Department	12	92.3
2	Director of Centre/Institute	3	23.0
3	Dean of Faculty	11	84.6
4	Chair Committee of Deans (Position now occupied by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic))	3	23.0
5	Provost, College of Medicine	3	23.0
6	Elected Member of Council (Representing Congregation or Senate)	4	30.8
7	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	5	38.5

## Discussion and Conclusion

As aptly noted by the notable historian and 8th Vice-Chancellor of University of Ibadan (Adewoye, 2000), ‘the history of the University of Ibadan is, in a sense, inseparable from the history of Nigeria after the Second World War’. Since its establishment, the University of Ibadan has gone through several phases, including the University College Era, the Nascent University, the turbulent years and the period of revitalization (Figure 12). There is hopefully now a new lease of academic life. Most other public universities in the country have also experienced similar phases with different degrees of severity, in so far as their fortunes depend to a large extent on the fortunes of their proprietors.

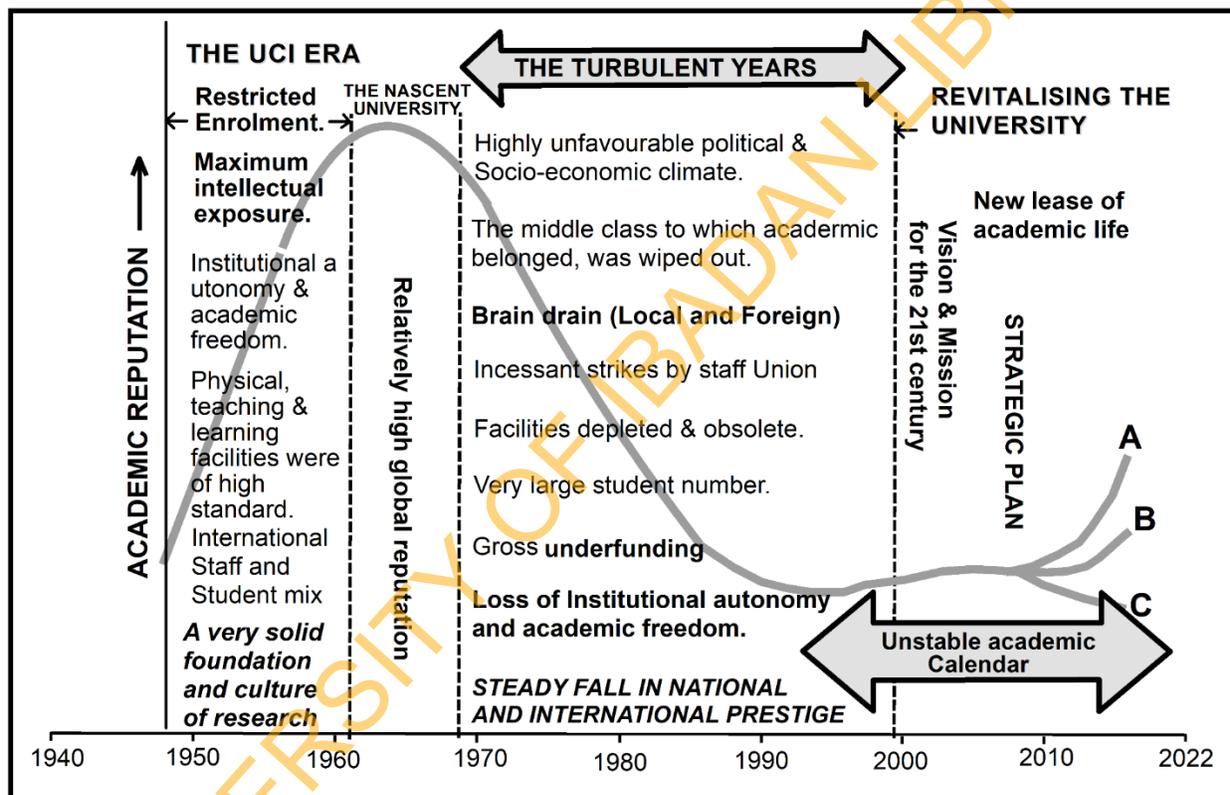


Figure 12: Schematic representation of the different era of the University of Ibadan, 1948 till date.

The Nigerian University System should be an agent for socio-economic development. Looking at the industrial and technological development of the world over the last 260 or so years it can be deduced that Nigeria is yet to make any significant progress (Table 17). Going forward, there is need for a paradigm shift with greater collaboration between the academia, industry, government and all other stakeholders. In a recent lecture at the University of Ibadan, Pogoson (2024) emphasized an incontrovertible link between global power standing and education. She stressed further that:

A nation's standing in the global arena is intricately linked to the strength of its education sector and the equitable compensation of its educators.. for Nigeria, this connection holds profound implications, shaping the country's trajectory in terms of economic development, innovation and international competitiveness. At its core, Nigeria's education sector serves as the bedrock of its human capital formation, laying the groundwork for individual advancement and national progress. However, without adequate investment and support, the sector faces significant challenges that reverberate across the nation's social and economic landscape.

We do not have to re-invent the wheel if we are committed to repositioning the Nigerian University System to greater heights in the years and decades ahead. All hands should be on deck to attract and retain very competent academic staff, researchers, administrative and technical support staff. Facilities should be provided to support advanced research that is locally relevant and globally competitive. The staff should be paid living wages. Students should be admitted based principally on merit and supported financially and the new Students' loan scheme should come on stream as soon as possible for those students who may otherwise find it difficult to support themselves financially. There should be greater efforts in internationalization by attracting foreign Faculty and students. Additional funding is required from sundry sources such as from the proprietor, tuition fees, endowments and research grants, donations from alumni and friends, local and international funding agencies. University governance and leadership should be strengthened through a supportive regulatory framework, transparency accountability, autonomy, academic freedom and strategic vision. A situation in which the National Universities Commission, JAMB and the Federal Universities are left for extended periods of time to operate without Governing Boards/Councils which should provide oversight is antithetical to good corporate governance. The academic calendar of public universities should be stable and predictable by saying no to union strikes.

The future of the Nigerian University System ultimately depends on what all the stakeholders wants to make of it. The failings of the past and up till the present moment stares us in the face. A problem well stated is half solved. In this short paper, some of the challenges facing the University sector have been identified. Addressing these challenges while not exhaustive would help a great lot in ensuring a very bright future. I thank you for your kind attention.

Table 17: Characterisation of the various Industrial Revolutions, 1760-2050

Industrial Revolution	Characteristics	Nigeria's participation
7 <sup>th</sup> (IR 7.0) Expected to start about year 2050.	An innovative paradigm that relies on the intricate interplay of sensors, microchips, neural artificial networks, mega-computers, and practical applications grounded in the utilization of robust programming languages. To be centred around the Natural Organic Artificial Intelligence (NOAI) Systems.	
6 <sup>th</sup> (Industry 6.0) Believed to have started.	Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology into various industries bringing with it a new wave of automation, efficiency and innovation. To be driven by bio-technology, nano-technology and healthcare.	
5 <sup>th</sup> (5IR) Began in 1970; till 2010	Incorporated concepts such as sustainability, human centredness and concern for the environment in addition to transformation of the industrial structure through the utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Thing (IoT), big data, etc which was debated in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It encompasses the notion of harmonious human-machine collaborations, with a specific focus on well-being of multiple stakeholders; Information Technology. Digital Transformation.	Ajaokuta steel plant established; unfortunately not much success recorded.
4 <sup>th</sup> (1930-1970)	A fundamental change in the way we live, work and relate. A new chapter in human development, enabled by extraordinary technology advances commensurate those of the 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Industrial Revolutions.	Crude oil exploitation started; and exported to earn foreign exchange without any value addition.
3 <sup>rd</sup> (The Information Age; The Computer Age; The Digital Age; Silicon Age; New Media Age). Began in the mid 20 <sup>th</sup> Century. 1880 to 1930.	Characterised by the rise of digital technology, automation and the Internet. Driven by new inventions and innovations such as the personal computer, the Internet and mobile devices.	Still a colonized territory. Slavery and slave trade held sway in West Africa from 1450 to 1930.
2 <sup>nd</sup> (Technological Revolution) 1830 to 1880.	A phase of rapid scientific discovery, standardization, mass production and industrialization. Took place in Britain, continental Europe, North America and Japan.	
1 <sup>st</sup> 1760 - ca, 1830)	Brought about the invention of machines and most importantly steam engine. Mostly confined to Britain.	

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## **ABRIDGED CITATION of Prof Abel Idowu OLAYINKA**

He obtained a BSc (Geology) from the University of Ibadan; MSc (Geophysics) from Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, London and PhD (Geophysics) from the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. He had postdoctoral experience in Germany first at Technical University Braunschweig as a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Visiting Scholar and at Technical University Berlin as an Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellow. A member of the Faculty at the University of Ibadan since April 1988 and Professor effective 1<sup>st</sup> October 1999. He has successfully supervised 18 Ph.D theses, in various areas of Applied Geophysics. He has served as Visiting Professor, External Examiner and External Assessor for professorial candidates in many universities. As Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ibadan (2015 - 2020) he provided leadership that led to improved ranking of the institution as a world-class University. There was an expansion of the academic programmes with the establishment of four new Faculties and 22 new academic departments. He ensured a strengthening of the admission process into the undergraduate programmes with many of the students winning laurels in internal and external examinations which he always celebrate. As Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic from 2010 to 2014, he assisted the Vice-Chancellor in implementing his Strategic Plan, as approved by both the Senate and the Governing Council. His primary responsibility was to establish enduring structures to facilitate good governance, encourage scholarship and research, as well as improve staff welfare. As Dean of the Postgraduate School from 2002 to 2006, he established a Scholarship Scheme and a Teaching and Research Assistantship Scheme for Postgraduate Students; he facilitated a Workshop on Globalisation of Scholarly Journals; encouraged inter- and trans-disciplinary research through the Interdisciplinary Research Discourse Series; established the Overseas Conference Grants for Postgraduate Teachers; facilitated Workshop on Writing Grant Proposals for Academic Staff; facilitated a Workshop on Writing PhD Thesis for Research Students. As Head of Department of Geology (2001/2002; 2006 to 2010), he was involved in fund generation from alumni, corporate institutions and friends of the Department. The money mobilised during such campaigns was used to upgrade our teaching and learning facilities and the environment. He convened the First International Conference in Research and Innovation Management in West Africa in November 2006 and subsequently served as the Foundation President of the West African Research and Innovation Management Association (WARIMA), 2006-2015. He served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA), a body that comprises 16 research-intensive universities in Africa with headquarters in South Africa. He served as a member of the Council of Association of Commonwealth Universities, London. He has received significant accolades in his professional career include being Fellow Nigerian Mining and Geosciences Society, Fellow Nigerian Association of Petroleum Explorationists and Fellow Nigerian Academy of Science. He currently sits on the Board of Directors of Multi-Verse Mining and Exploration Nigeria PLC. He is happily married to Dr Eyiwumi Bolutito Olayinka, a Senior Lecturer in French at the University of Ibadan and the union is blessed with a daughter and a son.



