

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF PRIVATE IVORY TOWERS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

2015 marked 16 years when the first set of private universities made their debut in Nigeria. The two bedfellows that collaborated in the invention of these private universities are the neoliberal/new right perspectives on education, and 'public failure theory'. Government mediated the legislative measures that actually saw individuals, groups, and religious bodies found, fund and operate private universities. The thinking of policy makers and stakeholders was that public universities were under pressure due to dilapidated infrastructure of those old universities, and as such could not cope with the explosive population of candidates seeking for admission into Nigerian universities. Therefore private initiative in the provisioning of tertiary education would be the solution to the problems bugging the public universities. Sequel to the abovethinking, sixty-one private universities now dot the country. However, after sixteen (16) years of their existence, these institutions have made little or no progress and are now grappling with problems even worse than those of the public Universities. Thus, this study examined the challenges and prospects of these new universities with a view to determining if they will be able to transform into world class universities and provide the basis for the survival and overall progress of Nigerian peoples in the 21st century, through functional education.

Keywords: University, private, public, challenges, enrolment, funding.

Introduction

In spite of the fact that a university college was established at Ibadan in 1948, universities in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general have a comparatively recent origin, coming nearly nine centuries' after European universities (Okafor, 1971:5). As one of the most important social institutions, university has rightly been seen as "knowledge factory" where the raw material of humanity may be refined, emancipated, trained, and honed to become leaders in all facets of human endeavor.

It is no wonder that ever since the first university made its appearance on our shores, Nigerians have welcomed it with alacrity. This is because education is the key to all doors. It is the process of acquiring knowledge, developing skills, mores and values that are requisite for the development and sustenance of the society via the enhancement of quality human capital. Provision of education the world over is seen as a productive investment which the proponents of the human capital theory give the pride of a place when compared with physical capital. This can

be understood when one considers that among the productive forces of society – land, capital, and labour – the latter is the organizer of the others, (Adedeji, and Bamidele, 2002).

Higher education at college and university levels plays the vital role of cultural transmission, social integration, selection and allocation, personal development as well as gate – keeping (Broom and Selznick, 2004). Oyebode (2007) also described the role of education as the ‘acquisition, conservation and transmission of knowledge and its application to the affairs of men. The institutional framework through which these laudable objectives could be realized in Nigeria led to the establishment of five universities, namely university college, Ibadan (1948), university of Nigeria, Nsukka (1960), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (1962), university of Ife (1962), and university of Lagos (1962).

However, the heyday of the Nigerian university system came to its end in the 1980s. According to Balogun (2012), a few decades back, Nigerian tertiary institutions attracted students from other African countries and were highly rated globally. But since 1990s the reverse has been the case, it has been schooling without learning.

As educationists, experts and commentators have observed, many reasons account for this national tragedy: poor funding which started with the advent of the military in the 1970s and reached its apogee between 1990 and 1997 when the real value of government allocation for higher education nose-dived by 27 per cent, while enrolment grew by 79 per cent, lack of infrastructural facilities conducive for educational pursuit, brain drain, increasing demand for university education, incessant shut-downs as a result of striking university staff and students, gangsterism and cultism, among others, (Osagie, 2009:12; Adedeji and Bamidele, 2002:516).

The corollary of this daunting crisis in the education sector was a public outcry by the stakeholders, especially students, teachers, parents and patriotic citizens all of who wanted a quick fix by the government. Government’s solution to this apparently overwhelming confusion in the educational sector was to increase the number of public tertiary educational institutions in the country to take care of its apparently changing ideology on the provision of higher education.

However, the philosophy behind privatization of University education in Nigeria is rooted in neo-liberal economic thinking in the West in the 1980s. The notion labeled higher education as a non-merit, “private good” which consumers who can afford it could purchase. According to Hill (2006), a colossal, amount of over 12000 Billion is spent on education, globally. Therefore a global market in educational services sector is indeed very lucrative. The multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organization (WTO) had since latched on to this view by increasingly opening up educational services world over to corporate capital (Rikowski, 2002) No doubt, this has been welcomed by many countries, including Nigeria, which had been struggling with a state of anomy in her educational sector.

Some endogenous factors (which have been highlighted particularly in the literature review segment) helped re-enforce the globalization imperative that led to the establishment of private universities in Nigeria. For example, Okojie (2009) stated that:

It is well known fact that educational quality is declining as a result of increased enrolments and or reduced funding. This decline is manifested in falling student examination scores, reduced rigour in staff recruitments and promotion criteria, diminished research output, and complaints by employers regarding the ability of university graduates to perform.

Thus, from 1970 to 2015 the federal government has built additional 42 universities, while state governments have established 37 universities starting from 1977 when Rivers state government built University of Science and Technology at Port Harcourt.

The federal government, under General Olusegun Obasanjo's Administration, went a step further in its effort to find solution to the problems in the educational sector of the economy by opening the floodgate for private initiative in the sector. As a result 61 private universities have been chartered by the government; and corporate persons, religious bodies and groups have set up universities funded and operated exclusively by them. The earliest and most notable among these private universities are Babcock University, Ilesha –Remo, Madonna University, Okija, and Igbinedion University, Okada, all of which came on board in 1999.

Having operated for about sixteen (16) years, we believe that time has come for us to assess these private universities to determine if privatization of university education is the best option or solution to the challenges that are associated with public universities: decline in performance and general quality of higher education which are direct result of overstretched facilities, shortage of qualified academic staff, lack of teaching and learning equipment as well as poor infrastructure. On the other hand, the critics of privatized universities argue that these universities, ab initio, have worse problems of lack of infrastructure, unqualified academics as well as exorbitant school fees that is not affordable by the children of the poor. Furthermore, the critics of private universities argue that as the latter expands, there is no corresponding expansion in the industrial sector that could employ graduates from the universities. This has resulted in unprecedented high rate of graduate unemployment, they assert. All of these issues require close examination knowing full well that the future of Nigeria and its leadership lay in the quality of university education.

Literature Review

The Emergence of Private Universities in Nigeria: External Precursor

Events of consequence like that of establishing of private universities in Nigeria-go back into history. However, this study is not a historiography parse of origin of private universities. Perkin (1996:17), sees education as one of the most costly items in the welfare state. The reasons he gives for this is "that professional (post-industrial) society needs a trained workforce and a larger proportion of highly educated people than any previous era." Consequently, there has been, he goes further, unparalleled demand and expansion of higher education in both developed and developing countries. He further indicates that from 1960 the number of young people attending universities and colleges virtually in all countries has doubled or tripled (Perkin, 1996: 17). But welfare state has since come under severe attack from the right wing in the West, he informs us. Yet the citizens have become more tenacious in clinging to the benefits of welfare state, the onslaught of Reaganomics and Thatcherism which brought in their trail the so-called "Washington consensus," notwithstanding (Perkin 1996). This neo-liberal economic philosophy that was floated in the West in the 1980s, and picked – up by the multilateral institutions such as World Bank, IMF and GATT-WTO, account for the forces of entry of privatization of education in the developing countries including Africa and Asia. According to (Raghue, 1996:198):

At the global level, the World Bank's new philosophy of restructuring the economy of Third World countries advocated the induction of capitalist strategies of market forces involving competition, privatization, disinvestment in public sector,

reduction of subsidies and labeling of higher education as a non-merit, “private good”. This climate proved for the entry of private initiative in higher education in a huge way.

Baharathi and Jyothi (1996:14) add that the World Bank had claimed that education at lower levels can make greater claim to subsidies compared with university education as the rate of social return on investment in the former is comparatively higher than investment in the latter. However, he goes further to show that the above view was contradicted by the World Conference on higher education in 1988 which explicitly stated that advantages of higher education and the concomitant research remains indispensable to ensure “a balanced achievement of educational and social missions” (Baharathi and Jyothi 1996:15).

Internal Factors

The 1960 Nigeria’s independence constitution cleared the way for both the federal and regional governments to establish universities by placing this function under concurrent legislative list. Sequel to this, regional universities were created at: Nsukka in the East, at Ile-Ife in the West, at Zaria in the North, and at Benin in the Midwest, without legal battles (Okafor, 2011:382). Nevertheless the military (1966-1977) not only amended the 1960 constitution and made the establishment of university exclusively a federal function by the promulgation of decree no 46 of May 31, 1977, but also nationalized the regional universities through decree no 46, 1977 (Okafor, 2011). These actions represented the first incursion into university affairs by the military in Nigeria. Sections 24, 25 and 26 of 1979 constitution restored the power to create university to the concurrent legislative list. This meant that the federal government and the states which replaced former regions could establish, fund, regulate and operate universities (Okafor, 2011).

Even the 1979 constitution did not explicitly permit the founding of a university by private initiative. The important question is: how then did private university education occur in the land? Okafor (2011) supplies the answer when he opined that perhaps “the national euphoria” which greeted the return to civilian rule after two decades of military misadventure into politics must have paved the way for this audacious adventure. Odinkalu (2007:30) states that:

Nigeria’s Supreme Court established the legality of private universities in *Dr. BASIL UKAEGBU V. ATTORNEY – GENERAL OF IMO STATE*, (1983) NSCC 160. Here the then Imo State government instituted proceedings to preclude Dr. Ukagbu, a private operator, from establishing or operating a private university. The Supreme Court found (sic) in favour of Dr. Ukagbu affirming, however, the need to balance his entitlement with the right of every member of the community to what it called freedom from unsavory and diabolical institutions and teachings. The court thus created both the basis for private universities and the justification for their regulation.

As Oladapo (1988:59) also averred, this Supreme Court ruling on March 30, 1983, paved the way for the establishment of private universities to the extent that by the end of 1983 over 26 private universities founded by individuals and groups dotted the country. Thus, the Imo Technical University became the first private university (Okafor, 2011).

Establishment Trend of Private Universities

As of now, there are 61 approved private universities in the country, forty-seven federal universities and thirty –seven State owned universities.

Adekeye, (2009:56) paints a gory picture of how fake universities are germinating alongside the ones approved by the NUC like the Biblical parable of tares and wheat growing together until the time of harvest. According to him, the news of illegal universities has been with the country over a decade ago when over 30 of such universities were exposed by a Lagos – based weekly newsmagazine. The executive secretary of NUC corroborates this information when he told journalist in Abuja in 2009 that on the whole about 47 illegal universities were operating across the country.

The NUC, according to Fakeye et al. (2009) had enlisted the services of the law enforcement agencies to close down these ‘degree mills’. They identified the very first six illegal universities shutdown by government at that time. They are Atlantic International University, Okija, Anambra State; Open International University, Akure, Ondo State; Middle Belt University, Otukpo, Benue State; Leadway University, Ughelli, Delta state; Metro University, Dutse/Bwari, Abuja, and Southern University, NgwuroEgeru, Ndoki, Rivers state.

In July 2012, the NUC (2012) announced to “the general public, especially parents and prospective undergraduates that the identified “Degree Mills” have not been licensed by the Federal Government and have, therefore, been closed down for violating the education (National Minimum Standards) Act CAP E3 Law of the federation of Nigeria, 2004.

Typology of Private Universities

Erinosho (2007:6) has identified different types of private universities now operating across the country. According to him, most of these universities are owned by religions missions. He groups them into those established by:

- a. Orthodox or Pentecostal Christian Organizations
- b. Muslim bodies
- c. Entrepreneurs who work solo or in partnership, and
- d. Nigerians who are in partnership with foreign bodies.

He concludes the classification by informing his audience that the major private sector initiative on higher education in Nigeria today are by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the Pentecostals such as the Church of the Living Faith (alias Winners Chapel), the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Church of God Mission, Baptist, Anglican Faith and Muslim organizations. The Catholics and Methodists are not left behind, according to him.

Adediran and Gbadamosi (2012:14) adopted a classificatory system slightly different from that of Erinosho (2007). They identified three types of private universities in Nigeria, namely sole proprietorship, religious, and hybrid types. The sole proprietorship as the name suggests is one-man enterprise established by individuals, operating as a person or as a corporation. This type of university, he continued, possesses all the paraphernalia of a university such as governing council, board of regents etc, yet the institution depends on the financier who exercises a complete control over his business. He named Igbinedion University, Lead City University, Western Delta University, Afe Babalola University, Novena University, and Renaissance University, among others as belonging to this category.

The next category of private university identified by Adediran and Obadamosi (2012) is what they call Mission or “Religious Universities”. According to them, these universities deemed to belong to the Churches as a whole had been founded by the Orthodox religious groups. The “allocation” of major responsibilities reflects the culture, diversity and spread of the church. In this type of ownership, Adediran and Gbadamosi (2012) insist that although the financial support for these comes from the church, the day-to-day running of the institutions is in the hands of council and management in terms of control. The authors cited Ajayi Crowther University – owned by the Anglican Communion; Bowen University – owned by the Baptist Convention; Babcock University – owned by the Seventh Day Adventist; Joseph Ayo Babalola University – owned by the Christ Apostolic Church; Wesley University of Science and Technology – owned by the Methodist Church as few examples belonging to this category of private universities in Nigeria.

“Hybrid Universities” according to them, are those that are mission oriented but are personally driven. In this case the owners not only found the mission but also established the universities. In other words the universities are the extension of the churches. Although these universities also have boards of regents, the founder of the church is the “Alpha and Omega” in terms of control. The examples of this category of ‘private universities include Madona University, Benson Idahosa University, Covenant University, and Redeemers University, among others (Adediran and Gbadamosi, 2012).

Management and Governance of Private Universities in Nigeria

A cursory look at the structure of private universities in terms of governance and management reveals they are trailing the public universities, barring for slight structural differences found among the ones that are religious – based institutions and single proprietorships. According to Osagie (2009:49), the major constitutive bodies in these universities include Board of Regents, the governing council, the senate, and the principal officers. The Board of Trustees (BOT) in many of these universities for example, are established by the various laws establishing them with final responsibility for ownership, operation and welfare of the universities. At Igbinedion University for example, the president of the Board of Regent is also the proprietor (Osagie, 2009).

Adediran and Gbadamosi (2012:8) argue that in a situation where the president of the BOT is also the proprietor, the latter may even render all organs:

Council, Senate, Congregation and even the management redundant and ineffective. Where this happens, particularly in a university where the proprietor has no university experience or has never passed through a university himself, the damage to education system is unimaginable. The overbearing influence of the proprietor would limit the autonomy of the university.

Nevertheless, the Governing Councils of the private universities are responsible for overall policy determination, development and governance of these universities subject to any general directives by the BOTS (Osagie: 2009). Another dimension (albeit very negative) to university governance and management in Nigeria according to (Saint, Hartnet and Strassner, 2004:23) is that:

The effort to improve university system management and governance has been confounded by a pervasive culture of corruption within Nigerian society. A long tradition of weak governance oversight and limited management

accountability under a succession of military governments seems to have made corruption endemic to Nigeria at the end of the 20th century ... Not surprisingly; this social malignancy has also extended to the federal universities. Reports of resume falsification, plagiarism, cheating, examination malfeasance, sexual harassment, contract kickbacks, and the obligatory purchase by students of professional lecture notes have regularly appeared in Nigerian newspapers in recent years.

Their preferred solution to this higher educational management challenge is “a substantial dose of political will and broad-based leadership from NUC and Federal Ministry of Education Officials, as well as senior university officers” to act in concert to confront this problem. “How Private Universities Defraud Nigerians” was a lamentation by (Nwadike, 2012:52). He expressed disgust that some private universities from the beginning had profit motive than for educational advancement as they were “built on funds stolen from public coffers and those owned by churches were undoubtedly established with funds extorted from members of the churches”. According to him, this explained why they could not abide by the operational guidelines and rules governing the operation of universities in Nigeria, leading to the suspension of operating licenses of seven private universities by the NUC. Exposing further the problems of mal-governance in private universities, Abubakar and Murtala (2010:34) add that:

The recent suspension of operational licenses of seven universities is a result of violation of extant and operational guidelines, which have manifested in various ways such as commencement of part-time and other academic programmes without requisite approvals; inappropriate governance structure; commencement of academic programmes without proper consideration for adequate and material resources to ensure quality of the programmes; general poor learning environment and other practices that are alien to the training and tradition of the academia.

Funding and Quality of Private Universities in Nigeria

Available literature indicates that funding is central to university management across the globe (Wangenge-Ouma and Cloete, 2008). In the view of Okojie (2009) one of the most critical challenges of tertiary education in Nigeria has been to source and deploy adequate financial resources to match the growth of university education in Nigeria over the years. Interestingly, Idowu (2012:5) notes that between 1960s and 1975 all the universities in the country had been funded 100 per cent by the federal and regional governments’ as tables 1 below indicates.

Table 1: Pattern of funding between 1964 and 1975

University	Federal Support	Regional Support	Year
	% age	% age	
Ibadan	100	-	1964 - 1975
Lagos	100	-	1964 - 1975
Nsukka	30	70	1964 – 1975
Ife	30	70	1964 – 1975
Zaria	50	50	1964 – 1975
Benin	75	25	1964 – 1975

Source: Idowu (2012). In 1975, with the nationalization of all universities (and the University of Benin, 1970) all the universities were funded 100% by the Federal Government.

However, Idowu (2012:6) goes ahead to note that no sooner the regional universities were taken over than the military Government decided, judging from its action, that education was no longer a priority project. Again with the establishment of 14 new universities between 1975 and 1985 contrary to the original plan that expansion and development of higher education should be “planned in an orderly fashion to avoid an unbalanced development and wasteful duplication”, funding of university in Nigeria became a political hot potatoes (Ashby, 1960; Idowu, 2012:6).

In 1975, the Federal Military Government established 7 universities at Jos, Ilorin, Sokoto, Maiduguri, Kano now (BUK), Port Harcourt and Calabar; and between 1981 and 1985, additional 7 federal universities of Technology were established at Owerri, Yola, Makurdi, Bauchi, Akure, Abeokuta and Minna- (with Abeokuta and Makurdi being converted to universities of Agriculture (Idowu, 2012).

This relentless accretion in number of universities, no doubt, can account for the poor resource mobilization to the university education sub-sector. This poor funding of the universities over the years can be illustrated by the actual percentage of the federal budget allocated to the universities according to Osagies (2009:3)

In 1999, Obasanjo’s administration allocated 11.2 per cent or N23.047b of the budget to education, 8.3 per cent or N44.25b in 2000 and 7.0% or N39.885b in 2001. In 2002, the administration budgeted 5.09 per cent or N100.2b; in 2003, 11.83 per cent or N64.7b; in 2004, 7.8 per cent or N72.22b; in 2005, 8.3 per cent or N92.59b; in 2006, 8.7 per cent or N166.6b; and in 2007, it allocated 6.07 per cent or N137.48b

The above budgetary allocation to universities which some people see as an improvement over the previous era still represents a gross underfunding when compared with the United Nations recommendation that developing countries should invest a minimum benchmark of 26% of their national budget to education (Idumange, 2012). Besides, in stark contrast to the virtual neglect of education in Nigeria, many, even less endowed, African countries spend substantially on education: Botswana spends about 19 per cent of its annual budgets on education; Swaziland spends about 24.6 per cent; Lesotho, 17 per cent; South Africa, 25.8 per cent; Cote d’Ivoire, 30 per cent; Burkina Faso, 16.8 per cent; Ghana, 31 per cent; Kenya, 23 per cent; Uganda, 27 per cent; Tunisia, 17 per cent; and Morocco, 17.7 per cent (Obia, 2012:96).

The corollary of this gross underfunding of Nigerian universities according to experts include, among others, decadent infrastructure, brain drain, corruption, interference in university affairs, loss of autonomy, institutionalization of culture of authoritarianism and impunity in the ivory towers. These in turn led to declining teaching standard, examination malpractices, cultism, incessant strikes, and low quality of unemployed graduates (Ayu, 1994; ASUU, 2001; Alemika, 2005; Agbo, 2007; Balogun, 2012; Idowu 2012).

Furthermore, a fact finding committee on Needs Assessment of Nigerian Public Universities (CNANPU) set up by the federal government, discovered and exposed rot in public universities, which in the opinion of some observers and stakeholders are related to the same issue of gross underfunding of these universities:

With regard to infrastructure, the committee found that physical facilities for teaching and learning in the public universities were inadequate, dilapidated, over-stretched and improvised. Laboratories and workshops were old with inappropriate furnishing, power and water supply problems persist; they had scanty and broken furniture and were overcrowded. Besides, equipment and consumables were absent, inadequate or outdated. Kerosene stoves were being used as Bunsen burners in some including the Universities of Uyo and Jos. Some Engineering workshops were operating under zinc sheds and trees, and many science-based faculties were running what is referred to as “Dry Lab,” due to lack of reagents and tools to conduct real experiments. Sadly, no laboratory in any public university ranks among the top 1000 in the world. The report adds that University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), has the largest number of uncompleted projects (Oyekanmi, 2012:47).

Private Universities on the other hand open new vistas when it comes to funding. According to Osagie (2009:3), tuition fees and other cost recovery approaches that combine endowment, consultancy, and business ventures are some of the means through which these universities fund themselves. Owolabi and Okwu (2012:151-152) corroborate Osagie (2009) when they averred that there is a mixture of revenue sources available to private universities for funding development. Such sources according to them include market sources such as investment income, contract research and sales of goods and services. In addition to tuition fees which he regards as the major source, Onuoha (2012:173) adds minor sources of funding such as proprietors subvention, fund raising, industries as well as capital campaign. Nevertheless, he said that for most capital funding, his university – Babcock – has depended on “long term facilities from developers and banks”. Generally, Idowu (2012:14) identified major sources of funding for institutions of higher learning at the global level to include

- Budgetary allocations
- Research earnings
- Student aids
- Targeted subsidiaries
- Commercial activities
- Endowment
- International students, and
- Cost savings which in his words

“involve effecting administrative and academic efficiencies. Specifically in Nigeria, this should include redefining institutional interrelationships with the higher education system (e.g. the roles of NUC, TETFUND, and PTDF)”.

Analytical Framework

Public Choice Theory

James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock (1962) are the protagonists of public choice theory. Libecap (1989), Mueller (1989), and Rowmey, (1991) are the other major contributors to this theory. The central strand in their argument is that bureaucracy and democracy would inevitably produce inefficient and poor services delivery in which producers rather than the consumers tend to dominate decision making. For Buchanan (1973), public choice theory

deploys analytical methods of economics to political problem. Hills (1999), on his part buttressed the leading proponents of this theory by asserting that public choice theory is based on the economic model of rational choice, having the avowed goal of facilitating exchange of work and ideas at the tangent of the main stream social science.

According to public choice theory, individuals and groups act according their own interests. Thus, while politicians want votes, bureaucrats and teachers want secure jobs, and it is their interests that become dominant in conventional state education systems. Consequently, state education budget shots up, and this leads to higher taxation. The corollary of this development is a damage of the economy as businesses end up being over-taxed and unable to compete with businesses in other countries. At the same time students and parents have little or no control over education. They are compelled to accept whatever the state provides in the name of education as they have little opportunity to shape or change it (Butler 2012).

The most important contributors that applied public choice theory to educational processes using the U.S.A. as example are, Chubb and Moe (1997). They made a case for the introduction of market forces into education, insisting that problems of “ declining test scores, loose academic standards and lax discipline” that are the bane of public schools can only be overcome by moving towards a market system within education.

Chubb and Moe (1997) argued that private schools have a leeway for flexibility than public ones since the former do not have the diverse group of constituents that bug the public schools. Again, private schools are not hamstrung by governmental and bureaucratic meddling. Rather, they have freedom to change and adjust to what their clientele (students) want. These advantages which private schools have over public ones would lead to incentives to keep lower costs.

This theory can be applied to the Nigerian situation *mutatis mutandis*. From the late 1980s, there had been rot, state of anomie, and declining standards in public university system in Nigeria. This led to the invention of private universities. But contrary to the idea of Chubb and Moe (1997) that policy flexibility on the part of private schools would lead to incentives that keep costs of private education low, the reverse has been the case in private universities in Nigeria where the average tuition is N688, 701.13 per session. In fact it has been argued that private universities in Nigeria may soon price themselves out of existence.

Research Methodology

This study which deployed field survey involved a descriptive analysis of data collected from fifteen (15) private universities using institutional questionnaire, supplemented by indepth oral interview of the principal officers. Although the researchers had administered the instrument to 23 universities including the oldest among them, selected randomly across four geo-political zones of Nigeria, only 15 completed and returned the instrument. The contents of institutional questionnaire covered specifically, the issues relevant to the research.

Empirical Findings

Table 2: Enrolment Structure in Private Universities in Nigeria

S/No	University	Current Enrolment			Carrying Capacity	%Enrolment	Diff	%under enrolment /carry capacity	No of Faculty	Students/ Faculty/ Ratio
		Male	Female	Total						
1.	Babcock	3,879	5074	8953	10,000	89.5	-1047	-10.5	462	19:1
2.	Bingham			2000	3,500	57.1	-1500	-42.9	320	6:1
3.	Igbinedion	2,300	2700	5000	10000	50	-5000	-50	414	12:1
4.	Madona			8952					386	23:1
5.	Redeemers	1143	1257	2400	5000	48	-2600	-52	206	12:1
6.	SouthWest	74	59	133	3000	4.43	-2867	-95.6	26	5:1
7.	Bells	1500	1000	2500	5000	50	-2500	-50	189	13:1
8.	Covenant	4236	3277	7513	10000	75.13	-2487	-24.9	467	16:1
9.	Crawford	550	435	985	3000	32.8	-2015	-67.2	87	11:1
10.	G/Okoye	800	1200	2000	5000	40	-3000	-60	277	7:1
11.	Fountain	331	403	734	3000	24.5	-2266	-75.5	102	7:1
12.	Landmark	1600	1123	2782	6000	46.4	-3218	-53.6	212	13:1
13.	Elizade	260	163	423	6000	7	-5577	-93	86	5:1
14.	Joseph Ayo Babalola	1058	1862	2920	5180	56.4	-2260	-43.6	107	27:1
15.	Adeleke			993	5000	19.9	-4007	-80.1	68	15:1
	Total	17731	18553	48288	79680	60.6	-31392	-39.4	3409	15:1

Source: Field Survey 2015

Table 2 shows enrolment in the fifteen (15) private universities. The total capacity for all the universities was 79,680 students while the enrolment in 2015 was 48,288 students. Therefore during the year under reference, only 60.6% of the available spaces were filled leaving the remaining 39.4% unsubscribed for.

The analysis of the enrolment pattern for these 15 universities also revealed that none has fully enrolled to full capacity. However (Serial numbers 1 and 8) had virtually hit the mark while (Serial numbers 2, 3, 7, and 14) have either one half (50%) or slightly above half of their carrying capacity, filled. The worst hit in terms of lack of students' patronage or under capacity utilization are (Serial numbers 5, and 12).

Serial numbers (6, 9, 11, 13, and 15) in the table are threatened with atrophy for lack of student's patronage. It is important to note that the concept of carrying capacity was introduced by the NUC as the total number of students that each university can conveniently accept in relation to human and material resources at the disposal of such a university.

From the table it can also be seen that faculty-students ratio in these universities is good judging from NUC's ideal or prescribed ratio of 1:30 for Law, Accounting, Economics, History and International studies etc., and 1:20 for Agriculture, Chemical and Environmental science, Biosciences and Biotechnology etc. However, the study underscores that this observable good faculty-student ratio is the result of under enrolment of students rather than a planned action.

From the table we also observed total enrolment for males and females with the latter having an edge of (822) over the former in terms of number, meaning that there are more female students than male students in the fifteen universities. Parents and guardians believed that their female wards are safer in private universities than in public ones, hence there are more female students in private universities. The fifteen universities put together have a total of 3,409 faculties.

Other findings.

- Funding remains a never-ending nightmare for all universities in Nigeria, not only private ones. Many of the private universities are not able to pay staff salaries and wages, and we

believe that meaningful teaching and research cannot go on in such citadels of learning. This lack of funding also affects the ability of the universities to procure senior faculty. They therefore rely on older universities from where they procure visiting lecturers, adjunct lecturers, contract staff, and faculty on sabbatical for their teaching functions.

- b) Private university education in Nigeria is driven by profit motive. The *elite* private universities are already recording profits while the *stump* had simply positioned themselves waiting for maturity period of their business.
- c) Cost of private university in Nigeria is too high that prospective candidates with low pedigree cannot afford it. For this reason, many of the private universities are not able to source enough students to justify their existence. This negates the idea of widening access to education.
- d) Viable and applicable researches are not yet happening in the private universities for they lack the requisite facilities in human and material resources.
- e) Crises of access and quality are still persistent in Nigeria's educational sector in spite of the existence of 61 private universities.
- f) The study also found that in spite of all odds, these new universities had made great strides in land acquisition, buildings, and other infrastructure on their respective campuses witness complex buildings, and internet systems at Babcock, Covenant and Afe Babalola Universities. However, the hood does not make the monk.
- g) Table 2 however showed that these universities have proved to be a source of employment for teaching and non-teaching staff in a country where unemployment is a major problem.
- h) *Prima facie*, private universities in Nigeria are very, very far from being "Ivy League" Institutions for Africa.

Recommendation

The higher educational sector of the Nigerian economy is very important because of its role in producing leaders in all areas of national life: government, business, innovation and invention. Clearly, it has been seen that proliferation of private universities answering to profit logic is no solution to the problems of higher education. The government and the stakeholders should therefore look elsewhere for solution. For private universities to prove their mien and make a difference, they should avoid replicating the conventional courses/programmes offered in the public ones. They must traject towards specialization in certain special disciplines so they can be centres of excellence. Finally, to widen access, the policy makers could choose from one of these models: Open University system, the hybrid system and the conventional system. A situation where National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) enrolled 57,759 students as against Bangladesh Open University, Gasipar, which enrolled 600,000 students, speaks volumes. Again whereas Ahamadu Bello University enrolled 49,436 students using conventional system, the fifteen (15) private universities which were surveyed enrolled only 48,288 students showing that the efficiency of our university system does not rest on the accretion of number of institutions. Finally, private Universities should not be seen as Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that are left to whims and caprices of the entrepreneur who combines incremental policy and entrepreneurial theories with profit logic, to operate his business. Government must be seen to be proactive and pragmatic in not allowing higher education sector teeter on its high-heeled shoes.

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