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Admission Crisis In Nigerian Universities : The Challenges Youth And Parents Face In Seeking Admission

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ADMISSION CRISES IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: THE

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IN SEEKING ADMISSION

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ABSTRACT

The need for access to university education has recently become vital in Nigeria as a result of an increase in the college-age population and an awareness of the role of university education in the development of the individual as well as the nation. Recent admission policies of Nigerian universities have been dissatisfactory to the Nigerian public as many applicants and parents go through difficulties while seeking admission for limited available spaces in the universities. Universities take the task of admission of students into the academic system seriously, using the guidelines set by the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). The National Universities Commission (NUC), which regulates university education in terms of standards, has set policies based on merit, carrying capacity, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states as criteria for admission into all universities. It has been argued that rather than these policies enhancing access to university education, the criteria restrict access to higher education. Each year, thousands of applicants sit for the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) examinations and less than twenty percent (20%) on the average gain admission into the universities. This study reviews research on the historical overview of the Nigerian higher education system, organizational system of Nigerian universities, and scholarly views on the factors (such as inadequate number of universities/absorption capacity in Nigeria, lack of adequate facilities, and shortage of adequate manpower) and admission policies (such as carrying capacity, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states) that are responsible for the admission crisis in Nigeria and have a direct effect on parents and students regarding admission. The review

concludes that the above factors and policies are the actual cause of the admission crisis in Nigeria, leading many parents and youth to face difficult challenges in seeking admission.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my former pastor at St. Joseph's Parish, Spring valley, New York, Fr. Rudolph Gonzalez, and my older brother, Fr. Felix Kanyip Kumai, who both assisted me to get settled in the United States to study, and the entire membership of St. Jerome's Bible Society of St. Joseph's Parish, Spring Valley, New York, for their love and support throughout my stay in the United States.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

J. B. Hunt, Jr. (2006) states that "The fundamental educational challenge of our times is to get more people better educated and get most of them through postsecondary education" (Hunt, Jr., 2006, p. 5). In today's world, a knowledge-based global economy, major demographic shifts, and higher education have become an important means for economic development and democratic progress in a country. Tierney (2006) says, "Higher education is no longer just the most direct route to a middle-class life; it has become essentially the only route" (Tierney, 2006, p. 8). Since World War II, the expansion of higher education from elite to mass to universal has significantly increased student enrollment in the developed countries, including the United States (Trow, 2000). While approximately 30% of the college-age cohort was enrolled in American higher education immediately after World War II, its proportion increased to 50% in the 1960s, reaching universal access (Trow, 2000).

Such rapid expansion of higher education was not exceptional in developing countries as well, such as the African nations. The rapid growth of higher education in Africa is essentially a post-colonial product; that is, after political independence, many African countries began to establish local universities as a major priority for national development (Sawyerr, 2004). For the past three decades, a number of African countries have dramatically expanded the capacities of their tertiary educational sectors (Sawyerr, 2004). New universities were established to help the nations build their infrastructure, alleviate the poverty of the majority of their citizens, and reduce the poverty gap (Sawyerr, 2004, p. 9). For example, when Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the

higher education enrollment was 2000 within a handful of institutions, including the University of Ibadan and the University of Nigeria, Nsuka (UNN). By 2010, the number of universities had risen to 104, with a 1.5 million student enrollment (Okebukola, 2010). However, this continued growth of higher education has been accompanied by problems such as strains on budgets and facilities, low standards, and limited capacity to accommodate the growing demand for postsecondary education (Okebukola, 2010; Sawyerr, 2004).

According to the *Africa Competitiveness Report* (2011), between 2003 and 2008, student enrollment in African universities grew from 2,342,358 to 4,139,797, a 76.7% increase compared with a 53.2% increase worldwide over the same period. However, despite these increases, Africa's gross enrollment ratio (GER) of less than 6% is the lowest rate in the world (*Africa Competitiveness Report*, 2011). The GER is a nation's total enrollment in a specific level of education, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to the level of education. Most of the reasons for this low GER can be attributed to the country's inadequate capacity to absorb the demand. The number of students seeking admission to higher education far outpaces the capacity in these African countries (*Africa Competitiveness Report*, 2011).

The average GER for all developing countries increased from 5.2% in 1980 to 9.6% in 1996, whereas it increased from 1.6% to 3.6% for sub-Saharan Africa during the same period. The ratio for countries like Kenya and Ghana fell short of 3% in 2002, while the ratio for Nigeria and South Africa were 5.0% and 15%, respectively, in 2002 (Sawyerr, 2004; World Bank, 2002). Table 1 shows that South Africa was far ahead of Nigeria from 1965 to 2007. Ghana and Kenya are now on the same level with Nigeria in

improving ways to move further with development plans on higher education (Sawyerr, 2004).

Table 1

Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in Higher Education in Selected African Countries

Year	Nigeria %	Ghana %	Kenya %	South Africa %
1965	0	1	0	4
1975	1	1	1	6
1980	2.7	1.6	0.9	--
1985	3	2	1	--
1990	4.1	1.4	1.6	13.2
1995	4	2	2	17
2002	5	2	3	15
2007	5	5	4.8	18.1

Sources: *UNESCO, 1999; World Bank 2002; UIS, 2003; Varghese, 2004; Steyn, 2009.*

Table 2

Absorption Rate in Higher Education in Selected African Countries

Year	Nigeria %	Ghana %	Kenya %	South Africa%
2000	6%	--	9%	64%
2007	11%	--	14%	80%
2009	20%	15%	--	80%

Sources: *UNESCO, 1999a; World Bank 2000; UIS, 2003; Varghese, 2004; Steyn, 2009.*

Both Table 1 and Table 2 show that only South Africa is leading in gross enrollment ratio and absorption rates. Table 1 also suggests that Nigeria remained unchanged in terms of the GER (5%) between 2002 and 2007, while Ghana, Kenya, and

South Africa increased in their rates. Table 2 shows that Nigeria increased its capacity between 2007 and 2009 from 11% to 20% but still could not meet the demand due to the high number of secondary school graduates seeking admission. While these selected African countries increased their absorption capacity, Nigeria remains unchanged because the goal of its admission policy is to create equal opportunity to all geographical regions but not necessarily to increase absorption capacity.

There is still the problem of absorption capacity, where the increasing number of students seeking admission to universities far outpaces the rate of capacity expansion in Africa. Ghana and Kenya have been able to increase the admission rate and quality of education in their countries through implementation of new admission policies. In the 1970s and 1980s, Nigeria had a better quality of education, attracting many candidates from these countries to come to Nigeria for their higher education and for job opportunities (Asein & Lawal, 2007). Nigeria had developed an alliance with South Africa, especially during the apartheid period, when South Africans came to Nigeria for their higher education (Asein & Lawal, 2007). Today South Africa has gained its independence and is leading the education sector in the whole of Africa in terms of admission rates and standards (Asein & Lawal, 2007). Ghana and Kenya, which in the past sent students to Nigerian universities, are faring better than Nigeria now because they have improved their education standards and increased gross enrollment rates and absorption rates (Asein & Lawal, 2007). For example, according to the *University World News* (2011), the university enrollment in Ghana has increased thirteen-fold to more than 150,000 from 2000 to 2010. Such improvement is attributed to the introduction of agendas for economic development, poverty alleviation, and admission to higher

education, especially for students who do not meet the admission requirements but may be admitted on a fee-paying basis. These students pay a significant tuition fee if they are not qualified but can afford to pay (*Education in Ghana*, 2011). *The Africa Competitiveness Report* (2011) states that Kenyan enrollment increased by 230%, rising from 10,639 in 2005 to 35,179 in 2010. The reason for this remarkable expansion in Kenya is driven by the introduction of the "Module II Programmes," also known as Parallel Programmes or Privately-Sponsored Students Programmes (PSSP) (Kalai, 2010). The Module II Degree Programmes in Kenya is an improvement in terms of the provision of facilitating access to higher education in Kenya. The provision is based on strategies that are likely to increase societal stratification. It has created an avenue for providing higher education to the middle and upper classes of the nation, whereby students, even though not qualified, can be admitted and enrolled as long as they can afford to pay a higher tuition fee than regularly admitted students (Kenya Institute of Management, 2010; Kalai, 2010). Nigeria, on the other hand, adopted a system called "Federal Character," which is a federal government policy on admission criteria set by the National Universities Commission (NUC) and based on the ratio 60:40 Science/Arts system. Science students are given preference over arts students. There is also a policy based on catchment areas and a quota system (Akuta, 2009).

While the methods adopted by these African countries aim at providing the maximum opportunity for the highest number of students to participate in higher education, the Nigerian federal system does not intend to increase admission as Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa have. Rather, it intends to provide equal opportunity for admission to higher education based on geographical and ethnic demographics in the

country (Sawyerr, 2004). This may be one of the reasons why Ghana and Kenya are now doing better and are likely to rise up to compete with Nigeria. Therefore, the question is as follows: Why, after 2002, has the Nigerian admission system remained fixed instead of improving as Kenya, Ghana, and South Africa have?

Statement of the Problem

The Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) was established in 1978 by the Nigerian federal government to handle the higher education admission process (Asein & Lawal, 2007). The Board's aim is to ensure a unified standard for the conduct of matriculation examination and the placement of suitably qualified candidates into the nation's higher education system (Asein & Lawal, 2007). Before the founding of JAMB, prospective candidates numbered only about 30,000; but today, with the establishment of new universities and an increment of funds to the education sector, the figure is well over one million candidates (Asein & Lawal, 2007). The total enrollment of college applicants is approved by the National Universities Commission (NUC), which conforms to the 60% Science and 40% Arts ratio recommended by the federal government. As reported by the JAMB (2007) on admission requirements, applicants must meet the following criteria: (1) five-credit passes in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination in relevant subjects, including English and mathematics for all students; and (2) score the minimum required points for the desired course of study in the JAMB exam. The cut-off marks for admission vary by institution, depending on the competitive nature of the desired course of study and the special consideration given to residents of the immediate locality and to educationally disadvantaged students (Asein & Lawal, 2007).

The federal government guidelines for admission to the universities (federal, state, and private) are based on the quota system: 45% merit, 35% catchment/locality, and 20% educationally less-developed states, especially in the northern states. The merit-based 45% admission guideline gives priority to candidates who score higher than the cut-off marks (required points) on each matriculation examination. Those applicants will be given first consideration for their first choice of course and institution. The 35% catchment area (also called locality) guideline is meant to give equal opportunity to all applicants, regardless of their score on the JAMB examination. All the states in the country are grouped into catchment areas of each university. In most cases, the geographical and/or sociocultural areas are contiguous to the institution to which candidates apply (Asein & Lawal, 2007). Consideration is given to students who fall within the catchment areas of the university. Some of these institutions (e.g., federally-owned universities) have all the states of the Federation as their catchment area, while state-owned institutions have all the local government areas of their states as their catchment area. The 20% for the educationally-less-developed states (ELDS) is reserved strictly for indigenous secondary school graduates from the states that are given special consideration for admission by assigning lower cut-off marks on the JAMB examination (Asein & Lawal, 2007).

Only 45% of students are admitted based on their academic merits without regard to geographical region. Although this admission policy is meant to provide equitable access to federal and state institutions based on academic merit, residential zones, and discretion, competition for admission to limited spaces has led to unintended practices such as cheating on examinations, bribery for admission, manipulation of examination

scores, and denial of admission (Moja, 2000; Ubani, 2008). More importantly, some of the most competent students who have great potential are denied admission because of geographical constraints, discretion, or over-emphasis on science majors as opposed to the arts. This situation has a grave effect on the students and parents who have to face many challenges in seeking admission. Both face hardship and pain as they seek admission, knowing they are likely to be denied.

Table 3

Absorption Rates in Nigerian Universities

Year	#of Universities	Total # of Applicants	Total# Admitted	Percentage Admitted	Total # Not admitted	Percentage Not admitted
2002/2003	53	994,381	51,845	5.2%	942,535	94.8%
2003/2004	54	1,046,950	105,157	10.0%	941,793	90.0%
2004/2005	56	841,878	122,492	14.5%	719,386	85.4%
2005/2006	75	916,371	76,984	8.4%	839,387	91.6%
2006/2007	76	806,089	123,626	15.3%	679,846	89.0%
2007/08	104	911,653	107,370	11.8%	802,283	88.2%

| 2008/09 | 104 | 1,054,060 | 200,000 | 18.9% | 854,06 | 81.1% |

Source: Compiled by the author from JAMB application and admission statistics, 2002-2009.

Table 3 shows the number of applicants in seven consecutive years that applied for admission to Nigerian universities, with the number of applicants who were admitted and the number of those who denied admission. Table 3 reveals the gravity of the challenge of admission to Nigerian universities because the total number of those not admitted is far higher than the admitted candidates, showing that the demand is higher than the supply. Although the NUC absorption rate has increased from 51,845 in the 2002/2003 academic session to 200,000 in the 2008/2009 session, the actual number of students who were denied admission is significant. This is because the percentage of the admitted number is not proportional to the total number of secondary school graduates (1,054,060) who applied. Reports by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) conclude that, despite the tremendous improvement in the admission rate in the past seven years, the nation is still unable to meet the social demands for higher education to train future leaders who will develop the economy of the country.

Imhanlahimi and Maduewesi (2006) report that more than 70% percent of Nigerians who apply for admission to the university or other institutions of higher learning every year are denied admission not because they are not qualified but because certain factors militate against their gaining admission. Each year, thousands of applicants sit for the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) examination, and less than 20% on average gain admission to the universities (Moti, 2010, p. 28). The remaining 10% seek admission into other tertiary institutions such as polytechnics,

colleges of education, and monotechnics. Of those students who are unable to gain admission, some wait and join the competition another year with a new applicant cohort, while others get jobs, and still others become unemployed liabilities of their parents (Moti, 2008; Imhanlahimi & Maduewesi, 2006). JAMB (2007) reports that more than two-thirds (70%) of these non-admitted applicants score higher than average on the JAMB examination, but certain factors constrain them from getting admission (Asein & Lawal, 2007). The problem is that the number of students who seek university education exceeds the current capacity of Nigerian higher education. Nigeria needs at least double the current number of universities or needs to increase absorption rates in all universities to meet the need of the large number of applicants. If this is not done, the country will continue to lose a high number of competent students with potential, who can help improve the nation if the chance is given to them to develop their skills (Moti, 2010, p. 36).

Despite the goal of equalizing the educational opportunity between the advantaged in the south and the disadvantaged in the north, the gap between the high demand of admission to higher education and the inadequate capacity of the system to absorb the numbers of students seeking admission to higher education institutions continues to pose a serious problem, especially in the north. The northern states are educationally less developed compared to the southern/western states (see Table 4).

Table 4

University Admission in South/West and Northern Nigeria

South/West: State Highest	North: State Lowest
Imo 78, 495	Kaduna 2,180
Delta 66, 221	Borno 3, 076
Anambra 56, 159	Katsina 2, 449
Edo 54, 368	Kebbi 2, 190
Ogun 50, 368	Taraba 2, 149
Ondo 37, 346	Yobe 1, 330
	Zamfara 523
Total 342, 680	**Total 13,897**

Source: JAMB Application Statistics, 2002.

Table 4 shows the total number of students admitted in 2002 from both the south/west and the north. It shows admission from six educationally developed states in the south/west and seven educationally less-developed states in the north of Nigeria. The data show that the northern region has a lower admission rate than that of the southern/western part of the country. For example, Imo state had an enrollment of 78,495 in 2002, while Kaduna State had only 2,180 enrolled. The total enrollment was 342,680 in the south/west, whereas in the north it was 13,897. Across the country, all the universities were able to admit just 200,000 applicants, a bare 18.9 % of the 1,054,060 candidates seeking admission in the 2008/2009 academic year. Many students who aspire to go to college are denied admission to higher education because the Nigerian higher

education system has limited absorption capacity relative to the large number of applicants (Moti, 2010, p. 36).

Kaduna State was the chosen area of focus in this study for the following reasons: It is the center and headquarters of the northern states of Nigeria. The state is known as the education center of the northern part of the country and established the first northern university, Ahmadu Belo University, Zaria, Kaduna State. The state also has equal representation of almost all the ethnic groups in the country. It is also the symbolic capital of northern Nigeria (*Human Rights Watch*, 2003a).

There have been volumes of research on the admission crisis in Nigeria, mainly focusing on the factors and policies responsible for low admission. However, despite this growing body of literature, little has been explored in the areas relating to the challenges youth and parents face in seeking admission. A few past studies have been based on the decisions of candidates, their parents, and teachers on courses, programs, career choices, and the admission process (Iyamu, 2005). A study has been done of the parental influence on candidates' choice of college (Oyedeji, 2011) and of parents' and teachers' perceptions of the selection of students for admission as a factor of quality education in Nigeria (Iyamu, 2005). Olagbaye, in *The Vanguard* (2011), emphasizes the role that parents play in ensuring their children are adequately prepared to face the tasks ahead and encouraging them to engage in activities to gain admission and achieve their educational goals. As such, this study aims at understanding the perceptions and experiences of parents and students regarding the admission problem. This study provides suggestions for policies that will lessen admission difficulties and stresses to both parents and youth. Moti (2008) states that parents have a right to educate their children and to choose the

kind of education that should be given to their children and that governments (federal, state, and local) are obliged to make education available, accessible, acceptable, and adaptable.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges youth face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain factors and admission policies that have a direct effect on parents and students regarding admission. The goal of this research was to better understand the experiences of students and parents as students go through the difficulties and stresses of seeking university admission. A study of this nature may serve as the basis for re-orienting the thinking of the government and the public on the need to improve admission processes and emphasize merit in the selection of candidates for admission to the various levels of education according to their abilities, aspirations, and choices. Unless quality inputs (including selection of qualified students) are fed into the educational process, society will continue to lack quality educational results and the capacity to use education as an instrument of change. The findings of this study may help to promote this awareness.

Research Questions

The research questions that guide this study are as follows:

1. What structural barriers do youth face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain factors and admission policies?

2. What challenges do youth and parents face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities?

3. How does the student overcome the college admission obstacles and handle the disappointment of not being admitted?

4. How do parents respond to the situation of their children who are qualified but denied admission?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical perspectives that served as a guiding framework for this study are grounded in critical theory and the concept of cultural and social capital. The theories helped in analyzing factors that inhibit admission to Nigerian universities from students' and parents' perspectives and the best way to overcome admission crises. Critical theory is a theory that seeks human emancipation; that is, "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them" (Horkheimer, 1982, p. 244). The theory examines the struggle for humanization, breaking the cycles of injustice, exploitation, and oppression, which lie in the perpetuation of oppressor versus oppressed (Freire, 1998)). The theory was useful to this research because it focuses on the oppression of the individual, the group, and society by self-imposed or externally-imposed influences that deprive university admission.

Social capital refers to the unnoticeable resources implanted within interpersonal relationships or social institutions (Rowan-Kenyon, 2007). Social capital focuses on a person's participation in a social structure such as a family, community, or school and on the information and resources that one can gain from contributing to that structure (Coleman, 1988). The theory promotes high levels of interaction between parents and their children (Coleman, 1988), which can have a significant impact on student

admission. It can also reduce disparity between social-class groups and result in equal admission opportunity (HO Sui Chu, 2003).

Cultural capital is the passing on of values and norms from one generation to the next, or "social reproduction" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The theory may help to understand parents' involvement in their children's education, as cultural values impact their lives; it predicts that parents with greater cultural capital will be more involved and that involvement will be more efficacious in helping their children to succeed academically. This theory will help to discover the type of cultural capital a student posseses that can empower the student and affect his or her enrollment choices.

Significance of the Study

This study is meant to offer insight to students to know how to prepare for and face challenges when seeking admission. Parents also need to be aware that it is better for their children to be supported despite the challenges they face. The knowledge gained concerning the challenges youth face in seeking admission can improve their chances for admission and strengthen their determination to gain admission. This study is important because it will encourage student persistence in pursuit of admission and suggest policies that will increase absorption capacity in universities that will impact the nation's economic development.

The findings of this study have implications for educational policy and university admission because information gleaned from this study can help policymakers and administrators to reevaluate admission criteria. The study can provide insight into the pressing issues in Nigerian universities regarding admission and ways to improve

admission policy. Admissions staff may also gain information that can help in developing better ways to support and improve university admission in Nigeria.

The findings of the study may benefit the teachers and students of higher education, as they would find in it valuable information concerning academic achievement. The study may benefit higher education planners by helping them to formulate policies for higher education that will increase admission. The results of this study may contribute to persuading the government to provide more funding to universities to enhance their infrastructure, increase personnel, and provide more spaces for the ever-increasing number of qualified candidates who seek admission into Nigerian universities. Findings of this study may be of benefit to parents as they prepare their children for college admission and to administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders in education, as it will enable them to see the need to review the policies on admission that tend to restrict access.

Delimitations of the Study

The scope of this study was limited to the northern region of the country, with Kaduna State as the chosen area of focus. The reason is that the north has the lowest admission rate in the country, and Kaduna State is the center and headquarters of the northern states of the country, with equal representation of almost all the ethnic groups in the country (*Human Rights Watch,* 2003a). The study was limited to admission to Nigerian universities only; I did not wish to include other institutions of higher learning because space limitations do not allow for a full treatment of all institutions. This study compared Nigerian university admission policies with three other African countries--

Ghana, representing West Africa; Kenya, representing East Africa; and South Africa, representing South Africa--in order to have a good representation of the continent.

Definition of Terms

Absorption Rate: The percentage of the total number of applicants admitted and enrolled in university in a particular academic year. It also refers to the carrying capacity of a university in terms of admission in any given academic year as designated by the governing body (NUC, 2005).

Carrying/Absorption Capacity: The maximum number of students that an institution can sustain for quality education based on available human and material resources (NUC, 2005; Akpotu & Akpochafo, 2009). The carrying capacity means that students are admitted based on the facilities available. These facilities include adequate lecture rooms, well-stocked libraries, good staff/student ratio, accommodations, etc. The NUC inspected some universities and found that many are overpopulated and that facilities are overstretched (Oduwaiye, 2008).

Catchments Areas and the Quota System: The preferences given to the indigenous population of a locality in which a university is sited in considering candidates for admission. This system has hindered development, and it defies all logic because a nation cannot progress when its best cannot occupy their due positions because of a quota system. From the time of incorporating the quota system into the Nigerian law books to the present, the federal government has used it as a policy instrument in recruiting people to all federal government establishments, such as the armed forces, the police, the ministries, and government-owned universities (Akuta, 2009).

Federal Character: A policy which has been enshrined in Nigeria's Constitution since 1979, meant to ensure that appointments to public service institutions and admission to tertiary institutions fairly reflect the linguistic, ethnic, religious, and geographic diversity of the country (Adamolekun, Erero, & Oshionebo, 1991). It was established to solve the problems of inequality and marginalization of certain parts of Nigeria. From this point in the nation's history, the questions of merit or competitiveness among Nigerians were set aside in place of the quota system (Akuta, 2009).

Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER): A nation's total enrollment in a specific level of education, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to the level of education. It is the proportion of young people aged 19 to 24 that are in university; it is on average lower in Africa than anywhere else and can be considered inadequate to the demands of the knowledge a modern society needs (UNESCO, 2005).

Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB): The federal government established JAMB in 1978 with the aim of ensuring a uniform standard for the conduct of matriculation examinations and the placement of qualified candidates into the nation's universities (Asein & Lawal, 2007). It is a federal agency charged with the dual responsibility of testing and placement of qualified candidates into the nation's tertiary institutions--universities, monotechnics, polytechnics, and colleges of education--as a response to the absence of standardization and lack of uniformity in admission guidelines which beset tertiary institutions before 1978 (Asein & Lawal, 2007). With the establishment of JAMB and the policies put in place to guide its operations, the federal

government of Nigeria has been able to ensure a near-even representation of the various parts of the country in the nation's tertiary institutions (Asein & Lawal, 2007).

National Universities Commission (NUC): An organization established in 1962, under the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) as an advisory agency in the cabinet office by Decree No. 1.1974 (NUC website). NUC is the main channel for federal funds for university education in the country and is empowered to coordinate, finance, and oversee the overall development of the universities. The Commission is also accountable to the federal government for the total and individual performances of the universities. The Commission ensures the orderly development of university education, the maintenance of high standards, and the avoidance of unnecessary and wasteful duplication of academic programs, faculties, and facilities (NUC website). The Commission is empowered to advise on the creation of new universities and other degree granting institutions; distribute government grants in accordance with a set formula; collect, analyze, and furnish information relating to university development and education in Nigeria; and act as the agency for channeling all external aid to Nigerian universities (NUC website).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Education is an indispensable tool for enhancing socioeconomic, political, and cultural development of any nation; and as such, its role cannot be undermined (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008). The role that higher education plays in facilitating the growth and development of a country's economy is significant (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008). The Nigerian National Policy on Education (2004) highlighted the goals of university education:

1. To contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training.

2. To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and the society.

3. To develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments.

4. To acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.

5. To promote and encourage scholarship and community service.

6. To forge and cement national unity.

7. To promote national and international understanding and interactions (NPE, 2004, p. 2).

The increasing importance of higher education as a means of strengthening the economy and civilizing the individual has intensified the demand for higher education in

Nigeria over the last twenty years. However, Nigerian higher education has not been able to meet the demand for broadening college admission (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008). For Nigeria as a developing nation to gain sustainable development, it is expedient to develop effective and efficient human resources, especially for economic development as measured by the nation's Gross National Product (GNP) per capita (Chukwurah, 2011, p. 109). Jibowu (2007) stated that a nation's Gross National Product (GNP) per capita depends, to a great extent, on the level of development of its human resources. On this note, there is an urgent need for a rapid and effective improvement of the country's system of higher education. Making higher education accessible to every Nigerian should therefore be a top priority (Chukwurah, 2011, p. 109). The policy of admission into Nigerian universities is becoming controversial, as applicants go through painstaking examinations and unnecessary spending in the processing of an admission that may never be gained (Chukwurah, 2011, p. 108).

The main issue is that many qualified Nigerian students cannot gain admission to university education due to admission policies such as the quota system, catchment areas, Post University Matriculations Examination (UME) screening, and factors such as the lack of facilities, shortage of manpower, and limited number of universities. Akpotu (2005) stated that cost is not the main barrier in gaining admission into higher institution of learning in Nigeria. The barriers are the policy reforms of quota system, catchment areas, admission policy, poor and inadequate facilities, and the limited absorption capacity of Nigerian universities. Imhanlahimi and Maduewesi (2006) hold that in Nigeria, some unfavorable factors and government policies stand against the more than 70% of qualified students who apply for admission into universities and other institutions

of higher learning every year. Every year, hundreds of thousands of applicants write the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) examination, and on average less than 20% are granted admission into universities (Moti, 2010, p. 28). Ten percent out of these large numbers are granted admission into other tertiary institutions such as polytechnics, colleges of education, and monotechnics. Those who could not secure admission in the year either wait for the following year and write the examination again or pick up casual jobs; still yet, others remain a burden and liability to their parents and guardians (Moti, 2008; Imhanlahimi & Maduewesi, 2006).

The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges youth and parents face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by structural factors and admission policies. These factors (such as the inadequate number and absorption capacity of universities in Nigeria and the lack of adequate facilities and manpower) and admission policies (such as carrying capacity, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states) impact parents and students regarding admission. Such a study is not only needed but also timely as a guide for revamping the educational polices of the government to improve admission processes and emphasize merit as the starting point in the selection of candidates for admission.

Organization of the Review

This chapter is organized into three major sections: (1) historical overview of the Nigerian higher education system during the colonial period, (2) the organizational system of the Nigerian university, and (3) factors and admission policies influencing the admission crisis. This review presents research detailing a historical overview of the Nigerian higher education system from 1934 to the present, the organizational system of

Nigerian universities, and factors that are detrimental to students' admission to Nigerian universities.

First, the review presents the historical overview of Nigerian higher education from its colonial background, when in 1934 the first institution of higher learning was established in northern Nigeria and named Higher College Yaba. The review traces the beginning of higher education in Nigeria before independence in 1960 and examines the post-independence period from 1960 to the present, with emphasis on the forces that shaped the university and admission system in the country. This review deals with the university system, excluding primary and secondary schools and other institutions of higher learning such as polytechnics, colleges of education, and monotechnics. The main focus of this research is university education in Nigeria, with special emphasis on Kaduna State, the headquarters of the northern region. The north was selected because the northern states are educationally less developed and are the states facing high admission challenges compared with the southern/western states that instituted higher education during the colonial era.

The second aspect of the review is the organizational system of the Nigerian university, its hierarchical structure, enrollment rate, and funding system. Fundamental to a nation's development is primary and secondary education; but a formidable higher education system such as university education, where effective learning and training takes place, produces graduates with the necessary capabilities to address the perennial issues of poverty and underdevelopment in developing nations like Nigeria (Agboola, & Ofoegbu, 2010). The review examines the university structure, system of administration, rate of enrollment, source of funding, and use and management of finances. This

overview provides insight into the Nigerian university system from the founding of the first college in Nigeria in 1934 to the present day. The review demonstrates with empirical facts that it was not until the late 1980s, when the demand for university education increased immensely beyond what the universities could provide, that the Nigerian university system began to experience an admission crisis.

The third part of the review examines the factors and admission policies influencing the present admission crisis. This section of the review is the main issue of this study because it reveals how these factors (e.g., inadequate number of universities/absorption capacity, lack of adequate facilities, shortage of adequate manpower) and the admission policies (e.g., science/arts ratio system, catchment areas, and quota system) have become the source of the admission bottlenecks and how challenging it has become for applicants to gain admission and for parents to support their children in their pursuit of university admission.

The review of this literature is intended to facilitate an understanding of the challenges parents and youth face while seeking university admission in Nigeria. No studies regarding the university system were excluded. The review examines the research of eminent Nigerian education scholars who shed light on the problem of the admission system. Primarily Nigerian scholars were used because the study is limited to Nigerian universities.

Literature Search Procedures and Criteria for Inclusion

An extensive literature search was carried out to locate every study that could meet the inclusion requirements. The data on admissions and enrollments were obtained from the Nigerian Federal Bureau of Statistics, the National Universities Commission,

and the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board websites. This review analyzed the pattern of access based on the four geographical regions in Nigeria. This included obtaining information about admission guidelines and policies as set by the relevant regulatory institutions such as the Ministry of Education, the National Universities Commission (NUC), and the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). These government bodies deal directly with all issues relating to university in Nigeria and therefore are a good source of primary data. Electronic searches were made, using educational databases such as JSTOR, ERIC, and EBSCO to retrieve articles relating to admission issues and challenges in Nigeria from 2000 to 2011. The articles obtained from these databases are drawn from journals such as *International Journal of African & African American Studies*, *African Studies Review*, and *Journal of Education Administration and Policy Studies*. The rationale behind using articles from 2000 to 2011 was to use recent data to analyze and ascertain if there has been any modification and progress in the last decade regarding admission issues**.** These articles brought to light the operational system of higher education in Nigeria and evaluated the challenges admission policies pose on access to university education in the country.

Historical Overview of the Nigerian Higher Education System

Located on the West Coast of Africa, Nigeria has 36 states and a population of over 180 million; 30 million are of school age, from elementary to undergraduate level. The country is rich in petroleum and many other natural resources. Nigeria consists of over 260 different ethnic tribes with three dominant tribes: Yoruba in the southwest, Ibo in the eastern region, and Hausa in the north. Although people speak their native languages, which number over 260 dialects, the official language is English. Christianity

and Islam are the two dominant religions in the country (United States Diplomacy Mission to Nigeria website). In 1960, Nigeria gained its independence from the British. The country was under military rule from 1966 to 1979 and from 1983 to 1999. During these periods, Nigerian tertiary institutions were beleaguered by riots and strikes and these led to low enrollment and a gross decline in the quality of education in the country (United States Diplomacy Mission to Nigeria website & Global Literacy Project website). Educational institutions were mostly abandoned during the military era and are still in the process of recovering from the neglect of the military period. The federal government of Nigeria regards education as a tool for effecting enhanced national development, and the country's philosophy of education is based on (1) the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and (2) the provision of equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. The language of instruction in Nigerian institutions is English, and the Ministry of Education is the government body charged with the duty of regulating procedures and maintaining standards (United States Diplomacy Mission to Nigeria website).

Colonial Background before 1960

The origins of higher education in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial era when Nigerian leaders insisted on having a university because they saw it as a means of emancipation and advancement (Ajayi, 1975). It was necessary for their purpose that such a university should be patterned on the British universities (Ajayi, 1975). The Higher College at Yaba was established in 1934 and became the first higher education institution and a turning point in the history of the independence movement in Nigeria. The eager need for higher education by the nationalist leaders during the Elliot

Commission of 1943 led to the establishment of University College, Ibadan (UCI), in 1948, with a view to uphold university standards that are comparable with the esteemed universities of the world (Ajayi, 1975). The UCI was an affiliate of the University of London (Ike, 1976). According to Ibukun (1997), the UCI, at inception, had a number of challenges which included rigid constitutional provisions, poor staffing, low enrollment, and high dropout rate (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008). The Federal Government of Nigeria, in April 1959, commissioned an inquiry (the Ashby Commission) to proffer suggestions on the needs of higher education in the country. The Commission, led by Sir Eric Ashby, was comprised of three Nigerians, three Americans, and three Britons. The Commission was to make an appraisal of the higher education needs of the soon-to-be-independent nation of Nigeria (Fabunmi, 2005). Before the commission submitted its report, the eastern region government established its own university at Nsukka (known as University of Nigeria, Nsukka) in 1960 (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008). According to Afemikhe (2008) and Uvah (2005), in the early years of tertiary education in Nigeria, before independence in 1960, there were only two universities, the University of Ibadan and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Admission did not pose any serious challenges, as candidates seeking admission were small in number, a mere 1,395 in 1960 from both Ibadan and Nsuka (Uvah, 2005; Afemikhe; 2008). The historical review by Ajayi (1975) presented the beginnings of higher education but did not highlight the admission or enrollment conditions of the early colleges. Afemikhe (2008), however, did mention that seeking admission before independence was not a problem because there were a relatively small number of applicants and higher education was just springing up in the country.

Post-Independence Period from 1960

The implementation of the Ashby Report led to the establishment of first-generation universities: Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, in 1962 by the western region; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in 1962 by the northern region; and the University of Lagos (1962) by the federal government. By 1973, there were six first-generation universities: the Universities of Ibadan, Lagos, and Ife, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008). The total student enrollment of Nigerian universities had grown from a mere 1,395 in 1960 to 40,000 in 1976 (Uvah, 2005). The second-generation universities were founded between 1974 and 1979. These include the Universities of Calabar, Ilorin, Jos, Maiduguri, Benin, Sokoto, and Bayero University, Kano. The third-generation universities were established between 1980 and 1987. These include Ondo State University, Ado-Ekiti; Ogun State University, Ago-Iwoye; Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma; Abia State University, Uturu; Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu; Lagos State University, Ojo; and the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. The fourth-generation universities were established between 1988 and 2003. These include the University of Abuja; the University of Uyo; Delta State University; Abraka; and Benue State University, Markudi (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008; Okoroma, 2008). Ajayi and Ekundayo (2008) and Okoroma (2008) depict the establishment of the first-, second-, and third-generation universities with no problem regarding admission. However, according to Moti (2010), admission had become competitive and the number of applicants rose significantly. From these six first-generation universities and a total enrollment of 3, 646 students in 1962, the Nigerian university system has grown to 104 institutions, made up

of 27 federal universities, 35 state universities, and 42 private universities with a total enrollment of about 726,760 students. Yet, the challenge of access to university education in the country persists (Moti, 2010).

Table 5 shows enrollment growth among the first-, second-, and third-generation universities. The first-generation universities' carrying capacity was 3%, but the actual admittance rate was 9%, which was not a major problem. In the second- to third-generation universities era, despite the increment of 13% and 21%, respectively, admittance to university became more complex because of the high demand. This means that the difficulties of seeking admission to Nigerian universities began during the second- and third-generation universities.

Table 5

Enrollment Growth: Policy Norms and Rates of Increase between 1989/1990 and 1998/1999

Category	NUC Policy Norm (Carrying Capacity)	Actual Growth Rate
1st Generation Universities	3%	9%
2nd Generation Universities	10%	13%
3rd Generation Universities	15%	21%

Source: Harnett, 2000. Overall growth rates far exceeded government policy guidelines (carrying capacity).

Forces that Shaped the University and Admission System

The Military Era

Nigeria was under military rule for almost 28 years after its independence in 1960, and the political interference in the higher education system under a series of military regimes imposed distortions and constraints on the system's admission policies and progress (Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003). In the 1980s, Nigeria had established an esteemed higher education system offering instruction at an international standard in a number of disciplinary areas (Saint et al., 2003). The universities of Ibadan and Ahmadu Bello, for example, earned global acknowledgment for their research in tropical health and agriculture.

However, under successive military regimes during the 1980s and 1990s, complying with the political pressures of social demand for access, the education system and admission process expanded swiftly. Enrollments grew at an annual rate of 12% to 15%, and between 1980 and 1992, an additional 11 universities were founded (Saint et al., 2003). Military government intrusion in university affairs (e.g., the direct appointment of vice chancellors and, in some cases, of military "sole administrators") steadily increased (Saint et al., 2003). In the military era, university autonomy was discontinued and incentives and rewards for research productivity, quality teaching, and associated innovation gradually disappeared. This was a result of the fact that academic staff (faculty) and student organizations voiced public disapproval of the dictatorship-type administration of the military government. Since they were regarded as potential antagonists of the military rule, university budgets decreased and were ignored (Saint et al., 2003). Consequently, research output diminished, educational excellence declined,

enrollment decreased, and management structures rigidified (Saint et al., 2003). Between 1990 and 1997, for example, the government allocations for higher education were scaled-down by 27% even as enrollments rose by 79% (Harnett, 2000). This consequently led to a rapid depreciation in quality research and academic excellence in the universities, as implied by the 62% drop in the regular expenditure per student during this time (Hartnett, 2000). Downward pressure on staff salaries, coupled with deteriorating working conditions and political repression on campus, precipitated a series of staff and student strikes during the 1990s; these culminated in year-long shutdowns of the university system between 1992 and 1996, during which students were not granted admission to universities (Oni, 2000).

Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner (2003) gave an account of the crisis of the higher education system during the military era. They explained how the military affected the smooth running of universities, leading to the shutdown of universities for a long period of time. During the military era in Nigeria, universities experienced their worst moments, which included many strikes and cancellations of admission

National Universities Commission (NUC)

The hierarchical command structure of the military regimes controlled all aspects of public service. The National Universities Commission NUC was an agency under the Ministry of Education charged with the care of higher education in the country; the rationale behind its establishment was for the orderly development of university education in Nigeria, maintenance of high standards, and ensuring adequate funding (Uvah, 2005). It was created in 1962 and reconstituted as a statutory body in 1974. The NUC was originally intended to function as a modest university grants commission,

offering suggestions to the government or advisory board on policy issues, defining norms for quality assurance, channeling block grants from the government to the universities, and ensuring the balanced and coordinated improvement of the higher education system (Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003). In 1992, the NUC's governing board was dissolved, leaving it accountable exclusively to the Minister of Education and the Head of State. By the end of the military era in 1999, it had become a larger organization saddled with the responsibility of taking care of all aspects of university activities, including setting academic standards. The NUC is involved in the selection of institutional leaders and members of governing councils. It accredits all new university course offerings and the physical development plans for each campus; it also takes part in the concession of staff salaries with the various academic unions (Saint et al., 2003). According to the commission, the standards for admission into federal, state and private universities must take into cognizance the following criteria: merit, carrying capacity, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states.

Moti (2010) argued that NUC is supposed to advance and improve access to university education, but it has laid down criteria for admission instead of increasing access to higher education, hampering and denying access to many applicants. With the establishment of the NUC in 1962, the total population of students in Nigerian universities grew from a mere 1, 395 in 1960 to 40,000 in 1976; and when the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme was introduced in 1976, enrollment increased to 172,000 by 1988, when the first group of graduates from the new 6:3:3:4 system of education enrolled in the universities (Uvah, 2005). The 6:3:3:4 system of education is the policy that stipulates the number of years for each level of education (6 years primary

school, 3 years middle school, 3 years high school, and 4 years university). This policy consequently led to a massive enrollment in primary schools (Onlinenigeria.com: Expansion of primary education). Admission remains the main issue because the demand for university education is still high in the country. Table 6 indicates that the NUC admission rate of students has increased from 51,845 in the 2002/2003 academic session to 200,000 in the 2008/09 session, showing that the proportion has increased; but the actual number of students who were denied admission is significant. This is because the percentage of the admitted number is not proportional to the total number of secondary school graduates (1,054,060) who applied.

Table 6

Absorption Rates in Nigerian Universities

Year	#of Universities	Total #of Applicants	Total# Admitted	Percentage Admitted	Total# Not admitted	Percentage Not admitted
2002/2003	53	994,381	51,845	5.2%	942,535	94.8%
2003/2004	54	1,046,950	105,157	10.0%	941,793	90.0%
2004/2005	56	841,878	122,492	14.5%	719,386	85.4%
2005/2006	75	916,371	76,984	8.4%	839,387	91.6%

2006/2007	76	806,089	123,626	15.3%	679,846	89.0%
2007/08	104	911,653	107,370	11.8%	802,283	88.2%
2008/09	104	1,054,060	200,000	18.9%	854,06	81.1%

Source: Compiled by the author from JAMB application and admission statistics, 2002-2009.

Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB)

Prior to 1978, each university conducted its placement examination and admitted its students according to the spaces available. The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) was founded by the federal government as the central placement examination body in 1978 (Nwadiani & Igineweka, 2005). One of the reasons for the establishment of the JAMB was that each year thousands of applicants sit for college admission examinations and less than 20% on average gain admission into the universities (Moti, 2008). As a result, many applicants had to apply for admission to more than one university which, in turn, led to the problem of multiple applications, examinations, and acceptance. JAMB therefore had the responsibility of regulating admissions into the institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. The federal government initiated and promoted a federal character policy, and this led to the concept of equal opportunity in universities in the country. The federal character policy simply meant that public authorities, semi-government agencies, institutions of learning, and even the private sector should ensure fair and effective representation of states, local government

areas, and ethnic groups in positions of power, authority, and enrollment/placement in schools (Adejo, 2005; Okoroma, 2008).

The main criticism against the establishment of JAMB is that it is the only body that controls and regulates admission to all institutions of higher learning in the country. Onyechere (2010) opines that in the whole world, Nigeria is the only country where one body such as JAMB has total control of admissions into all universities, polytechnics, monotechnics, and colleges of education. He further argues that while universities in other countries have full autonomy to admit their students, Nigerian universities do not have such autonomy because of the power of JAMB in controlling and monitoring admissions. Universities should be encouraged to take over admission of their applicants; this will lead to an effective higher education administration (Oyedeji, 2011).

Civilian Government: Higher Education Admission Policies

For the first time after fifteen years (1983-1999) came a new democratically elected government in Nigeria. In 1999, with the new democratically elected government in power, the administration began to tackle the nation's long-festering higher education challenges created by the military regimes (Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003). In the bid to enhance academic excellence and increase admission, the present government has put in place more policies and institutional reforms in higher education than the combined governments of the previous two decades. The key actions taken by the government are institutional audits of all universities, revocation of the vice chancellors' former privilege of personally selecting 10% of each year's new student intake, reconstitution of all university governing councils with broader representation from the general public, the licensing of seven private universities to increase admissions, exclusion of university

staff from public service salary scales and regulations, and a 180% increase in funding of the university system that raised per-student allocations from the equivalent of USD 360 to USD 970 per year (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2001; Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003).

The coming of the civilian administration came with a new policy of autonomy for federal universities, granted in July, 2000 (Federal Ministry of Education, 2000; Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003). The university councils were granted the following powers by the policy: full responsibility for institutional governance, including the appointment of senior officers; restoring block-grant funding to universities; circumscribing the powers of the National Universities Commission; granting university senates the authority to decide on curricula; and giving universities the right to set admission criteria and select students. It also lays the groundwork for new minimum academic standards (Saint et al., 2003).

The National Assembly in May 2002 approved a reform in the existing higher education laws and established a permanent legal basis; this involved limiting the role of the NUC to quality assurance and system coordination. The university councils were empowered by the National Assembly to establish institutional policies, hire top management, and forward institutional budgets to the various departments and sectors of the university. The councils were also institutionally authorized to have control over their students' admissions and enrollment (Guardian, 2002; Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003).

However, Onyechere (2010) states Nigerian universities do not exercise this full autonomy in terms of admission, as other countries in the world do, as a result of the

regulatory powers of JAMB. At the present moment, there is an examination conducted by the universities called Post University Matriculation Examination (PUME)), whereby they carry out a formal test to interview and validate candidates' assessment by JAMB. Universities are bound to assess the candidates JAMB sends to them, not their own choice (Oyedeji, 2011). Despite all arguments on institutional control over student admission and enrollment, what is more important is the fact that the high demand for university admission needs to be considered in order to mitigate the frustration and difficulties youth and parents face while seeking admission.

Present Organizational System of Nigerian Universities

After gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria established the Ministry of Education. The ministry was saddled with the responsibility of overseeing the affairs of all levels of education in the country and is basically concerned with setting standards for staffing, facilities, and quality control through inspection of schools by education officers (Thomas, 2009). Nigeria's economy depends largely on crude oil from the Delta region as its major source of revenue. It has shown signs of growth, shielding Nigeria at least somewhat from the global economic meltdown (Thomas, 2009).

The Nigerian higher education system consists of universities, polytechnics, institutions of technology, and colleges of education that are part of or affiliated with universities and polytechnic colleges (International Association of Universities, 2000). Presently in Nigeria, there are 104 universities (27 federal, 35 state, and 42 privately owned) and 198 other higher education institutions; and this is the largest and most complex higher education system in Africa (Amadi, Adeyemi, Ogundiran, & Awe, 2010). The federal and state higher education institutions are under the direct care and

supervision of the federal Ministry of Education as well as the state Ministry of Education (Amadi et al., 2010).

In Nigeria, there are three levels of university education. The first level offers a bachelor's degree after a minimum of three years and a maximum of six years. The second level offers a master's degree following one year of post-bachelor's study. The third level offers the doctorate degree, which consists of two to three years after the master's. To secure an admission into the first level of university education, one must pass the competitive Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) examination (International Association of Universities, 2000).

Through the following organizations, the federal government controls universities and other higher education institutions: the Federal Ministry of Education; the National Universities Commission, which among other things allocates funds to federal universities and also stipulates the spending formula; and the Committee of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Federal Universities, which acts as a coordinating body and offers suggestions to government and university governing councils on matters of general and specific concern to higher education. Each university is managed by a council and a senate and is headed by an appointed vice chancellor. Within universities and colleges, the institutes and centers are more autonomous. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) defends the interests of the academicians in the Nigerian university system (Amadi, Adeyemi, Ogundiran, & Awe, 2010). The Nigerian system of education is modeled after the British system. Yet, a question persists. Why can't universities be allowed to increase their carrying capacity and admit students based on need?

Hierarchical Structure of the Nigerian University

The Nigerian university is a hierarchical system which consists of the following: visitor, chancellor, governing council, senate, vice chancellor, deputy vice chancellor(s), registrar, bursar, librarian, directors, provosts, deans of faculties, heads of departments, heads of units and divisions, congregation, and student affairs. In Nigeria the head of state (president) is automatically the visitor of all federal universities, while in the state universities, the governors are the visitors. It is the responsibility of the visitor to visit the university at least once a year or delegate someone else to do this (Amadi, Adeyemi, Ogundiran, & Awe, 2010). The chancellor, who is normally an emir (king), is appointed by the visitor and is the ceremonial head of the university who occasionally visits the university. The chancellor, in relation to the university, takes precedence before all other members of the university; and when he is present, he chairs all meetings of congregation held for the conferment of degrees and all meetings of convocation (Amadi et al., 2010). The governing council is the paramount governing authority of the university and consists of members appointed by the visitor who are drawn from the general public and accountable to the visitor. It is tasked with the responsibility of making decisions and policies which could have financial implications and is responsible for the general management of the affairs of the university. The council has the authority to do anything which in its judgment is calculated to facilitate the carrying on of the activities of the university and also manage the expenditures of the university (Amadi et al., 2010).

The senate is the supreme academic body of the university and is responsible for decisions on all academic matters in the system. The senate functions through an array of committees such as the Committee of Provosts, Deans and Directors, Business

Committee of Senate, Development Committee, Academic Matters Sub-Committee, and Learned Conferences Support Committee. The senate also has the responsibility of making policies that would guide the admission and graduation of students in the university (Osun State University website: http://www.uniosun.edu.ng).

The vice chancellor (president) is the chief executive and academic head of the university. He or she is the chief exponent of the educational mission of the university, and his or her office serves as the nerve center of activities in areas of protocol, external relations, and coordination of various internal organs. It is the responsibility of the vice chancellor to oversee the day-to-day administration of the university and see that the goals of the university are met. He or she is responsible to the governing council for the management of the human, financial, and material resources of the university. The success of the vice chancellor's job is highly dependent on his or her ability to lead, motivate, and inspire administrative associates and academic and non-academic staff, as well as students, to work toward the central purpose of the university to advance learning and enhance talent. The vice chancellor is constitutionally authorized with the general function of directing the activities of the university, for which purpose he or she is advised and assisted by the deputy vice chancellor(s), registrar, bursar, university librarian, provost, and deans and heads of department (Osun State University website; Amadi et al., 2010).

The registry is the secretariat of the university and the nerve center of all administrative activities in the university. The office is headed by the registrar, who is answerable to the vice chancellor in the daily administrative running of the university. The office is comprised of the registrar's main office, the Council Affairs Unit, the

Personnel Unit, and the Academic Affairs Unit. The registrar's main office coordinates the activities of the other units and is also concerned with policy formulation and implementation.

The Academic Affairs Unit has an admissions sub unit that is in charge of academic matters of the university, admissions, examinations, and records. The admissions sub unit also carries out verification of results from all examining bodies of all students admitted into the university each year (Osun State University website).

The Bursary Department is headed by a bursar, who is the chief financial officer of the university and is responsible to the vice- chancellor for the day-to-day administration and control of the financial affairs of the university (Amadi et al., 2010). The department has units encumbered with one responsibility or another. Each of the units has a unit head that oversees the affairs of the unit and is directly responsible to the bursar, who from time to time delegates duties (Osun State University website).

The university librarian is accountable to the vice chancellor in terms of the administration of the university library and the coordination of all library services in the university and its colleges, faculties, schools, institutes, and other teaching units (Amadi et al., 2010). The Congregation is the general assembly of all graduate members of the university staff, both academic and non-academic. The vice chancellor is its chairperson. The general function of the Congregation is to serve as a forum for discussing any university problem or issues and make recommendations to council and senate, in which two bodies it is represented (Amadi et al., 2010).

University Enrollment Rate

Nigeria presently has 302 tertiary institutions: 104 universities and 198 institutions of higher learning, enrolling more than 1,937,493 students in 2010 (NUC, 2010). The higher education participation rate (HEPR), defined as the proportion of the 18-35 year age group that is enrolled in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, is just 8.1% for all higher education institutions and 5% for universities (Agboola & Ofoegbu, 2010). In comparison to other developed countries like the United States, Australia, and Korea (64%, 41%, and 51%, respectively), this is really low (Daniel, Kanwar, & Uvalic-Trumbic, 2006). Federal universities enroll over 400,000 students (9% of enrollments), support numerous graduate programs, and serve as a magnet for students from neighboring countries (Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003). The World Bank (1988) assessed the higher education system in Nigeria and concluded that more than any other country in Africa, the structures that exist in Nigeria should provide adequate admission for effective development of university education (World Bank, 1988, p. 3). Despite the comments of the World Bank on admission, the university system developed less in terms of enrollment than anticipated.

Enrollments in the federal universities grew at the rapid rate of 12% annually during the 1990s and rose to 325,299 students by 2000 (NUC, 2002b). In the south/east region, enrollment growth rates were higher than the north/east region. (Saint et al., 2003). The increasing number of students seeking admission brought about an enrollment ratio of 340 per 100,000 persons (Asia averages 650 and South Africa 2,500) and an average staff/student ratio of 1:21 (sciences 1:22; engineering 1:25; law 1:37; education 1:25) (Saint et al., 2003).

The highest rates of enrollment growth were recorded in the academic disciplines of sciences and engineering. As a result, the share of science and engineering enrollments rose from 54% in 1989 to 59% in 2000, consistent with national policy targets (NUC, 2002; Saint et al., 2003). The major problem created by NUC is the consideration (special attention) given to science and engineering applicants in terms of admission compared to the arts.

Funding of Higher Education in Nigeria

According to Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner (2003), in 1999 the cost of running the federal university system was $210 million. With enrollment growth and currency devaluation, allocations per university student in the federal system fell from $610 to $360 between 1990 and 1999, with apparent implications for educational quality. However, agreements covering university salaries and teaching inputs negotiated with the government by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in 2001 have raised this sum to close to $1,000 per student yearly (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2001; Saint et al., 2003). Federal university revenues are received mainly from three sources: the federal government (84%), income generation activities (7%), and various student fees (9%) (Saint et al., 2003). Patterns in the structure of university expenditures have improved steadily during the last decade. Whereas in 1991 academic expenditures accounted for 49% and administration absorbed 46% of total expenditures, by 1999 these shares were 62% and 35%, respectively (Saint et al., 2003). Direct teaching expenditure per student, however, differed significantly among institutions. For example, in 1997/98 in the northern region, funds spent on direct teaching ranged from a low of 137 naira ($2) per student at Sokoto to a high of 1,683 naira ($21) at Maiduguri. The system-wide average

was 331 naira ($4) per student (Hartnett, 2000; Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003). However, efforts to develop enrollments and improve educational quality are seriously constrained by the factors and federal policies listed below.

There are various ways in which Nigerian educational institutions generate revenues for the management of their daily affairs and projects. Every institution draws a significant part of its funds from the federal government, state government, and private proprietors. The remaining part of their funding is internally generated from levies/charges/fees (for state-owned and private institutions), international development partners, support from alumni associations, and linkages with industries in Nigeria and abroad (Federal Ministry of Education, 2009; Adeniyi & Taiwo, 2011). In Nigeria, since the 1950s, educational expenditures have been on the increase; from 1955 to 1963 the expenditure on education increased overall to 10.5% (Adesina, 1988). The northern region spent 20% to 26% of its annual budget on education, eastern and western regions spent 35% and 49%, respectively, and Lagos spent 35% (Tsang, 1988). Prior to 1977, higher education institutions charged tuition fees and room and board fees, but in 1977 the government canceled tuition fees because the government took over all private schools and education was made free of charge (Oguntoye, 2000). With this development, the federal government has been involved deeply at the tertiary level, allocating an average of 68% of its total education expenditures to this level of education between 1996 and 2002 (Makoju et al., 2005). States in the country with state universities allocate an average of 34% on tertiary education (Hinchcliffe, 2002, pp. 9-10). A decree was signed into law to make available 2% of the profits of companies registered in Nigeria to be collected by the government and paid into a fund called the Education Tax

Fund (ETF), now the Education Trust Fund. This fund is distributed according to the ratio of 50 to higher, 40 to primary, and 10 to secondary education, respectively (Dawodu, 2010; Okuwa, 2004; Deniyi & Taiwo, 2011). Looking at the system of funding higher education in Nigeria as presented by Makoju et al. (2005), one can see that Nigeria has been spending a lot of funds to finance higher education; however, the problem is that the funds are not sufficient to meet the present demand.

However, there are historical stages of education development plans that shaped education from 1962 to 1985. The first development plan had 10.3% of the total planned public sector investment and ranked fifth in sectional allocation. The second development plan was 13.5% of the total planned public sector investment, which was second only to the transport sector. The third plan was 7.5%, which dropped the educational sector allocation to the fifth position. The fourth development plan, between1981 and 1985, was 17.5% (Tsang, 1988, p. 18). The federal and state governments are the major providers and financiers of education in Nigeria. Since the 1980s, however, the dwindling of government resources has put much pressure on the financing of education (Akinsanya, 2007, p. 69).

Due to the importance placed on higher education by successive governments between the 1980s and 2000s, the demand for university education has increased significantly (Agboola & Ofoegbu, 2010). In 1999, due to political pressure and the stress of social demand for access and equal opportunity to education, it became evident that neither federal nor state governments could meet the demand for higher education and, as a result, private participation in the establishment of tertiary institutions was encouraged (Nwagwu, 2001; Agboola & Ofoegbu, 2010). Oguntoye (2000) argues that since the

government took over education on all levels from private owners, education has received sufficient attention with the financing and management of educational institutions and has relieved individuals and voluntary agencies of the burden of educational finance. This effort by the government could not be sustained and eventually failed. The few individuals that were willing to sacrifice for education relaxed their efforts because education became a public good that had to be provided and paid for from the government budget. Since education became free, the demands for admission rose to such an extent that by the end of the 1980s government could barely cope financially with the demands for admission; and this left applicants and parents to struggle for admission every year (Oguntoye, 2000, p. 158). In the following section, I discuss the factors and federal policies that make access to university education difficult for a large number of qualified Nigerians.

Factors and Admission Policies Influencing the Admission Crisis

Inadequate Number of Universities/Absorption Capacity in Nigeria

The inadequate number of universities and insufficient carrying capacity of the universities in Nigeria to cope with the high demand for university education has put much pressure on university admissions (Chukwurah, 2011). The observed insufficiency in the number of universities in Nigeria, coupled with the great demand for university education, has created the problem of admission into the available universities and its impact on education standards (Okoroma, 2008). The entire absorption capacity of the university system in Nigeria can only comfortably accommodate about 15% of those seeking admission (Moti, 2010). As a result of the high number of graduates (one million) of the Universal Basic Education Scheme (UBES) seeking admission every year,

the situation has gotten worse (Moti). A lot of students (80%) of this total number still find it difficult to gain admission into universities because the number of available institutions is not enough to admit the high number of applicants. Other African countries--like Ghana, that has 18 universities with affiliated institutions; South Africa, that has 26 universities with a large absorption capacity; and Kenya, that has 28 universities with provision to grant admission to as many candidates as possible--do not have similar admission challenges because they have a higher carrying capacity than Nigeria (Moti, 2008).

Imhanlahimi and Maduewesi (2006) and Saanu (2010) argue that the number of available universities in Nigeria is inadequate in comparison with the number of qualified candidates seeking admission, thus creating a major admission problem. According to Okoroma (2008), the issue of admission into Nigerian universities has become a difficult issue over the years because of the ever-increasing demands for university education and the availability of only a few state and federal universities. In comparing Nigerian universities with Ghanaian universities, Nigerian students now see Ghanaian universities as a preferable alternative. Many applicants who are unable to secure admission into any of the Nigerian universities are now seeking admission into Ghanaian universities for a quality education and academic excellence.

Table 7

Number of Universities in Selected Countries

Country	Population	Number of Universities
Nigeria	140 million	104
India	1 billion	8,407

USA	290 million	5,758
Argentina	38.7 million	1,705
Spain	40.2 million	145
Mexico	10.9 million	1,341
Bangladesh	138 million	1,268
Indonesia	238 million	1,236
Japan	127 million	1,223
France	60.1 million	1,062
China	1.2 billion	1,054
South Africa	43.6 million	26
Kenya	41.7 million	28
Ghana	24.7 million	18

Source: *Compiled by the author from E. T. Ehiemetalor, Issues of Access, Equity and Private Sector Participation in the Deregulation of Education (2005).*

Table 7 shows a list of selected countries with their populations and number of universities. The table shows that Nigeria has one of the lowest numbers of universities serving a high population compared to other countries. For example, Japan, with a population of 127 million people, has 1,223 universities; the United States, with a population of over 300 million people, has 5,758 universities. This means that Nigeria, with a population of 140 million, should have more universities or increase its carrying capacity to meet the demand of over 1.5 million applicants that seeks admission every year.

Table 8

Distribution of Universities in Nigeria by Geo-Political Zones

Zones	South East	South West	South South	North East	North West	North Central	Total
No. of Univ.	16	30	19	08	13	18	104

Source: *National Universities Commission News Report (2010).*

SouthEast					SouthWest					SouthSouth				
State	F	S	P	Total	State	F	S	P	Total	State	F	S	P	Total
Anambra	1	1	3	5	Ekiti	-	2	1	3	Akwa Ibom	1	1	1	3
Abia	1	1	-	2	Lagos	2	1	3	6	Bayelsa	-	1	1	2
Ebonyi	1	1	2	3	Ogun	1	2	5	8	Cross Rivers	1	1	1	3
Enugu	1	1	2	4	Ondo	1	2	3	4	Delta	1	1	2	4
Imo	1	1	-	2	Osun	1	1	3	5	Edo	1	1	3	5
					Oyo	1	1	2	4	Rivers	1	1	1	2
SubTotal	4	5	7	**16**		6	9	15	**30**		5	6	8	**19**

NorthEast					NorthWest					NorthCentral				
State	F	S	P	Total	State	F	S	P	Total	State	F	S	P	Total
Borno	1	-	-	1	Kaduna	2	1	1	4	Kwara	1	1	2	4

State	F	S	P	Total	State	F	S	P	Total	State	F	S	P	Total
Bauchi	1	-	-	1	Kano	1	1	-	2	Kogi	-	1	1	2
Adamawa	1	1	1	3	Katsina	-	1	1	2	Benue	1	1	1	3
Gombe	-	1	-	1	Kebbi	-	1	-	1	Niger	1	1	-	2
Taraba	-	-	1	1	Jigawa	-	-	1	1	Nassarawa	-	1	1	2
Yobe	-	1	-	1	Sokoto	1	1	1	3	Plateau	1	1	-	2
					Zamfara	-	-	-	-	FCT	1	-	2	3
Subtotal	3	3	2	**8**		4	4	4	**13**		5	6	6	**18**

Sources:*JAMB-website.http://www.jambng.com:8080/jamb/*
http://www.nuc.edu.ng/pages/universities.asp; NUC-website,

Key: *F- Federal, S- State, P- Private; Total Universities = 104*

Summary:		*%*			*%*
South East -	*16*	*15.4*	*North East -*	*08*	*7.7*
South West -	*30*	*28.8*	*North West -*	*13*	*12.5*
South South -	*19*	*18.3*	*North Central -*	*18*	*17.3*

Table 8 shows the distribution of universities in Nigeria by geo-political zones, with the north having the least number of universities in the country. Imhanlahimi and Maduewesi (2006) hold that the fundamental factor mitigating against the admission of competent and qualified candidates into Nigerian universities is the insufficient number of universities. This number undeniably cannot absorb the ever-increasing qualified potential university candidates (Imhanlahimi & Maduewesi, 2006, p. 2).

Lack of Adequate Facilities

The Nigerian government has made concerted efforts to ensure that equal education opportunity is given to citizens as outlined in the National Policy on Education, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004):

In order to realize fully the potential of contribution of education to achieve national goals, education and training facilities shall continue to be expanded in response to societal needs and made progressively accessible to afford the individual a far more diversified and flexible choice (FRN, 2004, p. 9).

The facilities needed for the teaching and learning process in institutions of higher learning are classrooms, laboratories, workshops, staff offices, libraries, hostels, staff quarters, student and staff recreation centers, sports and games facilities, roads, electricity, and water supply (Amadi et al., 2010). There are two trends in the provision and availability of these facilities in Nigerian higher education. There was consistent progress from the 1960s and 1970s to the mid-1980s in the physical plants of the higher education institutions that were established during this period (Amadi et al., 2010). The major phases of the master plans were executed; good classrooms, libraries, laboratories, workshops, and staff offices were part of the facilities available in sufficient numbers in the first- and second-generation higher education institutions (Amadi et al., 2010). These institutions were able to provide comfortable residential accommodation for students, where rooms were well laid out and three course meals were served.

The oil glut in the world market in the early 1980s made it difficult for higher education facilities established since this period to compare with the pre-boom era in

terms of quality and quantity of facilities available. The second trend is the deterioration in the facilities in all the higher educational institutions, regardless of their generation. This deterioration is so awful that it has been a source of persistent strikes by the Academic Staff Union of Universities and condemnation by the parents and students (Amadi et al., 2010).

The benefits of education are, however, yet to be grasped fully, as many willing and competent Nigerians have no access to university education. This can be ascribed to the level of resources and facilities available in most of the institutions (Agboola & Ofoegbu, 2010). This section on the lack of adequate facilities intends to appraise scholarly views on the following questions: (1) Is there adequate financial support for university education? (2) Are the universities provided with adequate facilities? (3) Are the available facilities properly maintained?

Lack of Adequate Financial Support for University Education

The major factors responsible for the problem of inadequate facilities in Nigerian universities are inadequate financial support, inadequate provision of facilities, and inadequate maintenance culture (Babatope, 2010, p. 42). The federal universities are mainly funded by the federal government, and the national assembly is responsible for the appropriation and disbursement of funds on the approval of the executive branch. The Federal Executive Council empowers the National Universities Commission to disburse funds to each university. However, the capacity to fund these universities has eroded. The state universities are largely funded from federal allocations, with an average of 20% of the education budget; and the state universities usually supplement this with internally generated revenue (*Funding the Reinvented Universities*, 2010). Universities in Nigeria

have faced severe under-funding for many years owing to the increase in population and the high demand for university education. Chukwurah (2011) supports this view when he states that poor funding is one of the major factors that militate against access to university education in Nigeria (Chukwurah, 2011, p. 109). Even though Chukwurah (2011) commented on the low funding of university education, tertiary education at the moment receives a larger share of the education budget; however, the budget is not enough to meet the present demand of universities.

In the last four decades, different administrations in Nigeria have increased university subventions at the expense of investments in primary and secondary education, as they strived to maintain financial support in the face of rapidly increasing higher education enrollments (Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003). In 1962, for example, during the first-generation universities, Nigerian education expenditure was 3.5% of GDP and 15.2% of total government expenditure. Of this amount, 50% was allocated to primary education, 31% to secondary education, and 19% to tertiary education (Callaway & Musone, 1965). Since 2003, Saint et al. (2003) estimate that education expenditure is now 2.4% of GDP and 14.3% of government expenditure. The share of these funds going to primary education has dropped to 35% and secondary education's portion has remained relatively unchanged at 29%, but tertiary education's share has nearly doubled to 35% to meet the immense demand of university education. In comparison with other African countries, Nigeria's funding effort in relation to education is less than half as vigorous and its budgetary priority for the education sector is lower, but tertiary education receives a much higher share of these comparatively smaller amounts of

national resources (UNESCO's *World Education Report*, 2000*;* Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003).

Table 9

Spending on Education (%GNP) for Some African Countries as Compared to Nigeria

Country	%GNP
Nigeria	**2.4**
Ghana	4.4
Kenya	6.5
South Africa	7.9
Angola	4.9
Cote d' Ivoria	5
Malawi	5.4
Mozambique	4.1
Tanzania	3.4
Uganda	2.6

Sources*: Extracted from The African Dept; Reported by Jubilee, 2000; Alifa Daniel: Intrigues in FG-ASUU Face-off; The Guardian Online, June 17, 2001.* Compiled by Victor Dike, February, 2002), *The State of Education in Nigeria and the Health of the Nation.*

The data in Table 9 show that Nigeria has the lowest spending on education with 2.4% GNP, while South Africa leads with 7.9%. This shows that Nigeria is yet to meet the average GNP of Africa of 5.1% and 26 % of the education budget as recommended by UNESCO (UNESCO's *World Education Report*, 2000). The comments of Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner (2003) on the increment of university budget by the government was challenged by Dada (2004), when he stated that instead of Nigeria improving its budget toward the minimum standard of 26%, every developing country should allocate to education annually. Many Nigerians aspire to have university education, but the means of achieving this are limited (Chukwurah, 2011, p.109). Several attempts have been made to manage these challenges. One such attempt was the establishment of the National

Open University System to cater to the educational needs of the people aspiring to university education; but the question remains to be answered: Do all these efforts provide enough access to university education in Nigeria to the large number of students that are seeking admission every year (Chukwurah, 2011, p. 109)? The funding of universities in Nigeria has been a serious problem affecting the growth of university education. This is true because poor funding is likely to lead to inadequate provision of human and material resources, and student admission is usually based on the availability of these resources (Dada, 2004). According to Ehiametalor (2005), about 70.2% of Nigerians are living in poverty, and the majority of Nigerians cannot afford to send their children to school without scholarships or aid. Akpan and Undie (2007) comment that socioeconomic hardship deprives many qualified candidates of the opportunity to attend university because they do not have enough money to pay for the entrance examination fee nor travel to the examination centers.

Lack of Adequate Facilities Provided by Universities

According to Edegbo (2010), university education is in high demand, but the capacity of the universities to admit students is constrained by inadequate infrastructure. Moti (2010) noted that there are not sufficient funds to develop infrastructures in the universities, and the government is expected to increase the budgetary allocation to meet the needs of the universities. Inadequate infrastructure forced the NUC admission criterion of carrying capacity in order to ensure quality control. However, this criterion has become a restricting factor to access university education in Nigeria (Moti, 2010).

Table 10

Education as a Percentage of Federal Government Expenditure, 1992 to 2004

Year Allocation to Education	% of Total Budget
1992	6.3
1993	7.3
1994	14.9
1995	13.0
1996	10.8
1997	11.6
1998	10.3
1999	11.12
2000	8.36
2001	7.0
2002	5.9
2003	1.83
2004	10.5

Sources: ASUU Bulletin, December, 2002, Akpan &Undie, 2007.

Table 11

Federal Government Appropriation for Higher Institutions

Year	Total Federal Budget in Trillions (N)	Education Budget in in Billions (N)	%
2009	3,445,410,000.00	226,676,000,000.00	7%
2010	N4,206,465,684.00	271,196,102,115.00	6.45%

This Federal Education Budget is for funding of all federal institutions and subsectoral interventions.

Both Table 10 and Table 11 show that government appropriation for higher education is not sufficient to provide adequate facilities in many institutions of higher learning in order to enable universities to admit the number of students that are qualified for admission. Table 11 clearly shows that in 2010 the government budget for higher education was 6.45%, which is one of the lowest and yet surpasses the UNESCO minimum standard of 26% (Dada, 2004; UNESCO's *World Education Report*, 2000). Imhanlahimi and Maduewesi (2006) state that most Nigerian universities lack adequate facilities to cope with the rising number of qualified candidates seeking admission every year. In looking at the limited facilities in many Nigerian institutions, Afemikhe (2008) comments that there is a problem of overcrowding of lecture rooms and accommodation facilities; deteriorating and insufficient physical facilities, especially in areas of science, medicine, pharmacy, and engineering, where laboratories, chemicals, and equipment are required; and insufficient and archaic library holdings. Owing to the dearth of appropriate funding, the universities are not growing structurally and lack sufficient departments and structures to introduce new courses. Thus, few candidates out of the qualified thousands are offered admission on the basis of the facilities available in each university (Afemikhe, 2008, p. 2). Oni and Alade (2008) also comment that the Nigerian government has not been able to provide the financial resources essential to maintaining educational quality while expanding enrollment.

Nwana (2000) argues that universities struggle to maintain the infrastructure for research and teaching and make sure that the investment in university education is used to the best effect. In some universities, a lecturer teaches 1,000 to 1,500 students in a big lecture theatre without a public address system. Some lecture halls cannot contain all the

students, and a number of them stand outside. (Nwana, 2000; Babatope, 2010). The NUC (2006) reported that between 1999 and 2003, the presidential visitation panel that looked into the operations of all federal universities revealed that academic and physical facilities at the universities were in a deplorable and dilapidated state with insufficient lecture theatres/halls and laboratories. Adebayo (2005) and Oni and Alade (2008) further commented that there are not sufficient facilities in most courses, especially in the technological universities, which require intensive training in terms of hi-tech equipment. Equipment is either not available, not functioning, or outdated; and funds to provide appropriate equipment are not available. In fact, when universities face accreditation exercises, some departments have to borrow equipment from neighboring or affiliated institutions (Adebayo, 2005; Oni & Alade, 2008).

Lack of Proper Maintenance of Available Facilities

In the area of plant management, Oladipo (2001) observed that Nigerians have not developed the culture of maintaining public facilities. One of the bottlenecks of higher education in Nigeria is the deterioration of facilities due to lack of maintenance, resulting in falling standards and an unpleasant teaching and learning environment (Amadi et al., 2010). The existing buildings are dilapidated due to poor maintenance, which can impact negatively on the quality of education offered and reduce admission numbers because of insufficient facilities to accommodate students. Such conditions have led to teaching and administrative personnel leaving the education system to other sectors of the economy or out of the country (Amadi et al., 2010).

Aminu (1987) has faulted Nigerian universities for poor strategic planning in their physical development. He observed that a large part of the capital fund in some Nigerian

universities is tied to unserviceable, uncompleted projects that fill the campuses, some of them well designed but started without proper financial planning. He added evidence of regrettable inefficiency and neglect (Aminu, 1987; Babatope, 2010).

Okebukola (2003) comments that the government's inability to adequately fund higher education for current operations and address the deficits resulting from deferred maintenance of facilities are inadequate to support educational excellence in terms of expanding to meet the current admission demands.

The situation in Nigerian educational institutions could improve greatly in terms of admission if the government spent at least 26% to 30% of the annual budget on education with proper consideration given to the provision of infrastructures such as classrooms, laboratories, adequate supply of electricity and water, road networks, instructional materials, and information services. There is also a need to pay keen attention to the area of maintenance culture (Nwana, 2000; Babatope, 2010).

Shortage of Adequate Manpower

Adequate human and material resources are fundamental in the running of the university system and absorbing new intakes (Adeyemi, 1998; Baikie, 2002; Agboola & Ofoegbu, 2010). The inadequate financing of the university system has been identified as a major impediment to managing the enrollment growth and increasing access. Consequently, student enrollment in Nigerian universities is yet to meet the present demand (World Bank, 2002; Nicholas, 2002; Varghese, 2001; Maduewesi, 2001; Viagner, 1999; Agboola & Ofoegbu, 2010). According to Akinsanya (2007), Nigeria is going through a critical manpower development challenge. The number of prospective students seeking admission into tertiary institutions has been predicted to be over 1.2

million (JAMB, 2001). However, only about 20% of this number actually secures admission to such institutions, private or public. The dearth of sufficient faculty, especially qualified lecturers, is one of the major challenges of admission. Many institutions close departments or are unable to create new departments due to a lack of qualified faculty. Staffing paucity is most acute in engineering, science, and the business disciplines. Shortfalls are estimated at 73% in engineering, 62% in medicine, 58% in business administration, and 53% in the sciences. By contrast, this staff shortage does not exist in the disciplinary areas of education and the arts (NUC, 2002; Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003).

Okecha (2008) comments on the lecturer-student ratios. Lecturers in Nigerian universities carry heavier workloads than their counterparts in other parts of the world. The ratios of some countries are as follows: Kenya, 1:8; Zimbabwe, 1:7; Mexico, 1:8; Brazil, 1:10; United Kingdom, 1:9, Nigeria, 1:19, while the UNESCO norm is 1:10 (Okecha, 2008). In order to increase the admission rate, universities need to employ more academic professionals; staff strength should be seriously considered in order to increase admission capacity for qualified and competent applicants (Imhanlahimi & Maduewesi, 2006, p. 2).

Table 12

Faculty in Tertiary Institutions

System	Academic	# Required	# Shortfall
Colleges of Education	11,256	26,114	14,858 (56.9%)
National Teachers Institute	6,526	7,000	474 (06.8%)
Poly/Monotechnics	12,938	30,016	

			17,078 (56.9%)
Universities	30,452	50,000	19,548 (39.1%)
NOUN	5,220	15,000	9,780 (65.2%)

*2007 System-wide Staff Audit

Table 12 shows the type of higher institutions in Nigeria, the number of faculty per institution, the required number to function effectively, and the shortage of faculty that limits admission.

Table 13

 Universities: Academic/Non Academic Staff*

ACADEMIC STAFF (Faculty) 2006	**TOTAL**
PROFESSOR/READER	5,483 (20%)
SENIOR LECTURER	6,475 (23.6%)
LECTURER I and BELOW	15,436 (56.4%)
	TOTAL 27,394
NON-TEACHING STAFF	
SENIOR NON-ACADEMIC	30,275 (42%)
JUNIOR	41,795 (58%)
	TOTAL 72,070
	GRAND TOTAL ALL STAFF 99464

Academic staff: Non-academic staff = 1:2.6 *2007 System-wide Audit

Table 13 shows the number and percentages of academic staff (faculty) and non-academic staff in the universities. Jamila Shu'ara (2010) commented that there are academic staff shortages across the board in all universities, with about 56.4% of the academic staff in the Nigerian university system in the category of Lecturer I and below.

This means they have master's degrees or bachelor's degrees and that the universities need more professors with doctorate degrees (see Table 13).

Another issue is the difficulty in hiring and retaining academic staff in several universities (especially state and private) because of the low salaries of past decades and the declining financial attraction of university employment (Saint, Hartnett, and Strassner, 2003, p. 15). According to the report of the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2010) an assistant lecturer in a federal university earned N58,000 ($400) per month before the 2009 agreement. At present, the monthly salary for an assistant lecturer is N180,000 ($1,242) for a senior lecturer, N440,000 ($3,035); and for a professor, N520,000 ($3,587) per month, respectively. The issue raised by Saint, Hartnett, and Strassner (2003) of the low academic staff salaries during the past decades and the declining financial attraction of university employment indicates that the amount is not sufficient, and that has led many to leave academic life to take up political positions in the government. The outcome is that with inadequate or less-experienced faculty, some departments find it difficult to admit new students.

Federal Government Policy on Admission

The federal government, through the National Universities Commission, regulates and monitors admissions into tertiary institutions through various admission policies. The majority of students tend to prefer public university education to polytechnics or private colleges of education for obvious reasons, including quality of education and low tuition and fees (Agboola & Ofoegbu, 2010). The policy adopted in the past, based on the Ashby Commission of 1959 in the founding of universities and other tertiary institutions, was intended to equalize all the regions and populations and to meet the needs of the

entire nation. Regrettably, the policy has been replaced by political interests and affiliations since the introduction of the quota system, favoring some regions or states over others (Agboola & Ofoegbu, 2010; Okoroma, 2008). Okebukola further comments that students are denied admission on the basis of state of origin, the quota system, carrying capacity, catchment areas, and environmental and educationally disadvantaged areas (Okebukola, 2006; Agboola & Ofoegbu, 2010).

Another policy that hampers access is the policy of the 60:40 ratio of admission to the science and liberal arts disciplines, respectively, in the universities and the 70:30 ratio in polytechnics (N.P.E, 1981; Ojogwu, 2004; Okebukola, 2006; Agboola & Ofoegbu, 2010). The rationale behind this policy is that the country needs more scientists in all sectors of the country, especially in the oil industries and for economic development and transformation. The implication of this ratio system is that many qualified liberal arts students are denied admission because the slots reserved for the arts are not enough to admit the majority of applicants.

Table 14

Candidates' Access into Nigerian Universities across Disciplines (2000-2008)

Year	Admin	Agric.	Arts	Education	Eng/ Env	Law	Med Scien.	Scien.	Soc. Scien.
2000	6790	1391	4562	2840	8061	2431	3862	8027	7690
2001	13526	3609	9301	9711	14836	3623	5105	16099	13957
2002	7687	1880	5376	5826	8311	2199	3844	8468	8264

2003	14193	4789	10836	14988	15352	3455	7206	17059	16924
2004	13637	5356	13197	21195	15936	3607	7171	20495	22050
2005	7858	4452	6815	13855	10098	3010	4649	14172	11496
2006	13861	4864	9224	12655	11861	3149	6066	16181	15386
2007	10422	6404	10111	13594	14047	3463	7138	23387	18775
2008	9903	6834	10947	14551	15371	3028	8075	26038	18353

Source: JAMB (2009); Agboola & Ofoegbu, (2010).
Key: Edu-Education, Eng/Env-Engineering/Environmental Technology, Med Sci-Medical Science, Sci- Science.

Table 14 shows that from 2000 to 2008 the science disciplines such as agriculture, engineering/environmental technology, medical science, and science have always been higher in terms of enrollment. In 2008 the enrollment in the arts was 10,947, while that of science was 26, 038. This shows that science enrollment is double that of the arts in the country. Imhanlahimi and Maduewesi (2006) comment that the implication of this ratio is that of those hundreds and thousands of students who may be qualified in the liberal arts, only 40% will be admitted (Imhanlahimi and Maduewesi, 2006, p. 2).

NUC (2006) reported that in spite of an increasing number of people seeking university education, only 17% to 20% of candidates seeking admission to the universities can be admitted through the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). To create equal representation, the federal government has set guidelines for admission into universities based on 45% merit, 35% catchment/locality, and 20% educationally less developed states (Moti, 2008). The result of this policy is that it has led to the rejection of many brilliant candidates and the admission of weak ones because of

their place of origin and the connections they have with influential persons (Nwagwu, 1997).

Table 15

Summary of Student Enrollment

Institutions 2005	Male	Female	MF
Universities	494,822	285,179	780,001
Mono/Polytechnics	198,455	143,979	332,434
Colleges of Education	150,093	201,162	351,255
TOTAL			**1,463690**
Institutions 2008/09	Male	Female	FM
Universities	598,667	455,393	1,054,060
Mono/Polytechnics	183,717	127,864	311,581
Colleges of Education	182,790	182,433	365,223
TOTAL			**1,691,141**

Table 15 shows the summary of student enrollment in higher education, with universities leading in terms of enrollment and the other institutions absorbing those that the university cannot admit.

Catchment Areas and the Quota System

Catchment areas are geographical areas from which a higher educational institution is allowed or obliged to pick candidates (Moti, 2008). It also means the preferences given to the indigenous place where the university is located in considering candidates for admission. All the states in the country are grouped into catchment areas

of each federal university in order to give equal opportunities to all applicants. It is also called locality, which in most cases is the geographical and/or sociocultural area connecting to the institution to which candidates apply. Consideration is given to students who fall within the catchment area of the university. Most of the federal universities like Abuja have all the states of the federation as their catchment areas, while state-owned universities have all the local areas of their state as their catchment area (Moti, 2008).

According to Saint, Hartnett, and Strassner (2003), the JAMB reserved 30% of a university's admissions for residents of its immediate geographical or "catchment" area, and a further 20% for educationally disadvantaged students. Some 10% of university admissions were made at the vice chancellor's discretion. Only 40% of students were given admission on the basis of their academic performance (Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003, p. 12). Based on the admission guidelines, 35% of the available spaces are reserved for applicants based on states or locality (Adeyemi, 2001, Moti, 2008). Certain states are also considered educationally less developed, or disadvantaged. The following states across all the regions in the country are considered educationally less developed, or disadvantaged (ELDS): Kaduna, Adamawa, Bauchi, Bayelsa, Benue, Borno, Cross River, Ebonyi, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Kastina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, Rivers, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe, and Zamfara (Moti, 2008). Applicants from these states are given special consideration for admission. The university assigns lower cut-off marks to this category of candidates to promote impartial opportunities for higher education for all parts of the country.

By this system, a candidate in the southern states, considered to be educationally advantaged, who scores 300 out of 400, may not gain admission into the university, while

his or her counterpart in the north who scores less would be given admission. Although it is good that the educationally disadvantaged areas are being encouraged, it should not be at the detriment of others (Moti, 2008). A situation in which a candidate does not gain access to college or university based on one's state of origin is not justifiable. Using the quota system to guide and regulate access to university education has the inequitable consequence of reducing the chances of admission for highly qualified applicants. The outcome of these policies has always been catastrophic because meritocracy tends to be subverted and thus less qualified people are admitted. Imhanlahimi and Maduewesi (2006) said, for example, a potential candidate who is from the southern part of Nigeria, scoring 250 in JAMB, may not be offered admission in a southern university, while a northerner scoring 220 will be offered admission due to the quota system. This hinders many qualified Nigerians from gaining admission into Nigerian universities (Imhanlahimi & Maduewesi, 2006, p. 2).

Conclusions

The study examined the university system in Nigeria concerning the factors and admission policies that are making admission challenging for the youth and frustrating the efforts of parents to support their children's higher education. Access has been made complex because of government policies such as catchment areas, educationally less developed states, and carrying capacity, as well as the inadequate infrastructural facilities in the university system. From the analysis, it can be concluded that the rate of admission to universities is low compared to the number of applicants because of certain factors and admission policies which do not encourage entry for some regions and candidates. Nigerian youth aspire to higher education and qualified candidates must not be denied

access. To enhance access to universities, the issues of the quota system, federal character, and catchment areas should be reviewed to lessen the hardship and difficulties parents and youth face while seeking admission to university and to enable parents to see the educational dream of their children come true.

Theoretical Framework

I used critical theory, social capital, and cultural capital as theoretical perspectives to frame which structural factors affected the challenges facing Nigerian youth in gaining college admission and how Nigerian students and parents coped with the college admission challenges.

Critical Theory

Critical theory seeks human emancipation; that is, "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them" (Horkheimer, 1982, p. 244). I examined the works of Horkheimer (1982, 1993) and Bohman (2005) on critical theory and Leonardo (2004) on critical social theory. I also examined the works of Paulo Freire, whose lifework is a testament to critical theory. His insights into what he called "the culture of silence" (Freire, 1998, p. 14) led him to take an active role in social reform. Critical theory seeks to explain and transform all the conditions that enslave human beings in connection with social movements that identify dimensions of modern society in which humans are subjugated and exploited (Freire, 1998, p. 14). In both the broad and narrow senses, critical theory provides the descriptive and normative bases for social inquiry aimed at reducing domination and increasing freedom (Bohman, 2005).

According to Horkheimer (1982), critical theory is satisfactory only if it meets three criteria: it must be explanatory, practical, and normative at the same time. That is, it

must explain what is wrong with current social reality, identify the actors to change it, and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation. Any truly critical theory of society "has as its object human beings as producers of their own historical form of life" (Horkheimer, 1993, p. 21). In light of the practical goal of identifying and overcoming all the circumstances that limit human freedom, the explanatory goal could be furthered only through interdisciplinary research that includes psychological, cultural, and social dimensions, as well as institutional forms of domination (Bohman, 2005).

Freire's (1998) critical theory looks at the struggle for humanization and the breaking of cycles of injustice, exploitation, and domination which lie in the perpetuation of the oppressor against the oppressed. In these roles, those who perpetrate the injustice, the oppressors, do not only deny freedom to those they oppress, they also risk their own humanity because oppressor consciousness tends to transform everything surrounding it into an object of its domination (Freire, 1998, p. 40). To break the cycle, a revolution of ideas must take place; freedom can only occur when those exploited banish this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility (Freire, 1998, p. 29). This can only be achieved by first confronting reality decisively and simultaneously objectifying and acting upon that reality. For Freire (1998), the progressive educator must always be moving out on his or her own, continually reinventing what it means to be democratic in one's own specific cultural and historical context (Freire, 1998, p. 308).

According to Leonardo (2004), critical social theory is a multidisciplinary knowledge base with the rooted goal of advancing the emancipatory function of knowledge. The theory approaches this objective by promoting the role of criticism in the

search for quality education. As a critical form of classroom discourse, critical social theory encourages students' ability to evaluate institutional as well as conceptual dilemmas, particularly those that lead to domination or oppression. It also supports a language of transcendence that harmonizes with a language of critique in order to forge alternative and less oppressive social arrangements (Leonardo, 2004). A critical social theory-based movement in education highlights the relationship between social systems and people and how critical social theory can contribute to the emancipation of both (Leonardo, 2004).

Critical theory is helpful in explaining unbalanced outcomes and reducing institutional and societal processes that exploit certain groups as well as offering actions to transform society (Leonardo, 2004). This theory is useful to this research because it focuses on the suppression of the individuals (non-admitted students), by imposed factors (admission policies) that deprive university admission to many qualified candidates. This critical theory seeks to democratize education in order to improve and cultivate learning that will enhance the development of individuality, citizenship, social justice, and democratic participation in all modes of life, as well as the right of students to realize their educational goals. Critical theory helped to frame the study by using the theory to focus the analysis of the study on the best way youth can emancipate themselves from the present admission crises in the country.

Social Capital

Social capital refers to resources, knowledge, and information transmitted through interpersonal relationships or social networks (Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001). Social capital can exist in three major forms: obligations and expectations, information channels, and as

social norms and control (Coleman, 1988). Obligations and expectations can be understood as a "credit slip" that people hold and that can be cashed when necessary (Coleman, 1988). Information channels provide appropriate information as a vital basis for action. Social norms provide the standards for rewarding or sanctioning individual actions (Ho Sui Chu, 2003). Social capital means investment in relationships that assist the individual to take part in a relationship or system to gain knowledge about resources available (Lin, 2001).

James Coleman (1988) developed the notion of social capital to conceptualize social patterns and processes that contribute to the ethnic disparities of student achievement. He argued that the educational prospects, norms, and obligations that exist within a family or a community are important social capital that can affect the level of parental participation and investment, which in turn influences the academic achievement of their children (Coleman, 1988). For Coleman (1988), social capital centers on a person's connection with a social structure such as a family, community, or school and on the information and resources that one can achieve from contributing to that structure. This concept of social capital encourages high levels of interaction between parents and their children. Coleman (1988) extended the concept of social capital even further by asserting that it serves as a device to transmit the effects of family human capital from parents to children. Parents with high levels of human capital (e.g., high level of educational attainment) but low levels of interaction with their children have fewer prospects to transmit their human capital to their children than families who have high levels of interaction between parents and their children. This is because human capital is transferred, at least in part, through interaction. Thus, in Coleman's perspective, the

transmission of human capital from parents to children is dependent upon the level of relationships within the family. Coleman (1988) argued that it is from the structure of the relationships among actors that information is achieved and then can be transformed into social capital. The resources gained from participating in the social network make possible a particular achievement, such as enrollment in college. Social capital in this study is defined as parental participation in the student's college application process as well as their financial and moral support (Rowan-Kenyon, 2007). Social capital helped to frame the study by using the theory to focus the analysis of the study on how parental involvement influences the extent to which students gain college admission.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is the transmission of values and norms from one generation to the next (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, working with various colleagues, developed the concept of cultural capital in the early 1960s to address a particular empirical difficulty on economic obstacles as well as to explain disparities in the educational attainment of children from different social classes (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) argued that, above and beyond economic factors, cultural habits and dispositions inherited from the family are essentially significant to academic achievement, with middle- and upper-class groups having the most economically valued forms of cultural capital. The theory posits that parents with greater cultural capital will be more involved and that involvement will be more effective in helping their children succeed academically (McDonough, 1997; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Parental involvement in their children's education has become widely recognized as a predictor of positive academic outcomes, a key for

increasing the likelihood of improving childhood academic success in terms of school choice and course offerings (Ringenberg, McElwee, & Israel, 2009).

Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, with its typical focus on the social value of cultural habits, dispositions, and skills linked the study by using the theory to drive the analysis of the study on how parents' involvement in their children's education is important and essential, as they impact cultural ideals in their lives. The type of cultural capital that a student possesses can shape student enrollment choices, which are often influenced by cultures and values (Paulsen & St. John, 2002; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979). In this study, cultural capital refers to parental expectations, peer encouragement, parental involvement with the school to see how their children can achieve their academic goal, educational materials in the home, and partaking in various activities that lead to college admissions (Rowan-Kenyon, 2007).

In this chapter, I discussed several theories, ranging from critical theory to social capital and cultural capital theory, which linked the study by using the theories to focus the analysis of the study. The theories are applicable to parents' involvement in their children's education and in student enrollment and achievement because the theories present how students can emancipate themselves in the midst of oppressed society as they deal with the difficulties of gaining admission. These theories are relevant to my research because they are based on human empowerment, using education as the major key to liberate and educate persons. Critical theory, social capital, and cultural capital theory support the continuity of education and discourage delay or denial of education. The theories were used to link and analyze the outcomes of this study on the challenges and hardships youth and parents face in seeking university admission in Nigeria.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY
Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges youth and parents face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain factors and admission policies in Nigeria. This study sheds light on improving the admission process by taking into account students' abilities, aspirations, and choices as selection criteria for admissions to the university. The chapter begins with research questions, followed by the overall qualitative research design, ethical considerations, and researcher's role. I then discuss details of the research site, selection of participants, data collection, data analysis, and strategies for validating findings

Research Questions

This study was based on the assumption that certain factors and admission policies of Nigerian universities have been increasingly unsatisfactory to the Nigerian public. Many applicants and parents go through difficulties while seeking admission for limited available slots in the universities. Many qualified Nigerian students cannot gain admission to university education due to admission policies such as quota system, catchment areas, and factors such as lack of facilities, shortage of manpower, and limited number of universities. My research was guided by the following research questions:

1. What structural barriers do youth face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain factors and admission policies?

2. What challenges do youth and parents face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities?

3. How does the student overcome the college admission obstacles and handle the disappointment of not being admitted?

4. How do parents respond to the situation of their children who are qualified but denied admission?

Research Design

Taking a qualitative research approach, the aim of this research was to examine students' struggles and challenges in obtaining admissions to Nigerian higher education. One advantage of qualitative methods in exploratory research is that the use of open-ended questions gave the participants the opportunity to respond in their own words rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses, as quantitative methods do. Open-ended questions have the ability to evoke responses that are meaningful and culturally relevant to the participant, unanticipated by the researcher, and rich and explanatory in nature (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Another advantage of the qualitative method is that it allowed the researcher the flexibility to probe initial participant responses; that is, to ask why or how. The researcher listened carefully to what the participants said, engaged with them according to their individual personalities and styles, and used probes to encourage them to elaborate on their answers (Creswell, 1998).

This study is exploratory in nature because the issue has been understudied and not well examined. The using of an exploratory approach helped to uncover feelings and reactions of youth and parents regarding the difficulties of gaining admission. The research studied people's perceptions and experiences on this pressing issue. This qualitative research employed the technique of open-ended, semi-structured interviewing (Creswell, 2009, p. 182).

The interview data was complemented by classroom observation that I made in a tutorial center at Narayi Kaduna, which is designed to prepare students and applicants to pass university examination. The observation was done in the classroom; I observed how the teacher teaches, the kind of teaching material used, and the general feelings of students towards gaining admission. I transcribed the interviews verbatim and analyzed the collected data through theme-based analysis.

Ethical Consideration

To ensure the accuracy of scientific knowledge, ethical consideration was given to this research study. There is no monetary gain or benefit either to the researcher or the participants. I ensured that I protected the participants' privacy by using pseudonyms for all the participants, and I made sure the names that link the pseudonyms to the actual participants were kept confidential. I also clearly explained the purpose of the research to the participants and they had the liberty to withdraw from the study at any time.

In order to ensure the safety of the collected data, I made sure I kept my research notes, interview transcriptions, memoranda, and any other information concerning the participants in my possession and locked in the file cabinet of my private home office. I also stored all electronic data on a USB memory flash drive in my private home office. Audio records were transferred from voice recorder to USB memory flash drive, and the

audio records were deleted for the sake of confidentiality. In addition, each participant was given a copy of the interview transcript, and the participants' identities remained confidential in all presentation and written reports. When no longer necessary for research, all materials were destroyed.

Researcher's Role

My role as a researcher had many facets because I was the key instrument that interacted with the participants and gathered data. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), a researcher is expected to be reflective of his or her own background, have patience, and be objective regarding the meaning of the phenomena. As the key instrument, I collected data through interviewing participants, observing behavior, and keeping memoranda (Creswell, 2009, p. 175).

I am a Catholic priest, ordained for the Archdiocese of Kaduna, Nigeria, and I grew up in the northern part of the country. I did my primary education, secondary education, and undergraduate studies in the northern states (Kaduna, Plateau, Kwara, Benue and Kano) of the country. After my ordination to the priesthood in Kaduna, I worked in various parishes and at the same time did my graduate studies in education before I came to the United States in 2007 for my graduate studies. While in the United State, I worked for the New York Archdiocese at St. Joseph's Parish, Spring Valley, as one of the associate pastors and at the same time was a research graduate assistant at Seton Hall University. I did my graduate studies at Seton Hall University, in the School of Theology, and I am currently pursuing a doctoral degree in higher education

leadership, management, and policy in the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University. I am motivated to do this research on admission crises because I am keenly aware that admission to university has always been a pressing issue in Nigeria, especially in the northern region, where individual students' demand for higher education exceeds the absorption capacity of universities. Personally, I was denied university admission despite my high performance on the JAMB examination. I feel many youth are denied the opportunity to fulfill their potential, and I believe that this study will help increase awareness of the admission situation.

Streubert and Carpenter (1999) state that the researcher is an integral part of the study and his or her role must be acknowledged by the participants in the investigation and interpretation of the data. Strauss and Corbin (1998) comment that the researcher must step back and assess the situation with critical analysis to obtain valid and reliable data.

<div align="center">**Research Site**</div>

The research site for this study was Kaduna State University (KASU), Nigeria. Kaduna State was chosen because the state is a center for learning in the northern part of the country, with diverse ethnic groups from all over the country. It is the symbolic capital of northern Nigeria (Human Rights Watch, 2003a). According to the 2006 Nigerian Population Census, Kaduna has the third largest state population in Nigeria, with Lagos as the first and Kano as the second largest. The state has more than six million residents and the city has 1,128,694 residents. The state is a tribal melting pot, with several distinct groups that represent the entire country. The Hausa/Fulani are the dominant ethnic groups in the city and the state, and the Hausa language serves as the

lingua franca, with over 26 dialects. Kaduna is the name of the state and at the same time the name of the capital. The city predominantly consists of people who are Muslims, but close to 40% of the population are Christian (Maier, 2000; Thomas, 2009).

KASU was chosen because it is owned by the state government, and gathering data from this university gave good representation from all ethnicities of the country. KASU is one of the most recent state universities in the country, with a high profile of achievement. Kaduna State University is located in the city of Kaduna and was established in 2004 with the mission to provide university education of the highest standard for the development of the individual and the state, while inculcating the spirit of love, tolerance, understanding, and unity in the state and in the country (Kaduna State University, 2006). One of the objectives was to encourage the advancement of learning and to offer to all persons without distinction of race, creed, sex, or political conviction, the opportunity to acquire a higher and liberal education (Kaduna State University, 2006). The KASU mission is to prepare students to become productive members of society and good citizens of the world. The university educates, makes discoveries, serves as an engine of economic growth, and generates ideas for improving people's lives. It has a vibrant academic environment and exciting research programs (Kaduna State University, 2006).

In 2006, KASU had 1,497 students enrolled at the undergraduate level and 683 enrolled in sub-degree programs. The academic structure of the university is based on four schools--Arts, Medicine, Science, Social & Management Science--and a total of 22 departments. In addition, the university has the following remedial programs to help those with deficiencies and difficulties in admission: the General Studies Unit, College of

Basic and Remedial Studies, and Arabic-French Preliminary Studies. There are two

campuses, one in Kaduna and the other in Kafanchan. Currently, 41.2% of the student

body is in the sciences department, 33.7% in social and management science, and 24.9%

in the arts department (NUC, 2007). The ratio of academic staff to students at KASU is

approximately 1:21 (one teacher to 21 students) (KASU, 2008a). KASU currently has 63

classrooms and 15 laboratories/specialized rooms (Thomas, 2009). The university is

controlled and funded by the state Ministry of Education.

Recruitment and Study Participants

The participants in this study are all from Kaduna State. The sampling strategy

used in this research is purposeful sampling. The reason for carrying out purposeful

sampling is that the people who have been selected for the sampling have been selected

with a particular purpose in mind (those having admission issues). The participants in this

study are four college students from KASU, four applicants who had applied for

admission more than once in the past few years, four parents whose children are having

difficulty in gaining admission, and four university admission staff. Collecting data from

multiple perspectives increased the richness of the data and validated the findings of the

participants' feelings and experiences on the challenges youth and parents face in seeking

admission to Nigerian universities.

Students of KASU

Students were recruited through the help of the dean of student affairs at KASU,

who helped in identifying the students interested in participating, and permission was

granted by the vice chancellor to conduct a qualitative research. After identifying the

participants, a letter of solicitation and informed consent form was given to the students,

who read and agreed to be interviewed at KASU. I interviewed one student from each of the four schools--Arts, Medicine, Science, Social and Management Science--to be able to have equal representation from all the disciplines in KASU. I was particularly interested in university students and applicants who had applied for university admission more than once as the main subjects of this research because as the subjects directly affected, they could personally express their feelings regarding the issue. Therefore, secondary school students and students of other institutions of higher learning like polytechnic, college of education, and monotechnic schools were excluded from this research.

Applicants from Kaduna State

Applicants were recruited within Kaduna town through parishes. Announcements were made in parishes on my behalf to all interested applicants who had applied for admission more than once and were now taking tutorials in preparation for a forthcoming Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) examination. I was able to interview four applicants in Kaduna who had repeated the JAMB more than once and had repeatedly applied for and been denied admission.

Parents from Kaduna State

Parents were identified and recruited during the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meeting through one of the teachers at Government College, Kaduna, and after Sunday Mass in a church. The criteria for the subject selection were parents who had played a prominent role in their children's university application process since they could explain their feelings when seeing their children struggling for admission and sometimes being denied. Since they felt the impact directly, they were in a good position to propose ways to improve the admission process and discuss the importance

of persistence in pursuit of admission. I interviewed four parents concerning their experiences with the admission problem.

Admission Staff of KASU

KASU admission staff were recruited through the help of the registrar, who gave me an approval letter to conduct research and the dean of affairs at KASU, who introduced me to faculty who were members of the admission screening committee of the university. A letter of solicitation and informed consent form were given to four of the members of the screening committee who were interested in participating, along with the letter of permission that had been granted by the vice chancellor to conduct a qualitative research. I interviewed these four admission staff from the university in order to gather data concerning the process of admission in KASU and the way the students react to admission and denial of admission.

Description of Study Participants

Fifteen people from Kaduna State participated in this study. The sample participants were divided into four groups: four college students from Kaduna State University (KASU), four prospective students who had applied for admission more than once in the past few years, four parents whose children had been denied admission, and three university staff involved in admission screening in KASU. In the student group, two were males and two were females, and the age range was 23 to 27 years. These college students secured admission through the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) and the Post University Matriculation Examination (UME). All of these students secured admission after two to four trials. Each of them was from one of the four departments (schools) in the university: Arts, Science, Medicine, and Social Science Management.

The student applicant group was comprised of two males and two females with an age range between 23 and 30 years. One of the applicants was a married woman with two children, while the other applicants were single. No one in this group had secured university admission even though they had taken tutorial classes designed to help non-admitted students.

The third group were parents who had children that had applied at least twice for university admission. There were three males and one female with an age range between 50 and 56 years. All participants were married except one who was a widower with four children.

The last group, the admission staff of KASU, was comprised of faculty members who served on the admission screening committee. This admission committee was an ad hoc committee made up of the vice chancellor, two deputy vice chancellors (administration and academics), the registrar, deans, directors and heads of departments. I interviewed key members of the committee, including the deputy vice chancellor of administration, deputy vice chancellor of academics, and director of the General Studies Unit of the university.

The following is a brief profile of each interview participant, including age, prior education experience, and family background. I used pseudonyms to protect the participants' privacy, and I also used quotations to illustrate my interpretations and support my claims later in this chapter.

Profiles of KASU Students

Laura

Laura is a Christian and a native of Kaduna State from Jama'a Local Government Area (County) and Kagoma by tribe. Laura is a 400 level student (4th year) of the English Department at the faculty (school) of Arts, and she is 27 years of age. She graduated from secondary school in 2000 and repeatedly wrote the JAMB exam and Post University Matriculation Examination (UME) before she was finally admitted into KASU in 2009 after four attempts. Laura is the second child of the family and she hopes to further her studies up to Ph.D. level.

Salma

Salma is 23 years of age and a third-year student studying business administration at KASU. She was born into a Muslim family and grew up in Kaduna State in a family of seven: four girls and three boys. She attended her primary school at Hope School, Kaduna, and her secondary school at Federal Government College Minna in Niger State. Salma finished her secondary school in 2006 and secured admission into Kaduna State University in the year 2009 after two trials. Before Salma could secure admission, she took a program with KASU, in the College of Basic and Remedial Studies intended to prepare candidates for university admission.

Aku

Aku is a 24-year-old, 400 level Microbiology student from Kaduna State and Ninzom by tribe. He has four brothers, and he is the second child in the family. He lives in Ungwanboro, Kaduna, and completed his primary school at NNPC staff school and secondary school at ECWA staff school, Kujama, in 2005. Since then he has sat for the JAMB and Post UME three times before he finally secured admission into KASU in 2007. He hopes to work as a full time medical microbiologist.

Godswill

Godswill is 20 years of age and hails from Kenyi village, Koro by tribe from the southern part of Kaduna. Presently he is a 100 level (first year) student at the School of Medicine at KASU. He finished his secondary school in 2010 and gained admission into KASU after the second trial. Godswill is the second child of his family and his desire is to be a specialist in one of the fields of medicine.

Profile of Applicants from Kaduna

Blessing

Blessing is 23 years old and Bajju by tribe, from Fadiya, Zongo Kataf, Local Government Area of Kaduna State. She is the youngest child in a family of five. Blessing lost her father when she was little and now lives with her uncle. She finished her secondary school in 2009 at Trinity International College in Barnawa, Kaduna. Blessing has applied to the university four times without success. Her desire is to be a newscaster after studying mass communication. She took tutorials to prepare for the JAMB once; but despite her high score in the JAMB and Post UME, she has still not been admitted to the university.

Gregory

Gregory is from Plateau State, living in Kaduna. He is 24 years of age. He finished his secondary school in 2009, with a good O'level result and since then he has sat for the JAMB examination four times and has received good scores but never gained admission. Gregory is the first child of his family and a determined young man. He took two years of tutorials in preparation for the JAMB and Post UME and also applied to the Nigerian Defense Academy three times but still was not admitted. Gregory wants to study economics or computer science.

Patricia

Patricia is 24 years old, married with two children, from Jaba Local Government Area of Kaduna State. She graduated from secondary school in 2008 and took tutorial classes in preparation for the JAMB and Post UME. Patricia applied for admission to KASU twice without success, and her intention is to study mass communication in order to work in media.

Nelson

Nelson is a 27-year-old from Kogi State, whose father serves in the military. He finished his secondary school in 2002, and since then he has written the JAMB and applied to the university four times without success. Nelson is the third-born of his family of seven children. His younger siblings tried twice, and the second time they gained university admission. His desire is to study economics and become a teacher.

Profiles of Parents of Applicants in Kaduna

Mr. John

Mr. John is a single parent (widower) in the early 50s and has four children: one son studying accounting in college, one son still seeking admission, and the two younger children in high school. Mr. John is from Zango Kataf Local Government Area of Kaduna State and is an English teacher as well as head of a department in the high school. Mr. John has a lot of experience with issues of the admission crisis.

Mrs. Celine

Mrs. Celine is a 52 years old mother of five children. She is from Kaduna State and works in the Kaduna State House Assembly library. Among her children, one is in the Polytechnic, two girls are presently seeking university admission, and the other two

are still in secondary school. The two that applied for admission twice without success are still trying. Mrs. Celine has played an instrumental role in helping her children to seek university admission, and she is still positive in helping and supporting her children to attain their academic goals.

Mr. Cletus

Mr. Cletus is the father of four children. He is 54 years of age from Kaduna State. He has worked with the Kaduna State Ministry of Education for the past 28 years. Three of his children have finished secondary school, and one just graduated from the Polytechnic. Two of his children are seeking admission into the university and his desire is for them to acquire a university education.

Mr. Francis

Mr. Francis is a 54-yea-old father, Kagoro by tribe, from Kaura local government of Kaduna State. He attended Teachers' Training College of Education and then University of Jos. He is married with five children, three boys and two girls. The first son graduated from the College of Education in Kafanchan last year, the second son graduated from secondary school last year and was not able to make the JAMB score. He is presently undergoing remedial studies with the state university, and two of his daughters are in SS2 (high school, Grade 11) and primary (Grade 5). Francis said he has been very supportive in the education and training of his children and it is his desire to see them attain university admission.

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Profiles of Admission Committee of KASU

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Dr. Alex

Dr. Alex is in his late 40s. He is a family man and Kagoma by tribe from Kaduna State. He is an associate professor with KASU since joining the university in 2005. He was employed to teach in the Department of English and Drama and he is one of the members of the admission screening committee of KASU. He started as a Lecturer I and rose up to become an associate professor. He is also the Director of the General Studies Unit of the university. In the Department of General Studies, the idea is to ensure that students are educated in the knowledge of the different disciplines and cultures of the country. The aim of his office is to produce world class students that can compete favorably with graduates from other institutions and also give back to the country or state that has trained them by teaching others or working in different sectors to improve the economy. Dr. Alex chose to work in the university because he felt the need to contribute to the state that sponsored his education.

Dr. Daniel

Dr. Daniel is a family man in his middle 50s. He hails from Zangon Kataf Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Since 2005, he has been one of the pioneer lecturers at Kaduna State University. He was among the first group of applicants to be interviewed and offered appointment. He started in the Department of Mathematic Sciences, as the pioneer HOD (head of department). He held the office for four years before he was appointed Deputy Vice chancellor of Administration with the approval of the Senate. Dr. Daniel has a passion for teaching, and shortly after his NYSC (National Youth Service Corp), he was given an appointment to lecture in Kaduna Polytechnic where he taught for nineteen years and received his Master's and Ph.D. degrees before he left for KASU.

Dr. Ahmed

Dr. Ahmed is a family man and a Muslim scholar in his 50s, from Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. He is a senior lecturer in the Department of English Language and Drama at KASU, and he has been lecturing for the past 23 years. Since he graduated, he has worked in several institutions: NuhuBamali Polytechnic, Zaria; National Directorate of Employment (NDE); Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, for about 10 years; and KASU since 2005. Here in KASU he has served in various capacities: a classroom teacher and pioneer HOD (head of department) of English and Drama, pioneer dean, faculty of Arts and currently Deputy Vice chancellor Academics. By the virtue of his office, he is one of the members of the admission screening committee of KASU.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected from Kaduna Town and KASU in the form of interviews and observations. Permission was sought from the appropriate authorities, Institutional Review Board (IRB), and the authorized informed consent forms were duly signed. I conducted face-to-face interviews in English with college students, applicants, parents, and faculty of KASU who were members of the admission screening committee.

The semi-structured, open-ended questions were asked based on the factors and challenges youth and parents face in seeking admission. In the beginning of the interview, I discussed the purpose and nature of the study with the participant; I then gave out the informed consent form with the option to withdraw from the research at any time. A few minutes of the interview were used to answer questions the participants had regarding the study to put the participants at ease. The interview took approximately 45 to 60 minutes, during which time the participants were free to express themselves. The

interview started with a brief demographic background questionnaire to each group of participants to enable me to know their background. As much time as possible was given to allow participants to share experiences at their own pace, with minimal leading or coaching from the interviewer. With the permission of the participants, I recorded the conversation with a digital voice recorder and took notes necessary for follow-up with pertinent questions and without interrupting their thought process.

Interview

I used interview as a primary data collection method. I conducted a semi-structured interview, with a few open-ended questions on how the youth, parents, and admission staff respond to admission problems. The interview took place in private places (participant's home, office, and conducive place in KASU). The interview questions were focused on the participant's feelings and experiences on the challenges youth and parents face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by the admission policies. With the participant's permission, the interview was audio-recorded with a digital voice recorder. Participants reviewed the digital file after the interview. Only one participant did not wish her interview to be recorded; the researcher took notes during the interview. The interviews conducted helped in producing data in the form of comments and statements because people who were involved and directly affected freely expressed their feelings and experiences (Creswell, 2009).

Students/Non-admitted students.

With students and non-admitted students, their questions were based on their perception of the general admission process and how admission can be improved. I asked questions like the following: What do you think are the causes of the problems? and "Do

the problems perceived originate from factors such as inadequate number of universities/absorption capacity in Nigeria, lack of adequate facilities, and shortage of adequate manpower and from admission policies such as carrying capacity, science/art ratio system, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states? Other questions l asked were the following: What are the challenges and difficulties youth go through while seeking admission to university? How can they respond and cope with the difficulties and hardships of seeking admission? How can they handle the disappointment of not being admitted? How can youth best cope with admission difficulties?   What admission policy is the most helpful and how can that improve admission?

Parents.

The questions for the parents were based personally on their perception and response to admission difficulties and the disappointments of their children. I asked questions like the following: Do the problems perceived originate from factors (such as inadequate number of universities/absorption capacity in Nigeria, lack of adequate facilities and shortage of adequate manpower) and admission policies such as carrying capacity, science/art ratio system, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states? Other questions I asked were as follows: What are the challenges and difficulties youth and parents go through while seeking admission to university? How were you able to respond to and cope with the difficulties of seeking admission for your children when you knew that your child was competent but was denied admission? How did you handle the disappointment of your children not being admitted? How can youth and parents best cope with admission difficulties?   What admission policy is the most helpful and how can that improve admission?

Admission staff.

The questions for the admission staff were based personally on their perception and responses to admission challenges in the university. I asked questions like the following: How do you feel about this admission problem in our country? What do you think are the causes of the problems? Do the problems perceived originate from factors such as inadequate number of universities/absorption capacity in Nigeria, lack of adequate facilities and shortage of adequate manpower and admission policies such as carrying capacity, science/art ratio system, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states? How do you assess the NUC and JAMB criteria and whether these bodies are fair for student admission? Why are so many applicants denied admission? How do applicants respond and cope with the difficulties and hardships of admission, especially when they are denied? What challenges and difficulties do you go through while screening and processing university admission? How do you handle the situation when you see only a few applicants admitted and a high number are unplaced? Why is there such a high number, and how do you feel about the situation? What are the possible ways that these factors and admission policies can be improved to facilitate admission? What do you think the university can do to develop methods or means that can improve its absorption capacity to increase the admission rate?

Observation

I also gathered data through observation using participant observation technique. According to Schmuck (1997), participant observation provides the researcher with ways to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate with one another, and check how much time is spent on

various activities. The observation focused directly on observing behaviors and other factors that are most relevant to the research problem. I observed that the applicants are determined to gain admission as I interacted with them during the interviews, and I noted the general feelings of students towards gaining admission. The observation was based on how students coped with the college admission challenges and handled the disappointment of not being admitted as they struggle to pass the JAMB and to gain admission. On the part of the admission committee of KASU, I noted how they coped with parents and applicants on admission issues.

The documentation of the observation data consisted of field notes recorded in field notebooks during the observation and following the activity. The data were the records of what I experienced, learned through interaction with the applicants, students, parents, and staff of KASU, and what I observed. The field notes were based on accounts of events, how the applicants behaved and reacted, what was said in the class, their reaction to one another, physical gestures, and their responses to questions I asked. The written record of the observations have offered a firsthand account of the situation under study and helped me to understand the phenomenon more holistically in conjunction with other data.

Field Memoranda

As I conducted my interviews and observations, I kept a record of my weekly memoranda, based on my reflections, to express my ideas and how I felt about certain aspects that I observed during the research process (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). These memoranda, together with the field notes taken during interviews and observation, were used as additional data along with the interviews and observations in my study. The advantage of memoranda is that throughout the entire process of gathering data, it helped

me to record all ideas and insights that came my way (i.e., recording reflective notes about what I am learning from the research) (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Data Analysis Procedures

The analysis procedure that I used for this qualitative method approach was based on the three data sources that I collected: interviews, observations, and field memoranda. The data analysis involved six steps: organizing and preparing data for analysis, reading through all data, coding the data into themes and descriptions, interrelating the themes and description, and interpreting their meaning (Creswell, 2009, p. 185).

The first step was that the collected interview data was transcribed and typed into word processing documents along with the other forms of data (observations and memoranda), which was examined and analyzed by conceptual coding technique, especially the terms that appear frequently in the interviews. After collecting the data, I put the data into a form appropriate for manipulation and analyzing. A professional transcriptionist and I shared the tapes of the interviews and transcribed them immediately after all the data were collected.

The second step was reading through all the data in order to review and compare the tapes with the written transcripts for completeness and accuracy. I carefully read the transcribed data line by line to obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on the overall meaning before dividing the data into meaningful analytical units (i.e., segmenting the data) (Creswell, 2009, pp. 185-186).

The next step of analyzing was the coding, which is the process of organizing the

material gathered into segments of text before bringing meaning to information (Rossman

& Rallis, 1998, p. 171; Creswell, 2009, p. 186). Using Bogdan and Biklen's (2007)

coding categories, I used the "definition of situation codes" to sort my descriptive data

collected from the participants. The computer qualitative data analysis program

HyperResearch was used to facilitate the coding and perform complex searches on the

observations and memoranda that would be very time consuming if done manually

(Creswell, 2009, p. 188). The computer software program helped me with the coding

process by coding, generating themes, and sorting information for the analysis as I went

through each line of the text and assigned codes (Creswell, 2009, p. 188). While doing

the data analysis, I wrote analytic memoranda to capture my analytic thinking about the

data. In order to convey the findings of the analysis, I interrelated the themes and

descriptions and analyzed how they were represented in the study by using descriptive

information gathered about each group of participants. The final step in the data analysis

involved making an interpretation of the data to portray what lessons were learned and

call for action agendas for reform and change (Creswell, 2009, p. 189). I finally presented

my findings based on the data collected and drew my conclusions based on the research

questions and the larger meaning of the results.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to a qualitative study; the reason for using this method is

based on the research questions and the purpose of the study, and it resulted in well-

verified findings. Qualitative research enabled me to interview the people who are

affected directly and to observe the people's perceptions and reactions regarding factors

and policies affecting admission. The study is limited to admission to Nigerian university

education only. The review compared Nigerian university admission policies with three other African countries: Ghana representing West Africa, Kenya representing East Africa, and South Africa representing South Africa, in order to have a good representation of the continent.

Strategies for Validating Findings

In this qualitative research, the researcher verified that the data are valid. Qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings from the standpoint of the researcher, participants, or readers by employing certain procedures while qualitative reliability refers to the researcher's approach being consistent across different researchers and different projects (Creswell, 2009, p. 190). There are a number of ways and theories by which this can be accomplished. For example, Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that there are three behaviors that will result in good validity of findings: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation. These three behaviors are meant to improve the probability of producing credible data. Maggs-Rapport and Frances (2000) also state that "data are reckoned trustworthy if one engages in persistent observation, prolonged engagement, and triangulation." The prolonged engagement offers the researcher the opportunity of building trust with the participants, with persistent observation adding salience in that the researcher is aware of the intense and focused observations (Creswell, 2009, p. 192). Triangulation necessitates the use of multiple methods to build a coherent justification of themes, which improves the likelihood that interpretation will be accurate (Creswell, 2009, p. 191). Other qualitative researchers label the validation of data with differing

terminology, such as member checking (Creswell, 2009, p. 191) and trustworthiness and authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The first step towards the validating of the findings was to listen to the audio interview more than twice and then checking the transcripts to make sure that they did not contain obvious mistakes made during transcription. I made sure there was no confliction in the definition of codes or a mix-up in the meaning of codes during the process of coding by constantly comparing data with the codes and by writing memoranda about the codes and their definitions (Creswell, 2009, p. 190). The next thing I did was to perform the member checking, whereby the interview transcripts and findings were taken back to the participants to be reviewed for accuracy. According to Creswell (2009), member checking enhances the accuracy of the research because the data are checked and verified. I also made use of triangulation, which requires the researcher to corroborate the evidence from different individuals (i.e., college students, college applicants, parents, and institutional staff), using different sources of data collection, such as observation notes, memoranda, and interviews (Creswell, 2009). According to Creswell (2009), the advantage of using multiple sources of information ensures the research will be accurate, as the data has been drawn from multiple sources. Finally, I make sure that all the data collected from interviews, observation and memoranda were in logical order with one another before I wrote the report of my findings and presented suggested policy changes.

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS
Introduction

In this chapter, I present the findings based on the analysis of the interview data and field notes with a particular focus on the experiences of students, applicants, applicants' parents and institutional staff as the students attempted to gain access to university. I organized the findings into four major themes and subthemes based on the responses of each group of participants: (1) youth seeking admission and admission issue in Nigeria (reasons that impede access to university education in Nigeria), (2) challenges and barriers in seeking admission, (3) admission shock and disappointment, and (4) parents' strategies to help their children cope with the admission crisis. Each theme, along with subthemes, is reported separately by the four participant groups (students, applicants, parents, and university staff). The subthemes are described and analyzed under each major theme based on how they affect the admission process and college access. The chapter focuses on demonstrating how each theme is related to the guiding research questions through subthemes (see Table 16).

Table 16

Four Major Themes with Groups of Participants and Subthemes

Four Major Themes	Subthemes	Research Questions	Group of Participants
1. YOUTH AND ADMISSION ISSUE IN NIGERIAN HIGHER EDUCATION	Who do you know "godfatherism" Quota system: The unjust system of admission	1. What barriers do youth face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain factors and admission policies?	Students
	Godfatherism with societal connection		Non-admitted students
	Religion influence in admission		
	Admission corruption		
	Merit-based versus family influence		Parents
	Improper parental guidance		
	Religion sectionalism		
2. CHALLENGES AND DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN SEEKING ADMISSION	Emotional stresses Financial involvement	2. What challenges do youth face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities?	Students
	"Nigerian factor" cause of demoralization		Non-admitted Students
	Financial constraint		Parents
	Admission frustration		
	Admission pressure		Admission Staff
3. ADMISSION	Faith in God and	3. How does the	Students

SHOCK AND DISAPPOINTMENT	hard work	student overcome the college admission obstacles and handle the disappointment of not being admitted?	
	Faith and determination		Non-admitted students
4. PARENTS' JUSTIFIABLE MEANS OF COPING WITH ADMISSION CRISIS	Encouragement and support	4. How do parents respond to the situation of their children who are qualified but denied admission?	Students
	Patience and maturity		Non-admitted students
	Accepting reality and "shigashigai nema" (personal contacts)		Parents

Theme 1: Youth and Admission Issues in Nigerian Universities

This section explores the reality of the admission crisis in Nigeria, especially among the youth who are seeking college admission. The participants (students and non-admitted students) had applied at least two to four times before gaining admission or were still seeking admission at the time of the study. These students found it difficult to secure admission into any university in the country. In the following section, the participants' accounts demonstrated their experiences with college admission and their perception of admission denial.

Reasons that Impedes Access to University Education in Nigeria

KASU Students

"Who do you know": Godfatherism.

Dissatisfaction concerning the admission issue of "who you know," which is referred as "godfatherism," emerged as one of the most prominent subthemes. When I asked students to describe how they feel about the general problem of admission in the country and why they were denied admission in their previous attempts, it was common for them to express their disheartening feelings about the difficulties of gaining admission into Nigerian universities due to the syndrome of godfatherism. Godfatherism is seen in Nigeria as "men who have the power personally to determine both who gets nominated to contest elections and wins in a state or to determine who is to be admitted to a university or employed in any establishment" (Azuoma, 2012). This phenomenon is firmly establishing itself as a guiding principle in contemporary Nigerian society, extending to all sectors, including education, whereby university admission is not determined based on merit but also on who you know that is influential in the society (Azuoma, 2012).

Salma, a 300 level (third year) student of business administration was denied admission twice because she did not have anybody to support her, even after taking a remedial program with the university. She was eventually granted admission to KASU in 2009 when she applied for the third time. She felt frustrated at the unfairness of college admission policies in Nigeria:

> I feel mortified whenever it comes to the issue of admission because other
> countries are not like that. Admission procedures in Nigeria are awful,
> financially and academically, to both parents and students; admission is

not given to those students who perform well either on the JAMB or any university's internal examinations.

Salma's account illustrates how she felt frustrated at the unfairness of the college admissions policy and how it has been unjustly handled in this country; admission is given to those who do not perform well but have somebody to support them, while those who do well on entrance exams are not considered. She also expressed that corruption in terms of bribery is a major cause of this pervasive admission problem in Nigeria; according to *Global Post* (May, 2012), admissions officials work with student agents to demand cash for admissions. University officials also consider letters from ministers or other top government officials before they grant admission. Even if a student does not perform well but has a godfather, that person will be granted admission, indicating that it is only the children of the rich that can continue to have access to university education, while those who have no one to assist them may never get a chance to experience a university education.

Laura, an English and drama student at Kaduna State University (KASU), applied four times before she was granted admission. She applied to Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, twice without success and KASU twice. The first time she applied to KASU, her name appeared on the admission lists of a different university, Nigeria University, Nsukka (NUN), to which she had never applied, nor listed it as her choice. Because of the distance from Kaduna State to Nsukka (eastern region), she declined the admission. When Laura applied to KASU the first time, she scored more than 200 points above the cutoff mark of 180 and yet she was not offered admission. The second time she applied to KASU, she was granted admission to study English and drama instead of the

political science major for which she had applied. She was told by a staff member in KASU who is close to her family that her place had been given to another person from the same local government area.

> The first time I applied to KASU, my JAMB score was well above 200, but I couldn't secure admission because a highly placed person in the society submitted a name and my name had to be removed for that person's name. It is not as if the person they substituted for me was better than me in any way. Academically, the person was not as high as me, but the person who submitted the name was influential.

Laura shared a feeling of frustration that she had no one (godfather) to help her secure admission because of the distorted system of Nigerian higher education admission procedures. A governor, minister, or vice chancellor will exert influence on behalf of a son or friend. Preference is often shown to applicants from certain regions of the country who dominate the decision-making body in the government.

Aku is a 400 level (fourth year) microbiology student who applied for admission three times before he finally gained admission in 2007. When he applied the first time in 2006, his JAMB score (192) was above the cutoff point of 170 and his Post UME score (50) was a passing mark. He noted that he was not given admission the first time because he had a deficiency in chemistry in his O'level result (high school certificate examination). He later sat for another O'level examination and JAMB on which he believed that he did well, as he was the second-best student from his local government area (county) among the examinees. Aku said, "Here in Nigeria, you have to know

somebody before you get admission or pay somebody for you to be given admission."
This is the problem youth are facing in seeking admission—that they are compelled to
have a "godfather" or pay heavily in order to gain admission. In my conversation with
some students, I found that some of them paid up to 100,000 naira ($700) before they
gained admission and these were not indigenes of Kaduna state. It is not uncommon that
admission is secured based not on merit but on 'who you know" (godfatherism) or "how
much you have."

Quota System: The Unjust System of Admission.

The quota system is a Nigerian admission policy in which admission is based on
slotted allocation given to each region, state, or local government area. This system aims
at equal distribution of admission to all parts of the nation. However, due to the corrupt
nature of the system whereby some regions or states or local government areas dominate
others by having more slotted numbers, most students I interviewed thought it an unjust
system. According to Aku, he was not given admission due to the quota system despite
the fact that he was the second-best student from his local government area (county) who
applied in the microbiology department.

> I later sat for the exams and I passed. I applied again to the same
> university, with a higher grade this time around. I was not given admission
> still, and I don't know the reasons why because according to all the
> criteria, I think I deserved to be admitted. Even compared to those from
> my local government area, I came out second, but still I was not given
> admission due to the quota system. I actually did well and I thought I
> should be given admission. I was not the only person; other friends of

mine were also affected. I applied three times before I got admission. I don't believe in the quota system.

Aku felt disheartened, highlighting that the admission issue has been the major setback in the higher education sector of the country because admission is not determined based on merit. To Aku, even though the quota system is politically meant to checkmate other imbalances in terms of appointment and admission in the country, the quota system is unjust because often students with lower scores are granted admission depending on the region or state. Among participants, the majority of them believed that the quota system should not be applied in the institutions of learning because it would not help the nation grow educationally. Rather, it harms the educational system because less qualified candidates are admitted while academically able students are left behind, their talents wasted. It is not good to use politics in running the education system. The best candidate should be taken, no matter where in the country he or she comes from (*The Tide*, 2012, September 11).

Godswill is a medical student who applied for admission twice before he was eventually admitted in 2012. When he applied the first time, he was denied admission with several of his peers. When he inquired as to why he was denied admission, he was told that the reason was not his scores in the JAMB but "something that cannot be disclosed." When he pressed further, he was told that every local government area (county) has a slot of only two candidates to be admitted and that his local government area slots had been filled already. Godswill was eventually granted admission to study medicine in 2012 after he took the JAMB and Post UME the second time. During the interview, Godswill noted that he could have been admitted the first time if there was no

quota system. Godswill also lamented over the low rate of admission due to the lack of university capacity to admit more numbers for the academic year:

> In my opinion, one of the major problems is the inability of the universities to admit students, like in KASU; they have only admitted medical students up to 50. In my cohort, we are only 35, compared to about 700 that applied, so if more chances were created, more people would have been admitted.

Godswill also discussed fear and lack of confidence in seeking admission, especially in the south if the applicant is from the north: "This issue of catchment area is a problem in the north compared to the many universities we have in the south, and then one is afraid of applying because of the catchment area." It is a common fact that northerners are not truly represented in the southern state universities, and northerners have been continually demanding preferential treatment in the admission process because of the small admission slots reserved for the northerners (Adeyemi, 2001).

Similarly, Laura expressed dissatisfaction with the issue of the quota system. According to her, the quota given to some parts of the states are less than others and she wonders what will be the fate of these secondary school graduates in this present generation. Laura also described an instance regarding her brother. He applied to study medicine in KASU twice. His JAMB and Post UME scores were good, but he could not secure admission because he was not from Zaria (a county in Kaduna State). It is common in some schools for applicants to lose the chance of gaining admission because they are not from certain regions or have no one influential to favor them even if they have the proper qualifications.

Summary

All the students who participated in the study had applied to college two to four times before they eventually got accepted. Gaining admission into any university is an uphill battle that depends on a combination of merit, personal connections, and money. While all students are expected to enter the university on the basis of merit and the quota system, personal connections (godfatherism) and money play a crucial role in influencing admission decisions. The relative importance of the latter is stronger among poor-performing students whose parents are influential in the society. The quota system, which is meant to offer equal opportunity for admission, is now seen as an unjust system because it has failed to achieve its purpose of equal distribution of admission to counteract godfatherism. The system has succeeded only in depriving many qualified candidates of admission.

Non-Admitted Students

Godfatherism and societal connections.

The non-admitted students from Kaduna State who participated in the study shared negative feelings toward college admission in Nigeria similar to the KASU students. The four non-admitted students held the view that godfatherism with a high level of societal connection determines who gains admission. Societal connection, according to the applicants, refers to the level of socioeconomic status one has attained in the society and the ability to achieve or get whatever one needs, be it employment or admission. Gregory, one of the non-admitted students, finished secondary school in 2009 with good O'level results and applied to the university four times and to the Nigerian Defense Academy three times, all without success. He believes that one has to have a "godfather" who is highly connected before one can gain admission. On all the JAMB

and Post UME exams that Gregory took, he got scores good enough to grant him admission except that in the year 2012 he scored 170 on the JAMB, which was below the cutoff mark of 180. He felt this was due to his preparation for the Nigerian Defense Academy examination, which took up his time and effort. Gregory cannot comprehend any reason why he was denied admission in the previous years when his score was high.

> The same year I graduated from secondary school was the same year I took the JAMB; I got 199 and my friend got 182, but he was admitted while I was denied admission in the same course of study because his uncle was working in the university. Admission in this country is based on godfatherism. If you don't have anybody, you will never gain admission, no matter how intelligent you are.

According to Gregory, the godfatherism-based admission policy has thwarted a number of qualified students from achieving their educational goals.

> Patricia finished her secondary school in 2008 and applied for admission to university twice. She sat for the JAMB and scored 184, which was above the cutoff mark of 180, and also took the Post UME and got the required points. In the process of pursuing admission by getting connected with some university staff, she was still not offered admission. When asked why she had been denied admission, she was told by one of the university staff that admission slots are always reserved for candidates that have politicians as their godfathers.

> I can't really say. I had the required scores. There was this man that was trying to help me with the necessary information I needed. I was thinking everything was okay. He called often to tell me to bring so and so document. I would rush and take it to him and then I was pregnant. He

was the one that informed me about the Post UME and all the things I needed; but at the end of the day, he said I should wait for the first list. The first list came out and my name was not there. He said I should wait for the second list; I did wait, I checked again, and my name was not there. He later came to tell me to take heart--that admission was meant for the candidates of politicians.

Patricia was dissatisfied with the admission situation because despite her strong desire and her high scores on both the JAMB and Post UME, she was still denied admission. Patricia believed she was denied admission because of godfatherism and lack of high connection in the university or with any politician. According to her, gaining admission is all about who is who. Who do I have? Who do I know working in the state university or top government official? Who am I connected to? In Nigeria politicians head most of the sectors by appointments; that is why it is easy for a top politician to issue out the name of a candidate or candidates for admission and the candidate or candidates will be considered for admission by the university authority.

Patricia's experience showed that merit is not enough to grant people admission; personal connection and having a godfather is paramount to admission. The issue is when can those intelligent young people be given the chance to build a career for themselves and in turn build the nation through higher education? The interview with Patricia and Blessing showed me that without a doubt they are highly intelligent young women eager to enhance their talents through education, but who will break the university admission barrier to create access for qualified candidates? Nigeria has come of age; the need to go

for the best in everything is urgent and education opportunities should not be based on who you know or your social status in society.

The influence of religion in admission.

The role that religion plays in determining who gains admission to university is another point of concern among college applicants. Some non-admitted students believed they were denied admission simply because their names reflected the faith in which they believed; and the fact that they did not share the same faith with those in charge of admission was enough to deny them admission. Religion plays a role in determining who gets admission and in which department. Through my observations at the university, I realized that a department that has a particular religion as the majority in the administration tended to have more students of the same faith in that department. Blessing, one of the applicants, has been denied admission four times, even after taking tutorials to help her pass her admissions exam. She followed the normal process of securing admission through the JAMB and Post UME, but she could not gain admission despite the good effort she made to pass her examinations. She applied to universities in the north: first, she applied to ABU Zaria; the following year she applied to Nassarawa State University without success, and then to KASU twice, still without success. She could not see any reason why she was denied because her exam scores were considerably higher than the cutoff mark. From her experiences of the past years, she became aware that she needs a godfather to stand for her in order to secure admission or she must share the same religion with those in charge of admission. Blessing explained how complicated the admission problem is in Nigeria, pointing to the role that religion plays as a gatekeeper to college admissions: "In Nigeria, religion is a problem; because of your

religion, you can be denied admission." This issue of religion influencing admission is not a written policy that one can criticize openly; it is a syndrome that has penetrated into the society. People can see it but cannot attack or eradicate it because it is a hidden agenda that has infiltrated itself into the country, and trying to stop it may lead to opposition and violence because of the religious fanatical attitude of Nigerians across the country.

Blessing felt dejected after four attempts to secure admission without success and questioned three male peers, all of whom had gained admission with lower scores than that of Blessing. The response was, "It is not all about your scores but about who you know and what religion you are." In reaction to that, Blessing tried to persuade her uncle, an attorney, to talk to some of the university staff and faculty so that she could gain admission. He responded that he would not bribe anyone to give her admission, nor allow her to practice a religion solely to gain admission. He advised her to continue taking the JAMB until she finally gains admission. In addition to the right personal tie, Blessing felt that if her name did not bear Christian meaning or portray her faith openly, she would surely gain admission. It is worth noting that in Nigeria most names that people use portray their faith or tribe; thus, it is easy to identify the faith and region from which somebody comes through names. Blessing's experience shows that admission is not only on merit but also on sharing the same faith.

Admission corruption.

It is not uncommon that youth and parents experience corrupt practices when seeking university admission. These corrupt practices that are common in the university system include receiving bribes, changing shortlisted candidate's names, and cases of

missing results. For example, Nelson was one of the candidates who lamented the issue of corruption in university admission. He graduated from high school in 2002 and applied for admission four times without success. He was very frustrated and promised himself to apply one more time and then never tried again. He believed that the country and the university system are corrupt, with immoral men at the head of affairs. The first university to which he applied was ABU, Zaria, and he scored 183, which was above the cutoff mark of 180, but he was not offered admission. The second time was still to ABU Zaria, again without success. The third time he applied was to the University of Abuja, the federal capital, also without success, and the last time he applied was to KASU, where again he was not offered admission. Nelson believed that sometimes there is a manipulation of results and that is why he was not given admission. "The result was not what I deserved." Nelson felt bitter because he was not admitted despite his good performance on the JAMB and Post UME. He talked about the instance where he was compelled to pay money in order to secure admission.

> For me, it's all about the issue of corruption. The university I applied to last time was asking me for a bribe in order to secure admission. I gave a man the sum of N10,000 ($70) then and I applied to NuhuBamali Polytechnic in Zaria. He assured me that I would get admission and I was quite excited, but he failed me and I couldn't go back to ask for my money, so I decided to leave everything to God. If only the university admission system would do away with corruption, things would go well.

For Nelson, corruption was the main problem of admission. He felt that his exam results were not accurate, and he was asked for a bribe before he could gain admission.

Nelson became a victim of bribery; he was compelled to play the game in order to gain admission. The experience of Nelson illustrates that there are youths who go through this kind of situation and probably lose faith because they cannot deal with the corrupt system where one has to pay to gain admission and even after paying do not gain admission.

Summary

The study on non-admitted students demonstrated that godfatherism with a high level of societal connection determines who gains admission in the country. The concept "societal connection" refers to the level of socioeconomic status one has attained in society and the ability to achieve or get whatever one needs, be it employment or admission. This godfatherism and societal connection syndrome has thwarted a number of qualified students from achieving their educational goals. Today, merit is not enough to grant people admission, but personal connection and having a godfather is one of the keys to admission. Another issue is the role religion plays in determining who gains admission to university. Some of the non-admitted students believed they were denied admission simply because their names reflected their faith, and the fact that they did not share the same faith with those in charge of admission was enough to deny them admission. The findings show that admission is not only on merit but on personal connection, especially if one shares the same faith or religion. The last issue raised by the non-admitted students was the corrupt practices that they experienced while seeking college admission such as bribery, changing shortlisted candidates' names, and cases of missing results. The study shows that there are non-admitted students who bribed in order to gain admission and after paying did not gain admission.

Parents

Merit-based admission versus family influence.

This section considers the responses of parents regarding their feelings about the admission crisis in Nigeria. Parents strongly believe that students should be given admission based on merit, regardless of which state one comes from or the influential status of the family. Family influence determines one's ability to secure admission in choosing college without consideration of merit. Part of the problem in Nigerian society and its education system is an apparent loss of regard for excellence and merit. Student admission to university and to the more highly esteemed programs is not based entirely on merit. Class influence and economic power are critical requirements for admission rather than merit. Though the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) is meant to moderate and ensure compliance to admission regulations, it is distressing to note that less than half of the students admitted each year (45%) is based purely on merit. This results in the preponderance of students who are neither mature nor ready for university education. Such students find it difficult to deal with their studies and are not likely to benefit maximally from the learning opportunities provided (Iyamu, 2005).

Among the parents, Mr. Cletus has two children who are presently seeking admission, and he believes that admission is not based strictly on merit but on other factors. He said, "We expect that since most universities are government-owned, students, no matter what states they come from, should be given admission based on merit and their performance on their exams, not on family influence." He knows that, although his sons have the required scores, he has to know someone who is influential in society before his sons will gain admission since he is just a civil servant. The socioeconomic status of a family seems to determine who gains admission. Mr. Cletus,

who came from a rural locality, could empathize with those coming from rural areas on how difficult it is to gain admission into university in the cities.

Mr. John has a child who took the JAMB twice but could not secure admission. Mr. John notes that gaining admission to Nigerian universities is difficult because most students who are denied admission do not have "godfathers" and are not from rich and influential families.

> They are denied admission because of so many factors. Some of the students do not have what we call "godfathers." There are some students that don't have the people that will "press buttons" [pursue admission] for them to get admission into universities. There are those coming from the well-to-do families that can "press a button" to secure admission, but the children that are not privileged cannot secure admission. Children from rural families or from families that are not well known will not get admission into any university in this country.

The parents of these non-admitted students whom I interviewed came from either middle class families or low socioeconomic families. These participants relied on the mercy of God, while waiting for admission to college for their children, which some of them may never experience because of their low socioeconomic status. Does that mean that Nigerian universities are for the rich and influential only? Many parents lamented this admission plight because they feel they are not treated fairly due to their socioeconomic status.

Mr. Francis has a son seeking admission for the second time. He acknowledged that his son was not able to secure admission because he did not perform well on his

JAMB. He has made his son undergo remedial studies in order to prepare him for admission one more time. On his last attempt, his son scored 185 on his JAMB, and Mr. Francis has been encouraging him to study hard to pass the other exam so that he can gain admission. Mr. Francis stated, "Many are denied admission because of their low socioeconomic status. They are capable students but cannot secure admission." It appeared that a family's socioeconomic status was associated with the chance of getting accepted into university; the higher the family's socioeconomic status, the higher the chances of gaining admission. Mr. Francis lamented that some people who deserve to be admitted based on merit are not given admission, while others who do not even pass the exams are given admission because of whom they know in the system.

Lack of parental guidance.

One of the findings in this study concerning why admission is denied to some candidates is the lack of proper parental guidance in helping their children in the choice of university and courses. The lack of wise guidance from parents during their children's admission process affects participants' admissions to college. Mr. Cletus thought that parents sometimes fail to play their proper role in helping their children to select the right university because they are influenced by the prestige of the university or a particular professional discipline. Parents that are educated and know the value of education should help their children in making the right selection in terms of the university and the choice of courses. Mr. Cletus stated the following:

> Parents are crazy about university prestige and so-called professional
>
> fields. They insist that their children should go into fields like medicine,
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> law, pharmacy, accounting, etc. In our own case, here in Kaduna, most

students tend to focus their attention on ABU Zaria [Ahmadu Bello University], ignoring the number of people that have applied to the university and forgetting other universities that could have spaces for them.

Mr. Cletus's account indicated that sometimes parents may contribute to the problem of the admission crisis, especially when parents expect their children to pursue a prestigious university and a particular professional field. This makes it even more difficult for students to gain university admission because many attempt to gain admission into highly competitive universities or professional schools that are marketable after graduation but end up not gaining admission.

Mr. Francis also believes that parents who are into a particular profession sometimes want to influence the decision of their children to choose a particular university and major so that it can be a family profession: "This problem is not uncommon among families who are in a highly professional field and they want the family to continue with a particular profession in the society." Most parents want their children to major in the same field as themselves and attend the same university just for the sake of history or the prestige of the university. The expression of both these parents on the lack of parental guidance in the choice of university and major has become an issue of concern regarding admission.

Religious sectionalism.

Religion has been a major issue in Nigeria since the country was amalgamated in 1914 by Sir Lord Lugard into one nation. The two major religions, Islam and Christianity, are still the determining factors in every aspect of Nigerian life. The

influence of religion is prominent in every government appointment and election as well as in admission to university in Nigeria. The dichotomy between these two religions also led to sectionalism, where people depend on their religion in their search of any government appointments, elections, or admission. Whichever sect dominates a particular sector seems to employ their followers or grant them admission to university, and religious sectionalism continues to be the determining factor in university admission. Mrs. Celine has two children who applied twice without success because they did not get good scores on their JAMB both last year (2011) and this year (2012), which means they are not even qualified to write the Post UME. However, on a general note she was dissatisfied with the admission system in Nigeria and Kaduna State in particular based on her subsequent experiences regarding admission. In her view, Muslim applicants are given preference over Christian counterparts in admission to KASU because the former vice chancellor is a Muslim.

> In KASU, the former vice chancellor is a Muslim and hardly any Christians get admission, and if they get admitted at all, they are given CRS (Christian Religion Study). The problem is basically sectionalism. This particular religion wants its own people. I can cite an example of somebody who is working under me in the library. She came in as a certificate holder in Library Science and to even write her name is a problem. Despite this, she was given admission to KASU to study in a different field altogether. Even now she cannot send a text message, but she is in the 200 level. The whole thing lies on "who knows who." This is the basic problem.

As illustrated in Mrs. Celine's account, admission to universities and choice of field of study appears to be based partly on religious sectionalism, even though NUC has developed plans to ensure geographical distribution to provide a fairer spread of higher education. Mr. John held similar opinions on religious sectionalism. According to Mr. John, most departments that are dominated by a particular religion seem to have more candidates of the same religion admitted: "If you look at most departments in the university, you will find that every department that is headed by either a Christian or a Muslim tend to admit more students of the same religion. I don't know why religion has to come into the choice of courses."

Summary

The clamor for professional degrees and prestige universities produces a degree of desperation among those seeking to gain university admission. This fear often leads students and, more particularly, parents to use any means necessary to gain admission because of their influence. Often this runs counter to official procedure, which emphasizes merit on a number of different examinations in order to gain admission. Parental guidance is also necessary to help students make the right choice of universities and majors, and religion should not be the determining factor of admission. Access to college depends on a combination of merit, personal connections, and money. For those with very high scores on their exams, primarily those run by the Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) and Post UME, merit is often enough to secure entry, regardless of other considerations; but admission is uncertain, based on the corrupt nature of some staff members that seek bribes before they shortlist students for admission. It is possible to secure admission through three means other than merit: semi-official

discretion (vice chancellor's list and staff quota), personal connections, and making financial payment, which is also known as "lobbying." Sometimes entry is secured on the basis of a combination of these factors, with religious and family influence playing a silent but prominent role.

Theme 2: Challenges and Difficulties in Seeking Admission

Introduction

This section addresses the first research question: What challenges do youth face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain factors and admission policies? The section presents the challenges and the difficulties that students, applicants, and parents face in the process of seeking admission. The disappointment and frustration of applicants, students, and parents in seeking admission often lead them through many challenges and difficulties. The findings brought out certain themes as some of the major challenges they experience, and these themes are presented according to each participant group.

College Students

Emotional stresses.

One of the major themes that was identified is the emotional stresses students and non-admitted students went through as they attempted to be admitted to a university. The stress refers to the challenges and difficulties students encountered physically and mentally as they struggled to secure admission, with all the abuses and humiliation they experienced relateing to the psychological and emotional trauma. For instance, Laura

expressed that she was physically and emotionally demoralized as she kept taking the JAMB without gaining admission, which made her feel that her efforts seemed to fall short. The most challenging period of her life was when she lost both parents while seeking admission. Laura recalled, "In the course of waiting for admission, I lost both parents and I had to sponsor myself." It was a devastating situation, taking an emotional toll on her. Another physical stress Laura went through is that she used to walk everywhere, seeking persons that were supposed to help her secure admission when she lost her parents and later her husband. They never turned out to be helpful and that made her think, "God didn't like me for allowing me to go through these trials." Laura tried her best to secure admission, but it was not easy for her because she had no one to support her. Her first three attempts to secure admission failed due to the Nigerian factor of "who you know." Laura's experience shows that candidates seeking admission always undergo physical and emotional stresses before they can secure admission.

I recall the case of Salma who, after starting the application process three times, finally learned that she was denied admission. She felt extremely disappointed and concluded that it was the end of her academic pursuit. "I felt sick because I thought that [failure to secure admission] was the end for me in the academic system. My parents also felt the same way, but they advised and encouraged me to never lose hope." She lost the motivation to continue the struggle to secure admission. Just as Salma felt that being denied college admission was the end of academic life for her, other applicants have given up their academic pursuits and have lost hope of getting a university education.

The emotional challenge Aku went through was trying to cope with parents and neighbors pressuring him for being at home and doing nothing. His father felt that he did

not study hard enough and claimed that is why he did not secure admission. His father and people in their neighborhood began to see him as a lazy boy, making it difficult for him to relate freely with friends and neighbors. He recalled, "I was feeling ashamed and shy and finding it difficult to relate to friends who had gotten admission." Aku's experience was common to many candidates who were emotionally depressed because they had failed to gain admission and found it hard to relate to classmates who are ahead of them. Psychologically, such students feel as though they do not belong to their social class, and they may lose hope in life and in achieving their goals. Godswill had a similar experience and feelings. Godswill could not imagine staying at home for another year, seeing his colleagues leaving for college before him. His desire was to finish university at an early age, but now he has to go for extra years, which has destabilized him emotionally.

Financial constraints.

Another difficult challenge that most students encountered was the financial constraints in seeking admission. To gain admission into any university involves financial demands from the student. It takes a lot of financial capital to secure admission because of the constant buying of admission forms, travelling to examination centers, and paying money to secure admission; and at the end of the day, there is no guarantee of gaining admission. Godswill spoke of his dissatisfaction regarding the financial burden of buying application forms again and again and standing in long lines in order to purchase admission forms.

> It's not everybody that has the money to purchase the JAMB form. I
>
> remember I purchased mine around N4,500 ($23.00); and it was difficult

getting the Post UME form, as I had to be in long queues before I got it.

These were the basic challenges--having to wait for another year and spending the money to buy these forms again and again.

Godswill's financial expense in the purchase of application forms illustrates that many youth seeking admission have gone through this constraining situation to spend huge amounts of money repeatedly for the sake of seeking university admission.

In the case of Aku, he was asked to pay money (bribery) before he could be given admission. He noted, "I had a problem one time with someone whose name I will not mention due to confidentiality. He was requesting money from me to enable him to secure admission for me." This shows that there are individuals seeking admission who face a lot of financial demands that they cannot handle due to the corrupt nature of Nigerian society. In my interaction with some students in KASU, they told me that they had paid heavily in order to gain admission into the university and that it was not easy for them to raise such large amounts of money. For example, Laura had to obtain employment in order to earn money to buy forms, travel to exam centers, and pay her transport fare to see those who were willing to assist her in securing admission. Financial concerns are frustrating, especially if one is from a low-income family. State scholarships are the only aids available, but they are not publicized and are only available to the few individuals who are lucky enough to secure admission. Students from remote villages find it hard to migrate to the urban areas to seek admission or earn scholarships because they cannot afford the cost of buying the forms, travelling to the cities to take exams, and paying their way into the university. Therefore, the financial concerns in seeking admission have been an obstacle to gaining admission.

Summary

Students go through emotional and financial challenges while seeking admission, which has led some to lose hope, fall sick, and withdraw from associating with people because they feel inferior at being unable to gain admission. Many students experienced open rejection by friends and family because they were thought to be lazy; this rejection has affected them emotionally. The financial burden in seeking admission has also been a big obstacle for many students. Some students have found it difficult to even afford the admission forms, and the means to travel to examination centers to pursue admission. However, despite the challenges students faced, they were able to stand firm in their determination to gain admission.

Non-admitted Students

Demoralization as caused by the "Nigerian factor."

This section on non-admitted students portrays the challenges and difficulties they encountered while seeking admission and how the "Nigerian factor" totally demoralized them and discouraged many from applying for admission. The "Nigerian factor" is another phrase to replace the words *corruption and other unacceptable actions in the society*. The phrase is a slogan that refers to the way things are done illegally, and without prosecution, because the country does not follow the rules of the law seriously. The participants felt disappointed with the entire admission process due to the so-called "Nigerian factor" that has been a major problem in the country and has made many candidates feel unimportant and unwanted by the society.

Gregory was demoralized because he could not afford to bribe anybody to gain admission. On several occasions he was asked to pay money in order to secure admission,

but his refusal has resulted in his staying home and giving up trying to gain admission. "I feel ashamed because most of my classmates that are in university now were not better than me academically, and that has made me lose hope of achieving my goal. I can't explain why things are going on in Nigeria like this." This is not only applicable to Gregory but to the majority of youth waiting for admission, and after so many unsuccessful attempts are frustrated and demoralized. Some of them feel ashamed of mingling with their classmates who are far ahead of them in education, and they have given up hope of ever attending university. In the case of Gregory, he has no one to assist him except his widowed mother, who is struggling to feed the family. Gregory's situation is an indication of what so many unsuccessful applicants are going through, especially those from poor socioeconomic backgrounds with no one to help them financially or stand for them to secure admission.

Blessing was demoralized because of the discouragement of writing entrance examinations repeatedly with good scores but without securing admission. "When you write again and again, you get discouraged. For instance, when I was in the exam hall, I kept asking myself if I was going to gain admission." Sometimes she felt as if the whole world is against her because of the so-called "Nigerian factor" that has made her and so many applicants discouraged even as they take the exams. This lack of gaining admission has demoralized so many youth and confined them to remain at home with no aspiration to further their education.

Nelson became demoralized after making the effort to travel to test centers with all the risks on Nigerian roads only to have nothing come of it. Nelson felt bad because he risked his life to travel to different centers to write the entrance examination; and

although he often got high scores, he was never offered admission. He once paid a bribe, but he was still not offered admission. There are many applicants that have fallen victim to attempts of bribery, but they always result in failure. This act of bribery has led many youth to be demoralized and no longer interested in attempting to secure admission. Nelson also expressed the psychological stress he went through in his father's house, especially from his younger siblings who were looking at him with disrespect because they are in higher institutions. "I feel so demoralized because even my younger siblings look down on me as if I am of no use because they are all in higher institutions." Sometime candidates experience such depressing situations even in their homes and among family members and relatives because they are seen as unserious persons simply because they could not secure admission.

The most demoralizing experience that unsuccessful applicants go through is when their own family rejects them or abandons them without financial and moral support in the process of seeking admission. This was the case with Patricia, a participant who was seeking admission while pregnant. "Seeking admission with the added burden of pregnancy was not easy; anytime the admissions people informed me of anything I had to go alone, coupled with the financial challenge."

Summary

The outcome of the research findings presents the most difficult situation of so many non-admitted students: how to cope with life because the admission crisis has made them feel discouraged and demoralized due to the "Nigerian factor." Many factors responsible for demoralizing them include bribery and corruption, writing of entrance examinations repeatedly every year, financial constraints, and family abandonment and

rejection. The Nigerian factor has demoralized so many candidates and confined them to remain at home with no aspirations to further their education.

Parents

Financial constraints.

This section deals with the challenges the parents of some applicants faced while their children were seeking university admission. The parents spoke about these challenges, especially on the aspect of financial constraints, which limited their ability to help their children financially while seeking admission. Financial constraint refers to the limitation that parents experience due to low income or limited resources to support the training and education of their children. Parents are constantly giving money to their children out of the little they are able to save to buy application forms and to travel to different centers to write exams, often without any positive outcome. This is so frustrating that they feel as if they are wasting money, especially when they see their children coming back home without college acceptance. Mr. John commented on the financial constraints in the process of his children's college application, stating that the fee involved in securing admission was too expensive for low-income families like his. What makes the situation worse is that there is little certainty in getting accepted to university despite the fact that a large amount of money is invested in the process of seeking admission. Parents, especially those from the middle class and lower class, experience a lot of frustration in order to raise money for their children to keep pursuing admission every year; and when their children fail to gain admission, they get frustrated and discouraged at having to go through the financial support cycle again. An elderly man in one of the villages told me that he is broke this year because he spent all the

money he earned from his farm produce business to give to his child to get college admission, but the child came back to say he was not offered admission. Parents lament how disheartening it is when they invest their limited resources in the education of their children and their effort is wasted due to the pervasive college admission crisis of the country. Many have withdrawn financial support when it comes to the issue of admission because of their past experiences. The youths are the victims because so many are left without hope of the future.

Admission frustration.

The issue of denial of admission due to limited spaces available has frustrated many candidates and is affecting their relationship with their parents, family, and neighbors. The candidates who could not secure admission and are forced to stay at home have built up accumulated anger over the years. Mrs. Celine explained that her children have become very aggressive over the years because of the frustration of being denied admission. "Any small thing makes them flare up, especially when they see their peers in school. They sometimes start behaving badly, and some even fall sick." It is certain that frustration can lead to anger, and anger can in turn lead to irrational actions; and many parents are at the receiving end of their children's negative attitude due to admission frustration. Parents are seriously worried when they see their children who have been denied university admission becoming aggressive and involving themselves in dubious activities which implicate them in one or another kind of trouble. Mr. John explained why some children demonstrate negative reactions to their parents. To him, it seems that some children feel that it is their parents who are responsible for their failure of securing admission to the university

My child at that time, while waiting for admission, thought I was actually refusing him admission. Each day, he feels his friends have gone, and he is still at home while he is supposed to be at the university with his friends. Each time I see him at home, I feel so bad because I can see the anger in him. Why it is my son has not gone [to college]? Now, it is not my making and neither is it his making. The reason is based on a policy that I cannot control.

It is certain that some candidates channel their grievances to their parents, thinking that they are the cause of their denial. Parents may not be supportive because they may have seen that their children are not serious students or they cannot help because of their financial situation. A child who stays at home instead of being in college is at risk of being affected by many societal ills, especially if he or she joins a gang and begins to roam the streets due to frustration with their situation

Summary

Parents go through a lot of challenges and difficult times when seeking or waiting for their children's admission. They expressed the challenges and difficulties they go through in trying to support their children's education, especially the financial aspect and the frustration they experience because of the denial of university admission. Parents save their earnings to be able to give their children money to seek admission and prepare them for college, but they are frustrated at the end of the day when the child cannot secure admission and becomes a source of trouble to the family.

Admission Staff

Admission pressure.

This section presents the findings on the part of the admission committee of KASU, as they face admission pressure from multiple stakeholders (parents, university staff and faculty, government officials and politicians, friends, and relatives). In this context, admission pressure means the constant demand for admission that people put on the staff and faculty in charge of admission in order to secure admission for their children. Dr. Daniel explained the challenges faced by the admission staff.

> The fact that they see you are a staff member here or a member of the committee, people feel you are the Alfa and the Omega. One is under pressure almost every year; parents, relatives, close classmates, those that are highly placed want you to admit candidates; but at the end of the day, you just leave it to come through due process and sometimes you find that after the admission, people will not be greeting you.

Such pressures that Dr. Daniel felt also affected his family because some of his relatives felt they were not well represented if they could not secure admission despite the position he held as the deputy vice chancellor. The disadvantage of this situation is that one loses one's relationship with those who are close because they feel one is not willing to help while in a position to do so. Dr. Daniel also experienced pressure within his family, especially when his daughter was denied admission in KASU.

> I remember when my daughter applied here last year; she should have been in 200 level [second year], but she didn't get in. The mother questioned why the Deputy Vice chancellor could not

intervene. I said, "It must be on merit. I will not break the rule; she

must pass." But thank God she is 100 level [first year] now.

Many faculty get pressure from relatives and parents who are close associates. When they cannot help to get admission, they lose their friendship and people look at them with disdain. Many faculty members experience pressure during the admission period with great temptation whether to accept bribes or not. This issue of bribery and corruption arises from a downgrading of merit as a criterion for admission, allowing bribery, corruption, and nepotism to become the means that ensure admission of weak candidates. As a consequence, mediocrity and economic power take precedence over academic standards (Nwagwu, 1997).

Dr. Alex feels that pressure from parents is increasing on faculty members regarding admission because there is greater demand for university education. Dr. Alex believes that the National Universities Commission (NUC) is the main issue of the challenges regarding admission. For him, the NUC absorption capacity is truly a big issue in the university for the following reasons: KASU, for example, has been in existence for over seven years; and the university cannot admit more than 1,500 students out of 6,200 students that apply, not because the school cannot absorb more than that number comfortably but because admission is regulated in ways that create pressure on the university to handle the crisis by itself. There is a need for the NUC to increase absorption capacity and reduce admission pressure. Dr. Alex was concerned about the situation and the many friendships lost because of the admission crisis.

I am aware that there are persons that will never call me again

because I told them the honest truth; their children have applied

over and over again and because of the criteria we have adopted

here, they have not been able to get admission. They feel I am the

one that has refused to give them admission.

It is a sad situation when one holds a position and that office drives friends and relatives away. I observed, as I came into his office daily during this research, to see Dr. Alex look upset because people stormed into his office to speak harsh words to him as they expressed their dissatisfaction and disappointment for his not gaining admission for their children. Dr. Alex said that this year he has had over 30 requests, while last year he had 180 requests. Dr. Alex spoke about an incident that took place between him and his aunt.

I told you that requests are based on best candidates. This is my

niece and this is the third time she is applying. She doesn't qualify

for admission and each time I talk to the mother, she understands;

but parents don't understand

Dr. Alex's firmness on merit-based admission shows that some of the pressure that faculty members face in terms of admission is from some parents whose children do not really qualify but insist that their children have to be accepted to the university. Based on the pressure faculty members receive, the only solution is to keep reminding parents of the alternative to make their children look into other higher institutions of learning when their children have failed to secure admission to the universities after trying several times.

Dr. Ahmed is the chairman of the admission committee and responsible for admission-related issues; he stated that pressure is especially high when there is a high

number of qualified candidates but limited capacity to absorb them. For example, over 6,000 students applied this year and about 3,000 scored over 50% of Post UME, far above what the university can absorb for the year; and the pressure to solve this problem is on his office. He received pressure from all sides, both within and outside of the university. One incident occurred when he denied admission to the child of the deputy governor; he got pressure from state government officials, but he stood his ground.

> I told them that the applicant was not qualified; they were angry, shouting that they are the owners of the university, I said, "You don't own the university; the common farmer in Kafanchan owns it, and we were brought here to follow the rules, and that is how it is. Follow the rules. We believe in transparency and equity.

KASU, being a state university mainly to serve Kaduna State indigenes, receives pressure on a daily basis because Kaduna State indigenes often do not understand why a university created with the mission to provide university education of the highest standard for the development of the individual and the state, while inculcating the spirit of love, tolerance, understanding, and unity in the state and in the country cannot provide enough opportunity for admission for the indigenes of the state. The anger and pressure from parents, government officials, and politicians is high, especially on the admission committee members who constantly need to explain to parents why their children cannot all be admitted. Dr. Ahmed expressed how he tried to stick to the university policy and autonomy to determine who should be admitted on a basis of merit despite the pressure he receives from politicians who occupy the government offices. He does not always find it easy, but he has not given up and he is equal to the task.

Summary

The admission committee members of KASU spoke of the major challenges and difficulties concerning the admission pressure they receive from candidates, parents, relatives, and colleagues. They receive pressure from all sides, both within and outside of the university. When they are unable to help to offer admission, they lose their friendship and people look at them with disdain. The great temptation is that sometimes the faculty members are tempted to receive money from either parents or candidates for the sake of admission and the pressure is always high when one collects bribes. The most pressing issue is the burning anger and pressure from parents, government officials, and politicians on the admission committee members, who constantly need to explain to parents why their children cannot all be admitted.

Theme 3: Admission Shock and Disappointment

Introduction

Fear and disappointment were common among the student participants when they were denied admission after completing all the admission requirements. This section deals with the third research question: How does the student overcome the college admission obstacles and handle the disappointment of not being admitted? The section presents the experiences of all the student participants as to how they responded to the shock and disappointment of not being offered admission and how they coped with the disappointing situation. The general feeling of the participants was that they were shocked and disappointed when they could not find their names on the admitted lists.

Students

    Faith in God and hard work.

Despite the series of disappointments students went through in seeking admission, almost all of them had faith in God and believed that at the appointed time they would gain admission to study what they want. The belief in God and the ability to study hard and never to relent played a critical role in helping the students achieve their goal. The student participants demonstrated this belief as the main source of strength that kept them resilient until they gained admission. They believed that faith in God and their hard work helped them persist through the period of seeking admission. This demonstration of strong faith in God really amazed me, and I came to realize that Nigerians generally are religiously inclined; one can hardly separate a Nigerian from his or her religion or separate the state and religion. It was not a surprise then when Salma was asked how she overcame and coped with the disappointment of not being admitted, and she said that even though she felt sad, she still had faith in God and she knew that she would eventually gain admission, "I felt bad, unhappy, and disappointed after having put in all my best. But I have faith in God and believe everything has to do with time. I worked harder and never gave up, but instead kept struggling until I made it the third time." Salma, a Muslim, believes in God and has worked hard by taking remedial programs to increase her chance to gain admission. She did not allow the disappointment to discourage her, even after applying three times. She is a believer and a fighter who does not give up easily, and that kept her spirit strong until she eventually secured admission. Generally, when students apply for admission a couple of times without success, they get discouraged and give up; and sometimes they become a problem to their family. In the case of Salma, however, because of the good family upbringing she had from her parents, she was able to be calm and determined until she gained admission.

Aku shared a similar kind of faith as Salma. At first it was painful for him to sit at home for another year, and over the year he became shy and found it difficult to relate to people, especially his classmates, because he was disappointed with himself. However, his faith kept him strong when he realized that God does everything for a reason. With conviction in God, Aku resigned himself to his fate and began to study hard with determination until he eventually secured admission to KASU. Aku was able to work on his shyness and discouragement to achieve his goal; as a Christian, he trusted in God and became an example for other youths to follow, showing the need to work hard to overcome any disappointment that may befall them in the future. Laura is a pious person who has faith in God, and she is a hard working young woman with strong commitment and goal-orientation. At first she felt bad when she failed to get accepted to university, but she was able to gain admission into Polytechnic and also channeled her energy into other work. She noted, "Within the period of waiting for admission, I went to the Polytechnic, I did a National Diploma Program, I did my IT (Industrial Training), and I learned a lot of handwork here and there. I felt it should not deter me from achieving what I want to achieve as a human being." Laura, being a determined young woman, did not allow the disappointment of being denied admission to keep her from continuing to work toward her academic goals. Instead of staying idle at home, she went to Polytechnic to learn skills and business; after she secured admission to university, she was able to pay her school fee by herself and be independent, even as an orphan and a widow. There are many candidates who have lost the hope of gaining admission due to so many disappointments; Laura's determination set the example for others to follow.

Godswill was resigned to his fate when he learned that he was not admitted the

first time. He began to pray and hope that one day something would come up positively after his hard work. "Obviously, there was nothing I could do to change the situation I found myself in, so the best I could do was to pray and hope that maybe something better would happen. Well, I accepted defeat and studied harder than I did before to prepare for the next exams." Godswill, being a mature and gentle young man, knew exactly how to handle the disappointment of not being admitted. He accepted the reality that he had missed the chance of attending college, then turned to prayer and studied harder than he had the previous year until he gained admission into the academic program he desired. He did not give up easily to the disappointment of not being admitted but took the challenge and worked harder to achieve his goal. Among these students, keeping faith with God and hard work were a critical means of success and achievement in terms of admission.

Summary

All the students who participated in this study attributed their success of gaining admission to university to continual prayer and hard work. They believed that faith in God and their hard work helped them persist through the period of seeking admission. Most of them did not give up easily to the disappointment of not being admitted but took the challenge and worked harder to achieve their goal through study. Some of them, instead of staying idle at home, decided to learn acquisition skills and business while they continued to seek admission.

Non-admitted Students

Faith and determination.

This section presents the responses of non-admitted students in regard to the disappointment of not being admitted. These participants showed strong faith and determination to achieve their academic dream despite the disappointments and obstacles in seeking admission. Faith and determination became the prominent theme among them. Faith is the belief in God and determination is having the mindset of achieving a particular goal and not changing from it. Admitted students were able to demonstrate faith in God with hard work which helped them to succeed in gaining admission, and non-admitted students used the same means with determination never to give up but to keep trying until they gain admission. They believe that it is not yet time; that is, they are still at home, but sooner or later they too will gain admission. Gregory, who at one time felt ashamed of himself for not being admitted is now being consoled religiously to believe that the delay in admission was not denial and that one day he will gain admission. "For me, I will never get tired; I think maybe God has something for me that I don't know. I will keep on reading until I find myself in school, no matter how long it will take me." Gregory is very determined to further his education despite the disappointments and internal crisis he is going through. He developed the habit of intensive reading every day and is determined to gain admission and actualize his dream. Many other candidates over the years who experienced admission disappointment have grown to accept the reality that delay was not denial, and with faith and determination they were able to handle their crisis courageously, waiting for God's time.

Blessing could not understand why she was not able to enroll in university like her colleagues. She is coping with her disappointment through the grace of God. "It is really hard to cope. You see some of your classmates in their final years and some in 200

level [second year], and I have been at home all these years." Blessing's consolation now is the Church because she spends much time doing volunteer services in the church every day and hoping that one day she will finally gain admission to study in the course of her choice (mass communication). It is certain that many other applicants who have applied several times without success have become restless and showed resentment when they look at themselves at home doing nothing. Most of them find it difficult to cope with the reality of not being in school, and they are confused and feel they have gone astray because society has not made any provision to help such candidates or give them hope of gaining admission.

Nelson was unable to cope with the situation at home where his younger siblings looked down on him and talked to him without respect because he could not secure admission. He became restless because he could not find peace in his father's house and consoled himself with prayer and church. He enrolled himself in a computer school and is presently taking computer lessons to empower himself. There are many other candidates who are demotivated and restless as was the case with Nelson, but they need to develop a means by which they can help themselves to be active and relevant to themselves and to society. The worst thing Nelson could have done was to accept defeat and not plan to forge ahead, but he stood firm and determined to actualize his goal.

Experience taught Patricia to believe that the admission issue was about overcoming disappointment. She learned to be patient and remain calm with the consolation that it is not yet her time; but when it is God's time, she will gain admission. The way she handled her situation was that she put her trust in God and relied on prayers.

A determined spirit and prayers kept Patricia focused and engaged despite the series of disappointments in seeking admission.

Summary

Faith in God and determination to achieve in life despite the obstacles they encountered were what kept so many of the non-admitted students focused in their academic pursuit. Students who gained admission applied this means to help them remain focused until they got their admission, but the non-admitted students who are yet to gain admission are determined that no matter how long it will take them, they will continue to hope in God until they gain admission. Admitted students used this means and succeeded; similarly, non-admitted students believe that the same means will help them succeed and they will never give up until they actualize their dream of gaining admission.

Theme 4: Parents' Means of Coping with the Admission Crisis

Introduction

This section is centered on the fourth research question: How do parents respond to the situation of their children who are qualified but denied admission? The participants talked about the best means parents used to deal with the admission crisis, especially those whose children were denied admission. Different means are presented here which comprise subthemes: encouragement of children, accepting the reality of admission denial, and "pressing buttons" (personal contacts). These subthemes are analyzed under each participant group.

Students

Encouragement and support of children.

Encouraging children not to give up and giving them the support they need when they are denied admission is one of the themes that came out strongly among all the participants when they were asked how parents best responded to the situation of children who were qualified but denied admission. Encouragement is the moral support and the basic assistance parents are expected to extend to their children, especially when they are denied admission. Some parents responded positively when their children were denied admission, while others did not. Aku was not pleased with his father's response because his father blamed him; however, he was later able to gain admission due to the support he received from his mother. He called on all parents to be supportive, especially during the admission process, noting "What parents must do is to encourage their children seriously. The third time I almost gave up, but it was my mother who encouraged me to take the JAMB again. Parents should encourage their children and help them to be self-reliant." Aku saw that the best way parents can respond to the situation when their child is denied admission is to keep encouraging and supporting their child as his mother did with him and unlike his father, who was harsh and blaming him as a lazy student. Parents play an instrumental role in encouraging their children to study harder and at the same time go into other skilled professions in order to be self reliant while waiting for admission. For instance, Godswill told me that the best way for parents to respond to the situation is to advise and encourage their children. Godswill's parents were disappointed when he was denied admission, especially when they realized that he did not apply to the university of their choice. They blamed him, but at the end they gave him the money and support he needed for the next entrance exam, and he was able to gain access to university the second time. Some parents blame their children when they fail to secure admission, and

sometimes they withdraw their support from them. The best way to respond is to encourage the child to develop the means that can help him or her to remain focused and determined. Laura also held the opinion that parents should encourage their children to go into skilled professions to avoid hopelessness while waiting for admission. Salma spoke of the importance of parents' patience with their children, "Parents should always exercise patience. Parents should always encourage their children to pray and work hard." When her parents got the news that she was denied admission, they were calm and encouraged her to be calm and trust in God. Her parents were patient about the issue, and they drew her close to them to make her feel she was still their daughter and things would be better soon again for her. While she was doing the remedial program, they encouraged her to study harder and created enough time for her to study by a lessening of domestic work. In some cases, parents stopped supporting their children financially because they felt they were wasting money on an investment that was not fruitful, leaving their children to pursue admission on their own. Children are grateful to parents who understand them even if things are not turning in their favor; and when children get their parents' support, that brings out the best in them.

Summary

Several students concurred that the best way parents should respond to admission denial is to remain calm and encourage their children with the support they need in order to be able to achieve their goal. Parents were able to draw their children close to them and make them see the need to find skillful jobs while seeking admission. Some parents introduced their children into their business so that they could have some financial independence, and good a number of them are in university now. Parents should not stop

supporting their children financially because they think that they are wasting money on an investment that is not fruitful, leaving their children to pursue admission on their own.

Non-admitted Students

Patience with maturity of heart.

Non-admitted student said that they wanted parents to be patient with them while making another attempt to gain access to higher education. The main theme that emerged among the applicants was the virtue of patience from parents, which is the ability to endure pain and delays without complaint. Most of the applicants stated that their parents were able to respond to their situation of denial of admission with patience and a high sense of understanding, while some said their parents, especially the fathers, expressed anger and disappointment with their children. Patricia's parents were very patient and understanding about her situation, "My parents were not happy, but they were calm and encouraged me. My father told me that school and schooling require a lot of patience and I have to keep trying." Patricia's parents demonstrated a high level of patience and encouraged her to do the same. That really helped her to remain focused and work toward her goal. Many parents of applicants did not lose their temper and took everything gently, as I observed them. They said it is the "Nigerian factor," and nothing can be done but be patient and wait for God's time.

Nelson, on the other hand, told how his father became inpatient and threatened to stop assisting him since he has tried several times without success. He recalled, "My dad said he had tried his best and it is enough." Parents should know that once they lose patience with their children, that will be the beginning of their children's doom. However, Nelson's father did reconsider his decision and encouraged his son to apply

again to another institution. Blessing also discussed how some parents/guardians show a nonchalant attitude towards seeking admission for their children, especially children who live with parents that are not their biological parents. "The parents are reluctant to pursue admission for their wards." Some of these students find it difficult to wrestle with college admission because they feel that their parents/guardians show little interest when they are denied admission. Some of them expressed that these parents were unwilling to help them secure admission and that the parents instead expected these children to be domestic house help with strict rules and regulations while they were living in the house. Another experience described by some applicants was the preferential treatment the parents/guardians gave to their biological children. Nevertheless, these students perceived that parents have a duty to their children, biological or not, in terms of their education and that it is their responsibility to see that all their children achieve their academic goal.

Summary

The non-admitted students' views on how parents respond to the denial of admission to their children were varied. The common theme that cut across their responses was the patience that most of the parents showed when they were denied admission. A few of the applicants also expressed how their parents, especially the fathers, became impatient and reluctant about supporting their efforts to go to college. Children who were not living with their biological parents also expressed some dissatisfaction because they felt they were not treated fairly compared to the support and attention given to the biological children in the same house. Nevertheless, most parents demonstrated the virtue of patience that has allowed so many of the children to remain focused and determined to secure admission.

Parents

Accepting reality with "shigashigai nema" (personal contacts)

Parents often feel disappointed when their children are denied admission. In response to the question of how do parents respond to the denial of admission to their children, all the participants stated that the parents handled the disappointment by encouraging their children to accept reality and study harder, while on their part they continued making personal contacts known as "shigashigai nema." In the Nigerian Hausa language, the phrase "shigashigai nema" in this context means entering all the possible ways to make personal contacts in order to gain admission, either with those in charge of admission at the university or with political officials that are influential and can secure admission. Parents who participated in this study discussed how they encouraged their children while at the same time they tried to secure admission for their children through "shigashigai nema." Mr. John said that at first his son thought he was not supportive; he explained that the admission policy does not favor everyone and that the best way to handle the situation is to make personal contacts with faculty members at the university. He noted, "You have to get to know people at the university who can help press one or two buttons for you that will enable your child to get admission." Mr. John was able to accept the reality that his son was denied admission based not on merit but on the policy of the quota system; he consoled himself and his son by stating that it was not the child's fault, and he encouraged his son to remain firm and determined. Mr. John went further and made some contacts so that his child could secure admission in the next admission cycle, since the rejection was not a deficiency in academic performance but in institutionalized policy. Even in the midst of disappointment, one can forge ahead by

encouraging their children, find out the reason for the denial, and making some positive moves that will help their children secure admission in the future. Mrs. Celine believes the best way is to forge ahead, believing in God, and continuing to encourage her children to study hard because the best thing she can give them is to see that they get a good education. Mrs. Celine said:

> I encouraged them by explaining that it is not yet God's time. If it is God's time, definitely they will get admission. I tell them to accept the reality and not look at what is happening in the university--the quota system, who is who, etc. Let them just trust in God and continue reading their books.

She also tried to make some contacts with a few members of the Kaduna State House of Assembly where she works, but she could not be helped because her children's scores were below the cutoff mark. Some parents try to handle denial of admission with sensitivity, but some are hard on their children and blame them. Such parents need to know that accepting reality and helping their children achieve their educational goal is the paramount gift they could give their children. Mr. Cletus is aware of this reality and tries to encourage his children. As a result they have responded positively and that is why some of them have made it into the university. Mr. Francis responded negatively to this issue of disappointment. To him, parents can no longer cope because every year children keep applying without success, and the parents are fed up with the system and the disappointments. "Year in and year out, children keep applying and there is really nothing that parents can do." Mr. Francis pointed out that the admission crisis in Nigeria has reached a stage where parents can no longer do anything to help the situation. There

is a need to accept this reality, but at the same time never to relent in pursuing admission in a positive way.

Summary

All the participants stated that the parents handled the disappointment of their children being denied admission by accepting the fact and by encouraging their children to study harder, while on their part they continued making personal contacts known as "shigashigai nema." Some parents stand firm to do "shigashigai nema" for their children to gain admission, but some become hostile to their children and criticize them. Parents knew that helping their children to achieve their educational goal is the paramount gift they could give their children.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges youth face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain factors and admission policies, such as carrying capacity, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states. The aim of this research was to better understand the experiences of students and parents as students experienced difficulties and stresses while seeking university admission. Through open-ended, semi-structured interviews, I collected data from students, applicants, parents of applicants, and KASU admission committee faculty. These interviews offered opportunities to hear the voices of these participants as students persisted in their pursuit of university admission.

Four major themes were identified along with subthemes: (a) youth and admission issue in Nigerian universities, (b) challenges and difficulties in seeking university admission, (c) admission shock and disappointment, and (d) parents' means of coping with the admission crisis. In this chapter, I summarize the findings of the study as they relate to the four research questions. Then, I discuss how the findings contribute to the existing research on the college admission problems in Nigeria and make connections to the theoretical framework. Finally, I conclude this chapter with policy implication and practice and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

The first research question was "What structural barriers do youth face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain factors and admission policies?" The study revealed the experiences and reasons why so many students were denied

admission. At the time of the study, the college students and non-admitted students had applied two to four times before gaining admission or were still seeking admission. Apart from the factors that limit admission based on capacity, the study also revealed that there are other factors that impede access to university education in Nigeria. The first main issue is that of "who you know," which is referred as "godfatherism." The theme "godfatherism" became the most salient across all the groups. Godfatherism has been established as a guiding principle in Nigerian society, whereby gaining university admission is determined not only on merit but also on who you know that is influential in the society and can help you secure admission.

The second barrier is the quota system, which almost all the candidates believe is an unjust system of admission. Most Nigerian youth who graduate from high school aspire to go to college, increasing the number of applicants seeking admission. However, as the quota gets filled, many qualified candidates are left behind, lose time, and feel discouraged.

The third barrier is the influence of religion in gaining admission. Some of the candidates who are denied admission believe that religion influences the gaining of admission; if they do not share the same faith as those in charge of admission or those who head certain university departments, they may be denied admission. This is because the departments that are headed by either Christians or Muslims tend to admit more students of the same religion.

Admission corruption is another barrier. The study revealed that corrupt practices are common in the university system, including receiving bribes, changing shortlisted candidates' names, cases of missing results, etc. In addition, it is family influence that

determines one's ability to secure admission and choice of university rather than consideration of merit. Class influence and economics play a more critical role in admission decisions than merit.

The second research question was "What challenges do youth and parents face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities?" One of the findings of this study was the emotional stresses students and non-admitted students experience as they attempt to enter a university. The emotional stress is the result of the psychological and emotional abuses and humiliation experienced in the struggle to secure admission. Another difficulty that youth and parents experience in seeking admission is financial constraints.

Financial constraints were identified as the challenge parents experience due to low income or limited resources to support the training and education of their children. Some parents noted how disheartening it is when they invest their limited resources in the education of their children and their effort is wasted due to the persistent college admission crisis of the country. The study further revealed that to gain admission into any university involves heavy financial demands from the students and parents. It requires a great deal of financial capital to secure admission because of the constant necessity of buying admission forms, travelling to examination centers, and paying money to secure admission. Unfortunately, at the end of the day, there is no guarantee of gaining the admission.

The "Nigerian factor," which refers to the corruption and other unacceptable practices that cause demoralization among those seeking admission, has also became one of the challenges youth and parents face. The unacceptable practices of those in the university system admission process include the following: ignoring candidates and their

parents when they come seeking assistance, false promises, collection of money from candidates and their parents, and seeking sexual favors. Many applicants have been demoralized by these issues and have lost faith in putting further effort into gaining admission.

The study further revealed that candidates who could not secure admission and were forced to stay at home have accumulated anger over the years and express it over every little provocation, often with the parents at the receiving end. Last, staff and faculty in charge of admission feel "admission pressure." These participants pointed to the constant demand for admission that people put on them in order to secure admission either for themselves or for their children. Many faculty are pressured by relatives and parents who are close associates to help a child gain admission. When they are compelled to deny admission, they lose their friendship and people look at them with disdain.

The third research question was "How does the student overcome the college admission obstacles and handle their disappointment of not being admitted?" The theme "admission shock and disappointment" was identified, suggesting that the majority of student participants were shocked and disappointed when they were not shortlisted for admission, but they were able to develop means to overcome their disappointment.

Among enrolled students, the belief in God and the ability to study hard and never to relent play a critical role in helping them achieve their goal. The student participants demonstrated this belief as the main source of strength that kept them resilient until they gained admission. Among the non-admitted students, "faith and determination" were identified as the means of keeping them active while seeking admission. The participants

showed strong faith and determination to achieve their academic dream despite the disappointments and obstacles in seeking admission. Their faith gave them the mindset of achieving a particular goal, no matter how long it may take and how difficult it may be.

The final research question was "How do parents respond to the situation of their children who are qualified but denied admission?" This question addresses parents' means of coping with the admission crisis. The student participants agreed that the best way their parents responded to their situation was to encourage them not to give up and to give them the psychological and moral support they need when they are denied admission. Some parents were supportive and gave their children the moral support and the basic assistance expected when they were denied admission. For the non-admitted students, parents' patience and maturity refer to the ability to endure pain and delays without complaint. Most of the non-admitted students stated that their parents were able to respond to their being denied admission with patience and a high level of understanding, while some said their parents, especially the fathers, expressed anger and disappointment with their children. Some parents were able to use *shigashigai nema* (personal contacts); that is, the ability to make personal contacts in order to help their child gain admission, either with those in charge of admission at the university or with political officials that are influential and can secure admission from those in charge of admission.

Discussion

The issue of "godfatherism" emerged salient among all the participants. The literature indicates that there was no admission crisis when higher education was first introduced in the early years of tertiary education in Nigeria, before independence in

1960. Uvah (2005) and Afemikhe (2008) confirmed that admission was not a serious problem because the system was well organized, based on merit, and candidates seeking admission were small in number, a mere 1,395 in 1960 from the two universities (Ibadan and Nsuka). Why has the country not been able to retain this standard of admission today? Carrying capacity, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states are factors limiting admission for many qualified students. Today some university faculty are the ones responsible for the restriction of access to higher education rather than increasing it because they manipulate admission to favor only those who have influence (godfathers), knowing what they intend to gain in return. The interview with Dr. Alex at KASU confirmed this. He said, "NUC and our universities are another challenge. NUC should do a thorough study on the admission capacity of universities with a view to allow them to admit the number they are capable of admitting." If the NUC standard of admission were truly followed and universities were truly honest, they might be able to grant admission based on their carrying capacity and merit so that a good number of candidates could have access to higher education without experiencing the so-called "godfatherism syndrome."

Findings of this study suggest that the issue of the quota system is regarded as an unjust system of admission because it deprives many candidates of the opportunity of gaining admission. Similar to Akpan and Undie (2007), the majority of candidates said that using the quota system to guide and regulate access to university education inequitably reduced the chances of admission for highly qualified candidates. Moti (2008) noted that the effect of these policies has been catastrophic because meritocracy tends to be subverted, and thus less qualified people are admitted (p. 45). An applicant's

chances for a college education can diminish because the interest and zeal may be lost due to the frustration that results from the system. The quota system should not be applied in the institutions of higher learning because the system does not help the nation grow educationally. Many candidates that the nation relies upon to improve the economy situation of Nigeria are denied admission, and their talents being wasted (Akpan & Undie, 2007; Moti, 2008). The quota system also harms the educational system because in most cases less qualified candidates are admitted while intelligent students are left behind.

Another problem is the influence of religion in gaining admission, which is one of the most sensitive issues in the country due to the fanaticism of many Nigerians (Fayokun, 2007). During the course of this research, as I was on campus (KASU), I realized that a department that has a particular religion as the majority in the administration tended to have more students of the same faith in that department. The policy, adopted in the past based on the Ashby Commission of 1959 in the establishment of universities and other tertiary institutions, was intended to equalize all the regions and populations and to meet the needs of the entire nation (Ashby Commission, 1959). However, as indicated by participants, it has been replaced by political interests and affiliations (religion). There are two major religions in Nigeria: Islam and Christianity. Muslims are the majority in the north, while Christians are the majority in the south. The dichotomy between Christianity and Islam in Nigeria (both attracting large and dynamic followerships), has found its way into all Nigerian sectors, including education (Fayokun, 2007).

The findings of my research reaffirm that admission into university favors those who belong to the regions that are of the dominant religion. It is commonly believed among the participants that some professional courses (i.e., marketable courses like law, medicine, and administration) in the universities are reserved for certain religions or tribes, and the majority of those heading the department are of the same religion or from a particular region. The research findings show that the system of admitting students based on religion is not a written policy but something that people practice based on their fanatical interests. Saint, Hartnett, and Strassner (2003) argue that the NUC has set admission standards based on merit, carrying capacity, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states as criteria for admission into federal, state, and private universities even though it is not the best method for the country; but it is still preferable to allowing religion to influence admission decisions. The crisis of religion and its influence on admission policy in Nigerian universities needs to be addressed so that candidates can be admitted not based on creed or region but on merit and need of the country for economic progress.

Why is the education system so corrupt in Nigeria? Unethical conduct in the universities is becoming extremely worrisome; some members of the university staff are taking advantage of the admission crisis by demanding money from candidates and their parents. These practices reported by the candidates are similar to Willott's (2009) view in that the extent to which some students go to ensure admission is surprising, such as paying large sums to people, some of whom have no official connection with the university, in the hope that they will be true to their word and help them gain entry. Gaining admission has become a social issue in Nigeria in that many students are

compelled to pay money to gain admission into the university. College admission is only for the rich, who can afford to pay their way in. Akpan and Undie (2007), comment that socioeconomic hardship has deprived many qualified candidates of the opportunity to attend university because they cannot even afford to pay for the entrance examination fee or travel to the examination centers.

Research findings show that despite the fact that the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) is supposed to moderate and ensure compliance to admission regulations, less than half of students are admitted each year (45%) based on merit. The remaining percentage is maneuvered by influential parents to gain admission for their children into the university and courses of their choice. According to Iyamu (2005), these students, admitted based on influence, are not likely to be ready for college education. Such students find it difficult to cope with their studies and are not likely to benefit fully from the learning opportunities provided. Consequently, graduating students cannot perform well or represent the image of their school in society. Parents should learn how to help their children achieve academic success in order to merit admission, not use their socioeconomic status to maneuver the way for their children.

The study further reveals that many candidates were emotionally depressed because of the humiliation and injustices they experienced while seeking admission. When they fail to gain admission, they hardly relate well to classmates who are ahead of them because they feel oppressed as lower class citizens. Candidates experience a lot of injustices and oppression that tend to make them feel humiliated and lose hope in life and in achieving their goals. The humiliation and oppression candidates go through is in line with Freire's (1998) critical theory. Freire (1998) looks at the struggle for humanization

and the breaking of cycles of injustice, exploitation, and oppression which lie in the perpetuation of oppressor versus oppressed, the kind of condition students find themselves in that make them withdraw from people who they feel no longer belong to the same socioeconomic class. According to Freire (1998), in order to break the cycle, a revolution of ideas must take place; freedom can only occur when the oppressed banish this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility. The goal can only be achieved by first confronting reality critically and simultaneously objectifying and acting upon that reality (p. 29). Even though non-admitted candidates go through emotional stresses and humiliation, it is possible to break this cycle through self-determination and struggle. The candidates or parents can attain their goal only by focusing and not allowing anybody or anything to be an obstacle or barrier to that goal.

The financial expenses students and parents spend for college application before gaining admission is often used as a source of revenue for universities in Nigeria. Universities in Nigeria have faced serious underfunding for many years, driven by the increase in population and the high demand for university education (Adeniyi & Taiwo, 2011, p. 524). According to Chukwurah (2011), the poor funding is one of the major factors that negatively affect access to university education for low SES students in Nigeria. Though tertiary education presently receives a larger share of the education budget, the funding is not sufficient to meet the financial demands of universities, which in turn leads students and parents to pay for admission forms and examination fees (Chukwurah, 2011, p. 109). Many students and parents who are cognizant of the importance of education work hard to raise the money in order to achieve their goal. Some participants in the study were able to raise money to support their education and

did not to allow anyone (faculty members who seek bribes) to deprive them from gaining admission. Those seeking admission should build up courage to break through all oppression forces that have been obstacles toward their goal (Leonard, 2004).

Demoralization caused by the "Nigerian factor" (corruption) was a major concern among all the participants. A participant, Nelson, recounted how he unsuccessfully bribed to gain admission. This Nelson experience confirms Radda's (2009) view when he says that there is evidence to show that some lecturers take unjustifiable advantage of the admission season to get money, other material favors, and sexual favors from unsuspecting female applicants and their parents. He further said there are some lecturers that normally purchase and hoard admission forms in order to take advantage of applicants during the admission period. Some lecturers personally collect the admission letters of successful applicants to deliver the same to the applicants' parents or to the applicants themselves to create the notion that, were if not for their efforts, admission would not have been gained. These kinds of corrupt practices in the universities create opportunities for the opportunistic lecturer to take advantage of naïve applicants (Radda, 2009, p. 1).

This was clear evidence that applicants go through a lot of demoralizing challenges before they gain admission or just fall victim to corruption without gaining admission. The situation in which applicants sometimes find themselves can be overcome using Freire's (1998) critical theory that talks about the struggle for humanization and breaking the cycles of injustice, exploitation, and oppression which lie in the perpetuation of oppressor versus oppressed. Those who commit the injustice, the oppressors who collect bribes in the name of admission, deny freedom to those they oppress. They

transform everything regarding admission to their domination (Freire, 1998, p. 40). Critical theory helps to portray the oppression of individuals, groups, and society by self-imposed or externally-imposed influences that deprive university admission and leave many candidates discouraged and demoralized. Students seeking admission can overcome these challenges and difficulties by using this theory as a tool to emancipate themselves from oppression and the deprivation resulting from corrupt admission policies.

The constant denial of admission to candidates due to limited space available has caused many candidates and their parents to become frustrated. Most parents are frustrated because of their low income, lack of admission, and constant payment of admission fees yearly without success. This low income issue and admission frustration has made many parents withdraw their financial support or become reluctant to pay out money to support their children when it comes to the issue of admission. Ehiametalor (2005) reports that about 70.2% of Nigerians are low-income earners and that the majority of Nigerians cannot afford the financial demands of processing admission, nor can they send their children to school without scholarships or aids Akpan and Undie (2007) further comment that socio-economic hardship deprives many qualified candidates of the opportunity to attend university because they cannot even afford to pay for the entrance examination fee or travel to the examination centers. Admission frustration should not discourage parents from taking up their responsibility of paying their children's entrance examination fees or passing on the basic knowledge their children need in order to achieve their goal as proposed by Coleman's (1988) theory of social capital. In Coleman's concept of social capital, the transmission of human capital

from parents to children is contingent upon the level of social capital available within the family. When parents fail to fulfill their obligation to their children financially, it reduces the level of information gained that can be transformed into social capital that will help their children achieve their goals (Coleman, 1988).

Furthermore, Bourdieu and Passeron's (1979) concept of cultural capital, with its distinctive focus on the social value of cultural habits, dispositions, and skills that encourage parents' involvement in their children's education plays an important role in college admission among Nigerian youth. Parents need to be aware of why they have to be involved in their children's education and of the best way to impart cultural values in the lives of their children despite the frustration their children experience due to denial of admission. The cultural capital value that a student possesses helps a student know how to behave even if admission is not forthcoming. In this study, cultural capital, such as parental expectations, encouragement, involvement with the school, and the presence of educational materials in the home, plays a part in helping children to secure admission and learn ways of behaving that are generally acceptable to society.

Admission pressure that staff and faculty experience is a result of the constant demand for admission. Imhanlahimi and Maduewesi (2006) argue that universities should employ more academic professionals to ease the admission problem in the country, but it is surprising to know that faculty members are losing popularity among colleagues and relatives due to the admission issue. It is unfortunate to see a faculty member finding it difficult to relate well with colleagues or friends because he or she failed to help secure admission for their children. With respect to social capital theory (Coleman, 1988), social capital functions as "information channels," providing

appropriate information as an important basis for action. As such, most of the KASU faculty spend a good amount of time explaining to parents and all concerned that not all applicants can be admitted. This level of interaction between parents and their children and faculty helps to ease some admission tension and anxiety.

Many participants handled the shock and disappointment of denial by relying on faith in God with determination and hard work. It is common to see college students and applicants displaying their inherited cultural belief in God and their determination to remain focused, with their minds set for achievement despite the number of times they have been denied admission. It is notable that Nigerians are religiously inclined citizens. The country is characterized by three major religious groups: Christianity, Islam, and traditional religion. The first two are of foreign origin. Islam came from North Africa, while Christianity came from Europe. The two have taken firm roots in the native consciousness. The introduction and spread of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria, though initially championed by foreign missionaries, has now become deeply rooted in the hearts of its citizens (Fayokun, 2007). Most of the youths who have not gained admission and were brought up in a Christian family are very active in church activities. The belief in God's providence helped to keep so many youth focused and willing to study very hard even after the disappointment of not being admitted.

Encouragement and support given to children when they are denied admission emerged strongly among all the participants as the best way to cope. The best way parents responded was to encourage their children to develop the means that could help them remain focused and determined. Even though some parents were aggressive and

harsh toward their children for not gaining admission, it was agreed that parents should not stop supporting their children financially and should not think they are wasting money on an investment that is not fruitful. Allowing children to pursue admission on their own is not the best way to respond because it leaves the children vulnerable to any societal mischief. The encouragement and support that parents give to their children is related to Bourdieu and Passeron (1979)'s cultural habits and dispositions inherited from the family that are fundamentally important to the school success of children. Parents should handle the situation of their children's admission crisis by encouraging and supporting them as they pass on cultural values to their children for continued education success.

Non-admitted students were convinced that most of their parents were patient with them when they failed to gain admission. Parents need to be aware that losing patience with their children will be the beginning of their children's doom. Coleman's (1988) theory of social capital presents educational expectation, norms, and obligations that exist within a family or a community that are important and influence the level of parental involvement and investment, which in turn affects the academic achievement of their children. Since this theory promotes interaction between parents and their children, parents should be cognizant that they have the responsibility to empower their children, using education as the main tool to liberate and educate them. This, in turn, works to improve the global economy.

This study suggests that some parents remained supportive of their children's decision to continue with their academic pursuit and took it upon themselves to make all helpful contacts to help their children secure admission. According to Lin (2001), the fact

that social capital is an investment in relationships that helps the individual take part in a relationship or network to gain knowledge about available resources is appropriate to this study. In a similar way, the concept of "shigashigai nema" (personal contacts) represents parental participation in the student's education with the aim of gaining admission. The study confirmed the high levels of interaction between parents and children and all those involved in the pursuit of their children's education (Coleman, 1988). Parents' involvement in the affairs of their children's admission process is critical to gaining admission.

Implications for Admission Policy and Practice

The following are recommendations for policy and practice to curtail admission corruption and frustration and increase admission for candidates attempting to gain access to university education. This study shows that applicants with "godfathers" and high societal connection are the ones that are highly favored for admission. Those with high scores in each matriculation examination should be given first consideration for their choice of course and institution before other candidates with low scores or "godfathers." Based on conversations with Dr. Kure, 45% of available spaces reserved for merit-based candidates should be revised, allowing the university to admit applicants based on their ability and the admission guidelines set by each university.

Almost all the participants believed that the quota system is an unjust system of admission, not ensuring equity or merit due to its defective formulation, whereby those who are in charge of admission accept candidates from their own regions more than others. To enhance equitable access to universities, the issues of the quota system should be carefully reviewed to enable candidates to gain admission based directly on their

JAMB performance, O'level result, and university admission requirements. Furthermore, since the majority of students believe that the 20% available spaces reserved for the vice-chancellor's discretion most times is used for manipulation and granting admission to selected candidates, this should be eliminated from the admission policy and be merged with the percentage reserved for merit (45%). In the case of merit-based versus family influence, parents with high socioeconomic status should understand that acceptance of their children into college must be based on merit, not on their parents' ability to do "shigashigai nema." Therefore, it is the responsibility of the faculty and staff of the university to orient parents on how the admission process works and reinforce a merit-based admission policy that does not allow rich parents to influence admission decisions.

Religion has found its way deeply into the Nigerian system of government, causing many people to become fanatical about their faith and allowing it to influence the admission of students to universities and choice courses. For any university to admit qualified students, religious sectionalism should be discouraged. Admission and choice of majors should be based on merit, creating more admission opportunities to all regions regardless of religion.

Coping with Admission Challenges and Difficulties

Many youth seeking admission go through a lot of challenges and difficulties before gaining admission into university. The challenges they encounter have denied many potential Nigerian candidates access to university education. In order to remedy the situation, the following recommendations are made:

- This study revealed that many candidates become emotionally depressed when they have failed to gain admission. Government at the local council

level, through the help of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), should organize a good orientation program that will help candidates who are still seeking admission to have something to do that can empower them to be useful until they finally gain admission. The orientation should also focus on changing the students' behavior that affects their personality and negative attitude. The orientation should help the youth develop the spirit of dignity of labor and reduce the desire for university education for those who do not have the qualification requirements to attend university.

- This study revealed that socioeconomic hardship has deprived many qualified candidates of the opportunity to attend university because they cannot even afford to pay for the entrance examination fee or travel to the examination centers. Resources should be reallocated into the educational sector to introduce free university education, enabling low-income candidates to have access to university education. In the case of funding, government with other stakeholders, including local government councils, should be jointly responsible for the funding system to enable an affordable entrance examination fee. Private universities should also lower fees to be affordable to those children from low-income earners.

- Parents have good intentions to educate their children, but they may be unable to do so due to their financial circumstances. They should encourage and support their children's education at all times, regardless of financial circumstances.

- In order to reduce admission pressure, universities that have large numbers of applicants yearly should introduce evening or weekend part-time programs to absorb more candidates for degree programs. More state universities should be established in every state, and university manpower should be increased by training more staff and recruiting more faculty with adequate funding to enable provision of necessary facilities. The existing infrastructure in government-owned institutions should be expanded while private schools with land to spare should be encouraged to expand their facilities with government assistance. Furthermore, other institutions of higher learning, such as polytechnics and colleges of education, should be expanded to start awarding bachelor's degrees. This will help to diffuse the congestion of intakes in the universities and create more admission opportunity.

Ways Students Can Overcome Admission Shocks and Disappointment

Participants were shocked and disappointed when they failed to gain admission, but they were able to develop various means to overcome their shock and disappointment. In order to reduce admission disappointment among the youth, the following steps are recommended:

- Religion plays a prominent role in the lives of most Nigerians, and most have faith in God. Those who secured admission believed that faith in God and the ability to study hard and never to relent played a critical role in helping them to achieve their goal through prayers and hard work. Therefore, parents should bring up their children morally and in a proper religious way that can help them to remain strong in faith, no matter what difficulties and challenges they

may face in life. Since religious and moral education is offered in secondary schools as one of the compulsory subjects, students should be looked into as threshing floor for higher education and so be well prepared to make the transition to higher education through proper counseling. Traditional African values such as family solidarity, group cohesiveness, and social commitment that exist within clans and tribes should continue to provide strong motivation for the youth.

- Candidates should be able to take their examination in any part of the country without the stress and expense of traveling to an examination center far from his or her home. Open Universities and Distance Learning (ODL) should be encouraged with minimal fees to pay. Government policymakers should mount campaigns to educate the public of the advantages of ODL. The admission policy should be flexible and open to everyone without any discrimination.

- Candidates who get the cutoff mark on the JAMB but fail to pass the Post UME should be given the opportunity to use their JAMB result until he or she passes the Post UME with a score that could earn him or her admission into the university. In addition, a candidate should also be given the chance to take the Post UME of one or two universities. Candidates complained that most of the examination questions set by the JAMB and Post UME are not based on their field of interest. Therefore, the JAMB and Post UME should administer exams that are based on a variety of fields.

Parents' Means of Coping with Admission Issues

The last section presented how parents should cope with admission issues for their children. The following are the recommendations: Parents should be supportive, especially during the admission process and provide moral support and basic assistance for their children when they are denied admission.

The choice of courses plays a major role in admission failure because students often aim for courses they cannot pass during the Post UME. Highly competitive courses attract many applicants who will not be admitted due to their high demand. The study shows that some parents impose their will on their children by forcing them to choose a particular field or university. Parents should not force their children to choose a particular profession or university if the child is not willing to do so or lacks the necessary academic skills. Students should choose courses they can succeed in and choose a university for which the parents can afford to pay the fee and which is accredited with the NUC. Parents should also be able to send their child for tutorials since the tutorial has proven to be effective in increasing college admittance. It should be an obligation of the parents to monitor the admission stages and make all the necessary inquiries. In the case of admission denial, parents should respond to the situation of their children with patience and a high sense of understanding.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was conducted at a single university in Kaduna State (KASU), even though the participants came from the four regions of the country. A replicate study involving some universities in the north, south, east, and west should be carried out in order to gather broader perspectives representing all the regions of the country. Future research should also be considered for universities to improve their admission process.

Such study may help to understand the perception of parents and students regarding their ideas for improving the admission process. Future research can also be conducted on those who have academic deficiencies to help such applicants secure admission and help to build their future.

Conclusion

The main issue considered in this study was the fact that the number of students who seek university education exceeds the current capacity of Nigerian higher education. The study exposed the challenges youth and parents face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain factors and admission policies. The study argued that admission into Nigerian universities is based on a combination of merit, personal connections (godfatherism) and money (bribery). The preponderance of these three elements suggests a system in which admission policy is rooted in merit, personal connections (shigashigai nema) and financial corruption (money). The research suggests that the admission processes of Nigerian universities are not efficient, nor do they function well to create enough admission opportunities for those with potential who have financial constraints and no one to stand for them.

As a result of the unethical practices regarding admission taking place in the universities, youth and parents are deeply concerned about the crisis of admission, whereby academically less qualified applicants are admitted through personal connections with those in power. Some universities and departments are increasingly losing their credibility, integrity, and honor. This is largely due to a decline in the cherished values of objectivity, fairness, service to humanity, productivity, and search for the truth at all costs. Multi-faceted patterns of corrupt practices have been perpetuated in

the Nigerian universities so that many youth seeking admission lose confidence in the system. Most young individuals, who are discouraged with the entire system, have changed their minds and decided to go into different fields of life. Some who gain admission through dubious means (personal connections and money), are unable to successfully complete university-level work.

Until our policymakers implement and practice the suggested recommendations, we may not be effective in the implementation of Nigerian policy on higher education; i.e., to contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training and to develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and the society. It can therefore be concluded that that the best way to increase quantitative and qualitative admission into universities is to invest more in higher education and reform the policy systems constraining universities from absorbing more qualified students.

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Appendix A

APPROVAL LETTERS

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES
Department of Education Leadership, Management & Policy

APPROVAL FOR DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Candidate _____Peter K. Bakwaph_ _____, has successfully completed all requisite requirements. This candidate's proposal has been reviewed and the candidate may proceed to collect data according to the approved proposal for dissertation, under the direction of the mentor and the candidate's dissertation committee.

If there are substantive differences between what has been approved in the proposal and the actual study, the final dissertation should indicate, on a separate page in the Appendix, the approval of the committee for those changes.

Title of Proposed Dissertation: _Admission crises in Nigerian universities: The challenges youth_

and parents face in seeking admission _____

_____

_____

Dissertation Committee:

Mentor
(sign/date): _____ 4/30/12

Committee Member
(sign/date): _____ 4/30/12

Committee Member (sign/date):
_____ 4/30/12

Committee Member (sign/date):
_____

Approved by Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board on

_____

Department Chairperson (sign/date):

_____

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
1 8 5 6

June 6, 2012

Peter Kanyip Bakwaph
333 Sneden Place West
Spring Valley, NY 10977

Dear Rev. Bakwaph,

The Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board has reviewed the information you have submitted addressing the concerns for your proposal entitled "Admission Crises in Nigerian Universities: The Challenges Youth and Parents Face in Seeking Admission." Your research protocol is hereby approved as revised through expedited review. The IRB reserves the right to recall the proposal at any time for full review.

Enclosed for your records are the signed Request for Approval form, the stamped Recruitment Flyer, and the stamped original Consent Form. Make copies only of these stamped forms.

The Institutional Review Board approval of your research is valid for a one-year period from the date of this letter. During this time, any changes to the research protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

According to federal regulations, continuing review of already approved research is mandated to take place at least 12 months after this initial approval. You will receive communication from the IRB Office for this several months before the anniversary date of your initial approval.

Thank you for your cooperation.

In harmony with federal regulations, none of the investigators or research staff involved in the study took part in the final decision.

Sincerely,

Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.
Professor
Director, Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Eunyoung Kim

Office of Institutional Review Board
Presidents Hall • 400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079 • Tel: 973.313.6314 • Fax: 973.275.2361 • *www.shu.edu*

A   HOME   FOR   THE   MIND,   THE   HEART   AND   THE   SPIRIT

APPENDIX B

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN KASU

Barr. Sani,

The registrar

KASU

Dear Sir,

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN KASU

I write to seek for permission to come over to Nigeria and conduct a qualitative research interview with few students and lecturers in your university KASU, in the months of June to August.

As part of the Institutional Review Board policy of Seton Hall University, I am expected to get a written permission letter from your university granting me the permission to conduct a research interview and observation in your institution, which I chose for my research.

I am a catholic priest from Kaduna Archdiocese, presently doing my Ph.D. program in Higher education leadership, management and policy at Seton Hall University, New Jersey, USA. The title of my dissertation is "Admission crises in Nigerian universities: the challenges youth and parents face in seeking admission." The study is meant to reviews research on the historical overview of the Nigerian higher education system, organizational system of Nigerian universities, and scholarly views on the factors (such as inadequate number of universities/absorption capacity in Nigeria, lack of adequate facilities and shortage of Adequate Manpower) and admission policies (such as carrying capacity, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states) that are responsible for the admission crisis in Nigeria, which have direct effect on some parents and students regarding admission. My research is limited to Kaduna State only with KASU as the research field.

I will be glad if my request will be granted and letter of permission will be given to me for my school to permit me to conduct my research. I also present Dr. Alex Kure as one of my referees in KASU to assist me in pursuit of this goal.

Thank you for the cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Peter Bakwaph

Cc. Dr. Alex Kure.

KADUNA STATE UNIVERSITY (KASU)

VICE CHANCELLOR:
PROFESSOR W. B. QURIX
Ph.D Arc., M.A. Law & Diplomacy,
MNIA, IFMA (usa)

REGISTRAR:
SANI ABUBAKAR
LLB, (HONS), B.L. (HONS), B.Sc., MBA, NCE, CDB, AMNIM, MIMC
e-mail: sani5333@yahoo.com

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Kaduna, Nigeria
www.kasu.edu.ng

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

KASU/REG/191/VOL.1   25th April, 2012
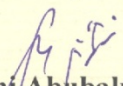
Fr. Peter Bakwaph,
C/o Dr. Alex Kure,
Department of English,
Kaduna State University,
Kaduna

Sir,

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN KASU

I am pleased to convey the Vice Chancellor's approval for you to conduct your research in Kaduna State University (KASU) with effect from June to August 2012 as contained in your letter dated Tuesday, April 24, 2012.

2. I wish you the best in your research work.

Sani Abubakar
Registrar
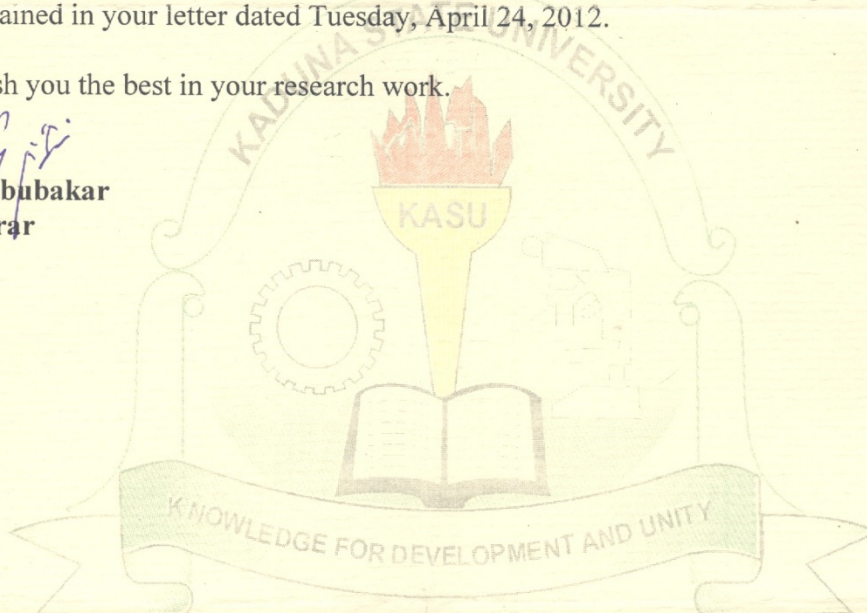
APPENDIX C

LETTERS OF SOLICITATION

Letter of Solicitation

Dear Student,

My name is Peter Bakwaph. I am a Catholic priest of Kaduna Archdiocese and a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University in USA.

As you are aware gaining admission to university is a general problem in our country and so I have decided to conduct research on this area to see how we can improve access to university education.

As a valuable contributor to this research, you would be asked to participate in a 45 to 60 minute interview in English (depending on your schedule) which will be conducted in a semi-public place like library, classroom or any conducive environment within the campus, any day and time at your convenience between June18 and August 24, 2012. I am hoping that you will participate in this study, which may help our youth to gain access to university education. If you agree to participate in the study, here are two copies of informed consent form attached to this mail. Once you sign both copies of the informed consent form, I will have one copy to myself and you keep one copy for your records.

Participation in this study is voluntary and can be ended at any time. The interviews will be conducted face to face. I will ensure that all conversations remain confidential and with your permission, the interview will be recorded with a digital voice recorder and later to be transcribed. The transcripts will be stored into a USB memory flash drive and firmly kept in my home office. After the research is completed and when no longer necessary for research, all materials will be destroyed.

During the interview, I will ask you a few open-ended questions about what you think are the causes of admission problems. I will ask questions like, what do you think are the causes of admission problems? Do the problems perceived originate from: factors (such as inadequate number of universities, lack of adequate facilities and shortage of adequate manpower) and admission policies (such as carrying capacity, science/art ratio system, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states)? How can you assess the outcome of these factors and policies on your struggles for admission? Some questions I will ask include: What are the challenges and difficulties you went through while seeking admission to university? How did you handle the disappointment of not being admitted? What admission policy is the most helpful and how can that improve admission?

If you would like to participate or have any questions regarding the study, please free to contact me between June 13 and 22 at peter.bakwaph@student.shu.edu or through Dr. Alex Kure, alexkure@yahoo.com

Thank you in advance for your interest and I look forward to meeting you soon!

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Peter Bakwaph,

Doctoral candidate,

Seton Hall University, USA.

Letter of Solicitation

Dear Applicant,

My name is Peter Bakwaph. I am a Catholic priest of Kaduna Archdiocese and a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University in USA.

As you are aware gaining admission to university is a general problem in our country and so I have decided to conduct research on this area to see how we can improve access to university education.

As a valuable contributor to this research, you would be asked to participate in a 45 to 60 minute interview in English (depending on your schedule) which will be conducted in a semi-public place like library, classroom or any conducive environment within the campus, any day and time at your convenience between June18 and August 24, 2012. I am hoping that you will participate in this study, which may help our youth to gain access to university education. If you agree to participate in the study, here are two copies of informed consent form attached to this mail. Once you sign both copies of the informed consent form, I will have one copy to myself and you keep one copy for your records.

Participation in this study is voluntary and can be ended at any time. The interviews will be conducted face to face. I will ensure that all conversations remain confidential and with your permission, the interview will be recorded with a digital voice recorder and later to be transcribed. The transcripts will be stored into a USB memory flash drive and firmly kept in my home office. After the research is completed and when no longer necessary for research, all materials will be destroyed.

During the interview, I will ask you a few open-ended questions about what you think are the causes of admission problems. I will ask questions like, what do you think are the causes of admission problems? Do the problems perceived originate from: factors (such as inadequate number of universities, lack of adequate facilities and shortage of adequate manpower) and admission policies (such as carrying capacity, science/art ratio system, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states)? How can you assess the outcome of these factors and policies on your struggles for admission? Some questions I will ask include: What are the challenges and difficulties you are going through while seeking admission to university? How did you handle the disappointment of not being admitted previously? What admission policy is the most helpful and how can that improve admission?

If you would like to participate or have any questions regarding the study, please free to contact me between June 13 and 22 at peter.bakwaph@student.shu.edu

Thank you in advance for your interest and I look forward to meeting you soon!

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Peter Bakwaph,

Doctoral candidate,

Seton Hall University, USA.

Letter of Solicitation

Dear Parent,

My name is Peter Bakwaph. I am a Catholic priest of Kaduna Archdiocese and a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University in USA.

As you are aware gaining admission to university is a general problem in our country and so I have decided to conduct research on this area to see how we can improve access to university education.

As a valuable contributor to this research, you would be asked to participate in a 45 to 60 minute interview in English (depending on your schedule) which will be conducted in a semi-public place like library, classroom or any conducive environment within the campus, any day and time at your convenience between June18 and August 24, 2012. I am hoping that you will participate in this study, which may help our youth to gain access to university education. If you agree to participate in the study, here are two copies of informed consent form attached to this mail. Once you sign both copies of the informed consent form, I will have one copy to myself and you keep one copy for your records.

Participation in this study is voluntary and can be ended at any time. The interviews will be conducted face to face. I will ensure that all conversations remain confidential and with your permission, the interview will be recorded with a digital voice recorder and later to be transcribed. The transcripts will be stored into a USB memory flash drive and firmly kept in my home office. After the research is completed and when no longer necessary for research, all materials will be destroyed.

During the interview, I will ask you a few open-ended questions about what you think are the causes of admission problems. I will ask questions like, what do you think are the causes of admission problems? Do the problems perceived originate from: factors (such as inadequate number of universities, lack of adequate facilities and shortage of adequate manpower) and admission policies (such as carrying capacity, science/art ratio system, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states)? How can you assess the outcome of these factors and policies on your struggles for admission? Some questions I will ask include: What are the challenges and difficulties you are going through while supporting your child in seeking admission to university? How did you handle the disappointment of your child not being admitted previously? What admission policy is the most helpful and how can that improve admission?

If you would like to participate or have any questions regarding the study, please free to contact me between June 13 and 22 at peter.bakwaph@student.shu.edu

Thank you in advance for your interest and I look forward to meeting you soon!

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Peter Bakwaph,

Doctoral candidate,

Seton Hall University, USA.

Letter of Solicitation

Dear Admission Staff,

My name is Peter Bakwaph. I am a Catholic priest of Kaduna Archdiocese and a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University in USA.

As you are aware gaining admission to university is a general problem in our country and so I have decided to conduct research on this area to see how we can improve access to university education.

As a valuable contributor to this research, you would be asked to participate in a 45 to 60 minute interview in English (depending on your schedule) which will be conducted in a semi-public place like library, classroom or any conducive environment within the campus, any day and time at your convenience between June18 and August 24, 2012. I am hoping that you will participate in this study, which may help our youth to gain access to university education. If you agree to participate in the study, here are two copies of informed consent form attached to this mail. Once you sign both copies of the informed consent form, I will have one copy to myself and you keep one copy for your records.

Participation in this study is voluntary and can be ended at any time. The interviews will be conducted face to face. I will ensure that all conversations remain confidential and with your permission, the interview will be recorded with a digital voice recorder and later to be transcribed. The transcripts will be stored into a USB memory flash drive and firmly kept in my home office. After the research is completed and when no longer necessary for research, all materials will be destroyed.

During the interview, I will ask you a few open-ended questions about what you think are the causes of admission problems. I will ask questions like, what do you think are the causes of admission problems? Do the problems perceived originate from: factors (such as inadequate number of universities, lack of adequate facilities and shortage of adequate manpower) and admission policies (such as carrying capacity, science/art ratio system, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states)? How can you assess the outcome of these factors and policies as you see applicants struggle for admission into your university? How can you assess the JAMB criteria and do you think guide rules are fair enough for student admission? What were the challenges and difficulties you go through while processing university admission? What are the possible ways that these factors and admission policies can be improved to facilitate admission? What do you think the university can do to develop methods or means that can improve its absorption capacity to increase admission rate**?**

If you would like to participate or have any questions regarding the study, please free to contact me between June 13 and 22 at peter.bakwaph@student.shu.edu or through Dr. Alex Kure, alexkure@yahoo.com

Thank you in advance for your interest and I look forward to meeting you soon!

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Peter Bakwaph,

Doctoral candidate,

Seton Hall University, USA.

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

Informed Consent Form
(Students from Kaduna State University (KASU)

Admission crises in Nigerian universities

Researcher's Affiliation
Fr. Peter Bakwaph, is the individual person conducting this research study, and is doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University in USA.

Purpose of the Research Study
The purpose of this study is to discover the challenges youth and parents face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain issues and admission policies.

Research Procedures
This study employs in depth interviewing methodology. Those selected to participate in this study are university students from Kaduna State University (KASU). The duration of the participation is 45 to 60 minutes, depending on their availability and willingness to provide detail information. The interview will be conducted in English and information gathered from this research will be used solely for the purpose of this study and any publications that may result from this study. During the interview, which will take place in a private place such as the participant's home, library, classroom or any quiet place within the campus, and the interview questions will focus on the students' feelings and experiences on the challenges they face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain issues and admission policies such as inadequate number of universities in Nigeria, lack of adequate facilities, shortage of sufficient lecturers, carrying capacity, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states. With the participant's permission, the interview will be audio-recorded with a digital voice recorder. Participants may review the digital file after the interview. If the participant does not wish his/her interview to be recorded, the researcher will only take notes during the interview.

Instrument
No questionnaires or survey instrument are used in this research

Voluntary Participation
Participation in this study is voluntary and can be ended at any time. The participants have the right to participate fully or discontinue at any time and it will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits that he or she may be entitle to.

Anonymity

There is no anonymity in this study because the researcher will know who the participants are.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be ensured by making use of pseudonyms to all the participants and making sure that the list that links the pseudonyms to the actual participants is kept safe. Research notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information will be in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher. All electronic data will be stored on a USB memory flash drive. After the research is completed, the audio files will be destroyed. When no longer necessary for research, all materials will be destroyed.

Audio Records

Audio records will be kept confidential on a separate USB memory flash drive (transferred from the voice recorder). This USB memory flash drive will also be stored in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher until the study is completed. Each participant has the opportunity to obtain a copy of their interview (both audio and transcribed). Participants should tell the researcher if a copy of the interview is desired or not.

Risks or Discomforts

There are minimal to no risks involved in this study.

Benefits

While there are no foreseeable direct financial benefits to participants, it is anticipated that the results of this study will help researchers to gain a better understanding of the admission policies for administrators and policy makers at institutions of higher education in Nigeria. No direct benefit to the participants except that the knowledge gained will help to improve admission system in the country.

Compensation

There is no monetary compensation to the participant.

Contact Information

If you have questions regarding this research project, you may contact Fr. Peter Bakwaph at peter.bakwaph@student.shu.edu   Faculty Advisor, Eunyoung Kim, can be contacted at 973-275-2156 or at eunyoung.kim@shu.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a human research subject, you may contact Dr. Mary Ruzicka, director of Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research at (973) 313-6314 or irb@shu.edu.

___   I agree to participate in the study
___   I agree to be audio taped when I am interviewed

Please sign and date two copies of this form. One copy will be stored by the researcher; the other copy is for your records.

Name:

Signature: Date

**Informed Consent Form
(Applicant)**

Admission crises in Nigerian universities

Researcher's Affiliation
Fr. Peter Bakwaph, is the individual person conducting this research study, and is doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University in USA.

Purpose of the Research Study
The purpose of this study is to discover the challenges youth and parents face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain issues and admission policies.

Research Procedures
This study employs in depth interviewing methodology. Those selected to participate in this study are applicants from Kaduna State. The duration of the participation is 45 to 60 minutes, depending on their availability and willingness to provide detail information. The interview will be conducted in English and information gathered from this research will be used solely for the purpose of this study and any publications that may result from this study. During the interview, which will take place in a private place such as the participant's home, library, classroom or any quiet place within Kaduna town, and the interview questions will focus on the applicant's feelings and experiences on the challenges they face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain issues and admission policies such as inadequate number of universities in Nigeria, lack of adequate facilities, shortage of sufficient lecturers, carrying capacity, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states. With the participant's permission, the interview will be audio-recorded with a digital voice recorder. Participants may review the digital file after the interview. If the participant does not wish his/her interview to be recorded, the researcher will only take notes during the interview.

Instrument
No questionnaires or survey instrument are used in this research

Voluntary Participation
Participation in this study is voluntary and can be ended at any time. The participants have the right to participate fully or discontinue at any time and it will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits that he or she may be entitle to.

Anonymity

There is no anonymity in this study because the researcher will know who the participants are.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be ensured by making use of pseudonyms to all the participants and making sure that the list that links the pseudonyms to the actual participants is kept safe. Research notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information will be in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher. All electronic data will be stored on a USB memory flash drive. After the research is completed, the audio files will be destroyed. When no longer necessary for research, all materials will be destroyed.

Audio Records

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Risks or Discomforts

There are minimal to no risks involved in this study.

Benefits

While there are no foreseeable direct financial benefits to participants, it is anticipated that the results of this study will help researchers to gain a better understanding of the admission policies for administrators and policy makers at institutions of higher education in Nigeria. No direct benefit to the participants except that the knowledge gained will help to improve admission system in the country.

Compensation

There is no monetary compensation to the participant.

Contact Information

If you have questions regarding this research project, you may contact Fr. Peter Bakwaph at peter.bakwaph@student.shu.edu Faculty Advisor, Eunyoung Kim, can be contacted at 973-275-2156 or at eunyoung.kim@shu.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a human research subject, you may contact Dr. Mary Ruzicka, director of Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research at (973) 313-6314 or irb@shu.edu.

___   I agree to participate in the study

___   I agree to be audio taped when I am interviewed

Please sign and date two copies of this form. One copy will be stored by the researcher; the other copy is for your records.

Name:

Signature: Date:

Informed Consent Form
(Parents)

Admission crises in Nigerian universities

Researcher's Affiliation

Fr. Peter Bakwaph, is the individual person conducting this research study, and is doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University in USA.

Purpose of the Research Study

The purpose of this study is to discover the challenges youth and parents face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain issues and admission policies.

Research Procedures

This study employs in depth interviewing methodology. Those selected to participate in this study are parents from Kaduna State. The duration of the participation is 45 to 60 minutes, depending on their availability and willingness to provide detail information. The interview will be conducted in English and information gathered from this research will be used solely for the purpose of this study and any publications that may result from this study. During the interview, which will take place in a private place such as the participant's home, office, or any quiet place within Kaduna town, and the interview questions will focus on the parents' feelings and experiences on the challenges they face in supporting their children in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain issues and admission policies such as inadequate number of universities in Nigeria, lack of adequate facilities, shortage of sufficient lecturers, carrying capacity, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states. With the participant's permission, the interview will be audio-recorded with a digital voice recorder. Participants may review the digital file after the interview. If the participant does not wish his/her interview to be recorded, the researcher will only take notes during the interview.

Instrument

No questionnaires or survey instrument are used in this research

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary and can be ended at any time. The participants have the right to participate fully or discontinue at any time and it will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits that he or she may be entitle to.

Anonymity
There is no anonymity in this study because the researcher will know who the participants are.

Confidentiality
Confidentiality will be ensured by making use of pseudonyms to all the participants and making sure that the list that links the pseudonyms to the actual participants is kept safe. Research notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information will be in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher. All electronic data will be stored on a USB memory flash drive. After the research is completed, the audio files will be destroyed. When no longer necessary for research, all materials will be destroyed.

Audio Records
Audio records will be kept confidential on a separate USB memory flash drive (transferred from the voice recorder). This USB memory flash drive will also be stored in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher until the study is completed. Each participant has the opportunity to obtain a copy of their interview (both audio and transcribed). Participants should tell the researcher if a copy of the interview is desired or not.

Risks or Discomforts
There are minimal to no risks involved in this study.

Benefits
While there are no foreseeable direct financial benefits to participants, it is anticipated that the results of this study will help researchers to gain a better understanding of the admission policies for administrators and policy makers at institutions of higher education in Nigeria. No direct benefit to the participants except that the knowledge gained will help to improve admission system in the country.

Compensation
There is no monetary compensation to the participant.

Contact Information
If you have questions regarding this research project, you may contact Fr. Peter Bakwaph at peter.bakwaph@student.shu.edu   Faculty Advisor, Eunyoung Kim, can be contacted at 973-275-2156 or at eunyoung.kim@shu.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a human research subject, you may contact Dr. Mary Ruzicka, director of Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research at (973) 313-6314 or irb@shu.edu.

___   I agree to participate in the study

___ I agree to be audio taped when I am interviewed

Please sign and date two copies of this form. One copy will be stored by the researcher; the other copy is for your records.

Name:

Signature: Date

Informed Consent Form
(Admission Staff)

Admission crisis in Nigerian universities

Researcher's Affiliation
Fr. Peter Bakwaph, is the individual person conducting this research study, and is doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University in USA.

Purpose of the Research Study
The purpose of this study is to discover the challenges youth and parents face in seeking admission to Nigerian universities as posed by certain issues and admission policies.

Research Procedures
This study employs in depth interviewing methodology. Those selected to participate in this study are university staff in charge of admission in Kaduna State University (KASU). The duration of the participation is 45 to 60 minutes, depending on their availability and willingness to provide detail information. The interview will be conducted in English and information gathered from this research will be used solely for the purpose of this study and any publications that may result from this study. During the interview, which will take place in a private place such as the participant's home, library, office or any quiet place within the campus, and the interview questions will focus on the staff feelings and experiences on the challenges they face when applicants are seeking admission to Nigerian universities. With the participant's permission, the interview will be audio-recorded with a digital voice recorder. Participants may review the digital file after the interview. If the participant does not wish his/her interview to be recorded, the researcher will only take notes during the interview.

Instrument
No questionnaires or survey instrument are used in this research

Voluntary Participation
Participation in this study is voluntary and can be ended at any time. The participants have the right to participate fully or discontinue at any time and it will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits that he or she may be entitle to.

Anonymity

There is no anonymity in this study because the researcher will know who the participants are.

Confidentiality
Confidentiality will be ensured by making use of pseudonyms to all the participants and making sure that the list that links the pseudonyms to the actual participants is kept safe. Research notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information will be in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher. All electronic data will be stored on a USB memory flash drive. After the research is completed, the audio files will be destroyed. When no longer necessary for research, all materials will be destroyed.

Audio Records
Audio records will be kept confidential on a separate USB memory flash drive (transferred from the voice recorder). This USB memory flash drive will also be stored in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher until the study is completed. Each participant has the opportunity to obtain a copy of their interview (both audio and transcribed). Participants should tell the researcher if a copy of the interview is desired or not.

Risks or Discomforts
There are minimal to no risks involved in this study.

Benefits
While there are no foreseeable direct financial benefits to participants, it is anticipated that the results of this study will help researchers to gain a better understanding of the admission policies for administrators and policy makers at institutions of higher education in Nigeria. No direct benefit to the participants except that the knowledge gained will help to improve admission system in the country.

Compensation
There is no monetary compensation to the participant.

Contact Information
If you have questions regarding this research project, you may contact Fr. Peter Bakwaph at peter.bakwaph@student.shu.edu   Faculty Advisor, Eunyoung Kim, can be contacted at 973-275-2156 or at eunyoung.kim@shu.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a human research subject, you may contact Dr. Mary Ruzicka, director of Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research at (973) 313-6314 or irb@shu.edu.

___   I agree to participate in the study

___   I agree to be audio taped when I am interviewed

Please sign and date two copies of this form. One copy will be stored by the researcher; the other copy is for your records.

Name:

Signature: Date:

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Student Interview Questions

Date:_____   Student:_____

1. Tell me little about yourself: What are you studying and what do you want to do after you graduate from university?

2. When and how were you admitted into this university?

3. Can you tell me how you feel about this admission problem in our country?"

4. Do you remember an occasion where you or any of your friends was denied admission to university? How many times did you apply for admission before you got? Why were you denied?

5. What do you think are the causes of the problems? Do the problems perceived originate from: factors (such as inadequate number of universities/absorption capacity in Nigeria, lack of adequate facilities and shortage of Adequate Manpower) and admission policies (such as carrying capacity, science/art ratio system, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states)?

How can you assess the outcome of these factors and policies on your struggles for admission?

6. What was your experience with JAMB criteria and do you think they were fair enough for you?

7. What were the challenges and difficulties you went through while seeking admission to university

8. Tell me more on how you responded and coped with the difficulties and hardship of seeking admission when you know that you were competent but denied admission?

9. How did you handle the disappointment of not being admitted? How did your parents feel and how did they handle it?

10. How best you think should youth and parents cope with admission difficulties?

11. What admission policy is the most helpful to you and how can that lessen admission problems?

12. What do you think NUC and JAMB can do to develop methods that can improve university absorption capacity to increase admission rate**?**

13. If you could change one thing about the university's admission process and policies, what would it be to improve admission?

Applicant Interview Questions

Date:_____   Applicants:_____

1. Tell me little about yourself: What are you seeking to study and what do you want to do after you graduate from the university?
2. What is your experience about the tutorial that you are now taking to prepare for JAMB exam? Is it helpful to you toward your pursuit of admission? And how?
3. Do you remember how many times you applied for admission to university? Why were you denied?
4. Can you tell me how you feel about this admission problem in our country?"
5. What do you think are the causes of the problems? Do the problems perceived originate from: factors (such as inadequate number of universities/absorption capacity in Nigeria, lack of adequate facilities and shortage of Adequate Manpower) and admission policies (such as carrying capacity, science/art ratio system, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states)?
                                    How can you assess the outcome of these factors and policies on your struggles for admission?
6. What was your experience with JAMB criteria and do you think they were fair enough for you?
7. What were the challenges and difficulties you went through while seeking admission to university

8. Tell me more on how you responded and coped with the difficulties and hardship of seeking admission when you know that you were competent but denied admission?
9. How did you handle the disappointment of not being admitted? How did your parents feel and how did they handle it?
10. How best you think should youth and parents cope with admission difficulties?
11. What admission policy is the most helpful to you and how can that lessen admission problems?
12. What do you think NUC and JAMB can do to develop methods that can improve university absorption capacity to increase admission rate**?**
13. If you could change one thing about the university's admission process and policies, what would it be to improve admission?

Parents Interview Questions

Date:_____   Parents_____

1. Tell me little about yourself: What job are you doing? How many children do you have? How many in the university and what is your desire for them?
2. How many children do you have seeking admission to university now? How many times did they apply for admission?
3. What has been your role in the education of your child and what major role have you been playing as a parent towards your child's admission into university?
4. Are you okay with the situation of admission in the country? Can you tell me how you feel about this admission problem in our country?
5. What do you think are the causes of the problems? Do the problems perceived originate from: factors (such as inadequate number of universities/absorption capacity in Nigeria, lack of adequate facilities and shortage of Adequate Manpower) and admission policies (such as carrying capacity, science/art ratio system, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states)?   How can you assess the outcome of these factors and policies on your child struggles for admission?
6. How can you assess the JAMB criteria and do you think they were fair enough for student admission? Why so many applicants are denied admission?

7. Tell me more on how you respond and cope with the difficulties and hardship of admission especially when your child was denied admission?
8. What were the challenges and difficulties you went through while processing university admission for your child?
9. How did you handle the disappointment of your child not being admitted? How did your child feel and how did he/she handles it?
10. What admission policy is the most helpful to you and how can that lessen admission problems?
11. How best you think should youth and parents cope with admission difficulties?
12. What do you think NUC and JAMB can do to develop methods that can improve university absorption capacity to increase admission rate**?**
13. If you could change one thing about the university's admission process and policies, what would it be to improve admission?

Admission Staff Interview Questions

Date:_____   Admission Staff_____

1. Tell me little about yourself: What job are you doing in this university? How long have you been in this job and what do you hope to achieve from this job?
2. Why did you choose to work in this University and are you okay with the situation of admission in your office? How can you assess the admission process in this university?
3. Can you tell me how you feel about this admission problem in our country?"
4. What do you think are the causes of the problems? Do the problems perceived originate from: factors (such as inadequate number of universities/absorption capacity in Nigeria, lack of adequate facilities and shortage of Adequate Manpower) and admission policies (such as carrying capacity, science/art ratio system, catchment areas, and quota for educationally disadvantaged states)? How can you assess the outcome of these factors and policies on your struggles for admission?
5. How can you assess the JAMB criteria and do you think they were fair enough for student admission? Why so many applicants are denied admission?

6. Tell me more on how applicants respond and cope with the difficulties and hardship of admission especially when they are denied admission? What do you think about their parents' reaction?
7. What were the challenges and difficulties you go through while processing university admission?
8. What is the most difficult situation you have faced in terms of student admission?
9. How do you feel and handle situation when you see only few applicants are admitted and high number are unplaced? Why such high number and how do you feel about such situation?
10. Are there other ways or means the university has to enhance student admission? Which of these ways or means do you think are most rewarding and why?
11. In what ways do you see yourself working in line with the university mission to improve admission?
12. What admission policy is the most helpful to you and how can that lessen admission problems?
13. What are the possible ways that these factors and admission policies can be improved to facilitate admission?
14. What do you think the university can do to develop methods or means that can improve its absorption capacity to increase admission rate?
15. If you could change one thing about the university's admission process and policies, what would it be to improve admission?