

A Comparative Study of Access to University Education in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined access to university education in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria. It employed the strategies of a descriptive survey design. The study population comprised all the 3 universities in Ondo and Ekiti States made up of one Federal university and 2 State universities. Out of this population, a sample of 2 universities was taken and selected through the purposive sampling technique while 102 respondents made up of 13 deans, 76 heads of departments and 13 faculty officers from the 2 universities were used for the study. The instrument used to collect data was an inventory while the data collected were analyzed using percentages. The findings show that access to university education in the 2 States allows increased production of high-level manpower. The level of access to university education was however greater in Ekiti State than in Ondo State. There was a greater access of female students into the universities than male students. Access to non-science courses was greater than access to science courses in the universities. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the governments of the 2 States should provide equal access for male and female students through effective counselling, motivation and encouragement. The governments could facilitate more male access through scholarships and increased bursaries to enable more male candidates enroll in the universities. Access to science courses could be improved through public enlightenment on the importance on science and technology in national development and through organizing remedial courses in science subjects for prospective students.

Key words: Population, instrument, education, development, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The term access poses some problems of definition. Researchers have however, defined it as the process of enrolling in a programme or a means of entering into certain courses of study (Marrett, 2000; O'Neal and Davis, 2000; Adeyemi, 2001). Thus, access to university education courses provides a preparation for students who intend to achieve higher education (Pantojas-Garcia, 2000; Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2006). This fact supported the argument made by Tsang (1988) that university education brings numerous economic and non-economic benefits to both individuals and society. Studies have shown that rates of return to education are higher than for physical capital investment (Psacharopoulos, 1985, Aghenta, 2001).

Thus, Tsang (1988) argued that in many developing countries, not only is access to higher levels of education still very limited, but the distribution of opportunities and resources among different social groups is highly unequal. Thus, in the Nigerian federal universities, the inability of the universities to admit more than 25% of the applicants in any given year led to the introduction such policies by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation

Examination such as the quota system to reflect Federal character. Under the quota system, 40% was for merit admission, 30% for equality of States, 20% of catchment area and 10% for university discretion. Up to the mid-1970s, merit was the main criterion for admission (Azelama, 1994; Nwagwu, 2000). However, Bamisaiye (1988) argued that one of the fundamental objectives of the quota system was to achieve a balanced development of different sectors of the economy and States of the country. These policies are however, not binding in State universities.

Female enrolment in the universities seems to have changed over the years in Nigerian universities. Data from the Federal Government Commission Report on Higher Education (1991) showed that in 1965, there were only 787 females out of the 7,709 university students or 10.2% of the total. The figures for 1980 were 17,099 females out of 77,791 or 21.9% and in 1990 there were 48,855 females out of 180,871 students or 27.05%. Information from the 1988-89 session shows that only about 45% of the total students in the conventional universities were enrolled in science-based subjects instead of the stipulated 60% (Kosemani, 1995; Nwagwu, 2000).

University education in Ondo and Ekiti States Nigeria dated back to 1981 with the establishment of the Federal University of Technology. In 1982, the University of Ado- Ekiti was established. These 2 higher institutions remained the only institutions in the 2 States producing high-level manpower until 1999 when the Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba- Akoko was established. Access to these universities seems to be the aftermath of the expansion of enrolments at the primary and secondary school levels which had far reaching effects on university admissions. The influx of pupils into secondary schools in the 2 States as a result of free secondary education that was embarked upon in the States at one time or the other seems to have great impact on admission in these institutions (Adeyemi, 1998).

The relevance of access to education could therefore be seen in the inauguration of the Universal Basic Education Programme, which is a response to the Universal Declaration of Human Right (1948) that stipulated the right of every citizen to basic education (Obanya, 2000; Babalola, 2000; Olubor and Unyimada, 2001; Adeniji, 2001). As a follow-up to this declaration, Section 19 of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution stipulated that government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal educational opportunities at all levels in line with the Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education (1998). As such, higher education is seen as a veritable sources of development, hence the need to make it accessible to all. There is no doubt however that some groups in developing countries have access to education more than others (Primus, 1998; Roberts, 1999; Adeyemi, 2001).

The manpower requirement approach also has great relevance to the access to university education in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria. This approach is based on the fact that any nation with plans or aspirations for economic development must consider the preparations of its human aspects of development (Aghenta, 2001). This idea supported Nwankwo = s (1981) argument that modern production has demand for precise skills and the number of people with those relevant skills. The relevance of this approach was confirmed by the Ashby Commission who used the approach to determine the need for qualified teachers in secondary schools for the period 1960 to 1980. In making this estimation, it was assumed that if the national economy was to achieve 4% of economy growth, the senior and intermediate manpower should grow at the rate of 8 and 13%, respectively (Adesina, 1981). Considering these rates of growth, the problem of access arises.

The purpose of the study: The purpose of this study was to examine the rate of access to university education in

Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria with a view to determining the relationship between access to university education and high Blevel manpower development in the 2 States. The study was restricted to only the universities in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria that were owned and financed by either the Federal or State Government.

Statement of the problem: The influx of students into secondary schools in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria has serious impact on higher education (Adeyemi, 2004). The increase in enrollment growth rate in the schools left much to be desired (Aghenta, 2000). Despite all the agreements entered into by Nigeria concerning eradicating illiteracy, the literacy rate in Nigeria is still very low (Babalola, 2000). There also seems to be widespread disparities in the access to university in Ondo and Ekiti States of Nigeria. Common observations in the schools = system have shown that many Nigerians were skeptical about the entire concept. As such, the issues of whether femela students have greater access to university educatiuon at the expense of male students in Ondo and Ekiti States of Nigeria constituted the problem which this study intended to examine. In addressing this problem, the following research questions were raised:

Research questions:

- What is relevance of access to university education in Ondo and Ekiti States Nigeria?
- What is the level of students = intake into the universities in Ondo and Ekiti States Nigeria between years 2001 and 2005?
- Do male students have greater access to university education than female students in each of the 2 States?
- What is the access of students into science and non-science courses in universities in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria?
- Is there any difference in the access to science courses in the universities between male and female students in the 2 States?
- Is there any difference in the access to non- science courses in the universities between male and female students in each of the 2 States?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was designed as a descriptive survey. A survey is a study involving a planned collection of data over a large area for the purpose of making description (Oppenheim, 1992). Considering his point, the study population comprised all the 3 universities in Ondo and Ekiti States made up of one Federal university and

2 State universities. Out of this population, a sample of 2 universities, one in Ondo State and the other in Ekiti State was taken and selected through the purposive sampling technique. A total of 102 respondents made up of 13 deans, 76 heads of departments and 13 faculty officers from the 2 universities was used for the study. These deans, heads of departments and the faculty officers constituted the respondents of the study. The instrument used to collect data for the study was an inventory, which consisted of three sections. It contained the enrolment of the terminal grade at the secondary school level in the country for the period of study; students= admission by state of origin; admission through catchment area factor; admission through merit, university discretion and educationally disadvantaged; student examination scores; and dropout/withdrawal rates and repetition rates among the fresh students. The content validity of the instrument was determined by experts in Test and Measurement who matched all the items of the inventory with the research questions to ascertain whether the instrument actually measured what it was supposed to measure. The data collected were analyzed using percentages.

RESULTS

Question 1: What is relevance of access to university education in Ondo and Ekiti States Nigeria?

In answering this question, data on the relevance of the access to university education in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria was collected from the respondents through the inventory. The data were analyzed using percentages while the findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 shows the views of the respondents on the relevance of access to university education in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria. The findings show that all the

respondents gave positive responses on the importance of access to university education in the 2 States. The highest level of responses (88.2%) was that access to university education allows increased production of high-level manpower. This was followed by the response that access to university education brings about a high level of awareness (85.3%). Other responses were in varying proportion and they all symbolize that access to university education in the 2 States was at a high esteem as a result of increased awareness that the economic returns to education is much.

Question 2: What is the level of students = intake into the universities in Ondo and Ekiti States Nigeria between years 2001 and 2005?

The level of students = intake into the universities in the 2 States was determined by collecting data from the respondents on the number of students admitted into the universities from years 2001 to 2005 through the inventory. The data collected were analyzed with the use of percentages. The findings are presented in Table 2 while the bar graph depicting the trend of admission is shown in Fig. 1.

As indicated in Table 2, the admission rate into the universities varied from one year to another. The bar graph in Fig. 1 shows that access to university education was greater in Ekiti State than in Ondo State. This was evident in the larger number of intakes into the university in Ekiti State as against the number of intakes in the university in Ondo State in each of the years examined. On the average, access to university education was 56.3% in Ekiti State and 43.7% in Ondo State.

Question 3: Do male students have greater access to university education than female students in each of the 2 States?

Table 1: Relevance of access to university education in ondo and ekiti states

	N	Agree	%	Disagree	%
Access to university education allows increased production of high- level manpower	102	90	88.2	12	11.8
It brings about a high level of awareness	102	87	85.3	15	14.7
It provides a means of getting gainful employment at the end of their studies	102	85	83.3	17	16.7
It brings economic and non-economic benefits to the individual and society.	102	84	82.4	18	17.6
It allows for improved economic empowerment	102	81	79.2	21	20.8
It encourages equal educational opportunities among Nigerian youths	102	75	73.5	27	26.5
Average total	102	84	82.4	18	17.6

Table 2: No. of Intakes into Universities in Ondo and Ekiti State, Nigeria 2001-2005

Years	Total Intake Ondo and Ekiti States	No. of candidates admitted		No. of candidates admitted	
		Ondo State	%	Ekiti State	%
2001/02	3198	1250	39.1	1948	60.9
2002/03	4840	1682	34.8	3158	65.2
2003/04	5093	1843	36.2	3250	63.8
2004/05	5217	1925	36.9	3292	63.1
2005/06	4261	1861	43.7	2400	56.3
Total Average	4522	1712	37.9	2810	62.1

Table 3: No. of male and female students admitted into universities in ondo and ekiti state, Nigeria 2001- 2005

Years	Total No. of students admitted		No. of male students admitted into 100 Level				No. of female students admitted into 100 Level			
	Ondo	Ekiti	Ondo	%	Ekiti	%	Ondo	%	Ekiti	%
2001/02	1250	1948	539	43.1	857	44.0	711	56.9	1091	56.0
2002/03	1682	3158	737	43.8	1364	43.2	945	56.2	1794	56.8
2003/04	1843	3250	781	42.4	1453	44.7	1062	57.6	1797	55.3
2004/05	1925	3292	853	44.3	1478	44.9	1072	55.7	1814	55.1
2005/06	1861	2400	847	45.5	1046	43.6	1014	54.5	1354	56.4
Total average	1712	2810	751	43.9	1240	44.1	961	56.1	1570	55.9

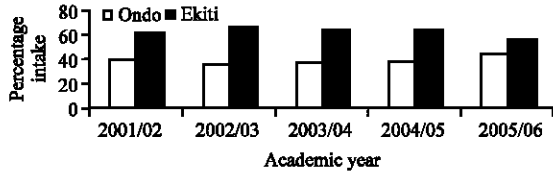


Fig. 1: Percentage of intakes into universities in Ondo and Ekiti states

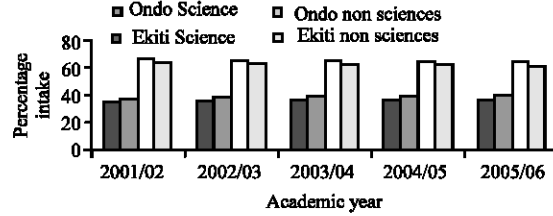


Fig. 3: Number of students admitted into science and non sciences courses in universities in Ondo and Ekiti states

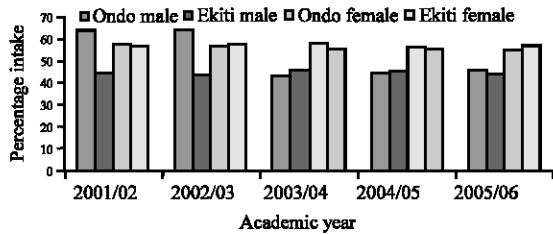


Fig. 2: Number of male and female students admitted into universities in Ondo and Ekiti states

In order to determine whether or not male students have greater access to university education than female students in Ondo and Ekiti States, data on the number of male and female students admitted into the universities in Ondo and Ekiti States were collected through the inventory. The data were analyzed using percentages. The findings are presented in Table 3.

In Table 3, the findings reveal that the access of female students to university education was greater than the access for male students. The bar graph in Fig. 2 shows that the trend in the access of students to university education was almost the same for Ondo and Ekiti States throughout the period 2001 and 2005. This was evident in the findings that access of female students to university education was 43.9% in Ondo State and 44.7% in Ekiti State while the access of male students to university education was 56.1% in Ondo State and 55.35 in Ekiti State. This shows that more female students than males gain access into the universities in the 2 States. Although the admission rate into each of the universities varied from one year to another, the overall admission rate shows that female students were admitted in a greater numbers than male students in both States.

Question 4: What is the access of students into science and non-science courses in universities in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria?

In response to this question, the number of students admitted into science and non-science courses in the universities in Ondo and Ekiti States were collected through the inventory. The science courses concerned included courses in the faculties of science, engineering and agricultural science while the non-science courses included courses in the faculties of arts, education, social science, management science and law. The data collected were analyzed using percentages. The findings are indicated Table 4.

As indicated in Table 4, the admission rate into each of the universities varied from one year to another and from State to State. The overall analysis however, shows that students were admitted into non-science courses at a greater rate than into science courses. This was reflected in the bar graph in Fig. 3. Thus, on the average, 35.9% of the number of students admitted in Ondo State was admitted into science courses while 64.1% were admitted into non-science courses. Similarly, 38.5% of the number of students admitted in Ekiti State was admitted into science courses while 61.5% was admitted into non-science courses.

Question 5: Is there any difference in the access to science courses in the universities between male and female students in the 2 States?

In answering this question, data on the number of student intakes into science courses in the universities in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria were collected from the

Table 4: No. of students admitted into science and non science courses in universities in ondo and ekiti state, Nigeria 2001- 2005

Years	Total No. of candidates admitted		No. of students admitted into science courses				No. of Students admitted into non-science courses			
	Ondo	Ekiti	Ondo	%	Ekiti	%	Ondo	%	Ekiti	%
2001/02	1250	1948	429	34.3	721	37.0	821	65.7	1227	63.0
2002/03	1682	3158	597	35.5	1184	37.5	1085	64.5	1974	62.5
2003/04	1843	3250	658	35.7	1248	38.4	1185	64.3	2002	61.6
2004/05	1925	3292	701	36.4	1274	38.7	1224	63.6	2018	61.3
2005/06	1861	2400	685	36.8	948	39.5	1176	63.2	1452	60.5
Average total	1712	2810	614	35.9	1075	38.3	1098	64.1	1735	61.7

Table 5: Access of Male and Female Students into Science Courses in Universities in Ondo and Ekiti State, Nigeria 2001- 2005

Years	Total No. of candidates admitted into science courses		No. of male students admitted into science courses				No. of female students admitted into science courses			
	Ondo	Ekiti	Ondo	%	Ekiti	%	Ondo	%	Ekiti	%
2001/02	429	721	295	68.8	503	69.7	134	31.2	218	30.3
2002/03	597	1184	409	68.5	834	70.4	188	31.5	350	29.6
2003/04	658	1248	443	67.3	892	71.5	215	32.7	356	28.5
2004/05	701	1274	496	70.8	925	72.6	205	29.2	349	27.4
2005/06	685	948	476	69.5	670	70.7	209	30.5	278	29.3
Total average	614	1075	424	69.1	765	71.2	190	30.9	310	28.8

Table 6: Access of male and female students into non-science courses in Universities in Ondo and Ekiti State, Nigeria 2001-2005

Years	Total No. of candidates admitted		No. of male students admitted into non-science courses				No. of female students admitted into non-science courses			
	Ondo	Ekiti	Ondo	%	Ekiti	%	Ondo	%	Ekiti	%
2001/02	821	1227	364	44.3	515	42.0	457	55.7	712	58.0
2002/03	1085	1974	461	42.5	819	41.5	624	57.5	1155	58.5
2003/04	1185	2002	494	41.7	773	38.6	691	58.3	1229	61.4
2004/05	1224	2018	482	39.4	767	38.0	742	60.6	1251	62.0
2005/06	1176	1452	489	41.6	569	39.2	687	58.4	883	60.8
Total average	1098	1735	458	41.7	689	39.7	640	58.3	1046	60.3

respondents through the inventory. The data were analyzed through the use of percentages while the findings are shown in Table 5.

In Table 5, female students = access to science courses in universities in the 2 States was lower than male students = access. The bar graph in Fig. 4 shows the trend in the admission of male and female students into universities in the 2 States. The graph shows that male students had a greater rate of access to science courses in the universities than female students. Although the access of female students was lower than for male students, the proportion of female students who gained access into university education in Ondo State (30.9%) was greater than the number of female students who gained access into university education in Ekiti State (28.8%).

Question 6: Is there any difference in the access to non- science courses in the universities between male and female students in each of the 2 States?

Responding to this question, data on the number of students admitted into non-science courses in the universities in Ondo and Ekiti States were collected through the inventory. The findings are presented in Table 6.

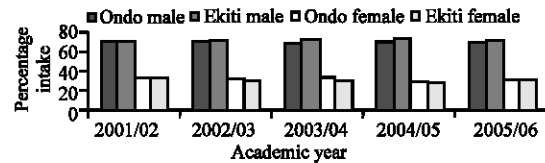


Fig. 4: Access of male and female students into sciences courses in universities in Ondo and Ekiti states

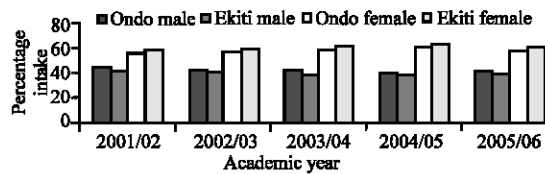


Fig. 5: Access of male and female students into non-sciences courses in universities in Ondo and Ekiti states

As shown in Table 6, the access of students into non-science courses in the universities was greater among female students than among male students in all the years of study. The bar graph in Fig. 5 depicted these findings and shows that on the overall average,

female students had a greater access to non-science courses in the universities (58.3% for Ondo state and 60.3% for Ekiti State) than male students (41.7% for Ondo State and 39.7% for Ekiti State). This implies that female students perhaps show more positive attitude and inclination towards offering non-science courses in universities in the 2 States than towards science courses.

DISCUSSION

In the foregoing analysis, the access to university education in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria was examined. The analysis show that the relevance of access to university education in the 2 States. As educationally advantaged States of the country Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, the findings indicating high level of awareness (86.1%), increased production of high-level manpower (79.1%) as some of the relevance of access to university education in Ondo and Ekiti States agreed with the findings of previous researchers (Azelama, 1994; Owolabi, 2001; Adeyemi, 2004). The findings on the level of students' intake show that access to university education was greater in Ekiti State than in Ondo State. This was evident in the findings indicating that access to university education was 56.3% in Ekiti State on an average and 43.7% in Ondo State.

The findings of this study indicating that female students had greater access to university education than male students in the 2 States negated the findings of earlier researchers (Kayode and Adesina, 1999; Nwachukwu and Okonkwo 1999; Adeyemi, 2001). This finding tends to correct the erroneous impression that female access to university education was low. The findings of this study indicating less than 40% students' admission rate into science courses in the universities negated the policy on admission as indicated in the Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education (1998) and the National University Commission (1996) policy of 40: 60 Science and non-science admission rate for Nigerian universities. Much as the universities intend to abide by this policy, a situation where a greater number of students applied into non-science courses at the expense of science courses tends to make that baseline difficult to attain. Hence, the findings of this study showed that on the average, 35.9% of the number of students admitted in the university in Ondo State were admitted into science courses while 64.1% were admitted into non-science courses. Similarly, 38.5% of the number of students admitted in the university in Ekiti State were admitted into science courses while 61.5% were admitted into non-science courses. This finding was consistent with the findings made by Akpan's (1985) findings on the

choice of science and non-science subjects in Nigerian secondary schools and the consequence for science enrolment in Nigerian universities.

However the findings of this study indicating that female students had lower access to science courses in universities in the 2 States than male students agreed with previous findings (Ubah, 2000; Owolabi, 2001; Adeyemi, 2001). This might not have been unconnected perhaps with the intrigues in science courses which possibly demand much mathematical computation. The finding suggests that female might not be many in the field of science and technology in the 2 States there supporting earlier findings (Akpan, 1985). Notwithstanding, the findings indicating that students were admitted into non-science courses at a greater rate than into science courses (35.9% for Ondo State, 38.5% for Ekiti State as well as 64.1% for Ondo State and 61.5% for Ekiti State for non-science courses) was consistent with earlier findings (Kosemani, 1995; Kayode and Adesina, 1999). However, the fact that female students had a greater access into non-science courses in the universities (58.3 for Ondo State and 60.3% for Ekiti State) than male students (41.7 for Ondo State and 39.7% for Ekiti State) implies that female students show more positive attitude and inclination towards offering non-science courses in the universities in the 2 States than towards science courses. This finding is in consonance with the findings of previous researchers (Nwagwu, 2000; Ubah, 2000). This might perhaps be due to the less-involvement of mathematics and other rigours in non-science courses in the universities.

One wonders however why male students access to university education in the 2 States was lower than their female counterparts since they had the same secondary education. The reason for this might be that male students perhaps prefer trading or farming where they could get money quickly to enrolling for higher education. All these tend to have serious implications for educational development and capacity building in the students.

CONCLUSION

Considering the findings of this study, it was concluded that access to university education was greater in Ekiti State than in Ondo State, Nigeria. Female students had greater access to university education than male students in the 2 States. The findings have also led the researcher to conclude that female students had lower access to science courses in universities in the 2 States than male students. It was also concluded that female students show more positive attitude and inclination towards offering non-science courses than towards science courses in universities in the 2 States.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that more efforts should be made to improve on the access of male students into the universities through scholarship programmes, increased bursary awards and employment opportunities that would make them show positive attitude to university education. Efforts should also be made to improve on the access of female students into science courses in the universities. The governments of the 2 States could do this by organizing enlightenment campaigns, effective counselling and creating incentives that would improve the access of female students in science courses in the universities.

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