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Title

Equality of access and catchment area factor in university admissions in Nigeria

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Abstract

The objectives of the study were to critically examine the desirability of the catchment area policy in the admission process in Nigeria and to analyse the implementation and implications of catchment factor as one of the criteria used in the admission process into Nigerian Universities. Three federal universities were purposefully sampled for the study. Data were obtained from the universities' admission officers, examination and record officers, faculty and departmental examination officers. Data were also collected from the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, the National Universities Commission and the Federal Ministry of Education. Data were collected through a prepared checklist. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses formulated. The obtained data were analysed by using simple percentage especially for the trend and comparative analysis. The t-test statistic and anova were used to test the hypotheses, while simple percentage and ratios were used to compute the wastage rate difference. The major findings include: that admission ratio into the universities among states was not proportional to the size of enrolment at the terminal grade of the secondary school level in these states which justify affirmative policies such as the one in focus to

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redress the imbalance; that the universities have been implementing faithfully the policy according to the laid-down guidelines; that the major groups in the catchment area of each university predominate admission, except where a major group is absent; and that there was a significant difference in the quality of performance of students admitted on merit and those admitted through catchment area policy while a no significant difference was found in the academic performance among students admitted through catchment area, university discretion and educationally disadvantaged states; and that the wastage rate of those on merit was lower than those through the catchment area policy. Based on the findings, the study suggested that the policy should be retained, but finetuned so as to effectively serve as a measure through which the imbalance in university education could be minimized and increased access to university education by the various groups in the country would be assured. However, the paper suggested that the percentage allocated to this factor be reduced in the light of its negative implication on the quality of student performance and subsequently the primary objective of university education. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Kola Adeyemi, E-Mail: ademeyemi@uniben.edu