

**SUSTAINING A PRODUCTIVE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
THE KEY ELEMENTS IN THE DEBATE**

CITATION:

Olayinka, A.I., 2022. *Sustaining a Productive University System in the 21st Century: The Key Elements in the Debate*. 11th Convocation Lecture, Osun State University Osogbo. Osogbo: UNIOSUN Publishing Limited. 69 pp.

Introduction

I wish to thank the Council and Management of Osun State University, Osogbo, for asking me to present her 2022 Convocation Lecture. It was a pleasant surprise when I received the invitation from the Vice-Chancellor to speak on the topic ‘SUSTAINING A PRODUCTIVE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE KEY ELEMENTS IN THE DEBATE’. I do not take this opportunity lightly as it affords me an opportunity to address this august audience based on my modest experience as a scholar-administrator using this important platform. I congratulate all the 2033 graduands who have been found worthy in character and learning as to be deserving of a degree of this institution. I wish you all every success in your career. You will be joining the 12,021 alumni and alumnae who have completed their respective degree programmes here as at the end of 2020/2021 academic year. I also congratulate your parents, guardians, siblings and other well-wishers. We all realise that achievement is like gold and I am very sure you are very delighted to join the league of Alumni of this citadel of learning.

It is particularly exciting to note that the institution will be graduating her first set of five Doctor of Philosophy candidates. It suggests that UNIOSUN has truly come of age in terms of postgraduate training and research. As we all know, a Doctor of Philosophy degree is the highest academic degree anyone can earn. You must have mastered a specific subject completely and you must have extended the body of knowledge about that subject. Our great country certainly requires many holders of the PhD degree in order to provide academic staff for the many new Universities springing up.

I wish to congratulate the leadership of this university for Approval for Pre-Clinical Accreditation of your College of Health Sciences by the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria while at the same time increasing the admission quota from 75 to 100. I recall that the Federal Government Needs Assessment Report of 2012 had some issues with your Medical programme then. Happily the State Government made arrangement for the affected students to complete their studies in Ukraine. Things will get better.

There is an inscription which reads “**3080**” as part of the logo of Osun State University, Osogbo. This is in reference to the fact that when the University Establishment Law was passed by the Osun State House of Assembly in December 2006 and signed into law by Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola, the National Universities Commission granted approval and formal recognition to the institution as the 30th State University and the 80th university in Nigeria. Some 16 years down the line, the Nigerian University System has since grown tremendously in size with 49 Federal Universities, 57 State Universities and 111 Private Universities; hence any newly established State university would, copying the template of Osun State University be “**58217**”. In effect, there has been an increase of 90% in the number of State Universities and an increase of 171% in the total number of Universities in the country (Federal, State and Private) over the last 16 years. This has implications for competition for students and staffing. Figure 1 shows the geographical distribution of the 217 Universities in Nigeria as of September 2022.

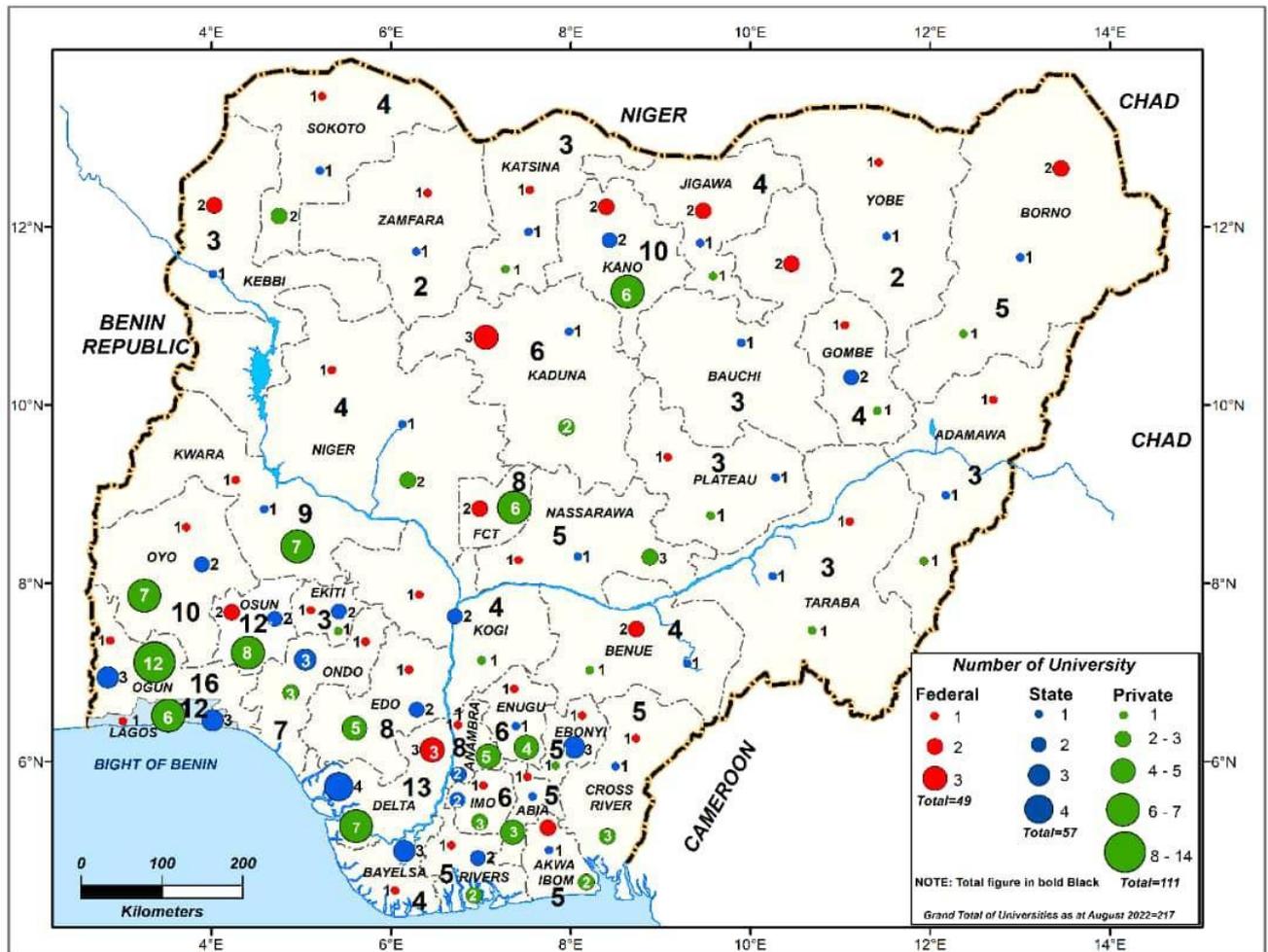


Figure 1: Geographical distribution of Universities in Nigeria as at August 2022 (Source of data: <https://www.nuc.edu.ng> downloaded 27th August 2022)

In the remaining part of this Convocation Lecture we have attempted to highlight the benefits of the University in the 21st Century, funding of University Education, Ranking of Universities, What can be done to make Nigerian universities the preferred destination in Africa, Postdoctoral research Fellowship Programme, Musing on the protracted strike by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and Benchmarking Osun State University.

Benefits of the University in the 21st century

It can be shown that the individuals who have the opportunity to acquire university education, the industry (private sector) and the nation in general all benefit from University education. A recognition of the fact that university education is both a private and public good will naturally influence the issue of cost or investment in University education by all the parties concerned.

For the Individual, the following benefits can be identified. Graduates have better employment opportunities and have enhanced earnings compared to non-graduates Degrees open doors - many jobs now demand a degree. University students and graduates have opportunity to learn new skills, gain knowledge from the experts and achieve your potential. There is a reduced benefit dependency. He/she is able to develop life skills and build self-confidence to become a strong and independent individual. There is intergenerational and social mobility. There is improvement in health and wellbeing. There is socialisation experience as you meet lots of new

people and have chance to explore different cultures. University students are able to make lifelong friends and important business contacts.

The Business/Industry benefits from applied research. There is possibility for matching business need to graduate skills. Quality graduates are produced after a rigorous training in the University. Business space is expanded. Knowledge Transfer between the University and industry and there is Continuous Professional Development/ Training.

University education is beneficial to the nation in a number of ways in terms of business profitability and productivity, reduced demand for health services, reduced interactions with criminal justice system, reputation of nation abroad and greater tax-base and earnings. Universities are expected to produce leaders in Government, business, innovation and invention. The future of a nation can be determined by the quality of its education system generally, but especially by its universities.

A world-class university is a central institution of the 21st century, providing access to global science, producing basic and applied research, and educating leaders of the academe and society. In developing countries such as Nigeria world-class universities are especially important as key ingredients for economic and social progress.

The three basic ingredients of a World-Class University include the following:

- a. High concentration of talent:
 - a. teaching staff,
 - b. researchers,
 - c. administrative and support staff,
 - d. students;
- b. Abundant (financial) resources:
 - a. First Stream (from the proprietor, whether public or private budget,
 - b. Second Stream from the users (tuition, levies and other fees),
 - c. Third Stream (from endowments and research grants offering facilities to conduct advanced research, donations, alumni);
- c. Favourable governance:
 - a. supportive regulatory framework,
 - b. autonomy,
 - c. academic freedom,
 - d. leadership,
 - e. strategic vision.

This has been succinctly put by James Bryan Conant, who served as the 23rd President (Vice-Chancellor) of Harvard University from 1933 to 1953:

There is only one proved method of assisting the advancement of pure science – that is picking men of genius, backing them heavily and leaving them to direct themselves.

A keyword in the Vision of most universities is ‘*world-class institution*’. The key characteristics of a World-Class University include the following:

- i. an international reputation for its *research*;
- ii. an international reputation for its *teaching*;
- iii. possession of a number of *research stars* who are world leaders in their disciplines;
- iv. *recognised* not only by other world-class universities but also outside the world of higher education;
- v. has a number of *world-class departments*, not necessarily all;
- vi. identifies and builds on its research strengths and has a *distinctive reputation and focus*;
- vii. generates *innovative ideas* and produces basic and applied research in abundance;
- viii. produces ground-breaking *research output* recognised by peers and evidenced in prizes, honours and distinctions
- ix. attracts the most able students and produces the *best graduates*;
- x. attracts and retains the *best staff*;
- xi. recruits staff and students from an *international market*;
- xii. attracts a *high proportion of postgraduate students*;
- xiii. attracts a high proportion of *foreign/international students*;
- xiv. operates within a global market and is international in many of its activities;
- xv. has a very sound financial base;
- xvi. receives large endowment capital and income;
- xvii. has diversified resources of income (e.g. proprietary, students' fees, donations, grants);
- xviii. makes a big contribution to the society;
- xix. has the confidence to set its own agenda;
- xx. has a first-class management team with strategic vision and implementation plans.

Funding of University Education in Nigeria

The main sources of funding in a university can be classified into the First, Second and the Third Streams. The First Stream is largely income from the Proprietor and its agencies such as Personnel Grant, Overhead Grant, Capital Project Grant, and TETFund Special Intervention Grant. The Second Stream will include Student Fees and Levies (Undergraduates, Postgraduates, Distance Learning) while the Third Stream includes income derived from Gifts and Donations, Investment Income, Endowments, Grants, Consultancy Services, etc.

Available data show that Nigeria is not investing enough in education in comparison to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 2).

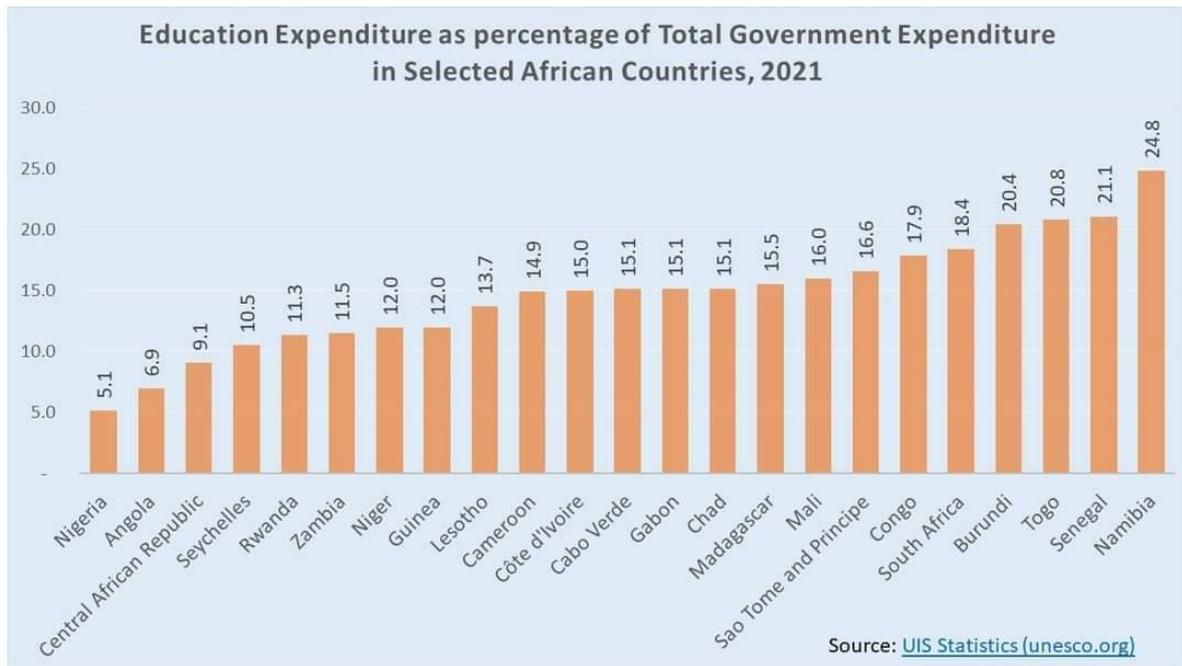


Figure 2: Education Expenditure as percentage of Total Government Expenditure in Selected African Countries, 2021 (Source: UIS Statistics (unesco.org)).

Elements of the Income Stream, Resource Outflow: Recurrent Expenditure, Resource Outflow: Capital Expenditure and a Resource Planning Model indicating the Inflow and Outflow of funds are shown in Figures 3 to 6.

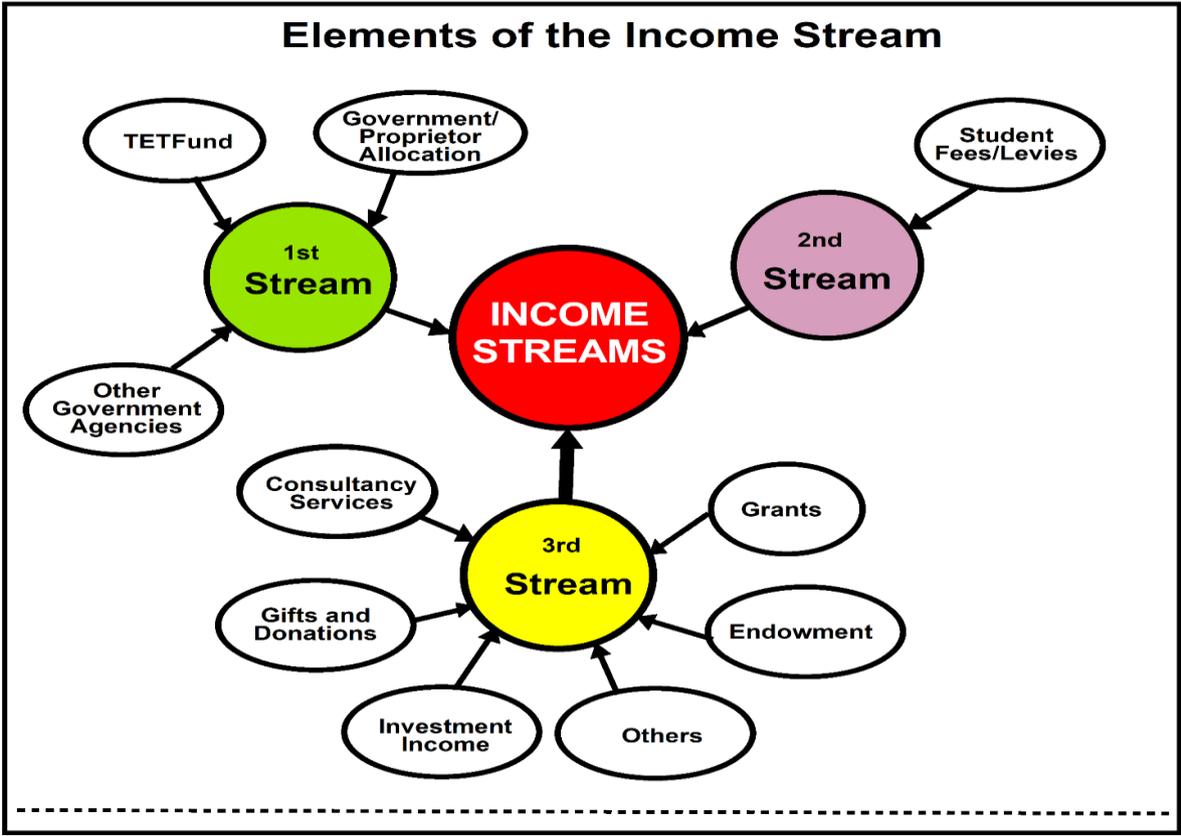


Figure 3: Elements of the Income Stream (Adapted from Bamiro, 2018)

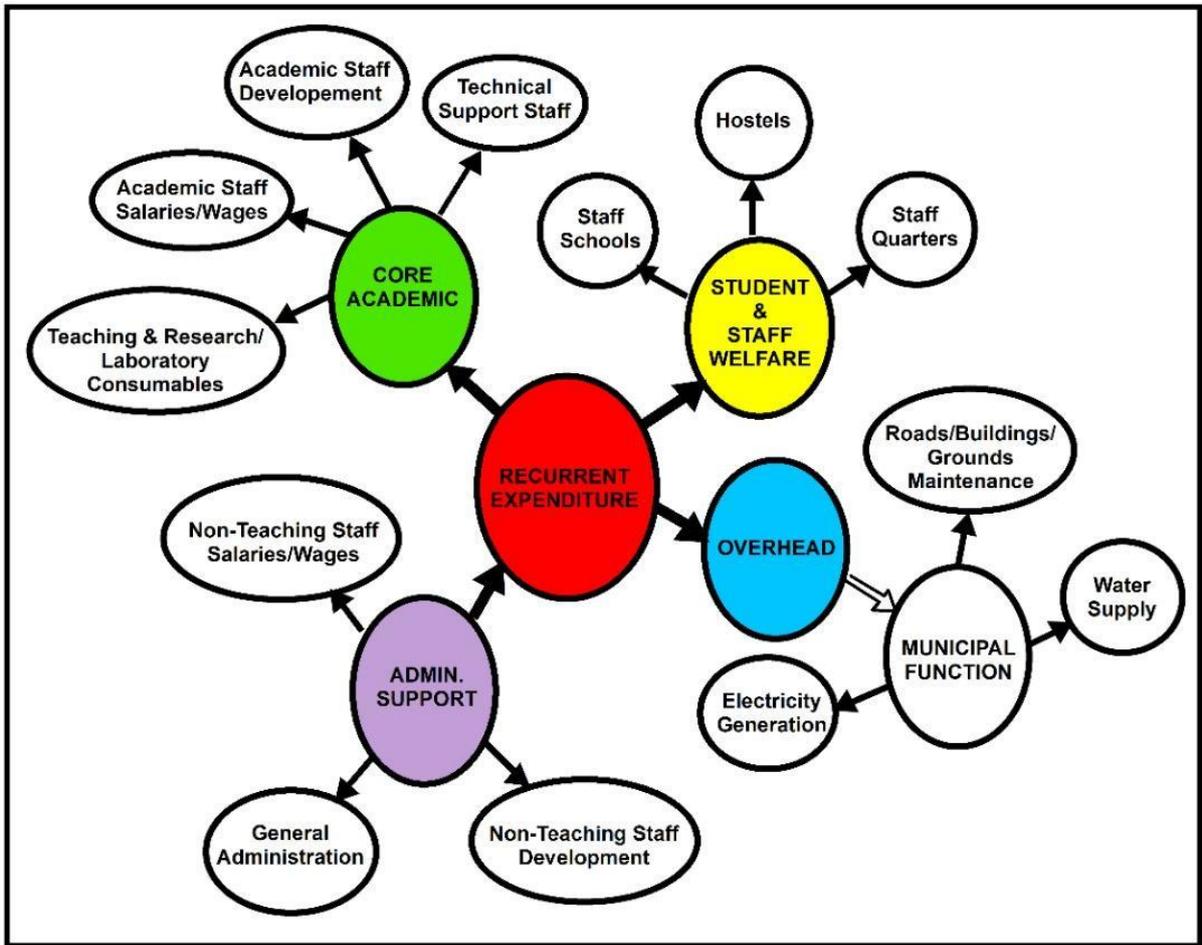


Figure 4: Resource Outflow: Recurrent Expenditure (After Bamiro, 2018)

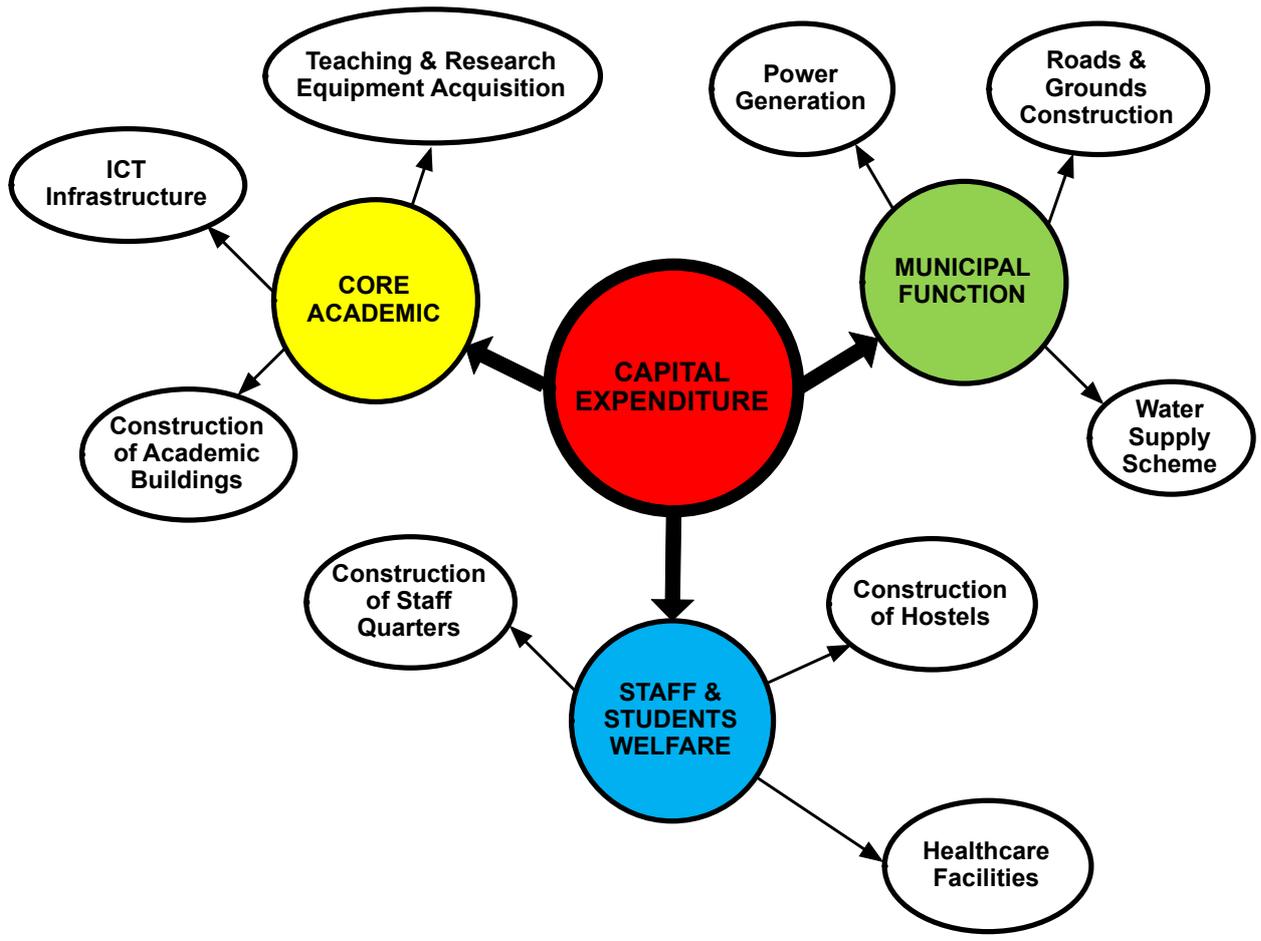


Figure 5: Resource Outflow: Capital Expenditure (After Bamiro, 2018)

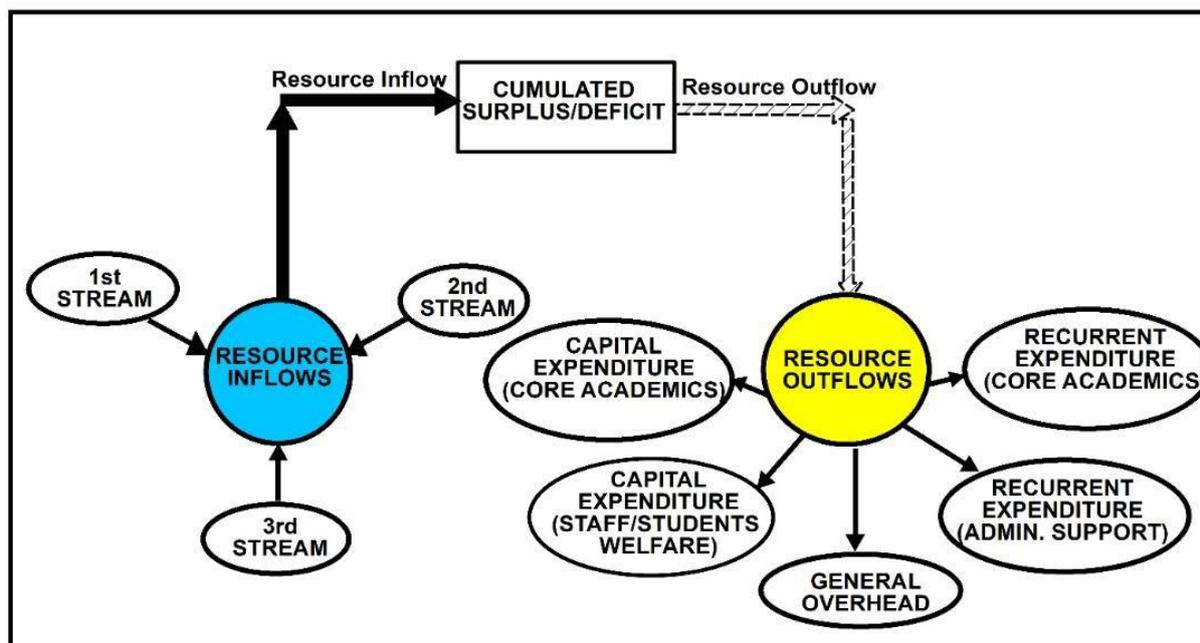


Figure 6: Elements of Resource Planning Model for Higher Educational Institutions in Nigeria (After Bamiro, 2018).

Professor Niyi Osundare’s 2005 Valedictory Lecture at the University of Ibadan entitled “**The Universe in the University: A Scholar-poet’s Look from Inside Out**” argued against the commodification of public universities. In his words:

A University cannot be run like a money-spinning business or corporation and be expected to still retain the soul and sense of Academe. Harassed by budget cuts by a Nigerian government that pays little more than a lip service to education, our university is being forced to look for funds in every which way. While it must be admitted that some departments are in a better position to generate outside funds than others, any attempt to commodify education and commercialize the disciplines can only lead to further undermining of the universe in our university. Time, we realize that a university can never be run as a cost-effective corporation. There are simply certain forms of knowledge that cannot be judged on their market value. (Osundare, July 26, 2005)”.

To the extent that universities are not-for-profit institutions, they are not businesses. Nonetheless, universities are economic enterprises in-so-far as they need adequate financial resources to survive, thrive and excel in carrying out their core mandates of teaching and training, research and uptake. An optimal mix of the First, Second and Third Streams of funding would be required for the funding of a university to be on even keel (Figure 7). If a

university is very strong and has earned a very good reputation, it should be able to attract international students who would be expected to pay higher scale of tuition fees than the home students. One suggestion is for each university to do a thorough cost analysis of their services by discipline. Let us know how it costs to produce an economist, a geologist, a medical doctor, a psychologist, etc. Let the government indicates how many graduates by type that it can afford and give the respective university the money.

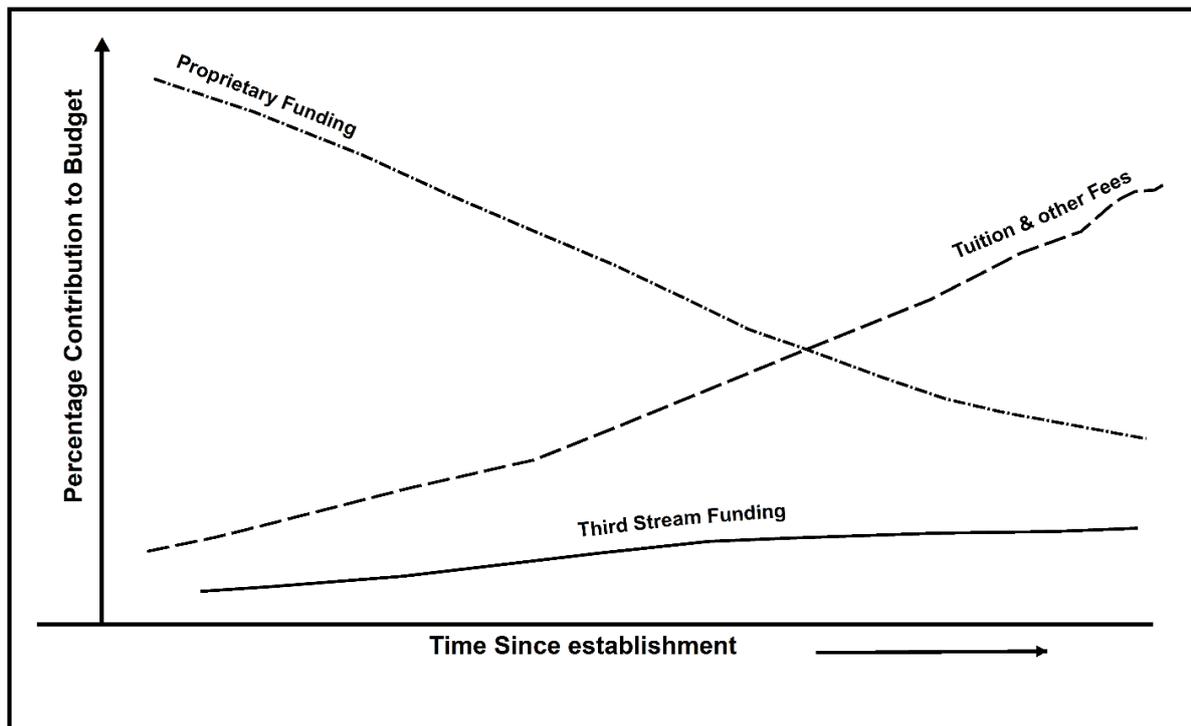


Figure 7: Hypothetical changing mix of First, Second and Third Streams in a University

At the University of Ibadan, as in perhaps all the Federal Universities, in the country, it is often the case that the major source of income to the institution is the proprietor (i.e. the Federal Government) the income is less than the expenditure leading to budget deficit. Features of the income and expenditure profiles at the University of Ibadan from 2012 to 2020, as contained in the Audited Financial Statements for the respective years are shown in Figures 8 to 11.

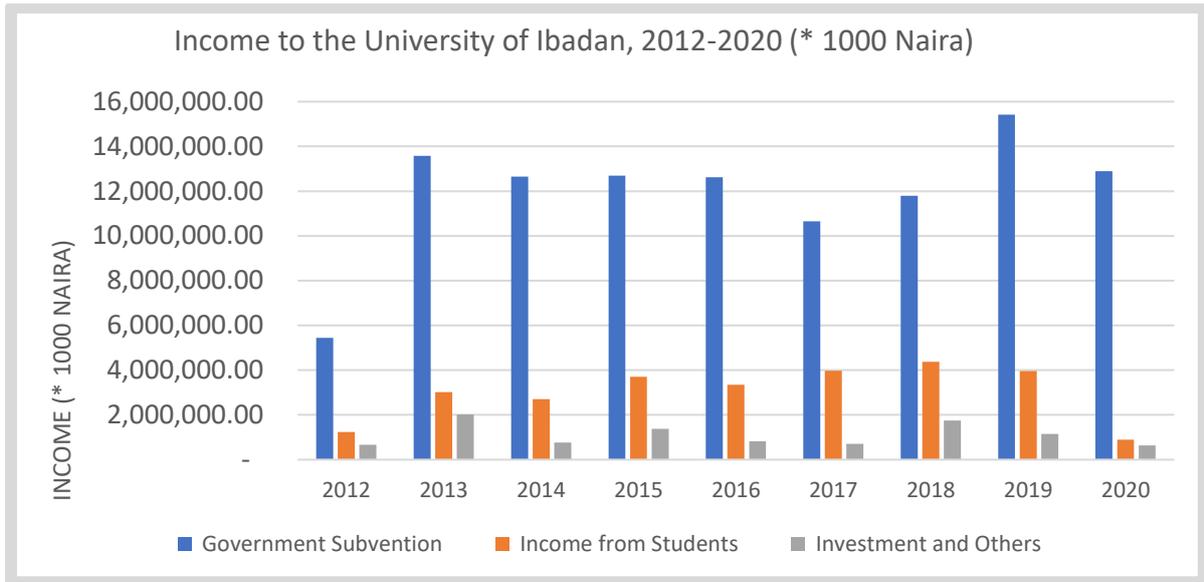


Figure 8: Income profile of the University of Ibadan from 2012 to 2020. (Source: Audited Financial Statements for the respective years).

The Federal Government pays the Personnel Cost in full, although there were instances from December 2015 till late 2018 when there were shortfalls in the Personnel Cost received and this led to relentless protests by the staff.

Government subvention is unpredictable and it accounts for between 71% and 89% of the Total Revenue during the period from 2012 to 2022 (Figure 9). Fees and levies from Students was lowest at 6% in 2020, no thanks to the closure of the University on account of COVID-19 pandemic and strike by the staff unions to the highest of about 27% in 2017 (Figure 10).

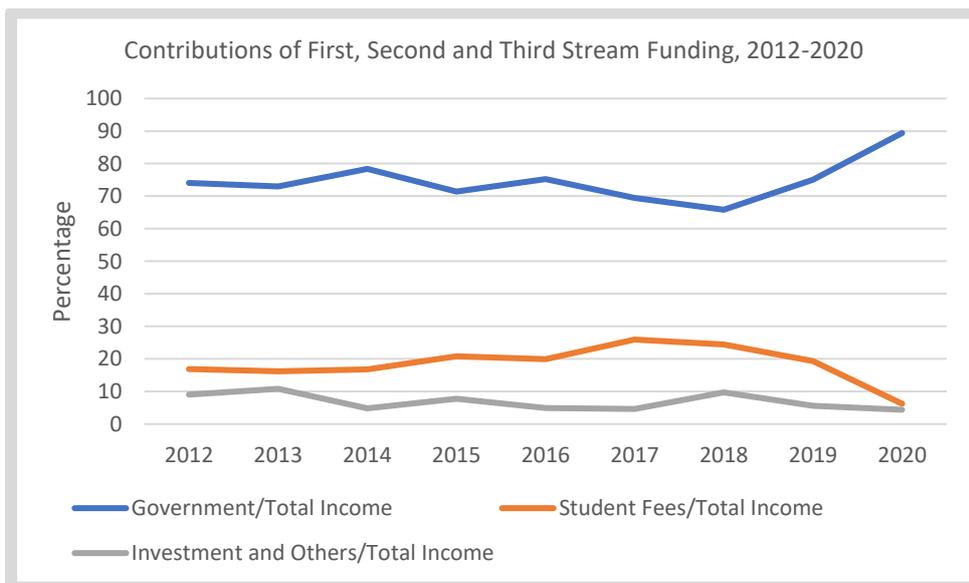


Figure 9: Contributions of First, Second and Third Streams Income, 2012-2020.

The expenditure profile in the period under reference is shown in Figure 10 . Most of the expenditure is related to Personnel Cost. The Administrative Expenses are greater than the Academic-related expenses.

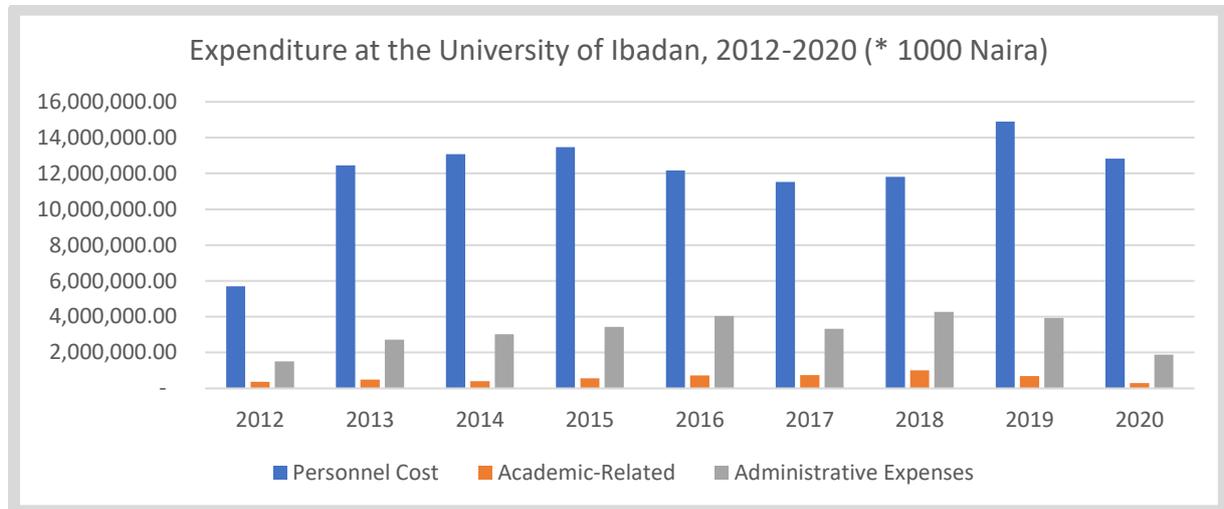


Figure 10: Expenditure Profile at the University of Ibadan from 2012 to 2020.

It can be shown that the University of Ibadan had a deficit in eight out of the nine years with the Expenditure exceeding Income (Figure 11). There was a surplus of 2.9 Billion Naira in 2013, while the deficit in the other years ranged from 214 Million Naira in 2019 to 2.48 Billion Naira in 2020.

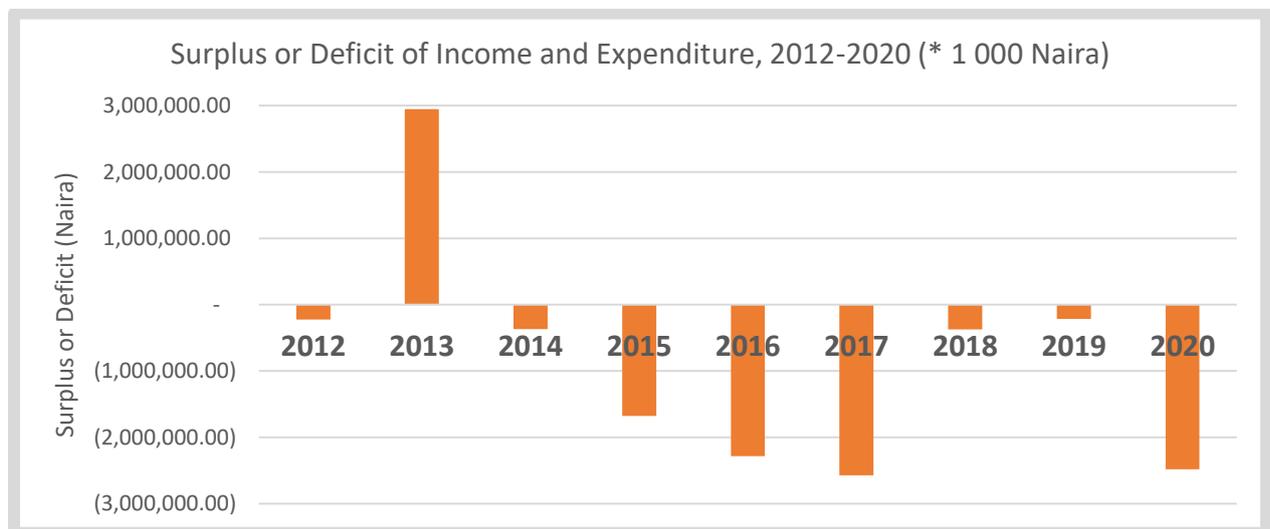


Figure 11: Surplus or Deficit of Income and Expenditure at the University of Ibadan, 2012-2020

Ranking of Universities

Ranking of Universities can be conceptualized as a third-party zero-sum comparison of performances based on quantification of selected criteria that can be periodically and repeatedly presented and/or visualized through hierarchical tables (Nwagwu, 2010). This basic definition applies to specific and relative performance assessments of individuals, institutions, systems, and others. Historically, both in absolute and relative terms, the subject of academic performance, quality, and excellence have been an inalienable higher education practice. Performance in a national, regional or global ranking is a relative kind, in which the criteria for comparisons are often converted into a zero-sum hierarchy to achieve some form of homogenized outcome. As a result, therefore, the performance advantages of an institution are based on comparisons with, and often at the expense of, other universities. Hence, global university ranking differs very markedly from historical evaluation practices that were also based on quantification, such as benchmarks and ratings (Hamann, 2016). Besides the zero-sumness of the comparisons, there is also the crucial factor of temporality in which ranking institutions produce repeated publications of ranking outcomes to make room for comparison of the performance of the actors over time.

This conception of university performance is based on the imaginary that global higher education could be viewed in a stratified format that compels and or justifies universities in different countries and regions of the world to continuously compete for status (Brankovic et al., 2018). University ranking was not born in 2003 when the Shanghai Ranking Consultancy published the first globalized Academic Ranking of World Universities (Shanghai), the practice rather dates back to the early 20th Century when there emerged several efforts to produce some basis for comparing the performance of institutions (Ringel and Werron, 2020). The driver of this trend at that time was the need to systematically and continuously measure the performance of students and faculty. The outcome of the assessment was used to compare the achievements of individuals at faculty and student levels (Godin, 2009; Rudolph, 1962). However, the public comparisons of the aggregated data for organizations were resisted by the universities, if the rankings were produced by non-academic institutions such as private foundations (Gelber, 2020).

As recently as 1973, Carnegie Foundation initiated a sort of university/college ranking activity, known as Carnegie Classification. It was directed at colleges and universities in the USA with the aim to support Carnegie's program of research and policy analysis. Carnegie informs that the framework for the Classification is "a way to represent and control for institutional differences, and also in the design of research studies to ensure adequate representation of sampled institutions, students, or faculty" (Carnegie Classification 1973). Thus Carnegie Foundation's seminal ranking did not focus on a linear ranking of institutions by a certain set of criteria; rather it was a 'capacity hunt' and 'fill the gap' type of exercise in which the areas of strengths, and by implications, weaknesses of institutions guided allocation and distribution of resources according to abilities in order to ensure efficiency in the use of resources.

We can discern four major enablers of university ranking. The first is that the university needs an indicator to assess its own performance – this is the historical and conventional practice in universities; the next is that university ranking could be an indicator of the performance of the national higher education system. The third is the performance of one university in relation to the other universities in the same system. Finally, there is the performance of the university as a continuously changing entity that deserves repeated quantitative valuations by a third party. We briefly examine these four drivers as a whole discursively. Table 1 shows the top 14

university ranking systems while Table 2 relates to the purposes of the ranking systems while Table 2 relates to the purposes of the ranking systems.

Table 1: Top 14 University ranking systems

Ranking System (abbreviation)	Start year	Sponsor	No of indicators used	Frequency	No of institutions
Academic Ranking of World Universities (Shanghai)	2003	Shanghai Ranking Consultancy	6	Annually	500
Carnegie Classification (Carnegie)	1973	Carnegie Commission on Higher Education	8	Every five years	4664
Center for World University Ranking (CWUR)	2012	Centre for World University ranking	8	Annually	1000
Leiden Ranking (Leiden)	2011	Leiden University Netherlands	18	Annually	842
QS World University Ranking (QSWorld)	2013	Quacquarelli Symonds Limited	6	Annually	916
Round University Ranking (RUR)	2012	RUR Ranking Agency	20	Annually	761
SCImago Institutions Rankings World Report (SCImago)	2009	SCImago Lab	12	Annually	5147
The Times Higher Education World University Rankings (Times)	2004	TES Global Ltd	13	Annually	800
Clarivate Analytics Innovative University Ranking (CA) (formerly Thomson Reuters)	2015	Reuters	10	Annually	100
U-Multirank (UMR)	2014	European Union and Advisory Board	30	Annually	1200+
US News and World Report–Global Ranking (USN&W)	2014	US News and World Report	12	Annually	1250
University Ranking by Academic Performance (URAP)	2010	Middle East Technical University	6	Annually	2000
Webometrics (Web)	2004	Cybermetrics Lab, Spanish National Research Council	4	Annually	11995

Table 2: Purpose of the ranking systems

	Purpose	Ranking systems
1	Research Performance	CWUR, Leiden, SCIMago, Times, RUR, Shanghai, URAP, UMR, Webometrics
2	Research Quality	Times, CA, UMR, URAP
3	Research Innovation and Economic Impact	CA
4	University comparison	CWUR, QS World, RUR, Shanghai, Times, UMR, USN&WR
5	University Marketing	QS World, RUR, Shanghai, USN&WR
6	Assist students in choosing an academic institution	QS World RUR, Times, UMR, USN&WR
7	Government funding or assessment	RUR, Shanghai, Times, UMR
8	Academic/Teaching Quality	RUR
9	Web Performance improvement	Web

Research performance is the major purpose for nine of the systems while academic teaching quality and web performance are the major purposes for two (RUR and Web). It can be observed from the details of the ranking systems that their purposes overlap in many cases. Contrary to the way the ranking is used by many administrators, many of the systems inform that their ranking is not aimed at comparing institutions, but to provide an interpretation of the performance of the institutions periodically. As in most global knowledge assessment infrastructures, none of the systems is African or Afrocentric.

Table 3 shows the sources and the criteria the ranking systems use to perform their ranking. Except Google Scholar, none of the sources is available on open access basis, and many universities are not clients of the sources.

Table 3: Criteria and sources of the various ranking systems

Criteria	Sources
Number of scientific documents (non-articles)	WOS, Self-Reported
Number of publications	WOS, SCOPUS, SCI, InCites, Self-Reported
Number of citations	WOS, SCOPUS
Number of articles as the corresponding author	WOS
Number of articles in Nature of Science or top 25% journals	Scopus
Number of articles with external collaboration	WOS
Number of articles with external collaboration	SCIMago Journal Rank indicator, WOS
Number of articles with industry collaboration	WOS
Number/Percent of Articles within the top most cited/field	SCImago Journal Rank indicator, WOS
Number of Articles within the most cited as main contributor	SCImago Journal Rank indicator, WOS
Number of different authors from an institution	Scopus
Ratio of citations per publication	Incite, WOS
Number of citations from top 10 producers at institution	WOS
Interdisciplinarity of publications	
Ratio of Citations and Papers per staff	
Industry Article Citation	WOS
H index of institution	WOS

Table 4 shows the top 10 universities in the Times Higher Education (THE) world university rankings in 2022.

Rank	Country	University	Overall	Teaching	Research	Citations	Industry income	International outlook
1	United Kingdom	University of Oxford	95.7	91	99.6	98	74.4	96.3
2	United States	California Institute of Technology	95	93.6	96.9	97.8	90.4	83.8
2	United States	Harvard University	95	94.5	98.9	99.2	48.9	79.8
4	United States	Stanford University	94.9	92.3	96.8	99.9	91	79.7
5	United Kingdom	University of Cambridge	94.6	90.9	99.5	96.2	56.7	95.8
5	United States	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	94.6	90.9	94.4	99.7	93.7	89.9
7	United States	Princeton University	93.6	89.5	96	99	88.8	80.7
8	United States	University of California, Berkeley	92.2	85.7	96	99.1	84.7	77.6
9	United States	Yale University	90.8	90.7	93	97	56.2	69.9
10	United States	The University of Chicago	89.8	87.2	90.6	98.3	56.3	74.4

Table 4: THE World Universities Ranking: Top 10, 2022

Tables 5 and 6 present the THE World Universities Ranking for Africa Top 10 and the THE World Universities Ranking for Nigeria in 2022.

Table 5: THE World Universities Ranking: Africa Top 10, 2022

Regional Rank	Rank	Country	University	Overall	Teaching	Research	Citations	Industry income	International outlook
1	183	South Africa	University of Cape Town	54.9	31.4	41.4	85.5	56.4	80.1
2	251–300	South Africa	Stellenbosch University	48.1–50.3	30.3	35.7	78.7	79.5	54.3
3	251–300	South Africa	University of the Witwatersrand	48.1–50.3	30.9	43.8	66.2	100	73.4
4	301–350	Ghana	University of Cape Coast	46.1–48.0	17.3	20.1	100	66.2	44.7
5	351–400	South Africa	University of KwaZulu-Natal	44.1–46.0	28.8	34.7	66.7	39.7	53.3
6	401–500	Ethiopia	Addis Ababa University	40.9–44.0	18.9	11.9	95.2	41.5	47
7	401–500	Egypt	Aswan University	40.9–44.0	13.9	9.8	100	34.8	47.9
8	401–500	South Africa	Durban University of Technology	40.9–44.0	16.9	11.5	99.9	37.8	39.1
9	401–500	Nigeria	University of Ibadan	40.9–44.0	23.4	12.6	91.2	35.3	32.2
10	501–600	Algeria	Ferhat Abbas Sétif University 1	38.1–40.8	19.5	8.1	93.8	34.8	40.8

Table 6: THE World University Ranking- Nigeria from 2016 to 2022

Year	Rank	University	Overall
2016	601-800	University of Ibadan	-
2017	>800	University of Ibadan	8.3—18.5
2018	801-1000	University of Ibadan	15.6—21.4
2019	601–800	Covenant University	26.0–33.4
	601–800	University of Ibadan	26.0–33.4
	1001+	University of Nigeria Nsukka	9.8–18.9
2020	401–500	Covenant University	38.8–42.3
	501–600	University of Ibadan	35.3–38.7
	801–1000	University of Lagos	22.2–28.2
	1001+	University of Nigeria Nsukka	10.7–22.1
2021	401–500	University of Ibadan	39.8–43.5
	501–600	Lagos State University	36.4–39.7
	601–800	University of Lagos	30.2–36.3
	801–1000	Covenant University	25.1–30.1
	1001+	University of Nigeria Nsukka	10.3–25.0
	1001+	Obafemi Awolowo University	10.3–25.0
2022	401–500	University of Ibadan	40.9–44.0
	501–600	University of Lagos	38.1–40.8
	601–800	Covenant University	32.0–37.9
	1201+	University of Ilorin	10.6–22.3
	1201+	University of Nigeria Nsukka	10.6–22.3
	1201+	Obafemi Awolowo University	10.6–22.3

Global University Ranking and Higher Education in Nigeria

What has been provided is a highlight about university ranking, giving us the opportunity to weigh in on the impact and relevance of the practice on Nigerian higher education, and how the new creature of globalized ranking could be managed to strengthen higher education. Evidently, there are ongoing meta-ideological and paradigm shifts in Nigeria’s higher education policies, as responses to the need to improve universities’ positions in the global university league table. As elsewhere, there is an increase in education and policy reforms across the country, new models of governance, new internationalization policies, and competition for international visibility and reputation, among others.

Global university ranking results are Meta outcomes; they depend on other resources, some of which are either beyond the reach of African universities or are constructed in the favour of the communities of the creators of the systems. Besides cost, there is also the constraint of information literacy and information technology deployment patterns at the institutional and individual levels. For instance, while the sources in Table 3 can be accessed by scholars that have legitimate access anywhere in some universities, others would have to either visit the library or a location where the sources are located in order to use them. At the

individual level, the unavailability and or lack of access to the sources has the consequence of low consciousness about what to do with the sources, for instance, WOS. Table 3 relates to the sources of information used by the ranking systems, and they show very clearly how difficult universities in Nigeria, for instance, can perform in their efforts to rise beyond their present positions.

The conceptualisation of research performance, which is the major purpose of many ranking systems, is the albatross of many universities in Africa. Generally, the subject of research performance raises fundamental issues of praxis, discursive knowledge, and temporality such that issues of social order and reality are called into question. Researchers are first and foremost people that are compelled to address issues in their environments before they address global concerns. Traditional research performance is based on publication output that obtains in various forms, the citation of published output and other assessments of the quality of work by expert panels and peer review, as well as the indicators of researchers' reputation. Each of these elements presents certain challenges to typical African universities. While researchers perform their research based on the slim resources available to them, and also share their results with colleagues and others, the global view about research performance places the goal post beyond the reach of African researchers. How do we engage on research performance from global perspective when access to top journals is difficult on account of language scope of research, methodology, globality of subject of interest, among others.

African universities can hardly compete favourably with universities in the West on the basis of the globalized university ranking of the west. The catch-up game will be endless. The African universities that rank favourably in the global league are those in the countries that have not only long embraced the sources of data used in ranking but have also fine-tuned their research management strategies to align with the sources. For example, South Africa has a policy in place that ensures that scholars publish in sources that are utilised by the ranking systems, or accredited by its local accreditation system such that ranking systems recognize such sources as having passed through quality assurance. It also has an incentive system that encourages their scholars to publish in accredited sources. Also, South Africa has a local and very properly managed scholar rating system that ranks their scholars aside from their ranks in the universities.

Higher education managers in Nigeria, as in many developing countries, just embraced global university ranking, not minding the functionalist and globalized characteristics of the system that do not consider the local conditions in which the institutions operate. When a ranking system releases a league table, many universities weigh their positions on the table without inquiring and questioning the exact basis of the ranking (please see Table 2). Institutions that are favoured by that result move straight to the press to inform the public about how good their institution is, and why their institution is better than others. However, local position of a Nigerian institution in a global ranking system may matter little to the policymakers, students, and faculty whose understanding of world-class university systems transcends local competitiveness. Even policymakers rehash the poor position of Nigerian universities in the global ranking regime without asking fundamental questions about the ranking systems. Poor information literacy with particular respect to university ranking systems might in fact account for this.

Practically African universities and their managers are not actually responding to the global ranking question. Communities not favoured by the existing ranking systems and the criteria used in producing them, define their own criteria and produce rankings that present them globally as competitive. This is exactly the response of the Spanish Research Council leading to the Webometric ranking system that was published in 2004. This observation also explains the proliferation of ranking systems. Institutions that rank badly one system can take solace in the other. The overarching aim of the ranking was to improve the ranking of Spanish

academic and research institutions on the Web and to promote the open-access publication of the scientific results from their institutions. Another line of response is the way South Africa reorganized its research management systems to align with the criteria used by the ranking systems.

Prior to the publication of the Academic Ranking of World Universities (Shanghai), Pouris (1989) had ranked the 14 universities in South Africa according to the number of their front-line researchers as identified by a large peer evaluation, and according to their research output. He argued that “It is important for students, researchers, and research funding organizations to be able to rank academic institutions, as future employment opportunities and research funding are determined by the quality of the institution” (p.1). South Africa did not follow through its early attempt at the ranking of universities and they did not globalize the ranking nor did they use criteria that could be extended to other communities.

Given the variety of criteria used by the global ranking systems and the in-egalitarian nature of the Meta systems that produce the criteria (Nwagwu 2007, 2010), national education policymakers ought to sit down and decide and adopt systems that do not put their universities at a disadvantage. This option comes in favour of the inability of the national higher education managers to forge a system of university assessment that is global but based on criteria that consider local conditions and situations.

Making Nigerian Universities the preferred destination in Africa

United Kingdom is the most preferred destinations by Nigerian students seeking education outside the shores of the country. This is perhaps not surprising on account of the ties between the two countries, with Nigeria being a former British Colony from which it gained independence in 1960. Other popular destinations include United States of America, Canada, South Africa, India, and Philippines. Table 7 shows the number of Nigerian students studying in various countries.

Table 7: Number of Nigerian students studying in Selected countries

S. No	Country	Year	Total number of International Students	Number of students from Nigeria	Proportion of International Students who hail from Nigeria (%)
1	South Africa	2015	42,351	2,243	5.3
2	United Kingdom	2022	633,910	22,230	3.5
3	United States of America	2021	914,095	12,860	1.4
4	Canada	2021	256,455	5,860	2.3
5	India	2017	45,424	2,090	4.6
6	Republic of Philippines	2021	14,566	1,017	7.0

(Source: www.iie.org/projectatlas). The years indicated are those for the most recent data in the respective countries.

The figures for United Kingdom has been on the rise since 2019 (Figure 12)

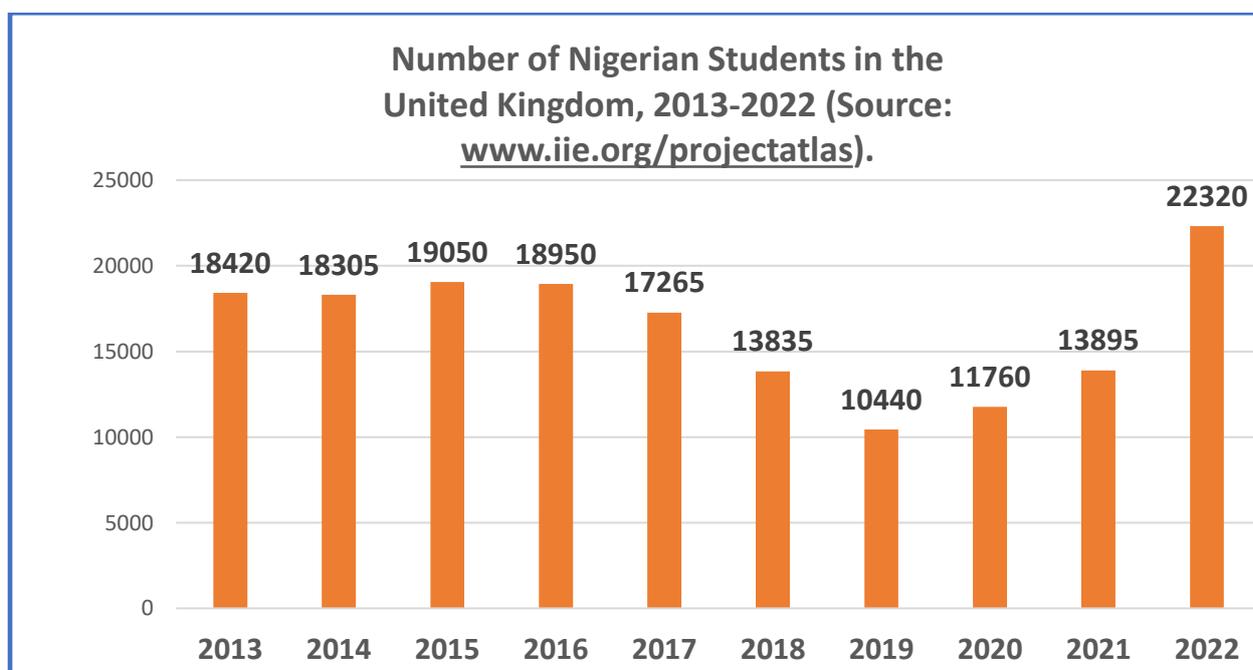


Figure 12. Number of Nigerian Students in the United Kingdom, 2013-2022 (Source: www.iie.org/projectatlas).

The major challenges with Nigerian Public Universities include the following:

- Poor staff mix compounded by ageing academic staff and difficulty in attracting, supporting, developing and retaining fresh talents.
- Ageing problem which translates to continual exit of experienced staff
- Inability to attract foreign staff and students on account of poor remuneration.
- Unstable academic calendar.
- Overdependence on government for funding.
- Difficulty in securing new sources of internally generated revenue.
- Weak financial budgeting and management.
- Relatively weak capacity for innovation in fund raising.
- Inadequate teaching and research facilities for staff and students.
- Relatively low quality of our degrees as evidenced by the large proportion of students who graduate with a Third Class or Pass degree.
- Academic and research programmes with limited connect with the government and industry and other stakeholders.
- Government subvention may be reduced, or static at best, in the POST COVID-19 era, especially in the face of the establishment of many new public Universities

Some of the implications of underfunding include the following:

- Reduction in the exposure of students to laboratory/practical classes and field trips
- Reduction in the attendance at academic conferences,
- Curtailment of the purchase of library books, chemicals and basic laboratory equipment
- Freezing of new appointments
- Limited opportunities for study fellowships,
- Loss of autonomy through increased dependence from external principals (third party funding)
- Internal centralization and expansion of administration, and
- Reduced coordination (harmonization) between universities because of increased competition.

Current reality

- Nigerian Public Universities are not attractive to many admission seekers whose parents can afford sending their children to private universities within the country and offshore universities within Africa, Europe, USA and other parts of the world do so;
- Nigerian Universities are not attractive to foreign Faculty on account of very poor remuneration and lack of adequate teaching and research facilities.
- The country needs to attract more foreign staff and students to come and work and study in Nigeria.
- There are security challenges in many parts of the country but we believe this is a passing phase.

What should be done

- Greater investment in higher educational institutions to improve, teaching, research, development and innovation.
- Encourage interaction with external partners, individuals, companies and public agencies and particularly fostering South – South partnerships.
- Ensure that student learning is informed and delivered by international-quality research-active academic staff and staff with professional and pedagogical expertise.

- Attract high-quality international students and staff to create a diverse and vibrant university community.
- Support strategic partnerships with a limited number of prestigious international organisations
- Improve student support services and expand facilities to attract more international students, especially from within the West African sub-region;
- Offer postgraduate bursaries to foreign students, especially those from ECOWAS countries to pursue Masters and Ph.D.s in Nigeria. They will be treated as Nigerian students for fee purposes.
- Strengthen student and staff exchanges.
- Explore how to benefit from the experience and exposure of Nigerians in diaspora and other eminent scholars who are prepared to work in Nigeria for short and medium lengths of time, even if they are not willing to take up permanent appointments here; this would help attract foreign academic staff.
- Drive the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and create a process of reporting the level of activity for each of the MOUs.
- Involve more students in the internationalisation agenda of the universities.
- There should be more campus-wide enlightenment, skills development and training in order to expand international opportunities for the universities.
- Continuously internationalise the curricular, research and outreach activities.
- Adequate provision should be made to guarantee suitably comfortable and affordable accommodation for foreign students and scholars.
- International mobility of students is a reality and by 2025 it has been estimated that about eight million students will be studying outside their country of birth.
- Available data has shown that Nigeria is among the top 10 countries of origin of foreign students in the United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa and Malaysia.
- If the quality of higher education in Nigeria improves, fewer students will emigrate to foreign lands while more foreign students would also come to Nigeria to study.
- A major reason why Nigerian higher educational institutions is not attractive is instability of the academic calendar.
- The need for improved funding of higher education in Nigeria cannot be emphasized.
- The need for repositioning Nigerian higher educational institutions to make them attractive to foreign students cannot be emphasized.

High Potential Individual (HPI) visa

It is worth mentioning that the ranking of universities is being employed to determine eligibility for some categories of visa in the UL. A High Potential Individual (HPI) visa gives you permission to stay in the UK for at least two years. To apply, you must have been awarded a qualification by an eligible university in the last five years. To be eligible for a High Potential Individual (HPI) visa, you must have been awarded a qualification by an eligible university. The list of eligible universities is based on rankings of universities from around the world. This list of universities relates to qualifications awarded between 1 November 2021 and 31 October 2022 (Table 8).

Table 8: Eligible Universities for the High Potential Individual (HPI) UK visa

Alphabetical Rankings Lists 2021 (establishments from Top 50 rankings which appeared on 2 or more lists)	Country
California Institute of Technology (Caltech)	USA
Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)	Hong Kong
Columbia University	USA
Cornell University	USA
Duke University	USA
Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL Switzerland)	Switzerland
ETH Zurich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology)	Switzerland
Harvard University	USA
Johns Hopkins University	USA
Karolinska Institute	Sweden
Kyoto University	Japan
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	USA
McGill University	Canada
Nanyang Technological University (NTU)	Singapore
National University of Singapore	Singapore
New York University (NYU)	USA
Northwestern University	USA
Paris Sciences et Lettres – PSL Research University	France
Peking University	ChinaIt
Princeton University	USA

Alphabetical Rankings Lists 2021 (establishments from Top 50 rankings which appeared on 2 or more lists)	Country
Stanford University	USA
Tsinghua University	China
University of British Columbia	Canada
University of California, Berkeley	USA
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)	USA
University of California, San Diego	USA
University of Chicago US	USA
University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong
University of Melbourne	Australia
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	USA
University of Munich (LMU Munich)	Germany
University of Pennsylvania	USA
University of Texas at Austin	USA
University of Tokyo	Japan
University of Toronto	Canada
University of Washington	USA
Yale University	USA

There are 20 Universities from the USA on this Table, 3 from Canada, 2 each from Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Switzerland, and China and 1 each from Sweden, France, Australia and Germany.

It can be expected that issues such as eligibility for the HPI UK Visa would improve the reputation of these universities who are able to make the exclusive list and could affect the choice of prospective candidates seeking admission into them,

Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Programme

The purpose of the Postdoctoral Research Fellowship is to provide an opportunity for experiential learning in research, which may serve as a path for further academic and professional development. Postdoctoral research fellowships are normally awarded to individuals within 5 years of having achieved a doctoral degree. Postdoctoral research fellows are individuals who undertake research and gain professional experience for a future academic career, under the mentorship of a host/principal investigator.

Typically, Fellowships are negotiable up to two years after which extension of tenure may be considered for up to a maximum of five years. The Postdoctoral Research Fellow is provided with research facilities under supervision of a senior academic in the discipline. He/She may not be given any teaching assignment and a reasonable stipend is paid. Experience has shown that Postdoctoral Research fellows are very productive and are able to publish their research findings and this adds to the research output of the host institution. In July 2022, for example, the University of Johannesburg put out a Call for 200 new postdoctoral fellowships for the 2022/2023 period. The University is looking for dynamic candidates who are interested in working on innovative solutions to problems related to the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) as well as on ways of exploiting the transformative potential of 4IR technologies in addressing the global Sustainable Development Goals. The call is, however, not limited to these topics.

The Postgraduate College, University of Ibadan announced its first postdoctoral research fellowship position in Non-Communicable Diseases Epidemiology (Only one position), in the Faculty of Public Health, on the 26 April, 2019 for a period of one month. It was online to allow international participation. A total of seven applications was received with two international applicants. Upon screening and close interactions (online and physical) an applicant from China (Dr. Akinkunmi Paul OKEKUNLE), though a Nigerian was selected, to work under the supervision of the principal, Dr O. M. Akpa.

The Postdoctoral Fellowship was jointly funded through a sponsorship award by the University of Ibadan Postgraduate College and a research grant from the Department of Epidemiology, with an offer for free accommodation in the Balewa Hall that houses our doctoral students. The remuneration was at the level of Lecturer II for the period of twelve months and was paid directly as monthly stipend by the Postgraduate College. This is because it cannot be mainstreamed into the University payroll.

Dr Okekunle distinguished himself as a worthy candidate, achieving and surpassing the set target of the fellowship. He submitted a total of 16 articles in reputable international journals, out of which 11 have been published within the period and the balance of five thereafter.

Upon the completion of his 12 months non-renewable term, the research fellow secured another offer in South Korea, where he is presently. The Postgraduate College and the direct host (Dr. Onoja M. Akpa) are proud of the success story of the first Postdoc fellow as he is similarly making lots of waves in his current location. It is hoped that this initiative of the Postgraduate College of the University of Ibadan would be deepened and additional funding support from the Tertiary Education trust Fund (TETFund) and other agencies so that more awards could be made.

Musing on the protracted ASUU Strike: Echoes of the past in the present

The current faceoff between the Federal Government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) commenced on 14th February 2022 as a rollover strike which has since graduated to a full-blown comprehensive, total and indefinite strike.

I write as an insider in the Nigerian University system and as a Nigerian patriot. As at the time of writing this short article the strike has now entered the 29th week and still counting; it has thereby already acquired the dubious distinction of being the second longest strike in the history of the Nigerian University System, surpassed only by the 2020 strike during the novel corona virus COVID-19 pandemic when the entire world was on a lockdown (Figure 1).

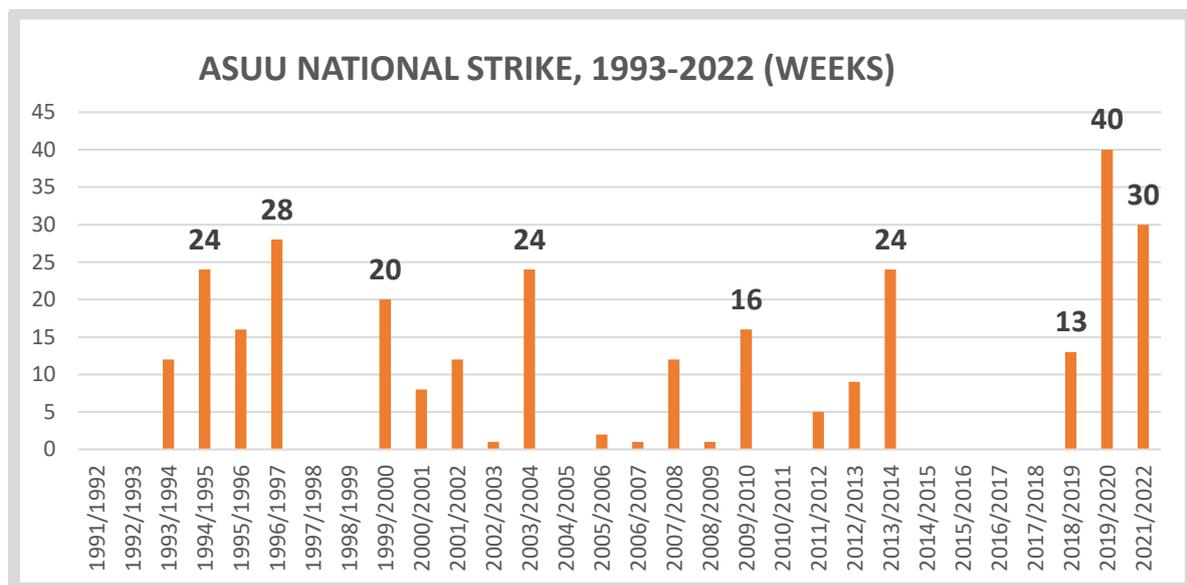


Figure 13: Duration of ASUU National Strike, 1993-2022 (The data for the on-going 2022 strike was as at 12th September 2022).

Using the 2019 data published by the National Universities Commission (Nigerian University System Statistical Digest), and assuming that all the Federal Universities and one-half of the State Universities are on strike, it can be shown that about 1, 479, 393 undergraduate students and 179,310 postgraduate students are stranded on account of the continued closure of public universities in Nigeria. The grand total is a humungous 1,658,703 students that are so affected by the protracted ASUU strike.

The past in the present

I recently came across a monograph published by the Association of University Teachers (AUT), University of Ibadan, in November 1973 and one could not but observe the striking similarities between the crisis in the University system of that year and its current edition, in spite of the 49 year time lapse. The more things change the more they remain the same. The AUT document chronicled the events that led to the crisis in the University earlier that year which revolved around conditions of service.

Apparently, a review of Condition of Service of University Teachers at University College Ibadan, the only university institution in the country during the pre-independence era was carried out in 1959.

In spite of repeated demands by the University Teachers as from 1964 no review of the conditions of service was undertaken for over a decade. The matter came to a crisis situation in 1972 when lecturers at the University of Ibadan, under the aegis of AUT, threatened to go on strike and there was the real possibility of the 1972/1973 session not commencing by September 1972 as had been the practice since the institution was established some 24 years earlier. The AUT showed understanding and the University was able to proceed with the academic calendar as earlier planned. By this time there were only six Universities in the country namely Ibadan, Nsukka, Lagos, Ahmadu Bello Zaria, Ile-Ife and Benin-City. However later events showed that it was just a matter of postponing the evil day.

The first series of industrial disputes between the National Association of University Teachers (NAUT) and the Federal Military Government began in 1972 and there was a resumption and continuation in April 1973. The university lecturers under the aegis of their national body, NAUT, declared a strike in April 1973. On 19th April of that year the Head of State made a broadcast to the nation in which he charged university teachers with lack of patriotism and ordered them to write letters to their respective Vice-Chancellors accepting government approved fringe benefits in which case they could resume work on 25 April or else to pack out of university accommodation and regard their appointment as terminated. Moreover, the Head of State announced the closure of the University of Ibadan and the University of Lagos until further notice. The genesis of the 1973 strike by the AUT could be easily traced to the fact that the conditions of service of the University teachers were left unreviewed for 14 years (1959 till 1973). For clarity, NAUT transmuted into ASUU in 1978.

The university teachers chose to go back to work but refused to write any letters to the Vice-Chancellors. In deciding to go back to work the university teachers were more concerned about the future of higher education in the country than in saving their own skin. Nonetheless, subsequent events have shown that an irreversible humiliation and desecration of the glorious era of the Nigeria academia and intelligentsia had begun in earnest.

Federal Government Needs Assessment 2012

As part of the 2009 Federal Government - ASUU Agreement, the Federal Government established a Needs Assessment Committee. The Committee submitted its report in 2012 and found among other things that the universities have a common problem irrespective of region and ownership. Physical facilities for teaching and learning in Nigerian Universities were inadequate and used beyond the original carrying capacity; Many lecturers, including Professors, share small offices; Dilapidated (Poorly ventilated, illuminated, furnished and equipped; Over-stretched/over-crowded (Lectures theatres, classrooms, laboratories and workshops shared by many programmes across different Faculties); Improvised (Open-air sports pavilion, old cafeteria, convocation arenas and even uncompleted buildings used for lectures. In some cases, workshops are conducted under corrugated sheds or trees. So much pressure is put on existing facilities mainly due to unplanned expansion of programmes). Basic Learning Resources were unavailable or in short supply. Many Laboratories and Workshops were old with inappropriate furnishing. » Power and water supply problems. » Scanty and broken furniture. In many universities, science-based Faculties are running 'Dry Lab' for lack of reagents and tools to conduct physical/real experiments. No Cutting edge research

equipment/facilities. No laboratory, workshop or library ranks among the top 1,000 in the world.

The Committee found that majority of the universities in the country were: grossly under-staffed; rely heavily on part-time and visiting lecturers; have under-qualified Academics; bottom-heavy (with junior lecturers forming large chunk of the workforce); only a few of them attract expatriate lecturers; have no effective staff development programme outside TETFund intervention and, potentially, the Presidential First Class Scholarship programme; 'closed' (homogeneous staff – in terms of ethno-cultural background).

Teaching Staff distribution, both by qualification and by rank, indicates that Nigeria's university system is in crisis of manpower. Only about 43% of the academic staff had Ph.D. There were numerically more support staff in the services of the universities than the teaching staff they are meant to support. More expenditure is incurred in administration and routine functions than in core academic matters » There were 77,511 full-time non-teaching staff in Nigeria's public universities. This is twice the total number of full-time teaching staff. The number of non-teaching staff in some Universities doubles, triples or quadruples that of teaching staff. Almost all the universities were over-staffed with non-teaching staff. The implication of this is over-blown personnel cost and misuse of available resources in the university system.

Fast forward to 2022

As against the six Universities in the country as of 1973 there are now 49 Federal and 57 State Universities to contend with. A major aspect of the current crisis that has led to the closure of most these public universities in Nigeria for some 29 weeks now and still counting is the fact that the 2009 salary scale of University Lecturers has remained static over the past 13 years.

One has spent the past 34 years as a member of the Faculty at the University of Ibadan, a period that is perhaps long enough to know that there is a strong correlation between the take home pay of staff and the ability to recruit and retain new blood Faculty. In the 1980s through to the 1990s it was extremely difficult finding quality staff to employ. That was at a time the Federal Government introduced a Structural Adjustment Programme. Most academic departments in our Universities became empty as many academic staff resigned in droves and emigrated to seek greener pastures in Europe, Middle East, USA, Canada and Southern Africa among other places. As of August 1991, we were only four academic staff left in my Department to teach the ever increasing number of undergraduate and postgraduate students. Needless to say that we were over-worked and underpaid. It is still a miracle that we survived in spite of all the scars. ASUU came up with some ingenious phrase in the form of car stickers to drive the message home 'My take home pay cannot take me home' and 'My boss is a comedian, the wages he pays is a joke'. In fact the wage was not just a joke but a huge joke taken too far. Cultism became the order of the day. Worse still teaching, learning and research facilities became depleted and/or obsolete. The overcrowded students' hotels were under sub-human conditions. There was a rapid fall in the reputation, prestige and competitiveness of the Nigerian University system. We are yet to recover from the loss of academic ideals.

The provision of decent hostel accommodation to at least 50% of the student population in any residential university is proving to be an uphill task for Nigerian universities. University managers have, over the years, been unable to diversify their means of providing hostel accommodation and associated facilities to students. The management styles of students accommodation is generally ineffective and has left majority of the hostel facilities in state of

disrepair. There has been, over the last two decades, an upsurge of students' population in almost all Nigerian universities but there was no commensurate improvement of accommodation and other student services. Consequently, there is a lot of pressure on the available accommodation facilities. As a result, there is: rapid deterioration of hostel facilities; overcrowding and undue congestion in rooms; overstretched lavatory and laundry facilities; poor sanitation, etc. These conditions, coupled with the general condition of the universities, produce graduates that lack confidence and sometimes even self worth.

It's the economy, stupid

"It's the economy, stupid" was a phrase coined by James Carville in 1992, when he was advising Bill Clinton in his successful run for the White House. Some 21 years ago I was Head of the Department of Geology at the University of Ibadan and I hosted a senior colleague of mine from one sister Federal University from the eastern part of the country. In the course of our discussion he informed me that he was going to vote for the incumbent President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, for a second term in office at the then forthcoming 2003 general elections. I tried to find out why he was so much in love with President Obasanjo. His response was spontaneous in coming. He informed me that before May 2000 he was living in penury, unable to meet most of his family obligations. Then from nowhere, without any ASUU strike, salaries of academic staff were increased by about 200%. I could relate with this confession because as a Senior Lecturer then, my monthly take home pay spiked from about Twenty Eight Thousand naira to about Eighty Five Thousand naira effective May 2000. It was, in a manner of speaking, a windfall.

About five years ago I had a private meeting with former President Olusegun Obasanjo and I tried to inquire from him the motivation for his government's upward review of salaries in May 2000. He informed me that it was based on his personal experience while serving a jail term in Yola Prison. He found out that some of the prison warders who attended to him were earning very meagre salaries in spite of having large families to cater for. So when providence smiled on him to emerge as an elected civilian president in 1999, some 20 years after he had stepped down as a Military Head of State, he deemed it fit to implement an upward review of the minimum wage which led to a highly significant improvement in salaries of public servants. This is highly commendable. The only snag was that no upward review of those salaries was undertaken for a long time subsequently in spite of the high rate of inflation. Meanwhile the price of goods and services is a moving target which defies the law of gravity which states that whatever goes up will come down. It may be noted that if we use a conservative annual rate of inflation of 10%, it follows that there would have been a 100% devaluation in just seven years. In effect the real value of the take home pay of employees would have dropped by at least 50% in seven years!

The 2022 ASUU Strike

An agreement was signed between the Federal Government and ASUU in 2009 which addressed the Conditions of Service, Funding, University Autonomy and Academic Freedom, and Other Matters related to regulations, working environment, etc. It was expected that the issues would be renegotiated after three years. For whatever reasons, there was a delay and the renegotiation eventually commenced in March 2017. with Dr. Wale Babalakin, then Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council of the University of Lagos as committee chair. Babalakin resigned after he left as Pro-Chancellor of University of Lagos. After the nine month strike of 2020, the Federal Government replaced him with Professor Emeritus Munzali Jubril. A new agreement was produced in May 2021. All relevant agencies of government apparently

participated. The Federal Government refused to sign the agreement. When the current strike started in February 2022, the initial demand of ASUU was for the Federal Government to sign that agreement. The Government Team came back after several weeks to say that they could not sign the Munzali Jubril agreement, and that ASUU should start the negotiations all over again. After a few weeks of objection, ASUU agreed. That birthed the third committee led by Professor Emeritus Nimi Briggs. He has also submitted his report. There is no indication as yet that the Federal Government is eager to sign latest negotiated agreement.

The main issues in the 2022 National Strike by the Academic Staff Union of Universities include the following:

- Finalisation of the draft Renegotiated 2009 Federal Government-ASUU Agreement
- Implementation of the Memorandum of Action signed with the Union on 23rd December 2020
- Deployment of the University Transparency and Accountability Solution (UTAS)
- Mainstreaming of the Earned Academic Allowances (EAA)- payment for excess workloads and responsibilities due to gross shortage of qualified academic staff
- Proliferation of Universities especially by State Governors
- Release of White Paper on the Visitation Panel Reports

Matters arising and searching for a way forward

It has become very obvious that the funding model for higher education in any country is largely a political decision. While in the US (the richest country in the world) students pay hefty tuition fees, in Germany (the richest country with the strongest economy in Europe), Scotland, Finland and Estonia, students attend university free. In Brazil, a developing nation like Nigeria, with more population, health and education (social services) are free, that is, paid for indirectly. To fund education in Brazil, Federal, State and municipal governments contribute 25 percent, 38 percent and 37 percent respectively. These are two extremes on the funding model spectrum.

Many students in the US incur huge debts on account of taking a lot of loans while studying to earn a University degree. They are expected to start repaying the debt so long as they earn more than USD125,000 per annum. While the Republican Party is against debt forgiveness, since the party perceives such debt forgiveness as handout the Democrats are in favour of some level of debt forgiveness of up to USD50,000 or even a total forgiveness of such debts. The ideological difference between the two parties is very obvious.

Germany has many highly ranked world class Universities and nearly all of them are public Universities funded by the respective 16 Landers (State Governments) in contradistinction to the USA where most of the leading Universities are privately owned. Even at that when you probe further you find out that the leading funding agencies in the USA such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) which offer grants to university researchers in the US are owned by the US Government. The Final Year 2022 President's Budget request for the NIH is \$2,213.6 million. On the other hand, the 2022 annual budget of the National Science Foundation is \$8.8 billion. In my great country Nigeria we are still debating whether TETFund should support private Universities.

Every politics is local. Most of the Nigerian elites enjoyed highly subsidised University education. A situation in which many brilliant but indigent students are not able to pursue University education on account of very high tuition fees is obviously inequitable.

We need to fashion out what is the best model for our country in order to reposition the Nigerian University system which is grossly underperforming for sundry reasons.

Many stakeholders from all walks of life get in touch with me every now and then to find out when the public universities will re-open so that students could resume classes as if I have the power to decree the institutions opened. I am as frustrated as any other stakeholder and patriot. The anxiety and frustration of students, parents and guardians are quite understandable. Ironically many members of ASUU also double as parents of undergraduate and postgraduate students. Worse still many members of ASUU are themselves research students whose academics and career progression have been put on hold, no thanks to the current strike. To that extent it can never be we versus them. All of us are involved in one way or the other. Students are the lifeblood of a university and the Faculty are there *in loco parentis* for the students. Anything that delays the students' graduation is naturally a cause for worry. We hope for the best such that normalcy can return to our public university system before too long.

The current population of Nigeria is 217,317,631 as of Sunday, September 11, 2022, based on Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data, making her the 7th most populous nation in the world. Growing at an annual rate of 3.2%, the figure is expected to rise to about 400 million by 2050 (Figure 14), by which time the country will be the third most population in the world, coming after India and China. The implication of this for the education industry is that an increasing large number of youths would be seeking higher education. Many have used this as an explanation for the establishment of more universities in the country.

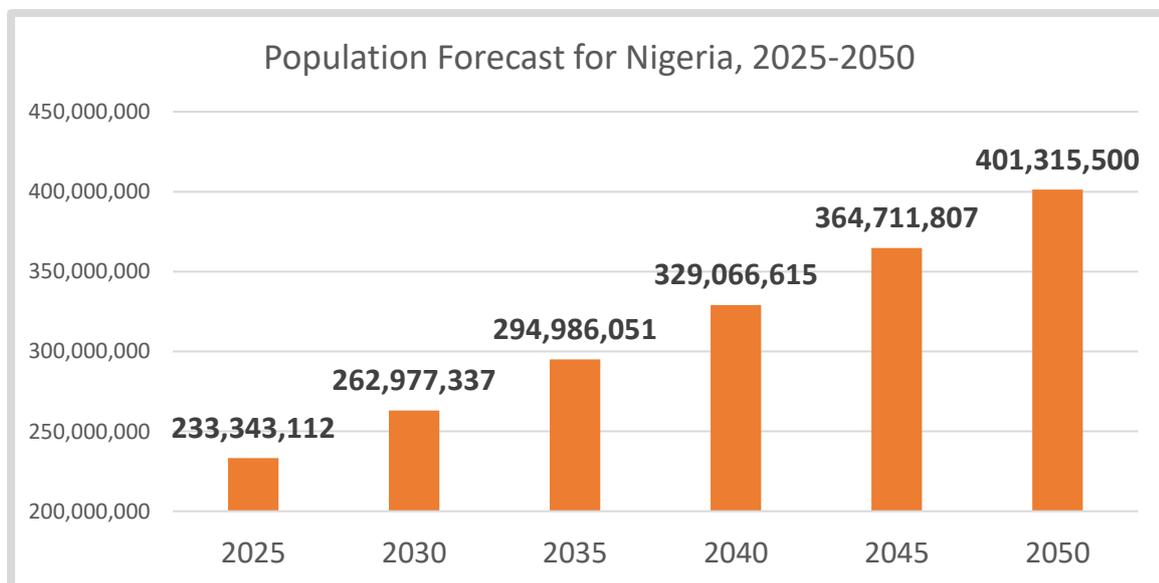


Figure 14: Population forecast for Nigeria, 2025-2030 (Source: www.statista.com)

The huge population of Nigeria could be an advantage if the people receive good education and have skills relevant to the 21st Century.

Benchmarking Osun State University

An excerpt from a recent interview of Prof. Clement Adebooye, the Vice Chancellor of UNIOSUN, states as follows:

Public universities, which include state and federal ones, are run on three models. The Federal Government operates a 100 per cent funding model for personnel costs. Some state universities also run that same model of 100 per cent funding. Some other universities run a 50/50 or 60/40 model of university funding and then the state contributes to the personnel cost. For us in Osun State University, we run the approximately 50/50 model whereby we contribute 50 per cent of the personnel cost and the state also contributes 50 per cent of the cost.

We take care of almost 100 per cent of the running cost of the university, running costs in terms of gardening, maintenance, cleaning services, sanitation, security services, accreditation, laboratory materials, equipment, and other things except some of them provided by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund. So, the major contribution that makes the university to be able to stand on its feet is the 50 per cent personnel cost from the state added to the 50 per cent personnel cost by the university. Therefore, our employees in this university know very well that this system is like a 'work-and-eat children's football tournament.' It is when our students are here that we can get 50 per cent of the personnel cost which is added to the one from the state and it is also at that time that we get our running cost. So, when students are not here, we don't get both the 50 per cent personnel cost and almost 100 per cent running cost. So our employees are conscious of this and the university council is also conscious of this very important element of our funding and decided on March 18, 2018, that if this university needed to survive, we should run on a 'who-does-not-work, does-not-deserve-a-pay,' (policy) and that has become a tradition here and that is what has been sustaining the system.

My oral communication with the Vice-Chancellor indicates that the University also award a number of scholarships every year. The scholarships are credited into the tuition accounts of the beneficiaries. These include:

- The Osun State University Staff-funded Scholarships (20 awards of N100,000 each/year; for indigent but diligent Undergraduate).
- Tunde Ponnle Scholarship (10 awards of N100,000 each per year, for indigent but diligent students).
- Teaching Assistantship for Postgraduate students. 50 at N70/month, awarded across all programs. Postgraduate students apply every year and are screened. We ensure that each Dept has at least a Teaching Assistant.
- Some undergraduates are engaged on Work-Study programs and are paid N30k/month. We engage at least 50 needy students/Semester.
- There is the Da Rocha scholarships which we award to 3 best students at the end of 200 level in Accounting.
- Scholarships of N100,000 each awarded by Osun indigenes in diaspora. Not less than 50/year.

It is gratifying to note that there has been an impressive growth in the student population at Osun State University from the 611 foundation students during the 2007/2008 session to 14 608 at the end of the 2021/2022 session (Figure 15).

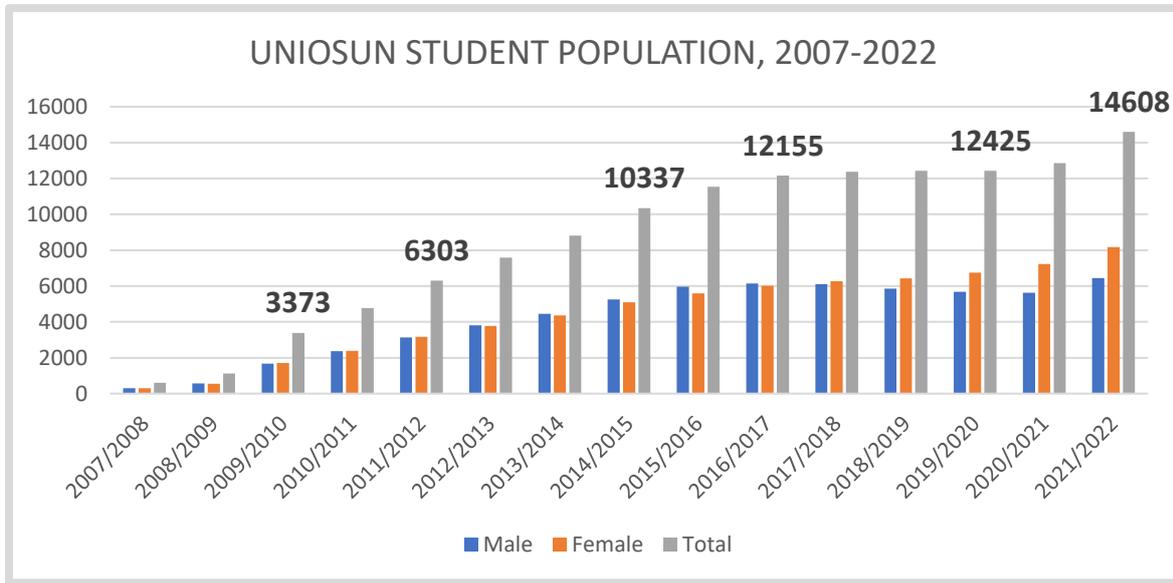


Figure 15: Growth of the Total Student Population at Osun State University, 2007-2022 and breakdown on account of gender.

It is gratifying to note that the female gender is well represented in the students' enrolment and over the last five sessions there have been more female than male students. The female students currently constitute about 56% of the total student population (Figure 16).

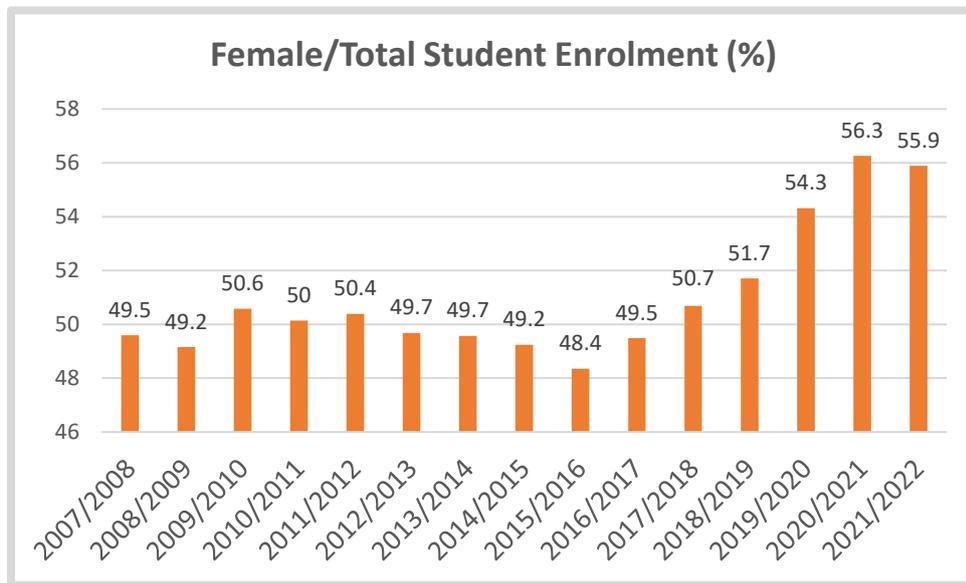


Figure 16: Proportion of UNIOSUN Students who are female, 2007-2022

The number of academic staff has grown from 66 in 2006/2007 to 526 during the 2021/2022 session (Figure 17).

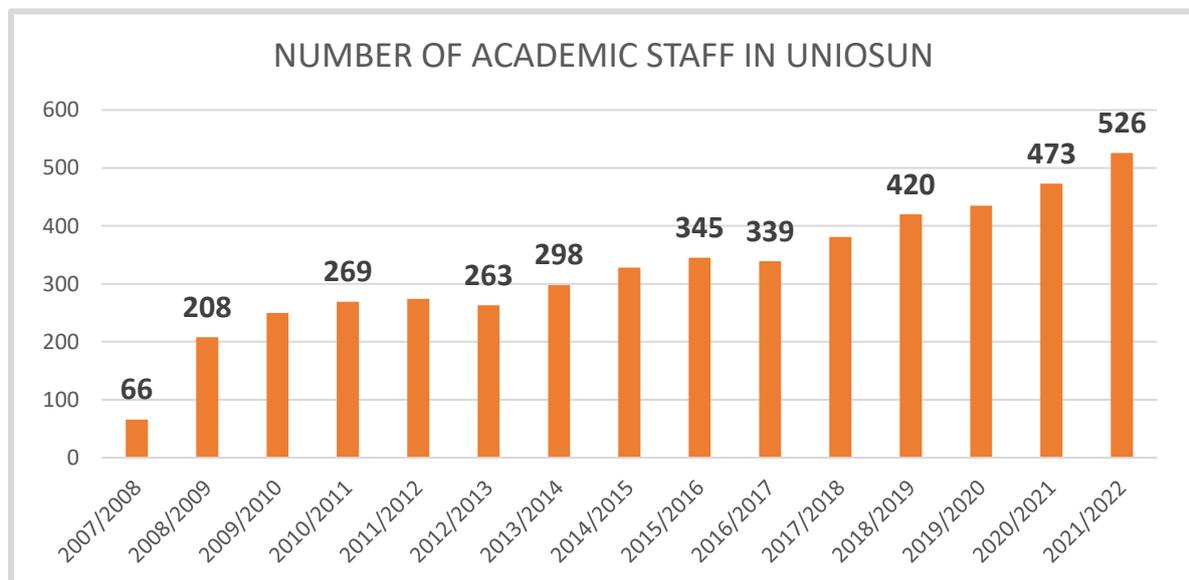


Figure 18: Growth of the Total Number of Academic Staff at Osun State University, 2007-2022

It is important to observe that there has been an increase in the proportion of the total staff population that are academic staff from 31% in 2006/2007 to about 52% now in 2021/2022 (Figure 18). This indicates that more funds are being spent on academic matters, which is the main mandate of the university.

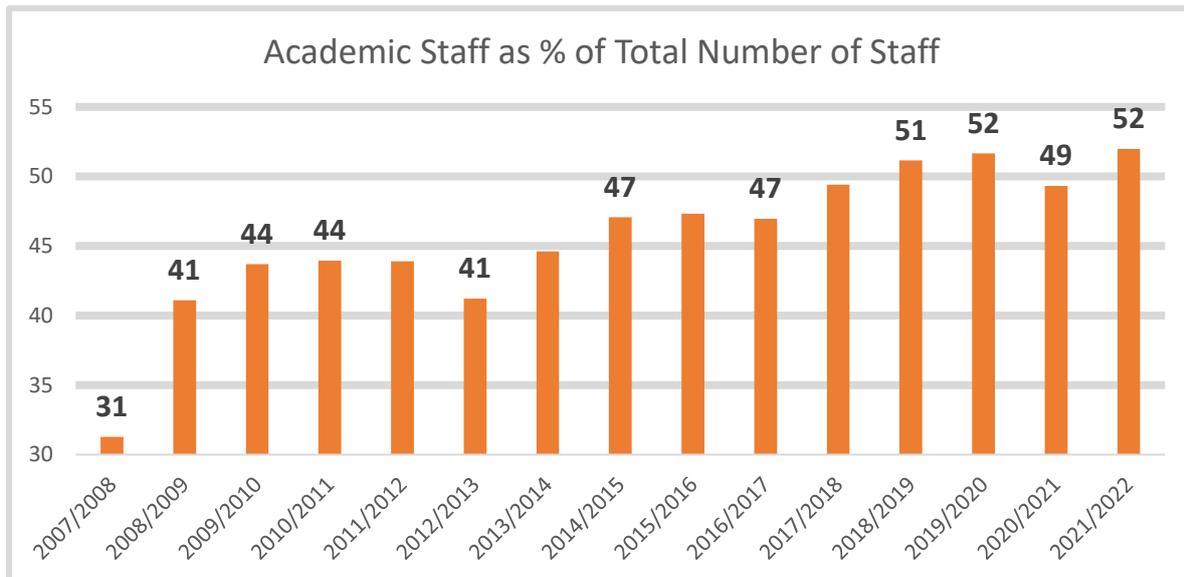


Figure 19: Academic Staff as percentage of the Total Number of Staff at Osun State University, 2007-2020

A comparison with the First and Second Generation Universities in the country show that the performance of Osun State University is only surpassed by the University of Jos which recorded a 54.6% in the proportion of total number of staff that are academic staff (Figure 19).

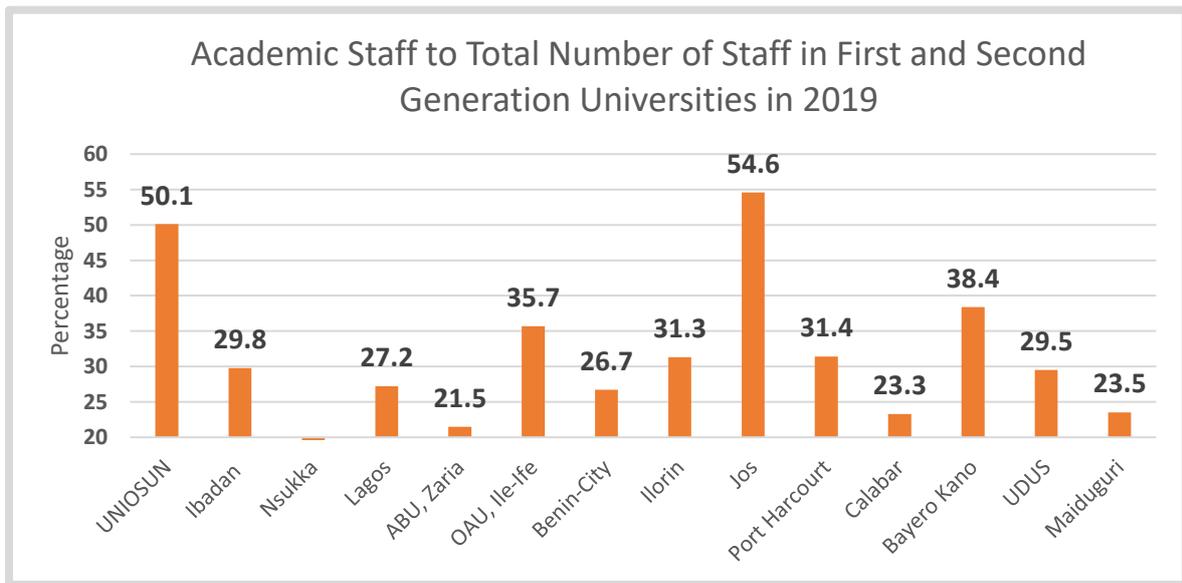


Figure 18: Comparison of Ratio of Academic Staff to Total Number of Staff between Osun State University and First and Second Generation Universities in Nigeria in 2019 (Source of Data: NUC)

The performance of Osun State University is compared to what obtains in selected State Universities in the country where Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti has the best performance at 72.9% (Figure 20).

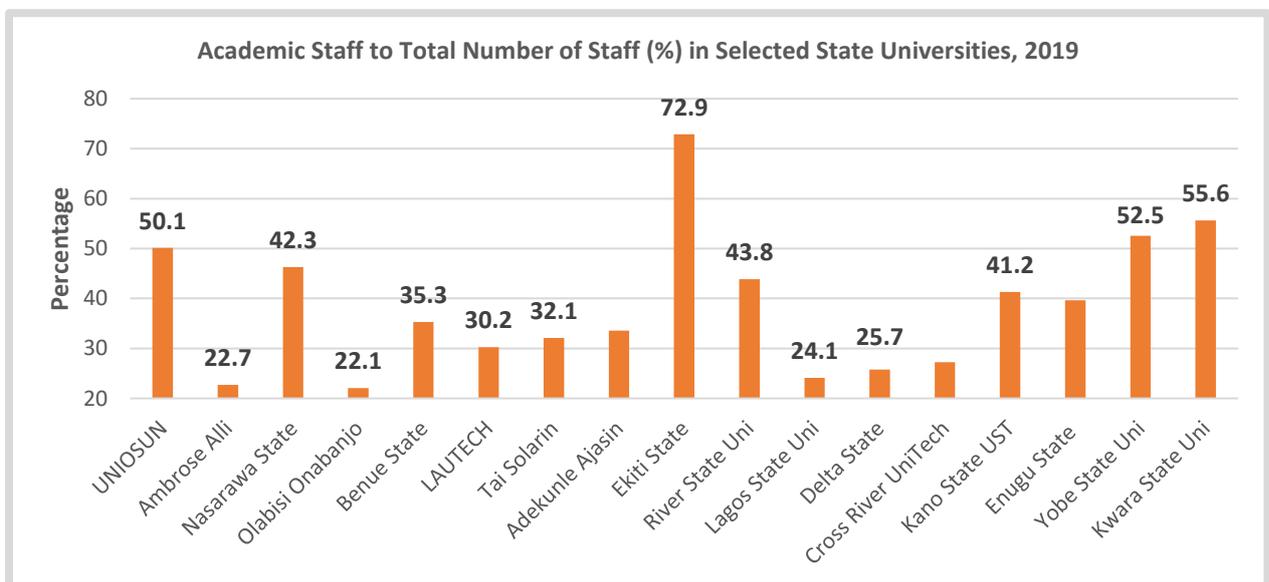


Figure 20: Comparison of Ratio of Academic Staff to Total Number of Staff between Osun State University and Selected State Universities in Nigeria in 2019 (Source of Data: NUC)

The performance of Osun State University in terms of the ratio of Academic Staff to the Total Number of Staff for Selected Private Universities is shown in Figure 21. It is a mixed grill with Pan Atlantic University showing the worst performance at 12% and Baze University and Al-Qualam University recording nearly 61%.

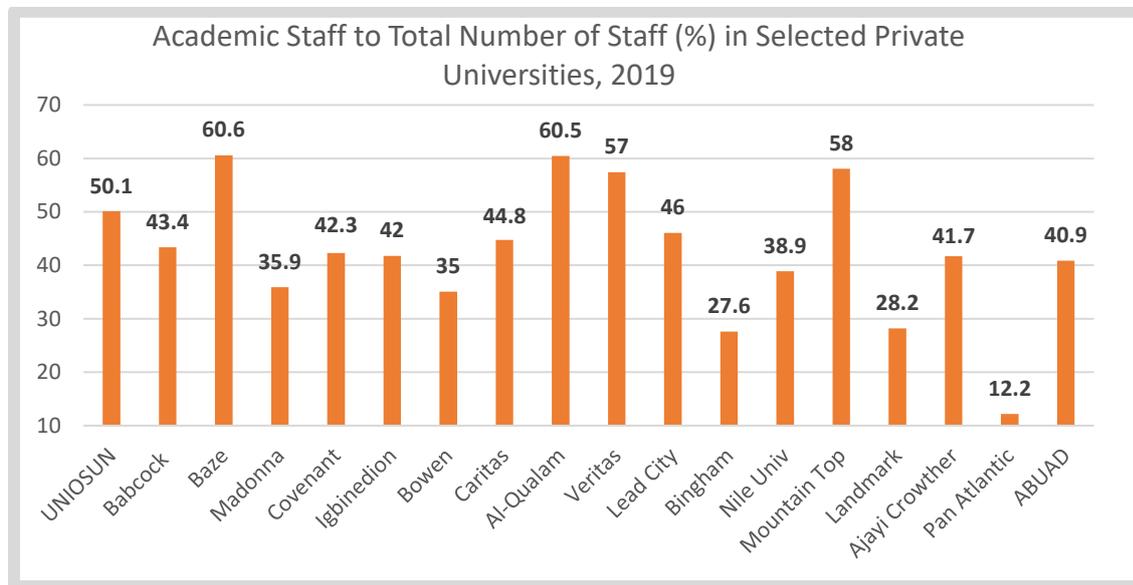


Figure 21: Comparison of Ratio of Academic Staff to Total Number of Staff between Osun State University and Selected Private Universities in Nigeria in 2019 (Source of Data: NUC)

In Olayinka (2022) we define a term the Vice-Chancellorship Stability Index (VCSI) simply as

$$VCSI = (\text{Total Period of Stability in tenure of the VC} / \text{Age of the University}) \times 100\%$$

In its 15 years of existence, Osun State University has had four substantive Vice-Chancellors including the incumbent and three Acting Vice-Chancellors. The three Acting Vice-Chancellors have been in office for a cumulative period of 31 months. This gives a VCSI of 82.8% which is much lower than that of the six first generation universities in Nigeria, whose VCSI ranged from 91.8% at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka to 98.3% at the University of Benin (Figure 22; Table 9).

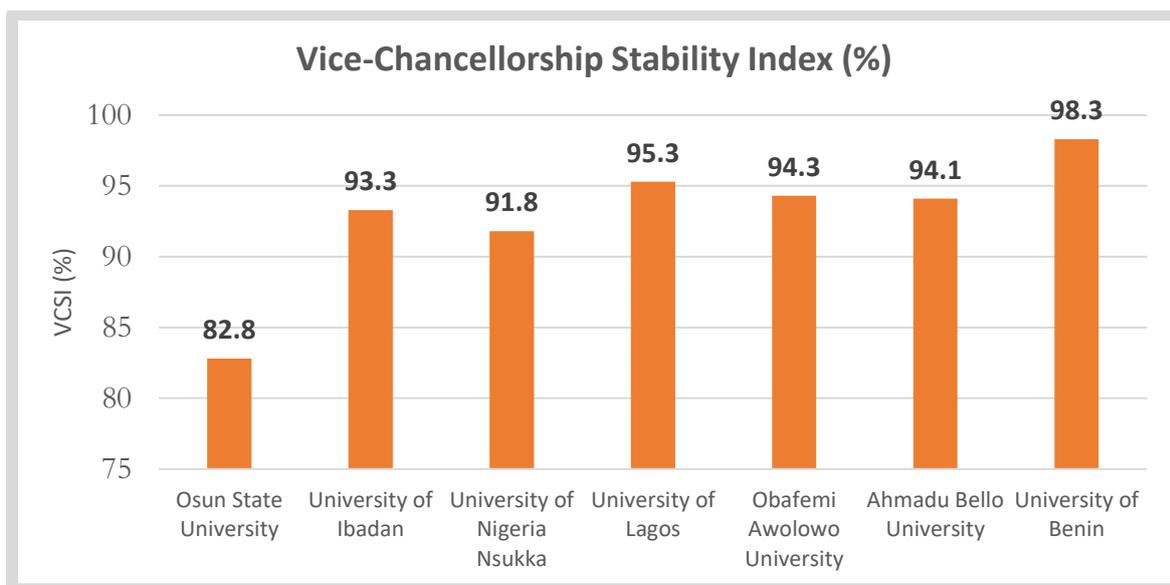


Figure 22: Vice-Chancellorship Stability Index for First Generation Universities in Nigeria (1948-2021) compared to that of Osun State University.

Benchmarking with two world-class Universities in the United Kingdom, the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge have never had an Acting Vice-Chancellor since their establishment in 1230 and 1412, respectively, with a perfect VCSI of 100%. On the other hand, Harvard University, established in 1637 has had Acting President for a total of about 19 years, giving a VCSI of 95%, which figure is about the average for the six First generation Universities in Nigeria.

Table 9: Vice-Chancellorship Stability Index for First Generation Universities in Nigeria, 1948-2021 and comparison with Osun State University

Institution	Period covered	Number of Acting VCs/Sole Admins.	Combined Tenure of Acting VCs/Sole Admins. (months)	Vice-Chancellorship Stability Index (%)
Osun State University	2007-2022	3	31	82.8
University of Ibadan	1948-2021	7	59	93.3
University of Nigeria Nsukka	1960-2021	2	60	91.8
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	1961-2021	4	41	94.3
University of Lagos	1962-2021	3	33	95.3
Ahmadu Bello University	1962-2021	2	42	94.1
University of Benin	1970-2021	1	10	98.3

On the other hand, the University has always had a Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council in office, except for the 17-month period from 22nd June 2011 till 26th November 2012. If we similarly define a Pro-Chancellor Stability Index, PCSI, as

PCSI = (Total Period of Stability in tenure of the Pro-Chancellor / Age of the University) x 100%

will give a very high PCSI value of 89%. It may be pointed out that the Council of the University of Ibadan had also been dissolved on a number of occasions with the PCSI being about 96%.

A word of advice to Vice-Chancellor Clement Adebooye

I hereby formally congratulate the new Vice-Chancellor of Osun State University, Osogbo, Professor Clement Adebooye, who is attending his maiden Convocation as the Vice-Chancellor of this institution. I wish you an impactful tenure. You should always have at the back of your mind that you have five years to lead this great university. Your refrain should be that you are going to leave behind a trail of achievements *in spite of* all the challenges. Failure because of the challenges is not an option worth contemplating.

The Vice-Chancellorship of a university anywhere in the world is a very tough job, more so in our country Nigeria. A former Vice-Chancellor of the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, and my mentor and my former Chemistry lecturer Professor Ikenna Onyido, has identified a number of phases in the tenure of a Vice-Chancellor in a public university in Nigeria. I have modified this slightly as below.

- Year 1 - **Honeymoon Period.** People are jostling to be part of the Vice-Chancellor's inner circle. Every move the Vice-Chancellor makes is hailed as unique and excellent - nobody had done it like that before. Sycophants will hail the Vice-Chancellor as the best there ever was. People are seeking relevance, appointments, etc. On the other hand, some of the candidates who contested against you will take you as mortal enemies for life and will work extremely hard to undermine your new administration. A few of them will hold the unproved and erroneous belief that they are better candidates than you. In reality, you did not appoint yourself. What is important is that Council had in its wisdom appointed you and it is to that body that any query and matter arising from your well-merited preferment should be directed.
- Year 2 - **Period of Separation of forces.** Those who were disappointed in Year 1 above will join the cynical members of the community who never see anything good in any Vice-Chancellor. Criticisms will begin to swell from those coalition. Of course, there will be committed men and women of goodwill who want the university to move forward.
- Years 3 and 4 - **Period for Enemy Action.** Petitions will start flying left, right and centre. Allegations of this and that will be made. It does not matter that this Vice-Chancellor is frugal even in his private life, above board and shuns ostentatious lifestyle, wrongs will be fabricated, mismanagement and outright stealing, in fact looting, of public funds will be alleged. The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) will come and go. Same for countless Statutory and Ad-Hoc Committees of both the House of

Representatives and Senate. Some of your colleagues will judge you by their own standards. Any mistake, no matter how innocuous would be blown out of proportion in order to embarrass your person and office. To them everything is fair in war.

- **Year 5- Succession Period** and time to step down. This is the most delicate and dangerous phase of your stint as Vice-Chancellor, considering that your time will soon be up and you then expectedly become a lame duck. Many of your colleagues who felt angered by some of your actions against them, especially in relation to disciplinary matters, would plan to hit you below the belt most viciously, and thereby extract their flesh of pound. They would make use of the social media under fictitious and anonymous names to attack your personality using barefaced lies, fabrication and fiction. They may even float online newspapers for gorilla journalism in order to embarrass the university, your person and office and thereby achieve their objectives to destabilise the system. There will be jostling by some inordinately ambitious and very desperate colleagues to take over from you. Be assured that a few of them would be ready to pull down the roof of the house if the process does not go their way. Many of your colleagues who have the ambition to succeed you will expect you to endorse their candidature, and if this is not forthcoming you had better be prepared for war. Even candidates who have not shown any outstanding performance as scholar-administrators and whom in your honest assessment do not have the capacity to be a Vice-Chancellor think they are the best thing that has happened to humanity since the invention of sliced bread. Nearly all of them are likely to come over to inform you and seek your endorsement and support. They will watch your every step within and outside the Campus. If you are perceived to have a soft spot for any of the candidates then be prepared for war, especially if it is assumed that you have performed very well in office and have widespread support within the University especially a good relationship with Senate and a Council Chairman who is above board. Your life would be further complicated if the candidate they perceive you to be supporting is a front-runner and unarguably the person to beat on account of his/her scholarship, administrative experience and community support. The other candidates will attempt to gang up against the front runner. The former group are only united in their opposition to the main candidate; if they were to be locked up in a room and requested to come up with a consensus candidate be assured there would not be any unanimity of purpose among them. The tone and tenor in Council is critical at this stage. You should read the body language of the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council. Whatever the case, ensure that there is strict adherence to due process, especially the extant rules and regulations governing appointment of a Vice-Chancellor, and advice the Chairman of Council appropriately.

Prepare your hand-over note for the benefit of your successor and a detailed account of your stewardship to put in proper perspective your fundamental

achievements in office, which document should be circulated to all the critical internal and external stakeholders of your university. Some of the Vice-Chancellorship candidates who have no modicum of support within the university community would seek external intervention in Abuja especially from their friends in high places, irrespective of the irreversible damage that such a mis-adventure would do to university autonomy. You can always expect a change in the composition of the government appointees on the Governing Council, especially the Chairman and the representative of the Ministry of Education. In the worse case scenario the entire Council might be dissolved. As far as those colleagues are concerned the end justifies the means.

There would be petitions forwarded to various security agencies against the front runner during and after the selection process. Every attempt would be made to damage your hard-earned reputation.

Some of your professorial colleagues may even incite some junior members of staff to cause chaos. The ultimate aim is to remove you from office before the expiration of your tenure as indeed has happened in a few public universities in the last few years. As always, God will intervene on your behalf and you will leave the office with your head high. You will have to navigate the highly toxic and shark-infested environment that our public universities have become and be optimistic of a safe landing.

Discussion and Conclusion

Osun State University Osogbo has earned a good reputation for itself over the last 16 years since it was established. One has the impression that it has met with the expectations of the founding fathers. You should continue to strive to excel in teaching, research and community impact. It is perhaps good that you have two campuses in each of the three Senatorial Districts of the State, at Osogbo, Okuku in Osun Central, Ipetu Ijesa and Ifetedo in Osun East and Ikire and Ejigbo in Osun West.

As a forward-looking institution, there should be opportunity for students of Osun State University to be exposed to 21st Century skills as part of their training here. This comprises both the hard and soft skills (Figure 23). This could be part of a Curriculum Review process, which by conventional wisdom should be undertaken after every five years.

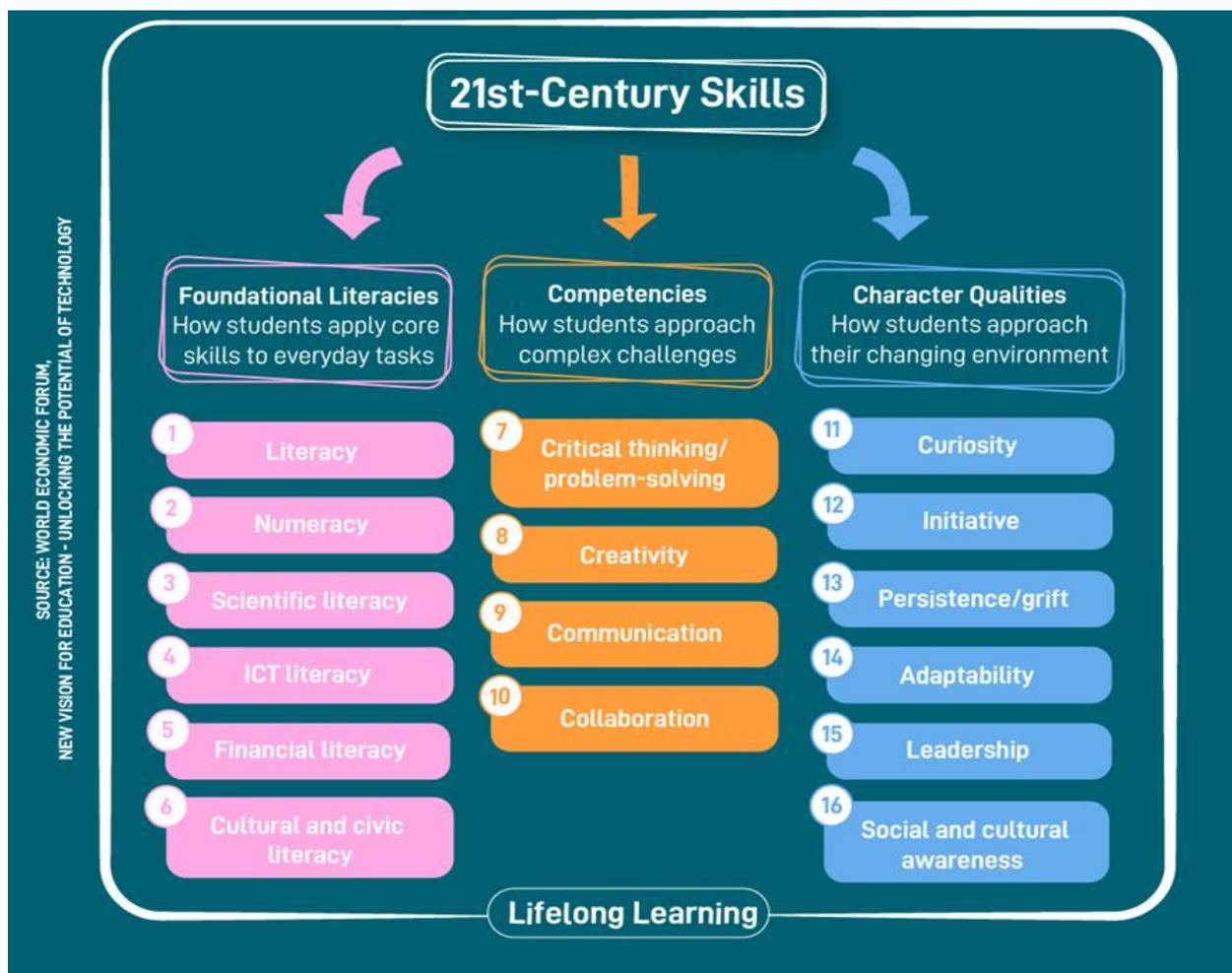


Figure 23: 21st Century skills (Source: World Economic Forum)

I suggest in a rapidly evolving world of the 21st Century Osun State University should set up a **Department (or Unit) of the Future** in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor to map your strategic Planning Process and undertake the necessary Monitoring and Evaluation.

I implore the leadership of the University to continue to strengthen Postgraduate training and research in the institution as a veritable way of increasing the research output. You should also work harder in improving your ranking.

Once again, I heartily congratulate all the graduands and wish you success in your career.

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