



Low Enrolment of Students in College of Education Billiri: Perceptions of Students, Parents and Staff

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Abstract

On completion of secondary education, students join various institutions of higher learning depending on their interest and capabilities. Colleges of education are witnessing low enrolment of students these days. This might have resulted from number of reasons. This research was set to investigate the perceptions of students, parents and staff (stakeholders) on the low enrolment of students into College of Education Billiri, Gombe State. The study revealed the opinions of stakeholders as to what are the factors responsible and the way forward. The study employed the social learning theory. The design for this study was survey design. The entire College of Education Billiri staff, students and parents served as the population of the study from which purposive sampling technique was used in drawing the sample. The instruments for the data collection was structured questionnaire named, Low Enrolment of Students into Colleges of Education Questionnaire (LESCEQ) which will be administered to sampled students and staff of College of Education Billiri; and interview was also conducted to get responses from parents. The data was analyzed using mean scores. The research findings highlighted some factors that are responsible for the drop in students' enrolment and recommendations were given on how to address the issue.



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Muhammad Ahmad Kumo

Principal Investigator

Introduction

Government and private individuals have been establishing colleges of education in order to cope with the increasing demand for professional teachers who can at least teach in the lower basic level of our educational system. It is no longer a news that these colleges are witnessing a drastic drop in students' enrolment. College of Education Billiri, like most of the colleges is experiencing low turnout of applicant each year. In the year 2015, the college admitted more than three hundred students as regular NCE I. Since then, the number kept reducing by year. This session, less than hundred candidates applied for admission into the college and staff unions had to intervene by sponsoring some students and paying for change of institution for others. Although, education is recognized as a fundamental human right-one that all individuals are entitled to benefit, the circumstances in which they live notwithstanding (Unesco, 2012), so many factors might have contributed to low enrolment of students into College of Education Billiri.

The staff of the college, students and their parents stand a better chance to say their opinions on why students reduce patronizing College of Education Billiri.

Conceptual Framework

Bakang (2021) studied the Causes of Low Enrolment in ICT-Related Courses. His results revelled that, the main cause of low enrolment in ICT related courses as not having an ICT subject offered at secondary school. This may be similar the study at hand as all the potential candidates do not offer educational courses. The secondary factors identified were: discomfort with prior computer usage, lack of prior exposure to technological devices, inflated outcome expectations, personal goals, career-related interests, insufficient contribution by key stakeholders, and poor performance in gateway subjects. All the factors identified can be applicable to colleges of education.

According to Albert (2021), Education should no longer be viewed and treated as a privilege, but rather considered a right and necessity for the individuals of society. Societies around the world must work at

providing education for those who seek it. Society as a whole benefit as a result of education. An educated community is a united community. Education leads to feelings of “togetherness” and compatibility within a society. Albert (2021) studied the Crisis for Higher Education Enrollment in Malawi. He found out that, Malawi’s tertiary gross enrolment rate is 0.4 percent as compared to 8.2% of Sub-Saharan countries average enrolment. Some of the reasons identified are the fact that Malawi adopted Distance Teaching and Learning; Radio Instructions; Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and face to face interaction mode. These modes of teaching and learning have greatly contributed to low higher education enrolment for they have been said to be: Not flexible; expensive; and restrictive, leaving out some very able and capable citizens. This tendency has implications for creating an elite society which is contrary to the world-wide goal of creating a more inclusive society. Other factors he identified as responsible for low enrolment into higher institutions are the shortage of number of both public and private higher learning

institutions. Next factor identified was the high cost of higher learning requirements in terms of tuition as well as accommodation and transportation.

Aluwihare & Manoshika (2013) studied the Issues of Low Student Enrolment in Open University of Sri Lanka. Reasons for the low enrolment as identified by the study are: Time constrain, study centres too far from residential areas, financial constraints and Language barrier.

Lenah, Peter, & Mwebi (2016) carried out a study on Socio-Economic And Gender Factors Influencing Enrolment of Undergraduate Students in University Self-Sponsored Programme. Their findings indicated that, the most significant socio-economic factors influencing enrolment of undergraduate self-sponsored students were: nature of school attended, parental occupation education and income. The University socio-economic factors that influenced enrolment were mostly the cost of the courses, financial support through bursaries, physical infrastructure, teaching staff, accessibility of the material required for

the course and management. The conclusion was that socio-economic factors and gender constitute a significant determinant to undergraduate students' enrolment. It was recommended that the government should endeavour to cushion the needy students pursuing their degrees through self-sponsored programme.

Catherine (2004), Studied the Factors that Lead to low enrolment of female students in undergraduate courses in the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University. His results indicated that among others, the factors that contributed to the low enrolment of female students are: High dropout rate of girls at lower levels of education, poor performance of girls in K.C.S.E, low enrolment of girls at primary and secondary schools, socio-cultural factors, uncondusive learning environment in the institutions and financial constraints due to high cost of education.

Odiike and Anozie (2021) carried out a research on Teacher Based Strategies for Improving Enrolment for Students in Fine and Applied Art in Colleges of Education in Anambra State. According to their findings,

the society is very ignorant of entrepreneurial benefits and values of Fine and Applied Arts education to the Nigeria populace in general hence, the unmerited negative attitudes exhibited by parents and students which debarred actually show that there is poor enrolment of students in fine and applied art education caused by societal attitudes, students lack of interest, inadequate infrastructure, lack of art equipment, and teachers attitude pose major constraint to students enrolment in fine and applied art education programme. If the teacher-oriented strategies mapped out in the study are properly implemented, there will be upsurge in students scampering for Fine and Applied Arts programmes and it is these students who will make up the national workforce for better society.

Ndidi (2020) worked on the Improvement Strategies for Students' Enrolment in Business Education Programmes in Colleges of Education for Sustainable Development in Delta State. His findings revealed that students' aspirations, students' abilities, students interest in the career, peer group approval, poor image and reputation of the

course, cost of tuition fees and departmental fees, non-availability of physical facilities and poor societal perception were some of the factors affecting students' enrolment in business education programmes in colleges of education in Delta State. Findings also revealed that such strategies as professionalization of the business education programme, standardizing the recruitment processes for lecturers employed into the business education programme, adequately funding the business education programme and the adequate provision of instructional teaching aids and technologies as well as provision of infrastructural facilities would increase the number of students enrolled in the business education programme in colleges of education in Delta State. Male and female business educators did not significantly differ in their opinion on the improvement strategies for students' enrolment in business education programme in colleges of education.

Statement of the Problem

Government and private individuals have been establishing schools among which are NCE awarding institutions. The nursery,

primary and secondary schools are in need of at least NCE holders to teach but sometimes they have to look for alternatives. This is because not all NCE holders produced each year go into teaching job. While we experience a rapid increase in schools, on the contrary colleges of education suffer low enrolment of students.

It is against this background, this research seek to investigate the factors responsible for low enrolment of students in College of Education Billiri, Gombe State.

Aims and Objective the Study

The main aim of this study was to find out the factors responsible for low enrolment of students in College of Education Billiri

- i. To get the opinions of students, parents and staff of College of Education Billiri on reasons behind low enrolment of students
- ii. To find out the lasting solutions to low enrolment of students in College of Education Billiri

Research Questions

The research is guided by the following research questions:

- i. What are the opinions of students, parents and staff of College of Education Billiri on reasons behind low enrolment of students?
- ii. What can be the lasting solutions to low enrolment of students in College of Education Billiri?

Significance of the study

The outcome of this research will be useful to: College of Education Billiri of Gombe State, and sister colleges of education as the results of the study provided recommendations on how to address the issue of low enrolment of potential student-teachers.

Research Methodology

The design for this research was Survey. "Survey research means collecting information about a group of people asking them questions and analyzing the results" (Shona, 2022). The survey design is therefore considered suitable, since the study sought information from a sample drawn from individual colleges, using questionnaire.

Research Population

The population of this study was College of Education Billiri of Gombe State community

which comprises staff, students and their parents.

Sample Size/Sampling Technique

The sample size was determined using Yamane formula. Eighty (80) staff (50 teaching and 30 non-teaching staff) of Gombe State College of Education Billiri were selected using Simple Random Sampling Technique. According to Julia and Saul (2023), in Simple Random Sampling Technique, each member of a population has an equal chance of being chosen through the use of an unbiased selection method.

Research Instrument

A well-constructed and self-developed questionnaire named, Low Enrolment of Students into Colleges of Education Questionnaire (LESCEQ) was used to get the required information from the respondents (College of Education Billiri staff, students their parents). The questionnaire items were divided into two sections (1 and 2). Section 1 for collection of information on personal data of respondents while section 2 comprised questions that solicited responses from the respondents based on the research objectives. Interview was also conducted in order to get

more opinions from parents. The Instrument was validated by an expert in Test and Measurement.

Method of Data Collection

This study collected all the needed data using questionnaire items which was administered to the respondents. The researcher carried out the administration of the questionnaire item by themselves. Interview will also be conducted by the researchers. This will enable the researchers interact with the parents (respondents) directly.

Method of Data Analysis

The study employed the use of quantitative data analysis method. The data collected from the completed and returned questionnaires were thoroughly checked, presented, analyzed, and quantified in analytical form using statistical tables. Quantitative data analysis “is helpful in evaluation because it provides quantifiable

and easy to understand results” (Pell Institute, 2023). The data was analyzed using frequency counts and mean scores. Each question acceptance level for mean was 2.50, such that a mean rating on any item less than 2.5 was regarded as rejected.

Data Presentation and Analysis

A total of eighty (80) questionnaires were administered to the fifty (50) teaching staff and thirty (30) no-teaching staff of Gombe State College of Education Billiri. Out of the 80 copies distributed, seventy-six (76) were returned but only seventy-three (73) were properly filled. Subsequently, this analysis was based on the 73 copies.

The collected data are presented on tables and analyzed using frequency counts and mean scores. Each research question acceptance level for mean was 2.50, such that a mean rating on any item less than 2.5 was regarded as rejected.

Results Presentation and Analysis

Research Question 1

What are the opinions of students, parents and staff of College of Education Billiri on reasons behind low enrolment of students?

Data relevant to this research question were collected using the first ten questions of the questionnaire. The summary of the data is presented on table 1.

Table 1

S/N	Question Item	SD	D	A	SA	\bar{X}	Remarks
1	How much do you agree or disagree that the tuition fees at the College of Education are a factor in the low enrollment of students?	18	27	16	13	2.36	—
2	How much do you agree or disagree that the location of the College of Education is a factor in the low enrollment of students?	29	23	11	10	2.03	—
3	How much do you agree or disagree that the lack of awareness about the programs offered at the College of Education is a factor in the low enrollment of students?	8	13	25	27	3.00	+
4	How much do you agree or disagree that the quality of education at the College of Education is a factor in the low enrollment of students?	24	22	16	11	2.20	—
5	How much do you agree or disagree that the lack of facilities and resources at the College of Education is a factor in the low enrollment of students?	28	23	10	12	2.08	—
6	How much do you agree or disagree that the reputation of the College of Education is a factor in the low enrollment of students?	19	26	15	13	2.30	—



7	How much do you agree or disagree that the lack of support and guidance from the College of Education staff is a factor in the low enrollment of students?	13	17	24	19	2.67	+
8	How much do you agree or disagree that the lack of financial aid and scholarships offered by the College of Education is a factor in the low enrollment of students?	26	20	14	13	2.19	—
9	How much do you agree or disagree that the lack of diversity and inclusivity at the College of Education is a factor in the low enrollment of students?	22	23	16	12	2.25	—
10	How much do you agree or disagree that the lack of career opportunities for graduates of colleges of Education is a factor in the low enrollment of students?	13	11	27	22	2.79	+

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Research Question 2

What can be the lasting solutions to low enrolment of students in College of Education Billiri?

Data relevant to this research question were collected using questions 11 to 20 of the questionnaire.

The summary of the data is presented on table 2.

Table 2

S/No.	Question Item	SD	D	A	SA	\bar{X}	Remark
11	How much do you agree or disagree that the College of Education should offer more scholarships and financial aid to attract more students?	11	14	26	22	2.81	+
12	How much do you agree or disagree that the College of Education should improve its facilities and resources to attract more students?	29	23	12	9	2.01	—
13	How much do you agree or disagree that the College of Education should improve its marketing and outreach efforts to attract more students?	8	10	23	32	3.08	+
14	How much do you agree or disagree that the College of Education should offer more diverse and inclusive programs to attract more students?	15	19	20	19	2.59	+
15	How much do you agree or disagree that the College of Education should improve its reputation and visibility to attract more students?	13	16	25	19	2.68	+
16	How much do you agree or disagree that government should provide more career opportunities for its graduates to attract more students?	16	12	28	17	2.63	+
17	How much do you agree or disagree that the College of Education should	24	19	18	12	2.25	—

	improve the quality of education it offers to attract more students?						
18	How much do you agree or disagree that the College of Education should improve its support and guidance services to attract more students?	17	16	22	18	2.56	+
19	How much do you agree or disagree that the College of Education should improve its relationship with the community to attract more students?	7	10	31	25	3.01	+
20	How much do you agree or disagree that the College of Education should offer more flexible and online learning options to attract more students?	14	12	27	20	2.73	+

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Major Findings and Discussions of Results

From the analyses of the responses in the tables 1 & 2 above, the findings of the study are summarized below:

1. Low enrolment of students at the College of Education Billiri can be attributed to:

- i. Lack or inadequate knowledge about the programmes offered by the college

- ii. Insufficient support and guidance from the College of Education staff to the potential students

- iii. Insufficient career opportunities for graduates of colleges of Education

2. The following can be the lasting solutions to low enrolment of students in College of Education Billiri:

- i. The College should offer more scholarships and financial aid to attract more students

- ii. The College should improve its marketing and outreach efforts to attract more students
- iii. The College should offer more diverse and inclusive programs to attract more students
- iv. The College should improve its reputation and visibility to attract more students
- v. The government should provide more career opportunities for NCE graduates
- vi. The College should improve its support and guidance services to attract more students
- vii. The College should improve its relationship with the community to attract more students
- viii. The College of Education should offer more flexible and online learning options to attract more students

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, we conclude that: Government, College management, staff of College of education and the Billiri community have indispensable

roles to play in order to curtail the problem of low enrolment of students as indicated in the findings.

Recommendations

Based on the findings made and the conclusions drawn, in addition to the results (as mentioned under the findings), in the course of interview with the parents; the following additional recommendations are:

- i. Billiri community should be more accommodative and more hospitable all.
- ii. The College should be targeting students from all the states of the federation. Though the college is state owned, the students should come from all parts of the country.

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