



Enrolment Projection and Resource Allocation in Nigerian Universities: Implications for Educational Management

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Abstract. This study examined the effect of enrolment projection on resource allocation in five public universities in South-South Nigeria: University of Benin, Ambrose Alli University, Delta State University, University of Calabar, and University of Uyo. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a sample of 250 respondents selected from the five universities. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that enrolment projection has a significant effect on the allocation of teaching staff, physical facilities and infrastructure, instructional materials and learning resources, and financial resources in the universities studied. The study concluded that enrolment projection is a critical tool for effective resource allocation in Nigerian universities. It was recommended that universities should develop robust enrolment projection models, align resource allocation with projected enrolment, and ensure regular monitoring and evaluation of resource utilisation.

Keywords: Enrolment projection, resource allocation, teaching staff, physical facilities, instructional materials, financial resources, educational planning, South-South Nigeria

1. Introduction

Education is widely recognised as a fundamental driver of national development. In Nigeria, universities play a critical role in producing the high-level manpower needed for economic growth and social progress. However, the rapid expansion of university education in Nigeria has created significant challenges in terms of resource allocation and utilisation. The demand for university education has grown tremendously over the years, with over two million qualified candidates competing for fewer than

500,000 university admission spaces annually (Agile, 2018). This widening gap between demand and supply has put immense pressure on existing university resources.

Enrolment projection refers to the process of estimating future student numbers based on past trends, current data, and various assumptions about future developments. It is an essential tool for educational planning, as it provides the basis for determining the resources needed to accommodate projected student populations. According to Etor, Ekanem and Sule (2020), projection serves as the basis for determining available resources, other school characteristics, and how well they could be distributed and utilised. Enrolment projection enables the government to assess the performance of its policy objectives and determine the cost of education programmes.

Resource allocation in Nigerian universities involves the distribution of financial, human, and material resources to various departments, faculties, and programmes. The National Universities Commission (NUC) plays a central role in this process, using student-teacher ratios and other criteria to determine funding allocations (Salomi & Alake, 2025). However, the rapid growth in student enrolment has often outpaced the allocation of resources, leading to overcrowding, inadequate facilities, and declining quality of education.

The relationship between enrolment projection and resource allocation is critical for effective educational planning. When enrolment projections are accurate, universities can plan for the recruitment of teaching staff, the construction of physical facilities, the procurement of instructional materials, and the allocation of financial resources. However, when

projections are inaccurate or when resources are not allocated in line with projected enrolment, universities face significant challenges in maintaining quality education. In Nigeria, the challenges of enrolment projection and resource allocation are particularly acute. The federal government has announced a seven-year freeze on creating new federal universities to allow the government to refocus resources on improving existing institutions by upgrading facilities, recruiting qualified staff, and expanding their carrying capacity (Federal Ministry of Education, 2025). This policy reflects the recognition that existing universities are struggling to cope with rising enrolment and that resources must be allocated more effectively. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the effect of enrolment projection on resource allocation in Nigerian universities and to explore the implications for educational planning.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The ideal situation in any well-functioning university system is that enrolment projections are accurate and resources are allocated in line with projected student numbers, ensuring adequate numbers of qualified teaching staff, sufficient physical facilities and infrastructure, appropriate instructional materials and learning resources, and adequate financial resources to support teaching and learning. In this ideal scenario, students receive quality education, and the university system contributes effectively to national development.

The actual situation in the five South-South Nigerian universities studied, however, falls far short of this ideal. Student enrolment has grown tremendously over the years due to increasing demand and government policies aimed at expanding access, but resource allocation has not kept pace with enrolment growth. Many of these universities face significant shortages of teaching staff, with staff-student ratios far exceeding the NUC recommended ratio of 1:30 (Salomi & Alake, 2025). Physical facilities and infrastructure are inadequate, with many students lacking access to lecture theatres, laboratories, libraries, and hostels, while instructional materials and learning resources are insufficient, and financial resources are inadequate to meet growing needs (Ofor-Douglas, 2024; Etor, Ekanem & Sule, 2020). Several factors contribute to this problem, including the lack of accurate and reliable data on student enrolment which makes accurate projections difficult (David, 2020), inadequate planning for resource allocation based on historical patterns rather than projected needs, insufficient funding for university education with Nigeria's education budget falling below the

UNESCO recommended benchmark of 15-20% of national budget, and limited capacity for effective resource management in many universities (Ofor-Douglas, 2024). The consequences are significant, as overcrowded lecture theatres, inadequate laboratory facilities, and shortages of teaching staff undermine the quality of education, students struggle to access learning resources, universities struggle to maintain academic standards, the quality of graduates' declines, and the university system fails to produce the high-level manpower needed for national development. Despite the severity of this problem, there is limited empirical evidence on the specific effect of enrolment projection on resource allocation in South-South Nigerian universities. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by examining the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of teaching staff, physical facilities, instructional materials, and financial resources in five public universities in South-South Nigeria.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of enrolment projection on resource allocation in five public universities in South-South Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- Examine the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of teaching staff in the five universities.
- Determine the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of physical facilities and infrastructure in the five universities.
- Examine the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of instructional materials and learning resources in the five universities.
- Determine the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of financial resources in the five universities.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

- What is the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of teaching staff in the five South-South Nigerian universities?
- What is the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of physical facilities and infrastructure in the five South-South Nigerian universities?
- What is the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of instructional materials and learning resources in the five South-South Nigerian universities?

- What is the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of financial resources in the five South-South Nigerian universities?

2. Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the Systems Theory, originally developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968). The theory posits that organisations are complex systems composed of interrelated and interdependent parts that work together to achieve common goals. According to this theory, a system is a set of interconnected parts that function together to form a whole. If one part of the system performs poorly, it affects all other parts and the overall performance of the organisation. The theory also highlights the importance of feedback and adaptation, suggesting that organisations must continuously adjust to changes in their environment to remain effective.

The Systems Theory is relevant to this study because it provides a framework for understanding how enrolment projection and resource allocation interact to influence the performance of Nigerian universities. The university system can be viewed as a system composed of various subsystems, including enrolment, teaching staff, physical facilities, instructional materials, and financial resources. Each of these subsystems must function effectively for the overall system to achieve its goals. When enrolment projection is accurate, it provides the basis for effective resource allocation, enabling the university system to function optimally. However, when enrolment projection is inaccurate or resources are not allocated in line with projected enrolment, the system experiences dysfunction, leading to overcrowding, inadequate facilities, and declining quality of education. By applying the Systems Theory, this study examines how enrolment projection affects different types of resources and how these effects interact to influence the overall performance of Nigerian universities.

3. Empirical Studies

Several empirical studies have examined the relationship between enrolment projection and resource allocation in Nigerian universities and other contexts. These studies provide valuable insights into the nature, causes, and consequences of the relationship. Etor, Ekanem and Sule (2020) examined access and resource allocation to education in Nigeria. The study found that projection serves as the basis for determining available resources, other school characteristics, and how well they could be distributed and utilised. The study also noted that enrolment

projection enables the government to assess the performance of its policy objectives and determine the cost of education programmes. This study is relevant as it establishes the fundamental role of projection in educational planning. Amaewhule and Anunobi (2025) examined the effect of educational resources planning on students' academic success in public universities in Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive research design with a sample of 206 students selected from three public universities. The findings revealed that well-planned educational resources positively affect students' academic success. The study recommended that public universities should improve their planning to provide adequate educational resources and prioritise identifying and correcting resource gaps.

Ofor-Douglas (2024) examined resource allocation and uneven development in Nigerian universities. The study found that resource allocation deals with how the resources available in the organisation are distributed and utilised. The study identified inadequate funding, dilapidated infrastructure, and human resources as key issues affecting Nigerian universities. The study recommended that there should be an increase in the development of infrastructure, human resources, and funding to support universities. Salomi and Alake (2025) examined educational planning and funding models in Nigeria, focusing on balancing equity and quality. The study found that insufficient funding, policy inconsistencies, political instability, corruption, and regional disparities are critical challenges facing Nigerian education. The study recommended enhanced funding strategies, strengthened data-driven planning, and inclusive policies for marginalised groups.

David (2020) explored enrolment projection techniques and implications for educational administrators in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study found that accurate enrolment projections are essential for effective educational planning and resource allocation. The study recommended that educational administrators should adopt robust enrolment projection techniques. Ekim (2020) examined the Delphi method for enrolment projection in rural school districts. The study found that the Delphi method is effective for enrolment projection in contexts where data is limited. The study recommended that educational planners should adopt the Delphi method for enrolment projection.

Agile (2018) examined expanding access to education opportunity in Nigeria. The study found that rising numbers of children and youths are unable to gain admission into schools to actualise their educational

and career dreams. The study highlighted the need for equitable and adequate resources to existing schools to ensure qualitative education. Udoma (2018) presented the breakdown of the 2019 Federal Government of Nigeria Budget Proposal. The study found that the budget for education was inadequate to meet the needs of the sector. Etor, Mbon and Ekanem (2013) examined primary education as a foundation for qualitative higher education in Nigeria. The study found that primary education is a foundation for qualitative higher education and that adequate resource allocation at all levels is essential.

4. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which allows for the systematic collection of data from a sample of respondents to describe their characteristics, attitudes, and experiences without manipulating any variables. The study was carried out in five public universities in South-South Nigeria: University of Benin (UNIBEN), Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Delta State University (DELSU), University of Calabar (UNICAL), and University of Uyo (UNIUYO). These universities were selected because they represent a mix of federal and state institutions and have all experienced significant growth in student enrolment in recent years.

The population comprised all academic staff and administrators in the five selected universities. The sample consisted of 250 respondents, including university administrators, academic staff, and

planning officers, selected using Yamane's formula and stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Enrolment Projection and Resource Allocation Questionnaire (EPRAQ)", designed to elicit information on enrolment projection practices and resource allocation in four areas: teaching staff, physical facilities, instructional materials, and financial resources. The questionnaire was divided into six sections covering demographic information and items on the four areas, measured on a four-point Likert scale.

The validity of the instrument was established through content and face validity by three experts in educational management and measurement and evaluation, leading to revisions and removal of some items. The reliability was established through a pilot test administered to 30 respondents, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.87. Data were collected through direct administration of the questionnaire over six weeks, with 220 completed questionnaires returned from 250 administered, representing a response rate of 88%. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (means, and standard deviations) to answer research questions using SPSS version 27.0.

5. Results

Research Question 1: What is the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of teaching staff in the five South-South Nigerian universities?

Table 1: Effect of Enrolment Projection on Allocation of Teaching Staff

S/N	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Enrolment projection guides the recruitment of teaching staff	3.72	0.52	Agree
2	Teaching staff are allocated based on projected student numbers	3.65	0.56	Agree
3	Enrolment projection influences staff-student ratios	3.78	0.48	Agree
4	Projected enrolment determines the number of teaching staff needed	3.58	0.60	Agree
5	Accurate enrolment projection leads to adequate staff allocation	3.62	0.58	Agree
6	Enrolment projection helps in planning for staff development	3.55	0.62	Agree
7	Staff allocation is reviewed based on enrolment changes	3.48	0.64	Agree
8	Enrolment projection ensures equitable distribution of teaching staff	3.70	0.54	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The data in Table 1 show the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of teaching staff. The mean scores for all items are above 2.5, indicating that respondents agree that enrolment projection has a significant effect on the allocation of teaching staff. The highest mean score (3.78) was recorded for the item "Enrolment projection influences staff-student ratios," indicating that enrolment projection is a key determinant of staff-student ratios. The mean score for "Enrolment projection guides the recruitment of teaching staff" was 3.72, and "Enrolment projection ensures equitable distribution of teaching staff" was 3.70, confirming the positive effect of enrolment projection on teaching staff allocation.

Research Question 2: What is the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of physical facilities and infrastructure in the five South-South Nigerian universities?

Table 2: Effect of Enrolment Projection on Allocation of Physical Facilities and Infrastructure

S/N	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Enrolment projection guides the construction of new facilities	3.74	0.50	Agree
2	Physical facilities are allocated based on projected student numbers	3.68	0.54	Agree
3	Enrolment projection influences the provision of lecture theatres	3.76	0.48	Agree
4	Projected enrolment determines the need for laboratory facilities	3.62	0.56	Agree
5	Accurate enrolment projection leads to adequate facility provision	3.70	0.52	Agree
6	Enrolment projection helps in planning for hostel accommodation	3.58	0.58	Agree
7	Facility allocation is reviewed based on enrolment changes	3.52	0.60	Agree
8	Enrolment projection ensures equitable distribution of facilities	3.66	0.54	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 2 presents the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of physical facilities and infrastructure. All items have mean scores above 2.5, indicating that respondents agree that enrolment projection has a significant effect on the allocation of physical facilities and infrastructure. The highest mean score (3.76) was recorded for "Enrolment projection influences the provision of lecture theatres," indicating that enrolment projection is a key determinant of the provision of lecture theatres. The mean score for "Enrolment projection guides the construction of new facilities" was 3.74, and "Accurate enrolment projection leads to adequate facility provision" was 3.70, confirming the positive effect of enrolment projection on physical facilities allocation.

Research Question 3: What is the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of instructional materials and learning resources in the five South-South Nigerian universities?

Table 3: Effect of Enrolment Projection on Allocation of Instructional Materials and Learning Resources

S/N	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Enrolment projection guides the procurement of instructional materials	3.68	0.54	Agree
2	Learning resources are allocated based on projected student numbers	3.62	0.56	Agree
3	Enrolment projection influences the provision of library resources	3.72	0.50	Agree
4	Projected enrolment determines the need for textbooks and journals	3.58	0.58	Agree
5	Accurate enrolment projection leads to adequate learning resources	3.66	0.54	Agree
6	Enrolment projection helps in planning for e-learning resources	3.55	0.60	Agree
7	Learning resource allocation is reviewed based on enrolment changes	3.50	0.62	Agree
8	Enrolment projection ensures equitable distribution of learning resources	3.62	0.56	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 3 shows the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of instructional materials and learning resources. All items have mean scores above 2.5, indicating that respondents agree that enrolment projection has a significant effect on the allocation of instructional materials and learning resources. The highest mean score (3.72) was recorded for "Enrolment projection influences the provision of library resources," indicating that enrolment projection is a key determinant of the provision of library resources. This is consistent with Amaewhule and Anunobi (2025), who found that well-planned educational resources positively affect students' academic success. The mean score for "Enrolment projection guides the procurement of instructional materials" was 3.68, and "Accurate enrolment projection leads to adequate learning resources" was 3.66, confirming the positive effect of enrolment projection on instructional materials allocation.

Research Question 4: What is the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of financial resources in the five South-South Nigerian universities?

Table 4: Effect of Enrolment Projection on Allocation of Financial Resources

S/N	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Enrolment projection guides the allocation of financial resources	3.74	0.50	Agree
2	Financial resources are allocated based on projected student numbers	3.68	0.54	Agree
3	Enrolment projection influences the university budget	3.78	0.48	Agree
4	Projected enrolment determines the funding needs of the university	3.62	0.56	Agree
5	Accurate enrolment projection leads to adequate financial allocation	3.72	0.52	Agree
6	Enrolment projection helps in planning for recurrent expenditure	3.58	0.58	Agree
7	Financial allocation is reviewed based on enrolment changes	3.52	0.60	Agree
8	Enrolment projection ensures equitable distribution of financial resources	3.66	0.54	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4 presents the effect of enrolment projection on the allocation of financial resources. All items have mean scores above 2.5, indicating that respondents agree that enrolment projection has a significant effect on the allocation of financial resources. The highest mean score (3.78) was recorded for "Enrolment projection influences the university budget," indicating that enrolment projection is a key determinant of the university budget. The mean score for "Enrolment projection guides the allocation of financial resources" was 3.74, and "Accurate enrolment projection leads to adequate financial allocation" was 3.72, confirming the positive effect of enrolment projection on financial resource allocation.

6. Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study revealed that enrolment projection has a significant effect on the allocation of teaching staff in the five South-South Nigerian universities. The majority of respondents agreed that enrolment projection guides the recruitment of teaching staff, that teaching staff are allocated based on projected student numbers, and that enrolment projection influences staff-student ratios. These findings are consistent with Etor, Ekanem and Sule (2020), who found that projection serves as the basis for determining available resources and how they could be distributed and utilised. The findings are also consistent with Salomi and Alake (2025), who established that the staff-student ratio shall be 1:30 for all programmes. The finding that enrolment projection influences staff-student ratios is particularly significant. When enrolment projections are accurate, universities can plan for the recruitment of adequate numbers of teaching staff to maintain appropriate staff-student ratios. However, when projections are inaccurate, universities may face shortages or surpluses of teaching staff, which can affect the quality of education. This is consistent with Ofor-Douglas (2024), who found that the staff-student ratio in many Nigerian universities is far above the recommended benchmark.

The second finding revealed that enrolment projection has a significant effect on the allocation of physical facilities and infrastructure in the five South-South Nigerian universities. The majority of respondents agreed that enrolment projection guides the construction of new facilities, that physical facilities are allocated based on projected student numbers, and that enrolment projection influences the provision of lecture theatres. These findings are consistent with Ofor-Douglas (2024), who reported that the rapid growth in student enrolment has outpaced the

provision of physical facilities, leading to overcrowding and inadequate learning environments.

The finding that enrolment projection influences the provision of lecture theatres and laboratory facilities is particularly important. As enrolment increases, the demand for lecture theatres, laboratories, and other physical facilities also increases. When enrolment projections are accurate, universities can plan for the construction of new facilities to meet this demand. However, when projections are inaccurate or when resources are not allocated in line with projected enrolment, universities face significant shortages of physical facilities. The finding that accurate enrolment projection leads to adequate facility provision is consistent with the argument that effective educational planning requires the alignment of resources with projected student numbers.

The third finding revealed that enrolment projection has a significant effect on the allocation of instructional materials and learning resources in the five South-South Nigerian universities. The majority of respondents agreed that enrolment projection guides the procurement of instructional materials, that learning resources are allocated based on projected student numbers, and that enrolment projection influences the provision of library resources. These findings are consistent with Amaewhule and Anunobi (2025), who found that well-planned educational resources positively affect students' academic success. The finding that enrolment projection influences the provision of library resources is particularly significant. As enrolment increases, the demand for library resources, including textbooks, journals, and e-resources, also increases. When enrolment projections are accurate, universities can plan for the procurement of adequate instructional materials to meet this demand. However, when projections are inaccurate or when resources are not allocated in line with projected enrolment, students may face shortages of essential learning resources. The finding that accurate enrolment projection leads to adequate learning resources is consistent with the argument that effective educational planning requires the alignment of resources with projected student numbers.

The fourth finding revealed that enrolment projection has a significant effect on the allocation of financial resources in the five South-South Nigerian universities. The majority of respondents agreed that enrolment projection guides the allocation of financial resources, that financial resources are allocated based on projected student numbers, and that enrolment projection influences the university budget. These findings are consistent with Salomi and Alake (2025),

who found that insufficient funding, policy inconsistencies, political instability, corruption, and regional disparities are critical challenges facing Nigerian education. The finding that enrolment projection influences the university budget is particularly significant. When enrolment projections are accurate, universities can plan for the allocation of financial resources to meet the needs of projected student numbers. However, when projections are inaccurate or when resources are not allocated in line with projected enrolment, universities may face budget shortfalls or surpluses, which can affect the quality of education. The finding that accurate enrolment projection leads to adequate financial allocation is consistent with the argument that effective educational planning requires the alignment of financial resources with projected student numbers.

7. Conclusion

This study examined the effect of enrolment projection on resource allocation in five public universities in South-South Nigeria: University of Benin, Ambrose Alli University, Delta State University, University of Calabar, and University of Uyo. The study found that enrolment projection has a significant effect on the allocation of teaching staff, physical facilities and infrastructure, instructional materials and learning resources, and financial resources. Universities use enrolment projections to guide the recruitment of teaching staff, construction of new facilities, procurement of instructional materials, and allocation of financial resources. However, the rapid growth in enrolment has often outpaced the provision of resources, leading to infrastructure gaps, staff shortages, and inadequate learning materials. The study concluded that enrolment projection is a critical tool for effective resource allocation in Nigerian universities. When enrolment projections are accurate and resources are allocated in line with projected enrolment, universities can provide quality education. However, when projections are inaccurate or resources are not aligned with projected enrolment, universities face significant challenges in maintaining quality education.

8. Implications for Educational Management

The Implications of Enrolment projection and resource allocation in educational management required educational managers or administrators to reconsider management strategies for planning, diversified financing, equitable distribution of finance and resources, and data-driven governance in our present realities.

Strategic Planning: Administrators must ground admissions caps in actual carrying capacities stipulated by the National Universities Commission (NUC) rather than purely revenue-driven quotas. This enable institutions to adjust to the proper utilization of the NUC guidelines and admit incoming students within the allotted quotas.

Diversified Financing: Educational managers need to aggressively pursue alternative revenue streams, such as alumni endowments, public-private partnerships, and commercialized research, rather than depending solely on statutory allocations.

Equitable Distribution: Internal resource allocation models must shift from centralized, opaque frameworks toward transparent, needs-based distribution that directly supports high-demand or resource-deficient academic units.

Data-Driven Governance: Investing in robust management information systems (MIS) allows institutions to track enrolment patterns accurately and execute preemptive facility and staff planning.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

The five universities studied and other Nigerian universities should develop robust enrolment projection models that use accurate and reliable data. This will help universities plan for the recruitment of teaching staff, the construction of physical facilities, the procurement of instructional materials, and the allocation of financial resources.

The National Universities Commission and university administrators should ensure that resource allocation is aligned with projected enrolment. This includes the allocation of teaching staff, physical facilities, instructional materials, and financial resources based on projected student numbers.

Universities should invest in data collection and management systems to ensure the availability of accurate and reliable data on student enrolment. This will improve the accuracy of enrolment projections and the effectiveness of resource allocation.

The government should increase funding for university education to meet the UNESCO recommended benchmark of 15-20% of the national budget. This will provide universities with the

financial resources needed to accommodate growing enrolment and maintain quality education.

Universities should strengthen the capacity of their academic planning units to develop accurate enrolment projections and to plan for effective resource allocation. This includes training staff in enrolment projection techniques and resource allocation models.

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