

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIA UNIVERSITIES; CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is a wave of fever that has caught Nigeria Universities with the rising rate of unemployed graduates. The success of integration of this new way of human resources development in our educational system depends on a lot of issues and the way we manage these challenges that goes along with it. This work adopted a descriptive research approach with the help of a research tool to analyze all the problems impending on the way entrepreneurial knowledge is spread and brought to light the challenges of entrepreneurial education. In addition, the work drew conclusion on the findings; lack of educators of entrepreneurship, low in-curriculum content of entrepreneurship and lack of funding are some of the factors militating against the success of entrepreneurship education and recommended for proper funding, integration of real entrepreneur in teaching to bridge the experience gap and the widen of in-curriculum content of entrepreneurship in Nigeria universities.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Education, Universities, Challenges and Issues.

Introduction

In this 21st Century Nigeria economy is beclouded by a lot of Economic woes which include high rate of unemployment, high rate of crime and kidnapping, over dependence on imported goods, bank failure, dwindling performance of Nigeria companies, political instability, low foreign investment, poor infrastructural facilities, lack of functional educational system, inflation and dwindling reserve as result of low revenue from non-oil export etc.

Sequel to the aforementioned, mostly the people affected by these Economic maladies are the youth, women and children. One of the panacea that will help to support everyone in day-to-day activities at home and in the society, makes employee more aware of the context of their work and better able to sieve opportunities and provides a foundation for entrepreneurs establishing a social or commercial activity is "entrepreneurship" according to European conference on entrepreneurship(2006).

Entrepreneurship Education is a paradigm shift from the conventional general business and Economic studies with it main goal to stimulate the entrepreneurial mindsets of young people, encourage innovative business start-ups and sustain a culture that will create an enabling environment for the growth of Small- Medium Scale Enterprise.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurial Concept

The word entrepreneur was developed from the French Language, which meant or denote an organiser of musical or other entertainment. Oxford English Dictionary (1897) also defined an entrepreneur in similar way as the directors or a manager of public musical institution. In early

16th Century, it was used to mean those who were engaged in military expeditions. In the 17th Century, it was also extended to field of Construction and fabrication. But in 18th Century, the word entrepreneur were used from economic perspective. The development of the word entrepreneur has passed through Centuries of transformation before it came to its present meaning.

According to Fapohinda (2006) entrepreneur is an Economic leader who possess the ability to identify successful introduction of new idea, techniques and new source of supply and to assemble the necessary equipment, human resources and organise them to its set objective, while Damachi (2001) refer an entrepreneur as an organiser of factors that add value to resource in production process.

In addition, Schatz (1990) refer to entrepreneur to consist of (artisan housewives and labourers) who efficiently allocate their resources in producing goods and services to create an equilibrium and dynamic economy.

Nevertheless, Oluntunla (2001) referred to entrepreneurship as being self employed or owning a scale enterprise or organisation in agriculture, manufacturing and service industry. In clear term entrepreneurship can be defined as the ability to convert an idea to an enterprise, which includes creativity innovation and risk taking. In addition, the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives.

The importance of Education for entrepreneurship

In the context of millennium development goal in Nigeria, entrepreneurship has been recognised as a vital factor in the process of Economic development of any nation. And in line with the present government agenda on youth empowerment, entrepreneurship has been recognised as a virile source of creation of Small Medium Scale Enterprise.

Following the declaration of European Conference (2006) entrepreneurship education was designed to:

- (i) develop personal attributes and skills that form the basis of an entrepreneurial mindset and behaviour (creativity, sense of initiative, risk-taking, autonomy, self confidence, leadership, team spirit) etc.
- (ii) Raising the awareness of students about self-employment and entrepreneurship as possible career options.
- (iii) Working on concrete enterprise projects and activities.
- (iv) Providing specific business skills and knowledge of how to start a company and run it successfully.

The Weakness of Nigerian Educational Policy

As was captured in Olumade (1999) the objective of Nigeria educational policy at university level is to develop intellectual capacity, develop values for the survival on individuals, manpower training, provide enabling and conducive environment as well as to acquire both physical and intellectual skills that will enable individuals to be self reliant and useful members of the society. But to our utmost surprise these goals have been pursued through lecturing, research, spreading of new information and community services, that is why our educational system have witnessed a lot of criticisms and unprecedented fall.

Nevertheless, the continuously changes on Nigerian education at policies over the year have fuelled the embers of dysfunctional educational system in the country which have resulted to large numbers of Nigerian graduates roaming about the street searching for jobs that never exists.

The Impact of Entrepreneurship to Economic Development

As was pointed out by Ubong(2007) on the research finding by Ewing Marion Kauffman centre for entrepreneurial leadership and other agencies that there is a positive correlation between the level of entrepreneurship in a country and national economic development. this new knowledge showed a positive correlation between the total entrepreneurial activity(tea) and projected GDP.The research finding has been confirmed by annual survey carried on developments in east Asia. Eight countries in east Asian described as high performing Asian economies(HPAES)have shown increased economic growth from 1960.the countries are Hongkong,Singapore,Taiwan,South Korea,Japan,Malaysia,Indonesia and Thailand .

Aim of Study

To under study the challenges and issues facing entrepreneurship education in Nigeria Universities.

Objective of the Study

The objective of these research study are as follows:

- a. Identify strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats to entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Universities.
- b. Identify the new approaches for entrepreneurship training in Nigeria Universities.
- c. Show the level of awareness of entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Universities.

Research Methodology

The research adopted a descriptive research approach with help of a research tool swot analysis to analyze (i.e. strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats).This process made use of discussion, observation, analysis and comparison of internal factors in ranking what it considered to be the main strengths and weaknesses, while the researcher made use of outcome of discussion with inside experts and analysts, examination of national and international statistics, to identify the threats and opportunities.

Discussion of Findings

The following factors were identified as the strengths of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria Universities.

Chart I: shows the analysis of Universities in Nigeria from 2004 – 2007. Between 2004 and 2005 Nigerian Universities have grown by 36.4%.And from 2005-2006 it has grown by 18.7% and from 2006-2007 it has grown by 7%. Importantly, Private sector, State Government and Federal Government have contributed immensely to this growth. Nevertheless, there are specialized Universities; as at 2008 we have 17 Federal Universities, 5 Federal Universities of Technology, 3 Federal Universities of Agriculture, 1 Federal University of Petroleum, 1 Military University, 34 State Universities and 34 Private Universities.

Chart II: shows Nigerian Universities with Entrepreneurship Centres and Programmes to develop entrepreneurship among its graduating students in 2007. It was ascertained that (25) Nigerian Universities run entrepreneurship programme while only (9) nine have entrepreneurship centres and (3) three have both entrepreneurship centre and programme.

Chart III: shows total enrolment in Nigerian Universities which has been on the increase since 2003 – 2007. Students' enrolment between 2002/2003 session and 2003/2004 session grew by 20%. While enrolment grew by 7.4% between 2003/2004 session and 2004/2005. But there was a drop of 12.6% from 2004/2005 session to 2005/2006 session. Finally the enrolment of student shot up again by 4.9% from 2005/2006 to 2006/2007.

Chart IV: shows the large turnout of human resources development in Nigerian Universities from 2001 to 2002, male and female graduates turnout of Bachelor degree, Post graduate diploma, Masters degree and Doctorate degree combined grew by 15% and 19% respectively. While from 2002 to 2003 male and female graduate turnout grew by 6% and 11.2% respectively. In 2003 to 2004 male and female graduate turnout grew by 66.7% and 66% respectively. Finally, from 2004 to 2005, male and female graduate turnout by 41.4% and 17.38%.

Chart V: shows the Resource persons in Nigeria Universities by major discipline. The number of Resource persons grew between 2001/2002 session and 2002/2003 session by 10%. While between 2002/2003 session and 2003/2004 session the resource persons dropped by 2.92%. Then between 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 session the resource persons dropped by 3.26%. Finally, from 2004/2005 session the resource person dropped by 1.42%.

Chart VI: ETF funding for research and higher academic pursuit, infrastructural development etc in Nigerian Universities shows that between 2003 – 2007 allocations grew by 52.2. Between 2004 and 2005 allocation grew by 33.6%. While from 2005 to 2006 allocation grew by 16.7% and between 2006 and 2007 allocation grew by 50.6%.

Chart VII: Shows that Nigerian Universities are categorized into faculties and schools. The student, teacher ratio in Federal Universities in the faculty of Administration indicates unhealthy growth rate which indicate either there is high labour turnover or poor motivation to attract more resource persons.

The following were identified as the weakness of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Universities.

Chart II & III: Indicates that out of 89 Universities in Nigeria only (25) twenty five Nigerian Universities run entrepreneurship programme while only (9) nine have entrepreneurship centres and (3) three have both entrepreneurship centre and programme which is 28.1% of the total universities. This is relatively small to make any meaningful impact in the society.

In addition, the in-curriculum content of entrepreneurship in Nigerian Universities is very low considering the fact that most faculties or schools in Nigerian Universities are doing one or two courses relating to entrepreneurship which is less than 20% entrepreneurship content. Most of the resource persons have no business experience, even the law governing civil service stipulated that one should not engage in any other business and using experience-based teaching method is crucial in developing entrepreneurial skills and abilities. However, there

seems to be a gap between the methods actually used and those viewed as the most effective and appropriate.

Nevertheless there are currently too few professors of entrepreneurship. There is a need to graduate enough Phd students in entrepreneurship who can become teachers.

The following were identified as the threats to entrepreneurship in Nigeria Universities

Chart II & III: Indicates the staff distribution in Nigerian Universities which show little or no human resources and funding for this type of education.

In addition, chart V & II shows that the internal organisational structure of Nigerian Universities will affect the development and delivering of entrepreneurship because faculties and department tend to work quite separately which pose a serious obstacles for students who want to move and for teachers interested in establishing cross-disciplinary courses.

In most Nigerian Universities, entrepreneurship have not been given it rightful place neither administrator or schools as a driving force to facilitate academic spin off and innovative start-ups and to help researchers acquire entrepreneurial skills for fully exploiting innovation and commercialisation of new technologies. But rather in most Nigerian Universities, seems to adopt a bureaucratic culture in the Institution. In most cases seems to make research publications look more important. Therefore entrepreneurship within an Institution is very much dependent on the willingness and vision of certain leaders.

Chart VI: Indicate there is little or no funding for this type of Education embedded in the ETF and PDTF core financial resources. Finally the mobility of teachers and researchers between higher education Institution and business is generally low.

The Following were Identify as Opportunities for Entrepreneurship in Nigeria Education

Chart VIII: Indicates the growing rate of unemployment among Nigerian graduates. The introduction of entrepreneurship will help tackle the unemployment problem, armed militancy situation, armed robbery problem and kidnapping of which the major culprits are graduate from Nigerian University.

- It will help stimulate the formation of Small Medium Scale Enterprise that help develop the local Economy and improve the gross domestic product of the country.
- The integration of entrepreneurship in the educational system will help develop a functional educational system that will stimulate the entrepreneurship mind set of people and encourage innovative business start-ups.
- The integration of entrepreneurship in the Educational system especially Nigerian Universities will promote autonomy which will in turn help bridge the funding gap that is chronically facing most Nigerian Universities.

Conclusion

The shortcomings of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria Universities ranges from; low in-curriculum content, lack of funding, absence of human resource, lack of motivation for

educators of entrepreneurship and inability to establish cross-disciplinary course due to internal organisational structure of Nigeria institution. Nevertheless, there is low mobility of teachers and researchers between Universities and business.

Recommendations

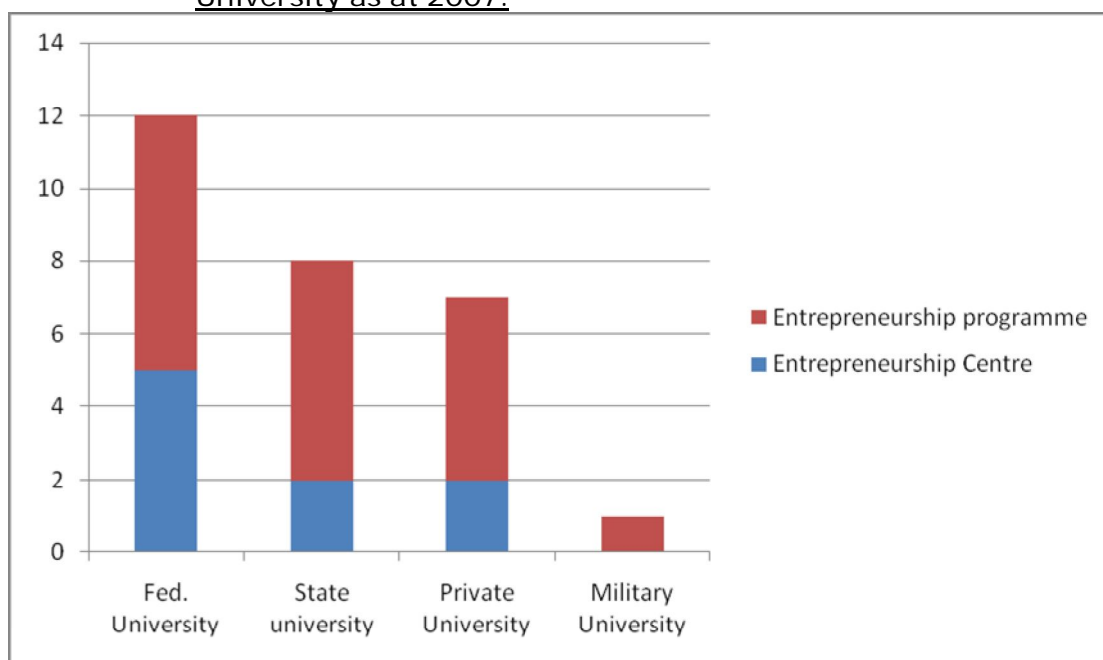
1. The Universities should establish an entrepreneurship department responsible for disseminating entrepreneurship throughout the Institution.
2. An introduction of entrepreneurship and self employment should be offered to all undergraduate students during their first year.
3. The educational policy should be changed to reflect the present situation in the Country.
4. Nigerian Universities should have incentive systems for motivating and rewarding faculty staff in supporting students interested in entrepreneurship and new business start – ups and should acknowledge the academic value of research and activities in the entrepreneurial field.
5. ETF and PDTF should make more funds available for training of entrepreneurship teachers.
6. Universities should support existing students organisation aimed at developing entrepreneurial projects and activities and building contracts with the business world.

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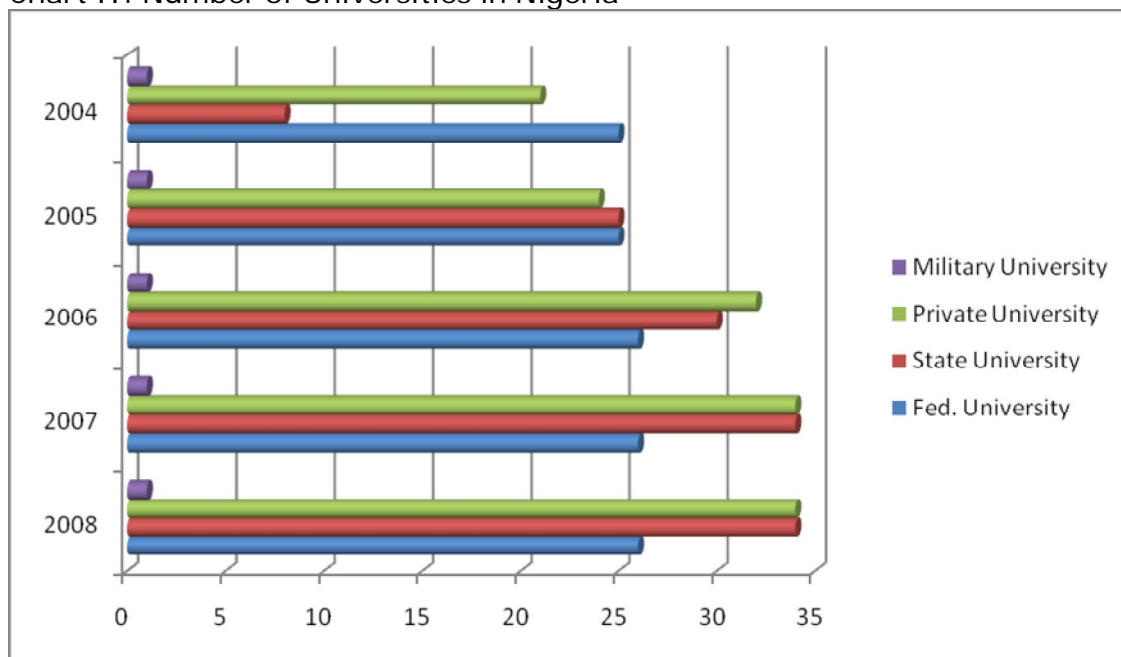
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Chart I: The level of awareness of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria University as at 2007.



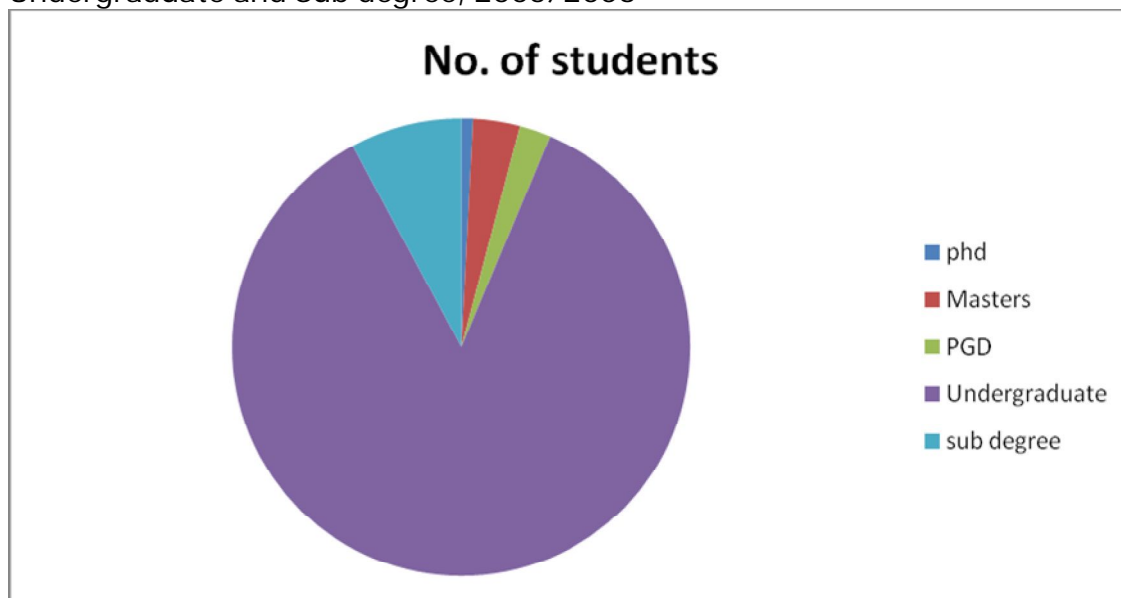
Source: Nigerian University Commission

Chart II: Number of Universities in Nigeria



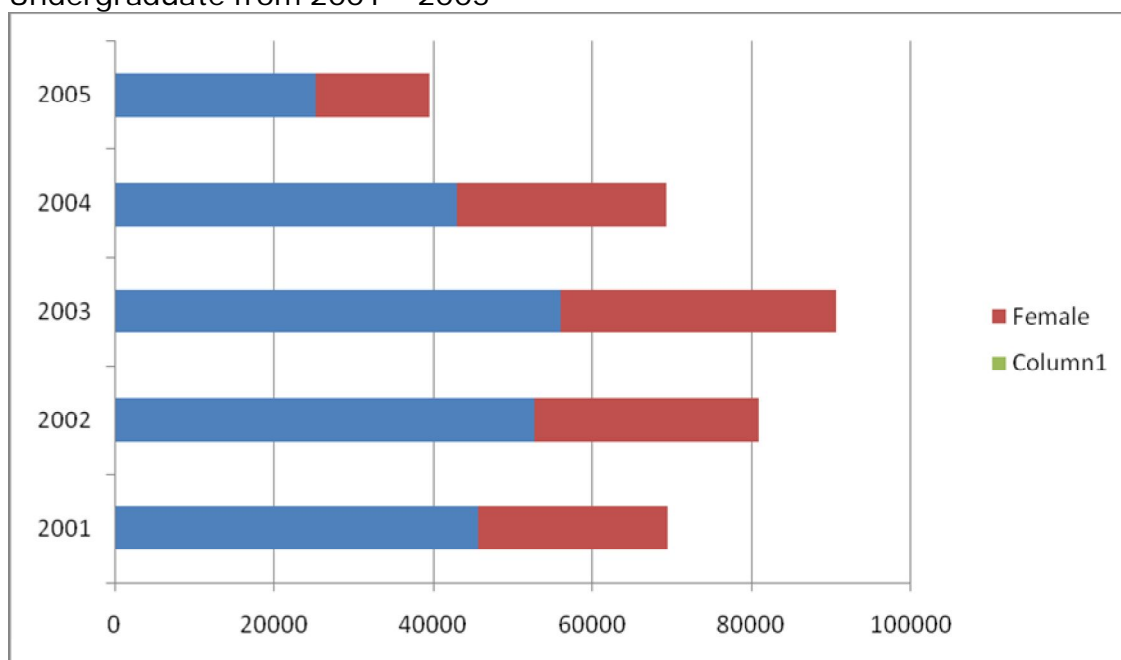
Source: Nigerian University Commission

Chart III: Enrolment in Nigerian University for all programmes; Phd, Master, Undergraduate and Sub degree, 2005/2006



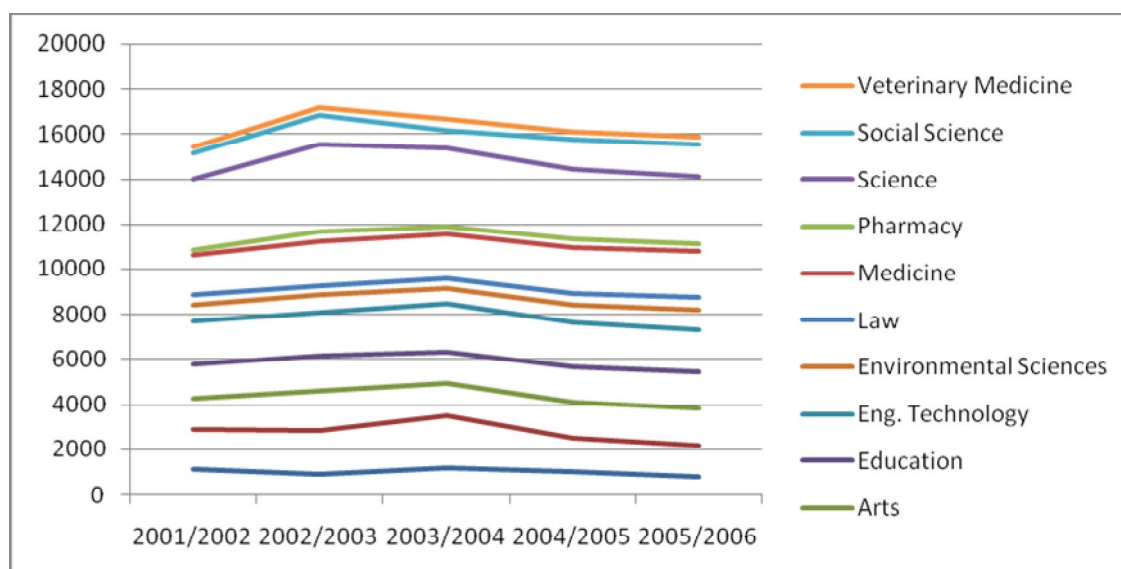
Source: Nigerian University Commission

Chart IV: Graduate turnout for all programmes Phd, Masters, PGD, and Undergraduate from 2001 – 2005



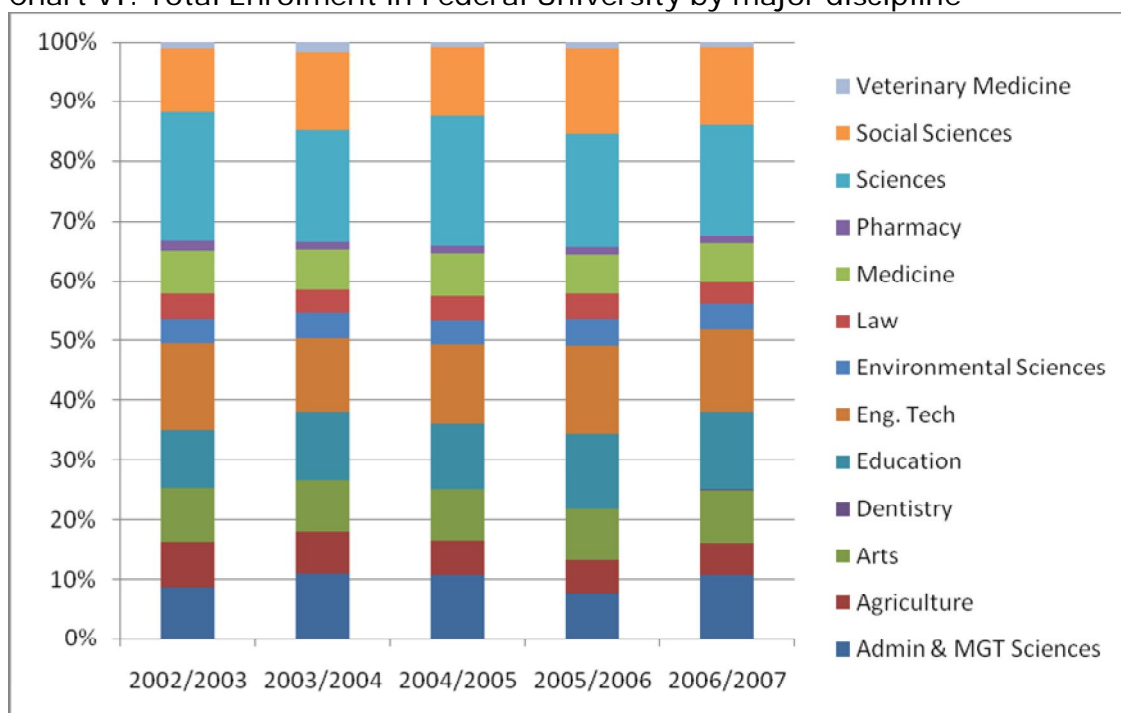
Source: Nigerian University Commission

Chart V: Number of Teachers in Nigerian University from 2001/2002 – 2005/2006 by major disciplines



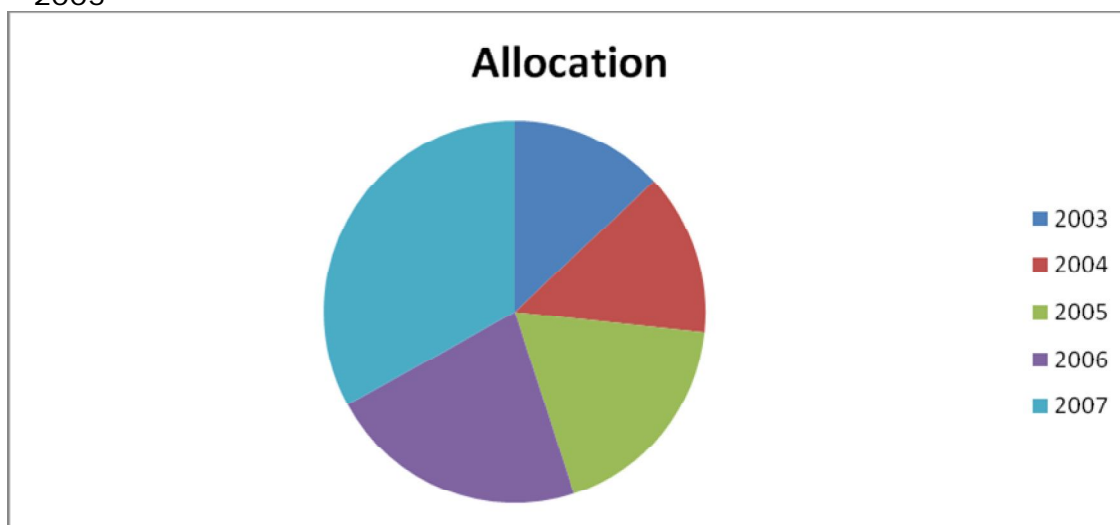
Source: Nigerian University Commission

Chart VI: Total Enrolment in Federal University by major discipline



Source: Nigerian University Commission

Chart VII: Summary of Education Trust Fund Allocations to Nigeria University 2003 – 2005



Source: Education Trust Fund