



Baseline Information on Academic Staff Strength in Forestry Programmes in Nigerian Universities as at 2017.

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Abstract

Sustainable forest management requires adequate manpower that is well-trained and highly skilled. In order to achieve this high level of competent manpower, forestry training programmes are established at the university level. The quality of any training programme is a function of the number and calibre of the teachers involved. The staff available for forestry programmes in any University at any particular time depends on the rate of recruitment and turnover in manpower. Consequently, staff strength will change over time. In order to evaluate the progress made in manpower recruitment and retention, there is the need for baseline information that will serve as reference point. This study presents the results of a survey of all forestry programmes in Nigerian Universities carried out in May 2017. The aim was to provide baseline data against which subsequent studies on academic staff strength can be compared. For the study, a list of all Nigerian Universities offering forestry as a course was compiled using the brochure of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). The list was updated with additional information obtained from colleagues whose forestry programmes were not listed in the JAMB brochure. A questionnaire was designed and sent to all Heads of Forestry Departments in the various Universities in order to obtain the required information. Information collected include the name of the department, staff list with rank and area of specialization, *etc.* All the forms were retrieved and data were extracted from them. The data were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis involving tables and graphs. In addition, the coordinates of each University were obtained from Google Earth and used to prepare a map of Nigeria showing the various Universities offering forestry. QGIS software was used to produce the map. The results obtained indicate that there were 27 Universities offering forestry programmes in Nigeria as at May 2017. This was made up of 18 owned by the Federal Government, eight owned by various State Governments, and one owned by a private organization. The total number of forestry lecturers in Nigerian Universities was 220 as at 2017. This number does not include those who specialize in wildlife and fisheries. Out of this 220, only 18% were female. There were 44 Professors of forestry in Nigeria, out of which two were emeritus. The distribution of forestry lecturers by rank was as follows: Professors (20%), Readers (9%), Senior Lecturers (21%), Lecturers I and II (29%) and Assistant Lecturers (21%). This implied that there was enough number of senior academics to mentor the junior ones. In terms of areas of specialization, only 11 out of 27 universities had specialists in all four categories of specialization. The inadequacy of available manpower in some areas of specialization affected the quality of training provided to the students. In order to strengthen the manpower of the various forestry institutions, adequate funding is required within the various university system. In addition, the staff should be exposed to global best practices in pedagogy so that they can be more effective in training the next generation of forestry officials who will be creative and global competitors.

Key Words: Forestry education, academic staff, areas of specialization, baseline information.

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Introduction

The role of forests in promoting human socio-economic well-being and mitigating climate change is well recognised. To guarantee this role, forests must be managed in sustainable manner. Implementation of sustainable forest management requires very competent professionals who have requisite skills. Forestry Departments in various Universities are set up to provide training on good knowledge base of forestry and various complimentary skills required by forestry practitioners in the workplace. Forestry education is for both technical and professional staff. Technical training is normally provided by monotechnics and polytechnics, while professional training is provided by the Universities. In Nigeria, when employed by the State Forestry Department, it is the students who graduate from University forestry departments that eventually become Directors of Forestry. The quality of training received by any student depends largely on the number and quality of academic staff available in his department during the course of his training. While Master's degree holders are employed in Universities as Assistant Lecturers, they are still regarded as occupying training positions since each of them is expected to be a postgraduate student enrolled in the doctoral programme. Only PhD degree holders are real Faculty members and constitute the core of the available manpower for running University degree programmes.

Over the years, the number of Universities running forestry programmes have increased from one in the 1960s to over twenty at present. Some authors have reviewed the state of forestry education in Nigeria and offered suggestions on how it can be improved. These include Nwoboshi (1988), Bada and Verinumbe (2005), Adekunle (2008), Adewusi (2008), Akande (2008) and Popoola and Agbeja (2008). Some of them traced the origin of forestry education in Nigeria and commented on how the training curriculum has evolved over time. Some considered students' enrolment and manpower available in certain institutions. With the multiplicity of University forestry departments in Nigeria, there is the need to assess the academic staff population in these departments with a view to seeing where there are deficiencies that should be addressed. Such assessment will also bring to the fore the areas of strength of the various

departments. Such information could be useful to prospective students seeking admission, and stakeholders who might be interested in engaging some of the academic staff as consultants on various projects. The state of academic staff strength in the Universities is not static. There are new recruitments and promotion of existing staff which affect staff composition from time to time. In order to evaluate the progress made by each institution in manpower recruitment, retention and promotion, there is the need for baseline information that will serve as reference point. This paper is therefore aimed at providing the status of academic staff strength in University forestry departments as at May 2017 to serve as baseline for future evaluation.

It is hoped that this paper will spur necessary reforms in the various forestry departments and lead to improvement in the overall quality of forestry education in Nigeria. In this paper, the focus is on "forestry education" and not on "renewable natural resources education". Therefore, the term "forestry education" was considered in a restrictive sense that excludes wildlife and fisheries, which are run as distinct programmes in some Universities.

Methodology

The total number of universities in Nigeria was obtained from the website of the National Universities Commission (NUC). A list of all universities having forestry departments was compiled using the brochure of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). The list was updated with additional information obtained from colleagues whose institutions have forestry programmes but were not listed in the JAMB brochure. A questionnaire was designed and sent to all Heads of Forestry Departments in the various Universities. The questionnaire served as guide on the type of information required from each institution. Information collected include the name of the department, staff list with areas of specialization, undergraduate students' population by gender and level, *etc.* All copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and data were extracted from them. In retrieving the data for institutions where forestry and wildlife programmes were combined in a single Department, academic staff who are wildlife specialists were excluded. To include them would have required enumerating all staff in Departments

of Ecotourism and Wildlife Management in universities with such department. This is beyond the scope of this present study. All the data obtained were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis involving tables and graphs. In addition, the coordinates of each University were obtained from Google Earth and used to prepare a map of Nigeria showing the various Universities offering forestry. QGIS software was used to produce the map.

Results and Discussion

The records obtained from the website of the NUC (<https://www.nuc.edu.ng/>) indicate that as at 2017, there were a total of 152 universities in Nigeria, comprising 40 Federal Universities, 44 State Universities and 68 Private Universities. A list of all the Universities offering forestry in Nigeria as at May 2017 is presented in Table 1. A total of twenty-seven (27) universities out of 152 in Nigeria were running forestry programmes as at that time. This represents 17.8% of the total universities in Nigeria. Eighteen of the 27 universities were owned by the Federal Government while eight were owned by State Government. Only one of the existing private universities in Nigeria (Bowen University) had forestry programme, and the programme was on the verge of being scrapped at that time due to very low students' enrolment. The number of Universities offering forestry programme increased from 20 in 2010 (Alao, *et al.*, 2010) to 27 in 2017. As at 2010, forestry programme was present in 11 Federal Universities, six State Universities and three private Universities (Alao, *et al.*, 2010). The slight increase in the total number of Nigerian Universities with forestry programmes suggested that forestry education was increasingly becoming important as at 2017.

In the various universities where forestry programmes exist, they were under different departmental names such as Forestry and Wildlife, Forestry and Environmental Management, Forestry and Wood Technology, Forest Resources Management, Social and Environmental Forestry, and Forest Production and Products. In eighteen of the Universities, wildlife was incorporated into the forestry programme while in others, it exists in a separate Department (Table 1). The first Department of Forestry in a Nigerian University was established at the

University of Ibadan in 1963. This was at a time when forests were valued primarily for timber production. Over time, the importance of non-timber forest resources such as wildlife came to the fore. Thus, forestry training curriculum was expanded to include wildlife and fisheries as was the case at the University of Ibadan before the creation of a separate Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Management. In recent years, the issue of climate change has received global attention and the role of forests in its mitigation is well recognised. Consequently, topics on environmental issues are now incorporated into forestry curriculum. In fact, six of the Nigerian Universities with forestry programmes have the word "environment" in their names. These universities were hopeful that such nomenclature will boost their enrolment.

Figure 1 is a map of Nigeria showing the location of the various Universities running forestry programmes. The figure shows that most of these Universities are in the southern part of the country where every State (excluding Bayelsa, Ebonyi, Enugu and Lagos) has a University running forestry programme. This could be attributed to the fact that the southern part of the country has tropical rain forest ecosystem. In the northern part of the country (comprising the north-central, northwest and north-east geopolitical zones), 10 out of the 19 States had Universities with forestry programmes. This region is characterised by savanna vegetation.

The distribution of forestry academic staff by rank in the various Universities as at May 2017 is presented in Table 2. The table indicates that the total number of forestry academic staff (excluding wildlife specialists) in Nigerian Universities was 220 as at 2017. There were 44 Professors which include the two Emeritus Professors of forestry in Nigeria. Of these 44 Professors, 10 were based at the Federal University of Technology, Akure, while the rest were spread among 15 other Universities. Eleven (11) of the Universities running forestry programmes in Nigeria currently had no Professor as at May 2017, although many of them engaged the services of Professors as adjunct lecturers in critical areas when the need arose.

Table 1: List of Nigerian Universities with Forestry Department

S/N	Name of University	Abbreviation for the University	Name of Department	Ownership
1	Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State	MOUAU	Forestry and Environmental Management	Federal Government
2	Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, Adamawa State	MAUTECH	Forestry and Wildlife Management	Federal Government
3	University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State	UNIUYO	Forestry and Wildlife Management	Federal Government
4	Nnamdi Azikwe University, Akwa, Anambra State	NAU	Forestry and Wildlife	Federal Government
5	Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State	FUAM	Forest Production and Products/ Social and Environmental Forestry	Federal Government
6	University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri, Borno State	UNIMAID	Forestry and Wildlife	Federal Government
7	University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross River State	UNICAL	Forestry and Wildlife Resource Management	Federal Government
8	University of Benin, Benin-City, Edo State	UNIBEN	Forestry and Wildlife	Federal Government
9	Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State	FUTO	Forestry and Wildlife Technology	Federal Government
10	Bayero University, Kano, Kano State	BUK	Forestry and Wildlife Management	Federal Government
11	Federal University Dutsin-ma, Katsina State	FUDUTSINMA	Forestry and Wildlife Management	Federal Government
12	University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State	UNILORIN	Forest Resources Management	Federal Government
13	Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State	FUNAAB	Forestry and Wildlife Management	Federal Government
14	Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State	FUTA	Forestry and Wood Technology	Federal Government
15	University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State.	UI	Forest Production and Products/ Social and Environmental Forestry	Federal Government
16	University of Port Harcourt, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State	UNIPORT	Forestry and Wildlife Management	Federal Government
17	Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Sokoto State	UDUS	Forestry and Environment	Federal Government
18	Federal University, Wukari, Wukari, Taraba State	FUWUKARI	Forestry and Wildlife Management	Federal Government
19	Bowen University, Iwo, Osun State	BOWEN	Soil and Environmental Management	Private
20	Cross River University of Technology, Obubra, Cross River State	CRUTECH	Forestry and Wildlife Resources Management	State Government
21	Delta State University, Asaba Campus, Delta State	DELSU	Forestry and Wildlife	State Government
22	Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State	EKSU	Forest Resources and Wildlife Management	State Government
23	Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Kebbi, Kebbi State	KSUSTA	Forestry and Fisheries	State Government
24	Nassarawa State University, Lafia, Nassarawa State	NSU	Forestry and Wildlife	State Government
25	Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State	OOU	Forestry and Wildlife	State Government
26	Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt, Rivers State	RSUST	Forestry and Environment	State Government
27	Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba, Ondo State	AAUA	Forestry and Wildlife Management	State Government

Source: Field Survey in May, 2017.

Table 2: Distribution of academic staff by rank for forestry programmes in Nigerian Universities as at May 2017

S/N	University	Professor	Reader	Senior Lecturer	Lecturer I & II	Asst. Lecturer	Total
1	MOUAAU, Umudike	1	1	0	1	9	12
2	MAUTECH, Yola	2	1	2	0	0	5
3	UNIUYO, Uyo	2	1	4	4	2	13
4	NAU, Akwa	0	0	0	1	2	3
5	FUAM, Makurdi	3	0	8	7	3	21
6	UNIMAID, Maiduguri	0	1	3	2	0	6
7	UNICAL, Calabar	0	1	3	7	1	12
8	UNIBEN, Benin	2	2	4	2	2	12
9	FUTO, Owerri	0	1	1	7	0	9
10	BUK, Kano	0	0	1	2	3	6
11	FUDUTSINMA, Dutsin-ma	0	0	0	4	0	4
12	UNILORIN, Ilorin	1	0	1	3	0	5
13	FUNAAB, Abeokuta	5	0	3	2	1	11
14	FUTA, Akure	10	0	2	2	6	20
15	UI, Ibadan	8	2	3	3	1	17
16	UNIPORT, Port Harcourt	2	1	3	4	3	13
17	UDUS, Sokoto	3	0	2	2	2	9
18	FUWUKARI, Wukari	1	0	0	4	2	7
19	BOWEN, Iwo	1	1	1	0	0	3
20	CRUTECH, Obubra	1	1	0	2	0	4
21	DELSU, Asaba Campus	1	2	3	0	0	6
22	EKSU, Ado-Ekiti	0	2	1	1	2	6
23	KSUSTA, Aliero	0	0	0	2	3	5
24	NSU, Lafia	0	1	0	0	0	1
25	OOU, Ago-Iwoye	0	0	0	1	3	4
26	RSUST, Port Harcourt	1	1	2	1	0	5
27	AAUA, Akungba Akoko	0	0	0	0	1	1
	TOTAL	44	19	47	64	46	220

Source: Field Survey, May 2017.

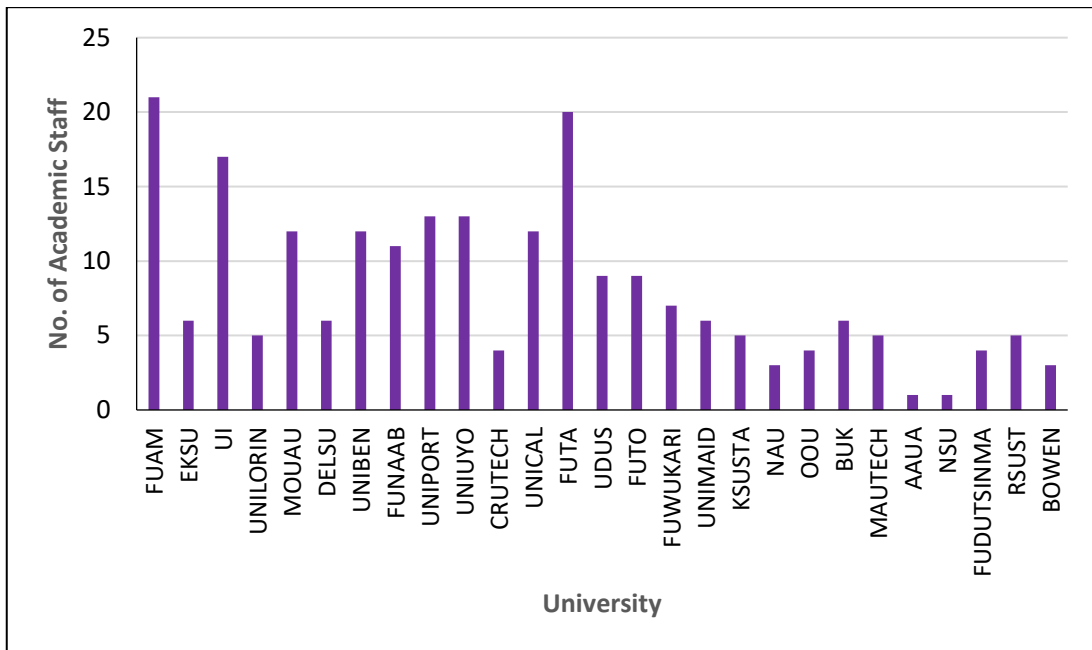


Fig. 2: Frequency distribution for academic staff population in forestry departments within Nigerian Universities.

Source: Field Survey, May 2017.

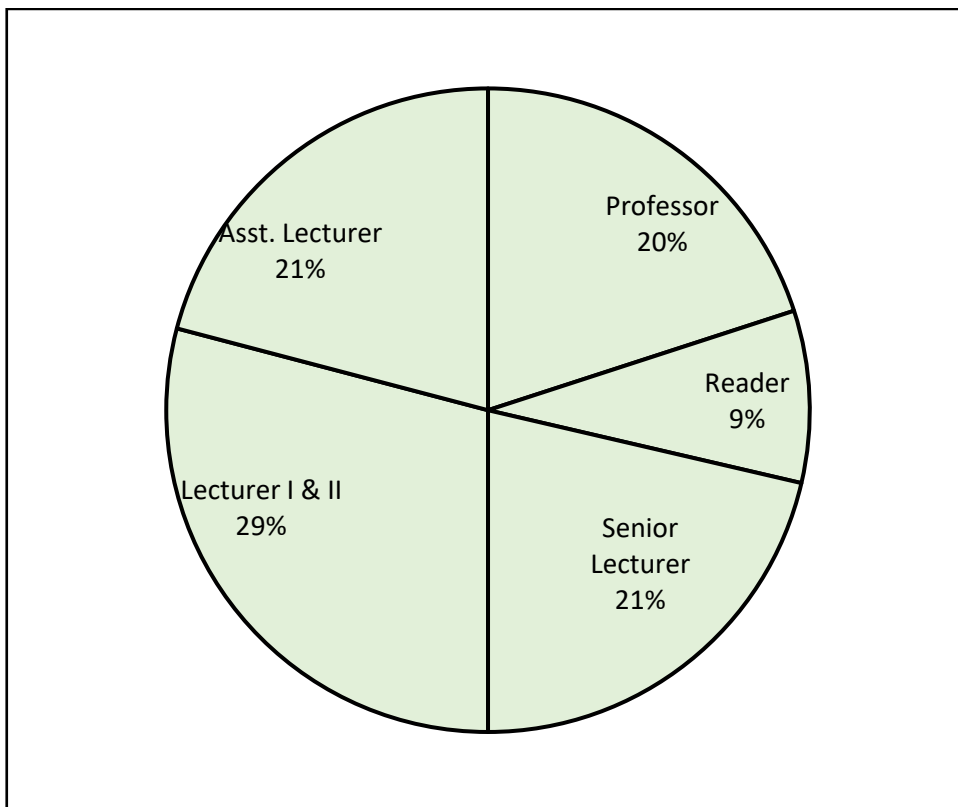


Fig. 3: Distribution of academic staff in all forestry departments in Nigerian Universities

Source: Field Survey, May 2017.

Table 3: Frequency distribution of female academic staff in forestry programmes in Nigerian Universities as at May 2017

Number of female academic staff	Universities
5	MOUAU
4	FUAM, UNIPORT
3	DELSU, EKSU, UNIBEN, UNIUYO
2	FUNAAB, FUTA, FUTO, UDUS, UI
1	FUDUTSINMA, FUWUKARI, OOU, RSUST, UNICAL, UNILORIN
0	AAUA, BOWEN, BUK, CRUTECH, KSUSTA, MAUTECH, NAU, NSU, UNIMAID

Source: Field Survey, May 2017.

Table 4: Frequency distribution of academic staff in various areas of specialization in forestry programmes in Nigerian Universities as at May 2017.

No.	University	Areas of Specialization for Academic Staff			
		Agroforestry, Forest Soils, Forest Biology, Silviculture, Ecology	Forest Biometrics, Inventory, Mensuration, Remote Sensing, GIS	Forest Policy, Forest Economics, Forest Management, Social Forestry, Environmental Management	Wood Science, Wood Technology, Forest Operations
1	MOUAU, Umudike	5	0	6	1
2	MAUTECH, Yola	1	1	4	0
3	UNIUYO, Uyo	4	3	5	2
4	NAU, Awka	1	1	0	0
5	FUAM, Makurdi	8	4	6	2
6	UNIMAID, Maiduguri	1	1	2	2
7	UNICAL, Calabar	8	2	2	0
8	UNIBEN, Benin	4	3	1	3
9	FUTO, Owerri	4	1	2	1
10	BUK, Kano	5	0	1	1
11	FUDUTSINMA, Dutsin-ma	2	1	1	0
12	UNILORIN, Ilorin	1	1	2	1
13	FUNAAB, Abeokuta	4	0	5	2
14	FUTA, Akure	6	3	3	8
15	UI, Ibadan	6	2	7	2
16	UNIPORT, Port Harcourt	6	3	2	2
17	UDUS, Sokoto	5	1	2	1
18	FUWUKARI, Wukari	5	0	1	0
19	BOWEN, Iwo	1	1	0	1
20	CRUTECH, Obubra	1	1	4	0
21	DELSU, Asaba Campus	2	1	1	1
22	EKSU, Ado-Ekiti	3	1	2	0
23	KSUSTA, Aliero	3	1	1	0
24	NSU, Lafia	0	0	0	1
25	OOU, Ago-Iwoye	0	2	1	1
26	RSUST, Port Harcourt	5	0	1	1
27	AAUA, Akungba Akoko	0	1	0	0

Source: Field Survey, May 2017.

. Areas of specialization were grouped into four as follows:

- A. Agroforestry, Forest Soils, Forest Biology, Silviculture, Ecology
- B. Forest Biometrics, Inventory, Mensuration, Remote Sensing, GIS
- C. Forest Policy, Forest Economics, Forest Management, Social Forestry, Environmental Management
- D. Wood Science, Wood Technology, Forest Operations

There are some lecturers whose areas of specialization cut across two groups. Such were tallied for each group. The table is an indication of the areas of strength and weakness of each University as regards forestry programme in May 2017. While some Universities utilized the services of visiting or adjunct lecturers to address their areas of weakness or deficiency, others simply make available lecturers to teach courses outside their areas of specialization. The latter option, in particular, had adverse effect on the quality of their product. Only 11 out of the 27 Universities had at least one academic staff in each of the four specialization groups. For these 11 Universities, the distribution of the lecturers among the four specialization groups is skewed in favour of one group or the other. On the whole, Groups A and C of the specialization groups were better served than Groups B and D where there were serious shortages. The relatively poor staffing in the various areas of specialization is not peculiar to forestry programmes and it is not a new phenomenon. Saint, *et al.* (2003) reported that there was a severe shortage of qualified academic staff within the Nigerian university system. This was because of several factors including “brain drain” and impeded new staff recruitment. As at May 2017, there were many vacant positions yet to be filled in the various Universities. Poor funding of the university system had impaired the ability of many University administrations to hire new academic staff. In addition, some lecturers had changed jobs or relocated to other countries with better conditions of service.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Quality forest management in a sustainable manner begins from a strong educational foundation for those charged with taking care of the forest. Universities are the

storehouses of the most specialized and skilled intellectuals (lecturers) who nurture the manpower needs of the nation in various sectors (including forestry). The number and quality of lecturers on any academic programme have a direct bearing on the quality of graduates they produce. With the existing shortages of lecturers in our Universities and the increase in students enrolment on forestry programmes, there is an urgent need to recruit more lecturers. As there is a dearth of doctorate degree holders among job seekers, Universities should be ready to absorb and invest in Master’s degree holders who show interest in academics. In doing this, emphasis should be placed on the specific areas of deficiency within each University. Existing academic staff on forestry programmes in each University should also be encouraged to further upgrade themselves through continuing education. This could be by participating in conferences and workshops as well by attending short-term training courses in their areas of specialization. In addition, they should be exposed to global best practices in pedagogy so that they can be more effective in training the next generation of forestry officials who will be innovative and enterprising. With the information provided in this paper, it is now possible to measure the progress of each University in terms of improvement in the recruitment, retention and promotion of academic staff in its forestry programme, using May 2017 as the reference point.

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