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Evaluating NCE Programmes Enrolment Trends And Their Effects On Nigerian Colleges Of Education: Analysis Of The College of Education, Warri, Delta State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to assess the trends in enrolment for NCE programmes and their implications for Nigerian Colleges of Education, specifically focusing on the College of Education in Warri, Delta State. The research population consisted of all lecturers at the College, with a sample size of 150 participants. A descriptive survey research design was employed for this investigation; the data collection tool was a self-structured questionnaire containing 32 items, titled: *Evaluating NCE programmes enrolment trends and their effects on Nigerian Colleges of Education: Analysis of the College of Education, Warri, Delta State (ENPETECOEW).* This instrument was divided into two sections: Section (A) addressed the factors contributing to the decline in enrolment trends for NCE programmes in Colleges of Education, while Section (B) focused on the consequences of reduced enrolment in these programmes. The evaluation utilized a 4-point Likert scale to gather responses from the participants regarding the factors affecting declining enrolment trends and the impacts of reduced enrolment in Colleges of Education. Admission data for the relevant period were sourced from the admission officer at the College of Education, Warri, to facilitate a comparative analysis of enrolment trends. The gathered data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means and standard error of means, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to test the null hypothesis. The results revealed a notable disparity in enrolment figures between females and males; additionally, it identified various factors contributing to the declining enrolment trends for NCE Programmes in Colleges of Education. Among these factors is the shift towards universities: prospective students predominantly favour universities over Colleges of Education due to the perceived higher status and improved long-term financial rewards associated with obtaining a university degree. Furthermore, the uniform entry requirements for tertiary institutions negatively impact the enrolment of students in NCE programmes across the country, as university degrees are perceived to carry greater social prestige and offer more job opportunities etc

Keywords: Dwindling, enrolment trends, factors & impacts, NCE programmes, College of education

INTRODUCTION

Education, in its most extensive definition, serves as the foundation upon which development gains significance. The governments of Nigeria are well aware of this essential requirement for balanced and sustainable growth on both human and national levels. Consequently, the stance articulated in the National Policy on Education emphasizes that any existing inconsistencies, uncertainties, and lack of

uniformity in educational practices across different regions of the country should be addressed to ensure a smooth and equitable development process. The Nigeria we collectively envision is one that is free and democratic, fair and equal, united, resilient, and self-sufficient; boasting a robust and evolving economy, and most importantly, a nation filled with promising opportunities for all its citizens. These national aspirations are also the foundation of the philosophical values of Nigerian education, with teacher education being a tangible example of these ideals ((NCCE minimum standard, 2012). College of Education is one of the tertiary educational institutions specifically mandated in the National Policy on Education to provide teacher education in Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

Vision and mission of teacher education in Nigeria

The educator serves as the central figure in ensuring quality within the educational system. As education has emerged as the fundamental instrument for the comprehensive advancement of society, teacher education must hold a position of utmost importance in the strategic planning and structuring of contemporary society. Consequently, it is imperative that both the Nigerian populace and government render teaching and teacher education appealing professional endeavours. Anticipatedly, the objectives of teacher education in Nigeria should encompass, among other aspects:

- Production of well-motivated teachers with high personal and professional discipline, integrity and competence for all the levels of the educational system;
- Preparation of teachers with appreciable expertise in curriculum planning, development and delivery, as well as competence in research, guidance and counselling;
- Production of professionals who can combine the use of conventional teaching strategies and worlds' unfolding ICT in the generation and imparting of knowledge, attitudes and skills;
- Continuous preparation and upgrading of teachers who can stand out for their professional competence, sense of social responsibility and commitment, to function effectively as constructive socio-economic, moral and spiritual change agents needed to promote goodwill, peace and progress not only in the country, but also in the world of the 21st Century.

The NCE programme, being a significant component of teacher education, primarily seeks to cultivate educators who exhibit high levels of personal and professional discipline and integrity. These educators are expected to be committed and possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable the effective realization of the aforementioned national objectives. This goal is particularly crucial in light of the government's determination that the NCE will ultimately serve as the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession in Nigeria. Furthermore, with the enactment of the Universal Basic Education Act in 2004, the necessity for producing specialized teachers across all levels of Basic Education has become essential. Consequently, general courses have been specifically tailored for the training of teachers in junior secondary education (NCCE minimum standard, 2012).

Objectives

By the end of the NCE programmes, the students should be able to:-

(a) Discuss intelligently the main ideas that have affected and still affect the development and practice of education generally, and in Nigeria in particular;

(b) Examine the main psychological, health and socio-economic factors that may help or hinder a child's educational performance;

(c) Study learners appropriately to determine the most effective ways of relating to them to ensure their maximum achievement;

(d) Professionally combine use of conventional and ICT or other innovations, instructional/learning strategies in generating, and imparting knowledge, attitudes and skills at basic education level;

(e) Develop, select, and effectively use appropriate curriculum processes, teaching strategies, instructional materials and methods for maximum learner achievement;

(f) Broaden their intellectual perspective through the general studies education programme for basic education;

(g) Demonstrate desirable attributes in moral and character development; Discuss intelligently major issues affecting teacher education and the teaching profession in Nigeria;

(h) Identify major problems of education in Nigeria, and their corresponding solutions;
(i) Demonstrate proficiency in measuring and evaluating learning outcomes, as well as in carrying out appropriate research on educational problems in Nigeria particularly at basic education level (NCCE minimum standard, 2012).

The Ashby Commission report from 1960, which resulted in Teacher Grade One College, gave rise to the College of Education in Nigeria. Nigeria established Advanced Teacher Colleges and Colleges of Education in 1973 due to the country's need for high-quality teacher education (Awodun & Boris, 2020; Ezugoh et al., 2020). The Colleges were founded to prepare teachers for elementary and junior secondary education (Suleiman et al., 2020). The Colleges were also required to grant the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE).

The Advanced Teacher College, Ihogbe in Benin City, Bendel State (now Edo State), was founded in 1979 and is now known as the College of Education Warri. In 1980, it changed its name from Advanced Teacher College to College of Education.

The College of Education Warri has expanded rapidly since its founding in 1979. In contrast to the five credits needed for entry into the university programme, the College experienced a relative boom in student enrolment when the admittance requirement was only three credits.

Unfortunately, enrolment in the College began to significantly decline when JAMB changed the admission requirements to five credits, matching those of the universities. This could be attributed to a number of factors, including candidates' preferences for university degree programmes.

Factors influencing the dwindling enrolment in the NCE programmes in the Colleges of Education

Students' Strong Preference for Degree Programmes: Students, shifted overwhelmingly toward the degree option, and their reasons were both rational and compelling. The O'level requirements for NCE and degree programmes were the same, eliminating any barrier to choosing the more prestigious degree route. The progression from NCE to degree could require as much as eight years for a student to finish the NYSC. Gaining direct entry into a degree programme proved to be significantly more efficient. Degrees held greater social prestige and job opportunities. A particularly notable aspect was the difference in academic workload. For example, NCE students studying subjects like English or Social Studies frequently undertook 18–20 courses each semester, whereas degree students in the same fields only managed 8–11. Once students recognized this disparity, many already enrolled in NCE programmes started retaking the UTME to transition to degree programmes. This combination of elements hastened the decline in NCE enrolment and diminished the programme's appeal across the country.

As noted by Enyi (2011:14), it is widely recognized that educators often hold a lower status and possess less authority compared to other professional sectors. There exists a prevalent belief that only those who are academically underqualified, with no promising future, choose to enter the teaching field. Furthermore, there is a common sentiment that teachers are among the least compensated professionals, which negatively impacts their self-esteem and self-image. Given that prospective students understand that gaining admission into Colleges of Education for the National Certificate in Education (NCE) is linked to the teaching profession, many are deterred from pursuing this career path, as it is perceived as a ticket to ongoing financial hardship and diminished social standing. Additionally, Onuorah and Onah (2018) as cited in Esheya and Ugadu (2022); have pointed out several factors contributing to low enrolment in schools, including Colleges of Education: a distorted value system, decreasing job opportunities, the mismatch between education and societal requirements, the educational background of parents, the state of the economy, and frequent teacher strikes. Moreover, Shertzer and Stone (1974) as cited in Esheya and Ugadu (2022); suggest that teenagers may drop out of school due to a desire to enter the workforce, difficulties relating to teachers, ongoing academic struggles, or the belief that school subjects do not meet their personal needs. All these reasons can be relevant to Colleges of Education and other teacher training institutions. Enyi (2011:14) emphasizes that there is a clear indifference toward teacher education programmes, especially at the NCE level. Consequently, admissions into Colleges of Education remain significantly low, while dropout rates are alarmingly high even among those who are

already enrolled. It has been previously mentioned that the prevailing view is that teachers are among the most poorly paid professionals, which adversely influences their self-esteem and self-worth.

Ejue (2020) attributed the decrease in student enrolment at the College of Education to the rise of licensed private Polytechnics, Health technology schools, and even Colleges of Education. Ugadu and Odo (2012) provided an additional explanation for the low enrolment and diminishing status of Colleges of Education, pointing to the elimination of Teacher Training Colleges (TTC). They suggested that in an effort to reform teacher education and enhance teacher quality, the National Council on Education (NCE) determined in 1990 that the National Certificate in Education (NCE) should be the minimum qualification required for teachers in primary schools and beyond (Ekundayo, 2008).

Most graduates of Colleges of Education are not employable because they lack employability skills (Omoniwa & Adedapo, 2017). Ethe and Odjegba (2018) lamented that enrolment into Colleges of Education in Nigeria has dwindled down and the interest in College of Education among students has also gone down below the bet.

The Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) enrollment in Nigerian Colleges of Education has drastically decreased recently, with institutions failing to fill even 10% of their authorized quotas. Nigeria's teacher education system is currently going through one of its most difficult times ever. Stakeholders are increasingly looking to the Federal Government's dual mandate policy as a crucial intervention to buck the trend as enrollment in Education Colleges continues to decline and concerns about an impending teacher shortage grow.

The issue gained more attention during the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board's (JAMB) recent annual policy meeting, where leaders of postsecondary institutions and other important education stakeholders examined admission data and devised a plan of action.

The information presented during the meeting painted an alarming picture. According to JAMB, candidates are growing less interested in the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), a traditional degree offered by Education Colleges.

A worrying tendency can be seen in the figures. In the 2024 admissions cycle, Colleges of Education were granted a 230,657 admission quota for NCE programmes. However, there were still over 209,000 open entrance spaces, and just 20,992 applications, representing just 9.1% of the available slot were accepted, leaving approximately 209,000 admission seats unfilled, not much had changed by 2025. Only 24,736 applicants or 10.53% of the available spots, were accepted out of the 234,981 admissions quota. Concerns have been raised about the development in official circles and among education professionals, who worry that a sustained drop in enrolment could endanger Nigeria's teacher supply in the future.

A concerning picture was drawn by the data provided at the meeting. The Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), a conventional degree offered by Education Colleges, is becoming less popular among candidates according to JAMB. The numbers show a concerning pattern.

Dr. Angela Ajala, the executive secretary of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), recently raised the alarm, stating that if immediate action is not taken, Nigeria may experience a severe teacher shortage within the next six years: "In some Colleges, you find barely 30 students across 10 programmes." The rate of attrition is concerning. Nigeria might not have enough teachers in the near future if we do nothing today (Fred, 2026).

Problem statement/justification

Enrolment at Nigeria's Colleges of Education for NCE programmes has significantly decreased recently, despite the programmes well-established and commendable goals. Rival institutions, a strong preference for University degrees, and unfavourable opinions of the teaching profession all contribute to this paradigm shift. The decline leads to underutilized facilities, poor admissions, and a threat to the supply of competent primary teachers. Thus, assessing enrolment trends from 2003/2004 to 2025/2026 academic sessions at the College of Education, Warri, Delta State, is the study's stated problem.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to assess the NCE Programmes enrolment trends from 2003/2004 to 2025/2026 academic sessions at the College of Education, Warri, Delta State. Specifically, it is to determine the:

I. Enrolment trends from 2003/2004 to 2025/2026 entrance years at the College of Education, Warri, Delta State
II. Factors influencing the declining enrolment trends for NCE programmes in College of Education, Warri
III. Level of male and female enrolment into the NCE programmes in College of Education, Warri
IV. Impacts of declining enrolment of candidates in College of Education, Warri

Research Questions

I. What is the enrolment trend from 2003/2004 to 2025/2026 academic sessions at the College of Education, Warri, Delta State?
II. What are the factors influencing the declining enrolment trends for NCE programmes in College of Education, Warri, Delta State?
III. What is the level of male and female candidates enrolment into the NCE programmes in College of Education
IV. What are the impacts of declining enrolment of candidates in College of Education, Warri, Delta State?

Hypothesis

I. Ho: There is no significant difference between the level of male and female candidates enrolment in College of Education, Warri, Delta State

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey research design was utilized to conduct this study. The study's population consists of all lecturers at the College of Education, Warri. The sample size includes 150 respondents. A self-structured questionnaire comprising 32 items, titled: *Evaluating NCE programmes enrolment trends and their effects on Nigerian Colleges of Education: Analysis of the College of Education, Warri, Delta State (ENPETECOEW);* was employed for data collection. The instrument was divided into two sections: Section (A), which deals with the factors influencing the declining enrolment trends for NCE Programmes in Colleges of Education; while section (B) deals with the impacts of dwindling enrolment into NCE programmes in the Colleges of Education; The evaluation was structured using a 4-point Likert scale, comprising the options: Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), which correspond to values of 1, 2, 3, and 4, respectively. This scale was employed to elicit responses from participants regarding the factors contributing to the declining enrolment trends and the effects of reduced enrolment in NCE programmes within the Colleges of Education. A standard was set to determine the acceptability of a factor, established at an average mean point of ≤ 2.50; any factor scoring below this threshold was deemed unacceptable.

A comparative analysis of enrolment trends for the NCE programmes in Colleges of Education, Warri; from 2003/2004 to 2025/2026 academic sessions was conducted. Admission data for the specified period were obtained from the admission officer at the College of Education. Experts from the Colleges of Education evaluated the instrument for face and content validity. To assess the internal consistency of the instrument, a test-retest reliability evaluation was performed. The reliability assessment utilized the Cronbach's Alpha model, yielding a coefficient value of 0.85, indicating acceptable good reliability. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means and standard error of means, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to test the null hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Showing the mean and Standard error of mean of factors influencing the declining enrolment trends for NCE programmes in Colleges of Education

Factors influencing the declining enrolment trends for NCE programmes	N	Mean	Standard error of mean	Remark
Shift to universities**:** Prospective students overwhelmingly prefer universities over COEs due to the perceived higher status and better long-term remuneration associated with a university degree	**150**	3.84	0.03	Accepted
Uniform entry requirements to tertiary institutions have adverse effects on the enrolment of students into NCE programmes in the country.	**150**	3.24	0.06	Accepted
University Degrees held greater social prestige and job opportunities	**150**	3.39	0.05	Accepted
Gaining direct entry into University degree programme proved to be significantly more efficient compared to NCE programme	**150**	2.85	0.08	Accepted
Academic workload per a semester for NCE programmes are significantly greater than the University programmes	**150**	2.86	0.08	Accepted
The progression from NCE to degree could require as much as eight years for a student to finish the NYSC; as compared to relatively lesser years for direct entry into education programmes in the university	**150**	2.82	0.08	Accepted
Poor funding & infrastructure**:** Many Colleges face inadequate funding from governments, leading to poor facilities, lacking libraries, and substandard laboratories	**150**	4.07	0.30	Accepted
Graduates from Colleges of Education lacks employability skills that could provide them with job outside the teaching industries	**150**	2.58	0.08	Accepted
Curriculum relevance: ongoing criticism that the curriculum is outdated and does not meet modern classroom challenges	**150**	2.52	0.07	Accepted
Infrastructure and digital gap: many institutions lack the ICT facilities needed to fully implement digital learning	**150**	3.04	0.05	Accepted
Poor public image of teaching**:** The profession is often viewed negatively, which discouraged enrolment and reduces the motivation of existing teachers	**150**	3.17	0.06	Accepted
Students avoid teaching as a career, the profession is often seen as a last resort	**150**	3.16	0.05	Accepted
Proliferation of institutions**:** The rise of many, often poorly equipped, NCE-awarding institutions dilutes the standard	**150**	2.85	0.06	Accepted
Brain drain & staff retention**:** There is a notable attrition of qualified, experienced personnel from the Colleges.	**150**	3.00	0.07	Accepted
Societal perception**:** A negative perception of	**150**	3.32	0.05	Accepted

teaching as a low-status, poorly paid profession discourages young people from pursuing the NCE				
Government employment policies that favour University degree graduates than the NCE	**150**	3.33	0.06	Accepted
Introduction of UTME by JAMB placed C.O.E. on unequal competition in favour of universities.	**150**	3.20	0.07	Accepted
The "Second Choice" syndrome: admission into COEs has served as a fallback for candidates who failed to secure placements into universities	**150**	3.37	0.06	Accepted
Alternative competition**:** There is heightened competition from the proliferation of private polytechnics, specialized schools (such as Health Technology), and affiliate university degree centres offering parallel qualifications	**150**	2.91	0.07	Accepted
Abolition of teacher training Colleges**:** The phase-out of traditional Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) removed the primary foundational pipeline that traditionally fed students directly into the Colleges of Education	**150**	3.09	0.08	Accepted
Identified disparity in the reward system	**150**	2.92	0.08	Accepted
Poor conditions of service	**150**	2.97	0.08	Accepted

Source: Field survey, 2026

Table 1. indicated that shift to universities**:** Prospective students overwhelmingly prefer universities over COEs due to the perceived higher status and better long-term remuneration associated with a university degree; Uniform entry requirements to tertiary institutions have adverse effects on the enrolment of students into NCE programmes in the country, University Degrees held greater social prestige and job opportunities; Gaining direct entry into University degree programme proved to be significantly more efficient compared to NCE programme; Academic workload per a semester for NCE programmes are significantly greater than the University programmes; The progression from NCE to degree could require as much as eight years for a student to finish the NYSC as compared to relatively lesser years for direct entry into education programmes in the university; Poor funding & infrastructure**:** Many Colleges face inadequate funding from governments, leading to poor facilities, lacking libraries, and substandard laboratories; Graduates from Colleges of Education lacks employability skills that could provide them with job outside the teaching industries, Curriculum relevance: ongoing criticism that the curriculum is outdated and does not meet modern classroom challenges; Infrastructure and digital gap: many institutions lack the ICT facilities needed to fully implement digital learning; Poor public image of teaching**:** The profession is often viewed negatively, which discouraged enrolment and reduces the motivation of existing teachers; Students avoid teaching as a career, the profession is often seen as a last resort; Proliferation of institutions**:** The rise of many, often poorly equipped, NCE-awarding institutions dilutes the standard; Brain drain & staff retention**:** There is a notable attrition of qualified, experienced personnel from the Colleges; Societal perception**:** A negative perception of teaching as a low-status, poorly paid profession discourages young people from pursuing the NCE; Government employment policies that favour University degree graduates than the NCE; Introduction of UTME by JAMB placed C.O.E. on unequal competition in favour of universities; The "Second Choice" syndrome: admission into COEs has served as a fallback for candidates who failed to secure placements into universities; Alternative competition**:** There is heightened competition from the proliferation of private polytechnics, specialized schools (such as Health Technology), and affiliate university degree centres offering parallel

qualifications; Abolition of teacher training Colleges**:** The phase-out of traditional Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) removed the primary foundational pipeline that traditionally fed students directly into the Colleges of Education; Identified disparity in the reward system; and Poor conditions of service; with the mean and standard error of mean estimations of 3.84 ± 0.03, 3.24 ± 0.06, 3.39 ± 0.05, 2.85 ± 0.08, 2.86 ± 0.08, 2.82 ± 0.08, 4.07 ± 0.03, 2.58 ± 0.08, 2.52 ± 0.07, 3.04 ± 0.05, 3.17 ± 0.06, 3.16 ± 0.05, 2.85 ± 0.06, 3.00 ± 0.07, 3.32 ± 0.05, 3.33 ± 0.06, 3.20 ±0.07, 3.37 ± 0.06, 2.91 ± 0,07, 3.09 ± 0.08, 2.92 ± 0.08, and 2.97 ± 0.08, respectively, depicted the factors influencing the declining enrolment trends for NCE programmes in Colleges of Education. The results of the present study are in agreement the findings of (Enyi (2011:14); Omoniwa & Adedapo (2017); Esheya & Ugadu (2022); Ejue (2020); Ugadu and Odo (2012)) as stated previously.

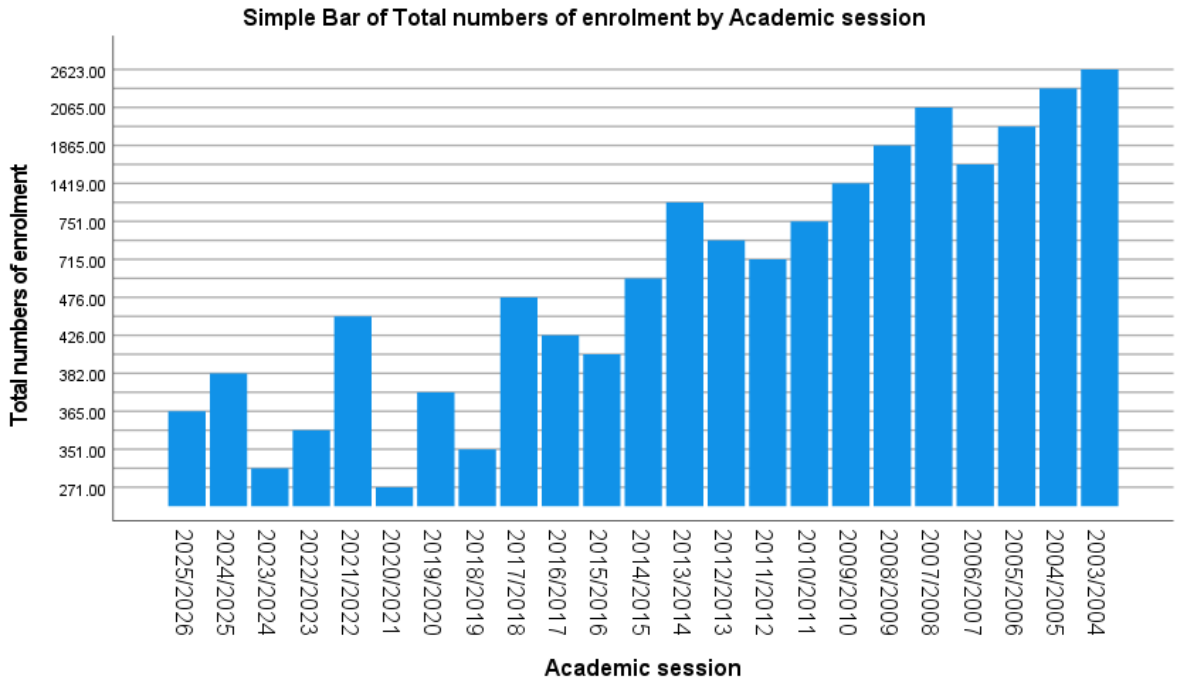
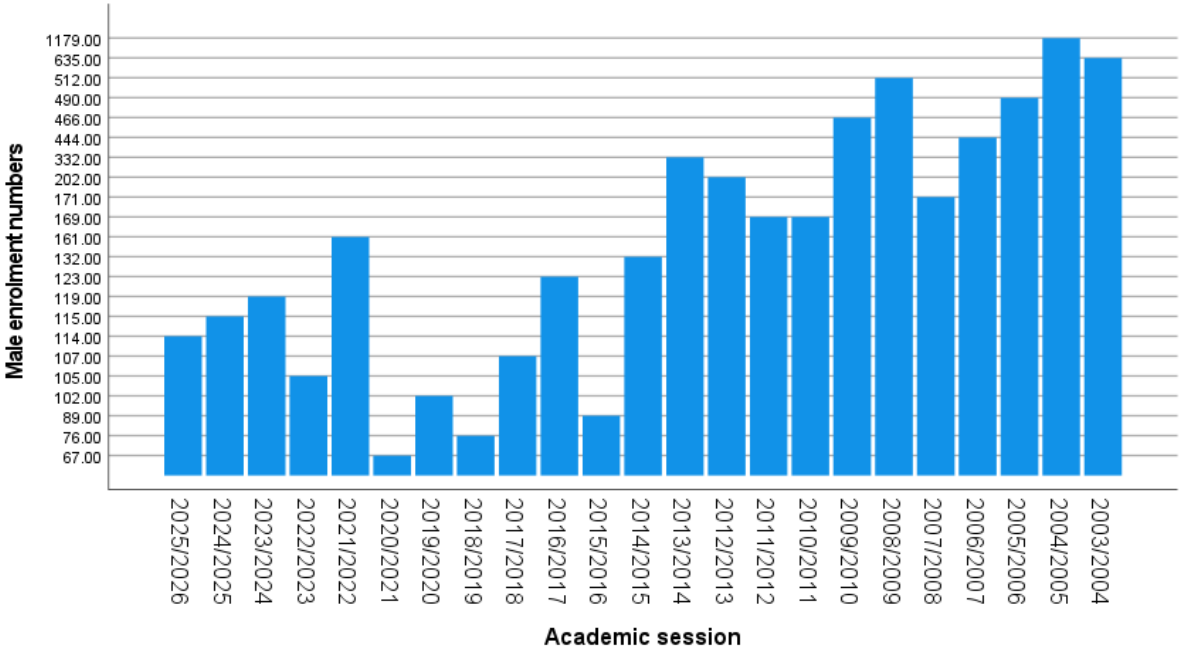


Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 illustrates a notable decrease in enrolment numbers for the NCE programmes at the College of Education, Warri, spanning from the 2003/2004 to the 2025/2026 academic sessions. The enrolment figures fell sharply from 2,623 in the 2003/2004 academic session to a mere 271 in the 2020/2021 academic session, before increasing to 365 in the current admission year of 2025/2026.The declining enrolment trends shown in Figure 1 are primarily attributed to the specific factors outlined in Table 1, as previously mentioned.


Male enrolment numbers
1179.00
635.00
512.00
490.00
466.00
444.00
332.00
202.00
171.00
169.00
161.00
132.00
123.00
119.00
115.00
114.00
107.00
105.00
102.00
89.00
76.00
67.00
2025/2026
2024/2025
2023/2024
2022/2023
2021/2022
2020/2021
2019/2020
2018/2019
2017/2018
2016/2017
2015/2016
2014/2015
2013/2014
2012/2013
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2008/2009
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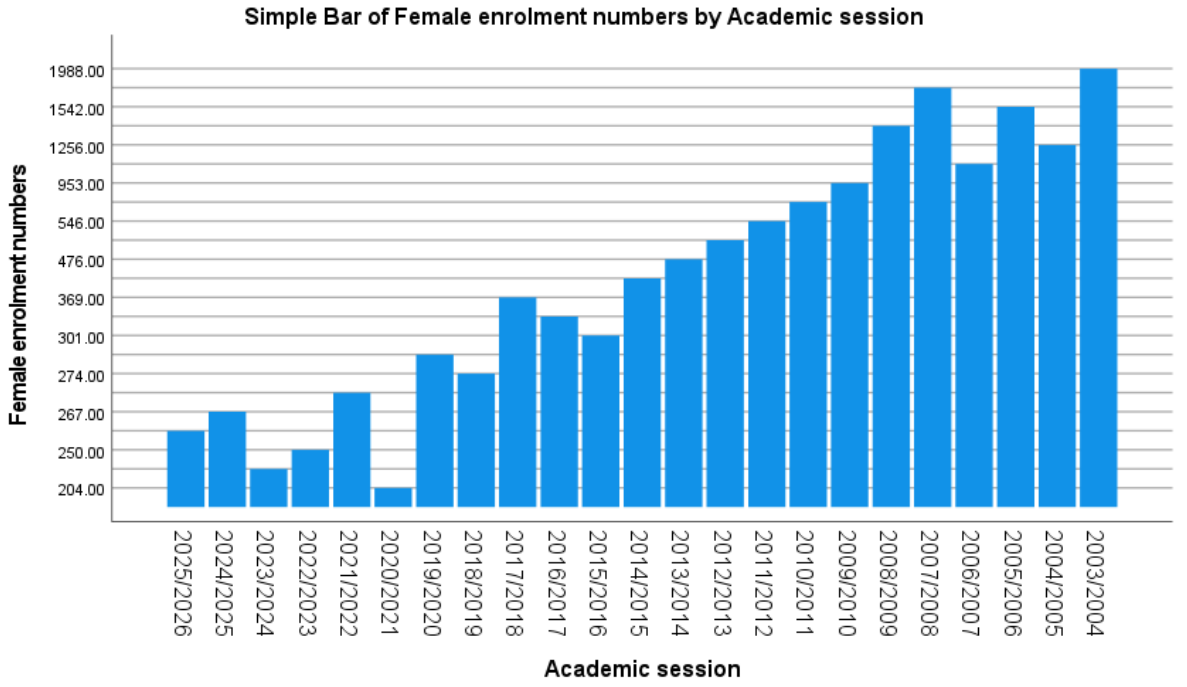
Academic session

Fig. 2.


Simple Bar of Female enrolment numbers by Academic session
Female enrolment numbers
1988.00
1542.00
1256.00
953.00
546.00
476.00
369.00
301.00
274.00
267.00
250.00
204.00
2025/2026
2024/2025
2023/2024
2022/2023
2021/2022
2020/2021
2019/2020
2018/2019
2017/2018
2016/2017
2015/2016
2014/2015
2013/2014
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2010/2011
2009/2010
2008/2009
2007/2008
2006/2007
2005/2006
2004/2005
2003/2004
Academic session

Fig. 3

Fig. 2 and 3 illustrates a significant decline trends in both males and females enrolment in the NCE programmes at the College of Education, Warri. Male enrolment decreased dramatically from 1,179 in the 2004/2005 academic session to 67 in the 2020/2021 academic year, before increasing to 114 in the 2025/2026 academic year. In contrast, female enrolment fell from 1,988 in the 2003/2004 admission year to 204 in the 2020/2021 academic session, subsequently rising to 259 in the 2025/2026 academic session.

Table 2 presents the findings of the current study, which reveal a statistically significant difference ($P \leq 0.5$) in the enrolment figures of female and male in the NCE programmes at the College of Education, Warri. This suggests that the declining trend in male enrolment is notably greater than that of female enrolment in the study area.

Table 2. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) on enrolment trend between males and females candidates in College of Education, Warri

Males & Females enrolment	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2047251.841	1	2047251.841	10.370	.002
Within Groups	8291554.045	42	197417.953		
Total	10338805.886	43			

*significant at ($P<0.05$)

Table 3. Showing the mean and standard error of mean of the impacts of dwindling enrolment in the NCE programmes in College of Education, Warri

Impacts of dwindling enrolment in the NCE programmes	N	Mean	Standard error of mean	Remark
Sharp decline in student enrolment has a direct impact on the Colleges' internal revenue base (low income base of the Colleges);	150	3.73	0.04	Accepted
leading to inadequate funding, poor development of infrastructures and maintenance of infrastructures, and inability to upgrade facilities; and the smooth operation of the Colleges; and	150	3.25	0.07	Accepted
Staff welfare and the overall quality of education.	150	3.04	0.06	Accepted
Inadequate knowledge of diversity, cohesion, and experiential learning among the very few students per class.	150	2.87	0.05	Accepted
Underutilized facilities	150	2.77	0.08	Accepted
Teachers' lack of interest in teaching students of insignificant class numbers	150	2.84	0.06	Accepted
Poor working environment	150	2.89	0.06	Accepted
Acute shortage of qualified teachers: NCE is legally the minimum teaching qualification for basic education in Nigeria. Declining enrolment directly exacerbates the millions of out-of-school children by widening the gap of competent, professionally trained foundational educators	150	3.21	0.07	Accepted
Lack of peer learning and diversity**:** With class sizes shrinking drastically, students miss out on the collaborative learning, peer interaction, and exposure to diverse ideas that enrich the teacher-training experience	150	2.91	0.06	Accepted
Loss of morale and teaching quality**:** Instructors and lecturers often lose motivation and experience low morale when teaching classes with insignificant numbers of apathetic students	150	2.72	0.07	Accepted

Source: Field survey, 2026

Table 3 illustrated that a significant decrease in student enrolment directly affects the internal revenue base of the Colleges, resulting in a low income base. This situation leads to insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure development and maintenance, and an inability to upgrade facilities, which in turn hampers the smooth operation of the Colleges, impacts staff welfare, and diminishes the overall quality of education. Furthermore, there is a lack of understanding of diversity, cohesion, and experiential learning among the limited number of students in each class, alongside underutilized facilities. Teachers often exhibit a lack of interest in instructing small class sizes, contributing to a poor working environment and a critical shortage of qualified teachers, as the National Certificate in Education (NCE) is the legally mandated minimum teaching qualification for basic education in Nigeria. The decline in enrolment further exacerbates the issue of millions of out-of-school children by widening the gap in the availability of competent, professionally trained foundational educators. Additionally, the reduction in class sizes leads to a lack of peer learning and diversity, depriving students of collaborative learning opportunities, peer interaction, and exposure to diverse ideas that enhance the teacher-training experience. Moreover, instructors and lecturers frequently experience a loss of motivation and low morale when teaching classes with minimal numbers of disengaged students. The mean and standard error of mean estimations of 3.73 ± 0.04, 3.25 ± 0.07, 3.04 ± 0.06, 2.87 ± 0.05, 2.84 ± 0.06, 2.89 ± 0.06, 3.21 ± 0.07, 2.91 ± 0.06, and 2.72 ± 0.07 reflect the identified impacts of declining enrolment in the NCE programmes within the study area. The findings of this study align with the reports of Osuchukwu et al. (2003).

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