

**National Common Entrance Examination (NCEE) Assessment Data for Admission
into Federal Government Colleges (FGC) in Nigeria : The Palaver and Role of
NECO.**

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National Common Entrance Examination (NCEE) Assessment Data for The Admission into Federal Government Colleges (FGC) in Nigeria : The Palaver and Role of NECO.

Abstract

In consonance with its mandate and core-value of redefining the future of the Nigerian child through quality assessment, the National Examinations Council, (NECO) created the National Common Entrance Examination (NCEE) Division which is domiciled in the Examination Administration Department (EAD) to handle data set and other conventional tools relating to access, generating, processing, analysing, storing, retrieving and general management of the examination. In harnessing and resolving the admission palaver most a times occasioned by gymnastics of politics, the paper chronicled in details the management techniques modelled by NECO to handle and process the data of her NCEE examinees into the 104 Federal Government Colleges across the States of the Federation. The paper adopted a Descriptive Survey Design as it captures in graphic details the existing situations in the Council with particular reference to principles and practice of management of data of over 100,000 examinees and other supportive /ad hoc staff in the yearly examination spread across centres in FCT Abuja and different states of Nigeria. The paper also took a cursory look at the procedures and techniques of examination administration practice as it relates to NCEE for selection and admission purpose into the Junior Secondary School (JSS) class of Federal Government Colleges (FGC). The level of performance of examinees in NCEE and statistical data of centres, supervisors and invigilators engaged in the exam for 2016-2019 across the states of federation was analysed. The challenges and opportunities in NCEE testing were also discussed. On the strength of the above, the paper concluded that for credibility of assessment and management of admission procedure, it therefore, requires a high efficiency of management skills to safeguard the integrity of NECO and give equal access to the examinees. For improved skills in management of data of examinees, it is recommended that periodic seminars and workshops should be organised to train staff of the Post-Exam Division on state-of-the-art techniques of data management for admission purpose among others.

Keywords: Admission, Assessment Data, FGC, NCEE, NECO, Palaver.

Introduction

The National Common Entrance Examination (NCEE) for admission into Junior Secondary School of Federal Unity Colleges is administered by National Examinations Council (NECO) to pupils in their 6th year of compulsory Basic Education. The purpose of the examination is to select the best from every state of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) for admission into Federal Unity Colleges. These colleges are essentially, secondary schools owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The principal objective is to foster the spirit of unity and cohesion amongst the children of Nigeria. This examination is held annually in March or April.

The result for the first examination determines candidates that qualify for a second examination based on cut-off marks for each state of the federation. The result of the admission is based on merit, equal state quota and environment consideration. In order to measure academic achievement in any educational enterprise, the assessor have to undergo series of processes to maintain standard and achieve results as he has to construct, administer and score the examination given to the examinees.

However, for such an examination to have validity and reliability, it should produce a similar and consistent results or grades for a similar or comparable group of examinees. The validity and reliability of assessment are directly dependent on many factors which among others include the administration of the examination. One of the regular features of a typical classroom practice is the assessment of the quality and quantity of the learning and teaching that has taken place. A major parameter to determine the effectiveness of the learning is for the examiner to generate the items, administer, score, grade and record the results of the examination. Such grading system will hitherto provide fair and reliable information about the examinees' strengths and weaknesses.

Farrant, (2000) opines that such examination will enable meaningful observations and comparison to be made of the kind of behaviour learners acquire during the teaching-learning process. To Rukundo A. and Magambo J. (2010) it is therefore incumbent upon persons entrusted with the management of tests to learn the principles and good practices of test administration to ensure these qualities of a test are upheld in testing. When test administrators are not conversant with the principles of test administration, the overall aim of examination process fails and more often than not, the examiner and the examinees suffer the consequences.

The author is of the opinion that for a successful administration of examination especially a large scale one like the National Common Entrance Examination (NCEE) efforts must be synergized to achieve results. Therefore, the harmonization and management of the inherent processes involved in the conduct of the examination is referred to as the administration of the examination.

The Role of NECO in Actualising her Mandates

Section 7 of the NECO's enabling Act gave the Council unrestricted and unfettered authority over its mandate, which include, inter alia:

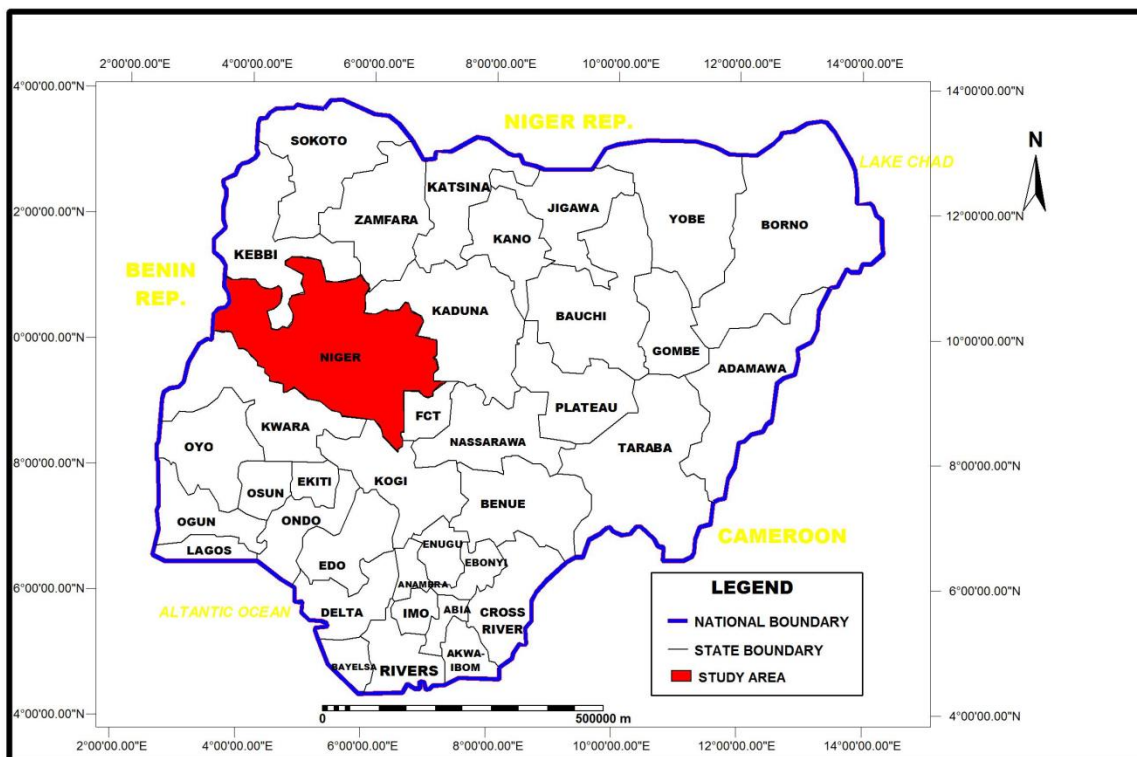
- revising and considering, annually, in the public interest, the examinations to be held for admission into Federal Government Colleges and other Allied Institutions
- collecting and disseminating information on all matters relating to admission into federal Government Colleges and other Allied Institutions
- the general control and conduct of National Common Entrance Examinations for admission into Federal Government Colleges and other Allied Institutions
- developing and administering selection examinations into the Federal Government Academy Suleja in accordance with such guidelines as may be approved, from time to time, by the Minister
- developing, administering and conducting aptitude tests for candidates into Federal Government Colleges and other Allied Institutions
- monitoring, collecting and keeping records of continuous assessment in all Federal Government colleges
- control of the conduct of the Internal and External Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) in Nigeria without prejudice to the extant powers and functions of the West African Examinations Council
- conducting researches leading to national improvement in testing and examination procedures at Junior and Senior Secondary School levels
- preparing and submitting to the Minister the report on standards of examination and such other related matters as the Minister may, from time to time, require.
- Carrying out such other activities as are expedient for discharge of all or any of the functions conferred on the Council under or by the act.

The Advantages Inherent in the Conduct of NCEE in Nigeria

The reforms introduced by the present management include the creation of the Council's new corporate website www.neco.gov.ng. The 2019 NCEE registration portal was plotted on the Council's new corporate website. The new registration procedure has been made simple and more user-friendly that candidates could not only be registered on computers but also on smart phones. The following are the advantages of NCEE among others :

- Selection process gives equal opportunity to every examinee from every Local Government Area.

- It is a fair representation of Nigeria populace.
- Brings out the best of the best from the pool of examinees.
- It fosters socio-cultural integration of Nigerian future generation.
- It provides a platform for the selected ones to enjoy a well subsidized basic education from the federal government of Nigeria.
- It serves as research resources for researchers.
- It is an avenue for socio-economic integration of the poor and the rich in the country.
- The examination serves as standard torchbearer for other examinations in Nigeria.



MAP OF NIGERIA SHOWING FCT AND THE 36 STATES OF THE FEDERATION

LEVELS OF CANDIDATES' PERFORMANCE IN NCEE BY National and State

S/NO	STATE	NUMBER OF CANDIDATES		RANGE OF SCORES							
		REG	SAT	00.50	%	51-100	%	101-150	%	151-200	%
1.	ABIA	2,823	2,784	110	3.95	1,250	44.90	1,342	48.20	82	2.95
2.	ADAMAWA	349	340	77	22.65	183	53.82	79	23.24	1	0.29
3.	AKWA-IBOM	1,579	1,533	83	5.41	817	53.29	613	39.99	20	1.30
4.	ANAMBRA	6,106	5,982	202	3.38	2,290	38.28	2,985	49.90	505	8.44
5.	BAUCHI	179	171	57	33.33	97	59.73	17	9.94	-	0.00
6.	BENUE	1,182	1,153	69	5.98	709	61.49	358	31.05	17	1.47
7.	BORNO	241	233	176	75.54	53	22.75	4	1.72	-	0.00
8.	CROSS RIVER	982	965	48	4.97	563	58.34	335	34.72	19	1.97
9.	DELTA	2,811	2,749	71	2.58	1,105	40.20	1,449	52.71	124	4.51
10.	EDO	1,583	1,536	77	5.01	801	52.15	612	39.84	46	2.99
11.	ENUGU	4,606	4,540	152	3.35	2,054	45.24	2,129	46.89	205	4.52
12.	IMO	3,638	3,567	134	3.76	1,610	45.14	1,614	45.25	209	5.86
13.	JIGAWA	416	389	161	41.39	221	56.81	7	1.80	-	0.00
14.	KADUNA	1,782	1,730	219	12.66	1,007	58.21	476	27.51	28	1.62
15.	KANO	5,586	5,468	1,378	25.20	2,361	43.18	1,686	30.83	43	0.79
16.	KATSINA	815	776	432	55.67	308	39.69	36	4.64	-	0.00
17.	KEBBI	206	203	133	65.52	60	29.56	10	4.93	-	0.00
18.	KOGI	528	520	22	4.23	314	60.38	178	34.23	6	1.15
19.	KWARA	1,425	1,402	77	5.49	789	56.28	492	35.09	44	3.14
20.	LAGOS	25,966	25,305	358	1.41	7,823	30.91	14,274	56.41	2,850	11.26
21.	NIGER	2,823	2,768	572	20.66	1,700	61.42	433	15.64	63	2.28
22.	OGUN	2,014	1,973	67	3.40	931	47.19	910	46.12	65	3.29
23.	ONDO	1,330	1,292	34	2.63	571	44.20	626	48.45	61	4.72
24.	OSUN	881	863	19	2.20	488	56.55	342	39.63	14	1.62
25.	OYO	1,650	1,623	53	3.27	707	43.56	810	49.91	53	3.27
26.	PLATEAU	1,598	1,547	158	10.21	935	60.44	433	27.99	21	1.36
27.	RIVERS	5,947	5,791	193	3.33	2,799	48.33	2,627	45.36	172	2.97
28.	SOKOTO	422	404	160	39.60	198	49.01	46	11.39	-	0.00
29.	TARABA	183	181	31	17.13	125	69.06	24	13.26	1	0.55
30.	YOBE	338	318	42	13.21	26	8.18	167	52.52	83	26.10
31.	FCT-ABUJA	8,192	7,956	529	6.65	4,422	55.58	2,890	36.32	115	1.45
32.	BAYELSA	335	327	29	8.87	203	62.08	94	28.75	1	0.31
33.	EBONYI	926	901	60	6.66	510	56.60	316	35.07	15	1.66
34.	EKITI	641	634	19	3.00	311	49.05	281	44.32	23	3.63
35.	GOMBE	216	213	52	24.41	146	68.54	15	7.04	-	0.00
36.	NASARAWA	992	969	133	13.73	604	62.33	207	21.36	25	2.58
37.	ZAMFARA	103	92	43	46.74	44	47.83	5	5.43	-	0.00
38.	OVERSEAS	33	33	-	0.00	24	72.73	9	27.27	-	0.00
39.	SUMMARY	91,427	89,231	6,230	6.98	39,159	43.88	38,931	43.63	4,911	5.05

STATISTICS OF CENTRES, SUPERVISORS AND INVIGILATORS EMPLOYED FOR THE CONDUCT OF NCEE IN 2016.

STATE CODE	STATE	NO OF CENTRE	NO. OF SUPERVISORS	NO. OF INVIGILATORS
1	ABIA	16	16	44
2	ADAMAWA	3	3	2
3	AKWA-IBOM	7	7	24
4	ANAMBRA	29	29	100
5	BAUCHI	2	2	2
6	BENUE	8	8	16
7	BORNO	2	2	3
8	CROSS RIVER	7	7	13
9	DELTA	14	14	45
10	EDO	10	10	22
11	ENUGU	22	22	73
12	IMO	18	18	58
13	JIGAWA	5	5	3
14	KADUNA	9	9	26
15	KANO	41	41	72
16	KATSINA	6	6	12
17	KEBBI	2	2	3
18	KOGI	5	5	7
19	KWARA	9	9	20
20	LAGOS	115	115	422
21	NIGER	19	19	41
22	OGUN	14	14	29
23	ONDO	7	7	21
24	OSUN	8	8	11
25	OYO	11	11	26
26	PLATEAU	10	10	22
27	RIVERS	27	27	97
28	SOKOTO	2	2	6
29	TARABA	2	2	2
30	YOBE	5	5	2
31	FCT	36	36	133
32	BAYELSA	2	2	5
33	EBONYI	7	7	12
34	EKITI	6	6	8
35	GOMBE	2	2	3

36	NASARAWA	7	7	14
37	ZAMFARA	1	1	1
98	COTONOU	1	1	0
TOTAL		497	497	1,400

STATISTICS OF CENTRES, SUPERVISORS AND INVIGILATORS EMPLOYED FOR THE CONDUCT OF NCEE IN 2017.

STATE CODE	STATE	NO OF CENTRE	NO. OF SUPERVISORS	NO. OF INVIGILATORS
1	ABIA	16	16	34
2	ADAMAWA	4	4	5
3	AKWA-IBOM	7	7	19
4	ANAMBRA	28	28	77
5	BAUCHI	2	2	4
6	BENUE	6	6	14
7	BORNO	1	1	1
8	CROSS RIVER	6	6	11
9	DELTA	13	13	34
10	EDO	9	9	16
11	ENUGU	21	21	61
12	IMO	20	20	56
13	JIGAWA	4	4	4
14	KADUNA	9	9	23
15	KANO	4	4	6
16	KATSINA	3	3	6
17	KEBBI	2	2	0
18	KOGI	5	5	9
19	KWARA	10	10	17
20	LAGOS	113	113	398
21	NIGER	13	13	31
22	OGUN	15	15	28
23	ONDO	7	7	22
24	OSUN	6	6	12
25	OYO	14	14	23
26	PLATEAU	8	8	15
27	RIVERS	28	28	76
28	SOKOTO	2	2	5
29	TARABA	2	2	1
30	YOBE	5	5	1

31	FCT	35	35	138
32	BAYELSA	1	1	5
33	EBONYI	7	7	14
34	EKITI	5	5	12
35	GOMBE	1	1	3
36	NASARAWA	6	6	11
37	ZAMFARA	1	1	1
98	COTONOU	1	1	0
TOTAL		440	440	1,193

STATISTICS OF CENTRES, SUPERVISORS AND INVIGILATORS EMPLOYED FOR THE CONDUCT OF NCEE IN 2018.

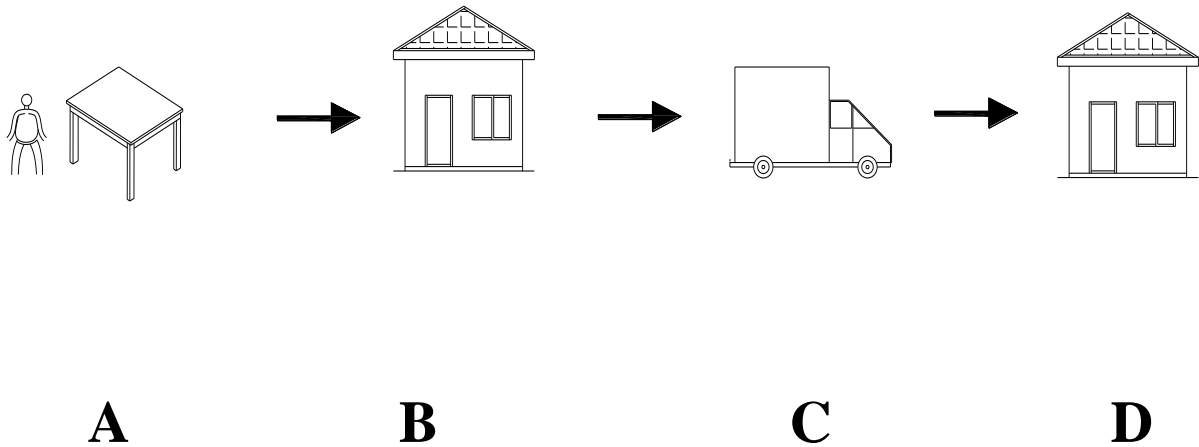
STATE CODE	STATE	NO OF CENTRE	NO. OF SUPERVISORS	NO. OF INVIGILATORS
1	ABIA	16	16	38
2	ADAMAWA	21	21	44
3	AKWA-IBOM	7	7	22
4	ANAMBRA	28	28	82
5	BAUCHI	2	2	2
6	BENUE	7	7	13
7	BORNO	1	1	4
8	CROSS RIVER	6	6	13
9	DELTA	14	14	
10	EDO	11	11	17
11	ENUGU	21	21	71
12	IMO	20	20	61
13	JIGAWA	5	5	2
14	KADUNA	9	9	19
15	KANO	3	3	2
16	KATSINA	2	2	2
17	KEBBI	2	2	0
18	KOGI	5	5	7
19	KWARA	9	9	15
20	LAGOS	115	115	419
21	NIGER	13	13	28

22	OGUN	15	15	32
23	ONDO	7	7	21
24	OSUN	8	8	11
25	OYO	13	13	26
26	PLATEAU	9	9	16
27	RIVERS	26	26	85
28	SOKOTO	2	2	4
29	TARABA	3	3	1
30	YOBE	4	4	3
31	FCT	35	35	136
32	BAYELSA	1	1	5
33	EBONYI	7	7	16
34	EKITI	6	6	11
35	GOMBE	2	2	3
36	NASARAWA	5	5	10
37	ZAMFARA	1	1	0
98	COTONOU	1	1	1
TOTAL		462	462	1,275

STATISTICS OF CENTRES, SUPERVISORS AND INVIGILATORS EMPLOYED FOR THE CONDUCT OF NCEE IN 2019.

STATE CODE	STATE	NO OF CENTRE	NO. OF SUPERVISORS	NO. OF INVIGILATORS
1	ABIA	19	19	34
2	ADAMAWA	2	2	2
3	AKWA-IBOM	9	9	23
4	ANAMBRA	28	28	89
5	BAUCHI	2	2	2
6	BENUE	6	6	12
7	BORNO	1	1	2
8	CROSS RIVER	7	7	12
9	DELTA	14	14	39
10	EDO	11	11	14
11	ENUGU	21	21	65
12	IMO	19	19	61
13	JIGAWA	5	5	2
14	KADUNA	9	9	18

15	KANO	4	4	5
16	KATSINA	2	2	5
17	KEBBI	2	2	1
18	KOGI	5	5	7
19	KWARA	10	10	16
20	LAGOS	117	117	379
21	NIGER	13	13	24
22	OGUN	15	15	28
23	ONDO	7	7	21
24	OSUN	10	10	11
25	OYO	13	13	22
26	PLATEAU	8	8	15
27	RIVERS	29	29	73
28	SOKOTO	2	2	4
29	TARABA	3	3	3
30	YOBE	6	6	1
31	FCT	35	35	126
32	BAYELSA	1	1	5
33	EBONYI	7	7	14
34	EKITI	6	6	15
35	GOMBE	2	2	4
36	NASARAWA	4	4	11
37	ZAMFARA	1	1	0
98	COTONOU	1	1	1
TOTAL		456	456	1,166



NECO Examination Management Processes and Practices Relating to NCEE in Nigeria

A good examination management practice should ensure effective and smooth conduct of the examination. For effective management, the activities of the examination are segmented into

- i) Pre-exam
- ii) During
- iii) Post-exam

The Pre-Exam Activities

The activities involved include the following among others:

- Item Generation
- Advertisement
- Security of Items

- Logistics - transport
 - Appointment of supervisors
 - Venue

During Exam Activities

- Supervision/Invigilation of exam
- Give clear-cut instructions
- Monitoring of exam
- Discourage malpractice
- Make provision for emergencies/damage control measures should be put in place.

Post Exam Activities

- Retrieve all test materials
- Process the exam/markings
- Release and publication of results.

Analysis of Data and Interpretation of Result

An overview of the data obtained 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 showed the following revelations:

- The south western states including Lagos state generated 32,447 being the highest number of candidates for enrollment. This was immediately followed by south east 18,099, north central states including Abuja 16740, south south with 13,237, north west 9,330 and the north east with 1,497. This shows the disparity in education among the geo-political regions of Nigeria and awareness in the advertisement and sales of admission form.
- The disparity is equally evident in the deployment of logistics and resources like the number of centres, supervisors and invigilators.
- Enrollment in north eastern states might have been significantly affected by Boko Haram insurgency and general insecurity that pervaded the region.

The Palaver Associated with NCEE

- The catch-them-young-syndrome traceable to parental desperation made some parents to present some physically less matured candidates.
- The carrying capacity of the schools are so limited that many prospective candidates who jostle for few vacancies may not secure the admission.
- The various media used in advertising the sales of forms are so elitist that the rural dwellers may not have equal access to such information as their urban counterpart.
- Generally, Nigeria does not have syllabus for Common Entrance Examination hence varying degree of content coverage places some candidates at an advantage.
- The cost of running this examination is weighty considering the logistics and other inputs by NECO.
- The security of staff, adhoc staff and exam materials must be strengthened.

Recommendations for Improvement

- Computer Based Test is recommended to cut cost, curtail malpractice and maintain efficiency.
- Syllabus for common entrance examination should be produced and circulated across the federation to ensure exposure to content requirement.
- The Federal Government of Nigeria should build more FGC to accommodate the demands, yearning and aspiration of teeming Nigerian children.
- A special software package should be designed for selection, admission and placement purposes taking into cognizance the heterogeneity of Nigeria.

Conclusion

There is no iota of doubt in the capacity and ability of National Examinations Council to conduct a credible and acceptable National Common Entrance Examination. The council is poised on deploying her state-of-the-art technology to facilitate the deployment of a Computer Compliant

Exam (CCE) but that will be essentially based on the level of cooperation of Nigeria populace and other education stakeholders.

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