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COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UTME AND DE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

There have been arguments on the differences in the academic performance of direct entry (DE) and unified tertiary matriculation examinations (UTME) students of universities. This study examined a comparative study of academic performance of students admitted through the UTME and those admitted via DE into the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria. The design of the study was an ex post facto research design. The population of the study was the entire students in the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin for 2014/2015 academic session. Purposive and proportionate sampling techniques were used to select 500 respondents used for the study. Students' Academic Performance Proforma was used to gather students' grades. Two research questions raised were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypothesis formulated was tested using the t-test statistical method. The findings of the study showed that there was significant difference in the academic performance of students who were admitted into the University through UTME and DE students. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the academic performance of students admitted through UTME and DE into the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin differs as there was an edge in the academic performance of the students admitted through Direct Entry. It was recommended that the National Universities Commission should mandate the Universities in the country to admit into the Faculty of Education only student who have completed their National Certificate in Education.

Introduction

The modes of admission of candidates into first degree programmes in the universities are in three major forms. These include admissions through the Direct Entry (DE), Universities Matriculation Examinations (UME) and through the pre-degree programme (Remedial Programme). Admissions through UME and direct entry are being handled by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) while admission through the pre-degree programme is being handled by the universities themselves (Akper & Fagbongbe, 1999).

Adeniyi (2003) reported that Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) candidates performed poorest in their university examination and this is because they may be too young to face an expanded computer-based-scientific-oriented

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curriculum and that they could also have the problems of lack of experience and tender age which affect their academic achievements. The author further said that it could be due to poor linkage between what is being taught in the university and what was known before entry into university from the secondary school level. Ipaye (2004) reported that in degree examination, DE students performed better than preliminary students in arts subjects; whereas the remedial students did better in science and technical subjects.

Ezema (2006) compared the degree results of DE students, UTME and remedial students and reported that for the five academic sessions studied, there was no significant difference the cumulative grade point average of the three groups prior to their degree examinations. Ojo (2005) reported that DE students were superior to their remedial and UTME students in academic achievement. The most evidence of superiority of DE students is the achievement criterion of degree completion rate. This indicates that the rate of students' wastage is more among remedial entrance students. Supporting this finding is the observation made by Angulu (2005) that students who enter the university with high school certificate performed better in the second and third year than those admitted into the university via pre-degree since they are usually more prepared for the university academic work. Nevertheless, the author recommended that remedial programme be allowed to stay as a means of meeting up admission quota and addressing issues of imbalance.

Performance is very important in human life and every society has its own goals and aspiration. According to Adu, Ojelabi and Adeyanju (2009), academic performance is an outcome of all academic tasks or rigors of a person which could be poorly or successfully stated. As noted by Ijaduola (2008), academic performance cannot be obtained in students if they are discouraged. Teachers are expected to meaningfully contribute to student's academic performance. A weighty academic performance of a student is sometimes attributed to higher teachers' efficiency. Academic performance is the student's accomplishment in terms of grades or scores obtained in a given test. It is determined by the individual scores in relation to a given standard or sometimes in relation to the performance of other students in class test or examination.

According to Ceci (1991); Herrustein and Murray (1994); Badu (1996), students' academic performance varies according to individual students' scores such as high, average or low academic performance. Students who place high premium on education are activated to enhance the development of their intellect and this foster academic performance (Sunday, 2000).

There are certain factors which Thorne (2000) affirmed that can affect academic performance of students. These include extra-curricular activities, the culture of the people and environment in which children are raised. It is also generally believed that parental assistance with home-work, poor motivation and racial and minority discrimination are other factors that can affect students' academic performance. Also related to academic performance among students, Ali, Jusoff and Mokhtar, Syafena (2000) enumerated active learning, students' class attendance, extra-curricular activities, peer influence, course assessment and demographic factor as some other factors.

In order to measure academic performance, Grade Point Averages (GPAs) have been widely used by different researchers. Some of these researchers are Broh, 2002; Darling, N, Caldwell, L. L., & Smith, R., 2005; Galiher, 2006; & Amy, 2006. GPAs are calculated at the end of every semester. On the other hand, Tho (1994); Hake (1995) have used test results to measure academic performance.

Afemikhe (2005) had studied university selection examination in relation to selection into Nigeria Universities; predictive power of selection examination score and predictive value of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) in Nigeria. Afemikhe (2005) found no significant difference between the effectiveness of JAMB and the individual university selection examination. The author therefore concluded that there was no need to use these two examinations together for selection of students under the same condition in same year. According to Afemikhe (2005), use of one of them at a time would be adequate. The researcher suggested by Afemikhe (2005) that since JAMB was widely accepted, it should be used alone for university admission exercise.

Statement of the Problem

Admission of students into university which is either through UTME or DE has revealed some discrepancies in these categories of students. The DE students have always found it easier to adjust and cope with academic rigour involved in their various programmes than those students admitted through UTME. The variance in their level of adaptability to the university environment is perhaps responsible for the discrepancies in their academic performances. Also, there have been arguments on the differences in the academic performance of DE and UTME students and this has been the basis of preference of one mode of entry to another. This paper hereby seeks to establish the differences in the academic performance of UTME and DE students.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to establish the different between the academic performance of DE and UTME students in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. What is the level of academic performance of the students who are admitted into the university through UTME in general courses and courses in Primary Education, Educational Management and Heath Education?
- ii. What is the level of academic performance of students who are admitted into the university through DE in general courses and courses in Primary Education, Educational Management and Heath Education?

Research Hypothesis

One research hypothesis was formulated for the study:

H₀: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of students who are admitted into the university through UTME and DE in the general courses.

Methodology

The design of the study is an ex post facto research design. The population for the study comprised all the students in the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin for 2014/2015 academic session. Purposive and proportionate sampling techniques were used to select the 300 level students. There were 1,506 students in the third year in the Faculty of Education for the 2014/2015 academic session, among which 1,147 students were admitted through UTME while 359 students were Direct Entry. Three departments in the Faculty of education were randomly selected out of which students were selected based on the population of each departments selected using proportionate sampling technique. Three hundred and eighty students were selected from UTME students and 120 students selected from Direct Entry students representing 33% of the entire population. The total sample selected was 500 students (UTME and Direct entry). Students in the Departments of Educational Management, Health Promotion and Primary Education Studies were selected for the study.

Students' academic performance proforma was designed and used for data collection. Each departmental examination officers were contacted to collect students' grades. Out of 380 UTME students selected, only 377 students grades were available for data analysis while 114 grades were available for DE students out of 120 students selected. The data gathered for the study collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The two research questions raised were answered using mean and standard deviation. The study adopted the following yardstick in determining the benchmark to categorise the mean levels: 1.00-1.59 as low performance, 1.60-2.59 as average performance and 2.60-5.00 as high performance. T-test statistics was use to the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of academic performance of students who are admitted into the University through UTME?

Table 1: Level of Academic Performance of UTME students in Departmental Courses

S/N	N	Mode of Entry	Course	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
Primary Education						
1	210	UTME	PES 202	2.30	1.05	Average
2	207	UTME	PES 303	2.36	.700	Average
Educational Mgt.						
3	53	UTME	EMA 202	3.06	.95	High
4	53	UTME	EMA 305	3.34	.74	High
Health Education						
5	114	UTME	HED 205	2.11	.53	Average
6	104	UTME	HED 303	2.13	.76	Average
Faculty Courses						
7	377	UTME	SSE 201	3.13	.50	High
8	377	UTME	SSE 202	2.21	.50	Average
General Courses						
9	377	UTME	GNS 211	2.15	.75	Average
10	377	UTME	GSE 301	1.46	.95	Low

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

Key

$\bar{X}$ Mean

SD Standard Deviation

1.00 -1.59 Low

1.60 -2.59 Average

2.60 - 5.00 High

PES Primary Education Studies

EMA Educational Management

HED Health Education

SSE Social Science Education

GNE General Studies

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of the level of academic performance of the students who were admitted into the University through Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) where the mean of students' academic performance in the departmental courses: PES 202, PES 303, EMA 202, EMA 305, HED 205, HED 305 were found to be 2.30, 2.36, 3.06, 3.34, 2.11 and 2.13 respectively. Therefore, level of academic performance of the students who were admitted into the University through UTME was found to be average overall at departmental level, while their performance in general and faculty courses were found to be average overall based on the finding.

Research Question 2: What is the level of academic performance of the students who are admitted into the University through DE?

Table 2: Level of Academic Performance of DE students in Departmental Courses

S/N	N	Mode of Entry	Course	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
Primary Education						
1	63	DE	PES 202	2.30	.05	Average
2	61	DE	PES 303	2.26	.30	Average
Educational Mgt.						
3	25	DE	EMA 202	2.06	.65	Average
4	25	DE	EMA 305	2.34	.94	Average
Health Education						
5	26	DE	HED 205	3.11	.43	High
6	24	DE	HED 303	3.13	.56	High
Faculty Courses						
7	114	DE	SSE 201	2.13	.70	Average
8	114	DE	SSE 202	2.55	.84	High
General Courses						
9	114	DE	GNS 211	3.44	.74	High
10	114	DE	GSE 301	2.66	.93	High

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

Key

$\bar{X}$	Mean	PES	Primary Education Studies
SD	Standard Deviation	EMA	Educational Management
1.00 - 1.59	Low	HED	Health Education
1.60 - 2.59	Average	SSE	Social Science Education
2.60 - 5.00	High	GNE	General Studies

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of the level of academic performance of the students who were admitted into the University through Direct Entry (DE) where the means of students' academic performance in the departmental courses: PES 202, PES 303, EMA 202, EMA 305, HED 205, HED 305 were found to be 2.30, 2.26, 2.06, 2.34, 3.11 and 3.13 respectively. Therefore, level of academic performance of the students who were admitted into the University through Direct Entry (DE) was found to be average overall at departmental level, while level of academic performance of the students who were admitted into the University through Direct Entry at general and faculty courses were found to be high overall based on the result from the finding.

Hypothesis Testing

Ho: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students who are admitted into the University through UTME and DE in General Courses.

Table 3: T-test analysis comparing academic performance of students through UTME and DE in General Courses

Source of Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Sig(2-tail)	Decision
UTME	377	2.27	.49	489	3.50	1.96	.000	Rejected
DE	114	2.84	.89					

*Significant $P < .05$

Table 5 shows a calculated t-value of 3.50 and critical t-value of 1.96. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, hence, the hypothesis is rejected. This means that there was significant difference in the academic performance of students who are admitted into the University through UTME and DE in general courses in University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that students' who are admitted through DE who have completed the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) perform better than those students who are admitted through UTME. This is perhaps as a result of their experiences and rudiments knowledge in education courses they might have acquired during their NCE programmes.

Recommendations

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

- Students to be admitted into the Faculty of education should be those that have acquired NCE as being practice some years back in some departments in university of Ilorin.

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