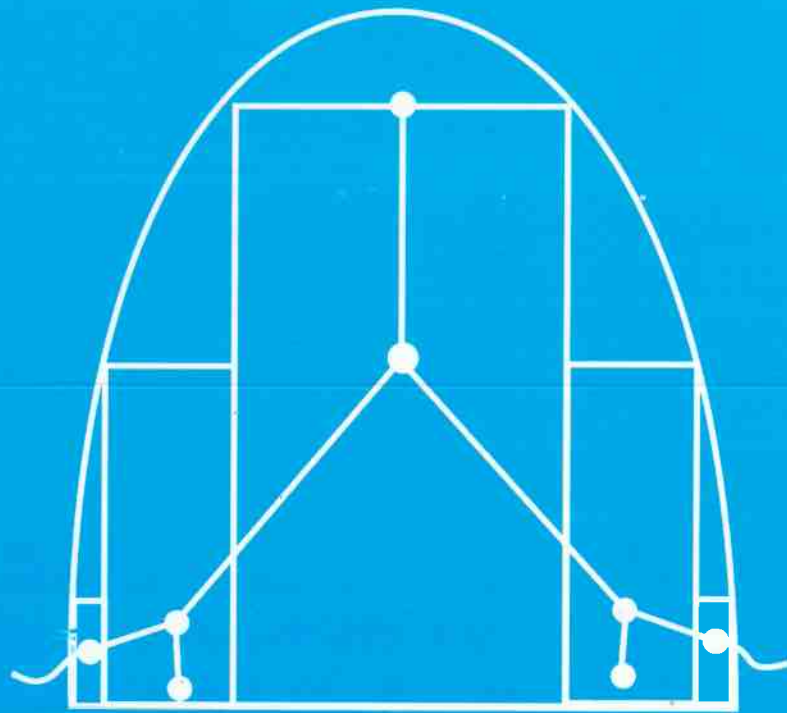


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Course of Interest and Academic Performance Of Students of University of Ilorin, Ilorin (2013 – 2015)

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between students' courses of interest and academic performance of student in university of Ilorin (2013 – 2015). The research design used for this study was a descriptive survey of correlational type. Three hundred out of 1, 393 students (300 level) in Faculty of Education University of Ilorin were randomly selected as sample using Krejcie and Morgan proportional sample size technique. Research instrument tagged "Students' Cumulative Grade Point Average Proforma" (SCGPAP) was used to obtain relevant data. One main and three operational hypotheses were formulated to guide the conduct of the study. Pearson product-moment correlation statistic was used to test the formulated hypotheses at, 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study among others showed that there was a significant positive relationship between students' course of interest and academic performance of students in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015 ($\text{Sig} = .002 < 0.05$). There was no significant relationship between students placed in a course not related to their course of choice and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015 ($\text{Sig} = .062 < 0.05$). Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that, all efforts be made by JAMB and University administration to ensure that students who have satisfied all admission criteria's are placed according to their course of choice when applying for admission, doing this would bring out the best out of the students in terms of academic performance.

Keyword: Student, course of interest, course of choice, course of study, and academic performance,

Introduction

It has become increasingly common to find candidates who have written Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) conducted by Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) and also sat for POST UTME organized by individual university, but could not gained admission to the University for their courses of choice. This, most time may be due to large number of applicants applying for limited space in a course of choice, or

candidates/students not meeting up with requirement(s) of admission into their course of choice. To this end, University decides and most of the time, the unqualified students for a particular field and/or the qualified one but who could not gain admission to their course of choice due to limited space are usually given admission to study courses that have limited number of applicants and accommodate more students. In some cases, students may not be aware nor pleased with this placement. While some may be placed in a course related to their course of choice others may be placed in a course not related to their course of choice. This has become the tradition in many universities in Nigeria of recent.

In some instances, career choice plays an important role in shaping the attitude of students towards any choice of courses in the University. In educational institutions, successes are measured by students' academic performance which generally refers to as how well a student is accomplishing his or her tasks and studies, or how well a student meets standard set out by the institution itself. El-anzi (2005) stressed that academic achievement is an important issue, a fundamental premium upon which all teaching-learning activities are measured using some criteria for excellence such as good academic performance, poor academic performance and academic failure. Academic achievement has a special importance for both the student and the people around him or her. Schunk (2004) asserted that a child's attitude is likely to be as a result of his interest in a particular discipline and this in turn may affect his or her performance. If the students are interested in a field, they are more likely to be successful in the field because interest in a field may produce high expectation.

The interest must be there for him to devote time for his study. Thus, it can be said that interest and attitude of learners toward the subject plays a decisive role for the success of the student. Students joining a particular department because of their interest are believed to be highly motivated to learn than students placed in a department without their interest. Interest is a very important factor when it comes to academic performance of a student. The interest of a tertiary institution applicants and students is very crucial as it may be the major determinant when it comes to their academic performance which on the long run may determine their success in life. This research work therefore, seeks to x-ray the relationship and the degree to which students' interest in course of study predicts their academic achievement using University of Ilorin as a case study (2013 – 2015).

Statement of the Problem

Researchers in the field of education always make effort to identify factors responsible for the poor performance of students across all levels of education including tertiary level. The level of academic achievement of students is dependent upon or associated with a number of psychological, sociological and environmental factors. The psychological factors could include attitude of students toward schooling, interest in learning, study habit, loss of

control, self-efficacy, personality, motivation, creativity, sociability, age, persistence, and intelligence (Kpolovie, 2010).

In Nigeria today, it has become a tradition in many universities to place students in courses out of their choices due to limited number of vacancies in some courses. Sometime, this may be as a result of students not meeting up with required grade to qualify them to their choice. The universities do this to reflect the diversity of the country in her admission policy as much as possible without considering the interest of the applicants. As it is often mentioned that “interest determines attitude, likewise the attitude determines the altitude”. That is, attitude of students to a particular course may be negative or positive due to their interest in such discipline which in turn affect their academic performance. Also noted by Olatoye and Ogunkola (2008), interest in school is a significant predictor of students' performance. Low performance in schools is a direct influence of student's unwillingness to learn.

Furthermore, the past years have experienced the evolution of research pertaining to interest but none has actually emerged in the present study environment. For instance, study conducted by Essien, Akpan, Okon and Obot (2015) focuses on students' interest in Social Studies and academic achievement in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. Again, study of Odinko and Adeyemo (1999) was on interest in schooling together with other socio-psychological factors on students' learning outcome in and attitude to English language respectively. Also, Ogunjimi, Salami and Oyedare (2015) focuses their study on parents and students interest as determinants of students' academic performance in Agriculture Science. The findings concluded that students' personal interest in agricultural science has a positive significant on their academic performance. These are the missing gaps this present study intended to fill a gap in study by examining students' courses of interest and academic performance in University of Ilorin, between 2013 to 2015.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between students' courses of interest and academic performance of students of University of Ilorin (2013 – 2015).

Specifically, the purposes of this study includes:

1. to investigate the relationship between students that were placed according to their course of choice and academic performance.
2. to find out the relationship between students that were placed in course related to their course of choice and academic performance.
3. to examine the relationship between the students that were placed in the course not related to their course of choice and academic performance.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Main Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between students' course of interest and academic performance.

Operational Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between students placed according to their course of choice and academic performance.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between students placed in a course related to their course of choice and their academic performance.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between the students placed in a course not related to their course of choice and academic performance.

Review of related Literature

Students' Course of Interest and Academic Performance

Students' academic performances are affected by a number of pedagogical and socio-psychological factors or intervening variables (Adeyemo, 2005). Such variables include locus of control, self-efficacy, students' interest in schooling, self-concepts, self-esteem, self-confidence, self-regulation, study habits, parental involvement, and peer influence among others. Any of these factors will however have either a positive or negative influence on students' academic performance thereby leading to either poor or a good academic performance depending on how influential the factor is found to be. McClernmey, Dowson, Young and Nelson (2005), asserted that interest is focusing of the sense organs on or giving attention to some person, activity, situation or object. It is an outcome of experience rather than gift. It could either result or cause motivation. It could also be regarded as a pre-determinant of one's perceptions that is, what aspect of the world one is mostly likely to see always. Essien, Akpan and Obot (2015), viewed interest as a condition in which an individual associates the essence of certain things or situation with his needs or wants. It could be a temporary or permanent feeling of preference. Adeyemo (2005), stated that "the importance of interest in whatever a person does cannot be underestimated". That Interest has to do with a learners' predisposition to react positively in certain ways towards certain aspects of the environment and it is usually developed in relation to and remained allied to more basic motives. Interest reaction to any situation depends on the situation's potential or actual fulfillment of personal needs and goals. When it comes to making choices, interest is of considerable importance. Interest according to Schiefele (1991) is a feeling of identification with a person and some conditions, things or other persons. Schiefele and Krapp (1996), also defined interest as a kind of consciousness accompanying and stimulating attention, a feeling, pleasant or painful directing attention, the pleasurable or painful aspect of a process of attention, and as identical with attention of itself.

Additionally, Okebukola (1997) observed the link between attitude and

academic success and noted that a positively high level of attitude towards a particular subject is said to translate into a high level of need for achievement and ultimately a high level of performance. In other words, if students have positive attitude towards a particular subject, there is assurance of good performance. This gives credence to the fact that interest contributes in remarkable dimensions to students' academic achievement.

Research Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is basically a descriptive survey of correlational type. Descriptive survey allowed for an accurate record of what was observed, so that the analysis could yield meaningful information for adequate description of the situation as they exist. The relevance of descriptive survey of correlational type to this study is that this study examined the relationship between students' courses of interest and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015

The population for the study comprised of all students in the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin. Krejcie and Morgan Proportional Sample Size Calculator Technique (Advisor, 2006) was used to select 300 students out 1,393 (300 level students). In order to select representative, samples that was considered is conversant with the current issues and that was able to supply the relevant information needed for the study. Table 1 showed the selection of sample from the population viz-a-viz the analysis of the sampled schools and participants.

Table 1
Selection of Sample from the Population

S/N	Department	Population	Sample Size
1	Adult Education	126	27
2	Art Education	208	45
3	Counsellor Education	139	30
4	Educational Management	159	34
5	Educational Technology	260	43
6	Health Promotion	91	20
7	Human Kinetics	37	8
8	Science Education	287	61
9	Social Science Education	147	32
	Total	1393	300

designed proforma. The instrument tagged 'Student' Cumulative Grade Point Average Proforma' (SCGPAP) and 'Students' Courses and Interest Disposition Questionnaire' (SCIDQ) was used to obtain data on 300 students cumulative grade point average in the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin.

In order to ascertain the validity of the instruments used in this study the drafts of the instruments (SCGPAP) was given to experts in the University of Ilorin for both face and content validity. Those consulted included lecturers in the Department of Educational Management and test and measurement specialists in the Faculty of Education. Their opinions and suggestions were incorporated into the final instruments that were administered on the respondents. In order to determine the reliability, the test re-test reliability method was adopted, 0.65 coefficient of reliability was attained.

Hypotheses Testing

One main and three operational hypotheses were postulated in the course of this study. It was tested using Pearson product-moment correlation statistic at 0.05 level of significance.

Main Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between students' course of interest and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015

Table 2

Students' Course of Interest and Academic Performance

Variable	N	X̄	SD	df	Cal r-value	P-value	Decision
Students' Course of Interest	300	2.45	.69	298	.646	.002	Ho Rejected
Academic Performance	300	164.65	12.71	6	while p-value (0.002) is less than the		

which states that there is no significant relationship between students' course of interest and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015 is rejected. It means that significant relationship exists between students' course of interest and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015. The findings of the study is similar to that of Kpolovie (2010) who identify psychological factors which include attitude of students toward schooling, interest of learning, study habit, attribution or loss of control that determine an

excellence performance.

Operational Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between students placed according to their course of choice and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015

Table 3
Students Placed on Course of Choice and Academic Performance

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	Cal r-value	P-value	Decision
Students on Course of Choice	300	2.52	.76	298	.626	.000	Ho Rejected
Academic Performance	300	164.65	12.71				

*Significant $P < .05$

Table 3 shows the calculated r-value of .626 while p-value (0.000) is less than the significance level (0.05) for 298 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between students placed on course of choice and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015 is rejected. It means that significant relationship exists between students' placed on course of choice and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015. This finding gave credence to the assertion of Ogunjimi, Salami and Oyedare (2015) who opined that students' personal interest in course of choice has a positive significant on their academic performance. Also, in the study of Odinko and Adeyemo (1999) find out that interest in schooling together with other socio-psychological factors are good predictors of predictors of students' learning outcome.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between students placed in a course related course of choice and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015

Table 4**Students Placed on a Course Related to their Course of Choice and Academic Performance**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	Cal r-value	P-value	Decision
Students on Related Course of Choice	300	2.51	.71	298	.591	.002	Ho Rejected
Academic Performance	300	164.65	12.71				

*Significant $P < .05$

Table 4 shows the calculated r-value of .591 while p-value (0.000) is less than the significance level (0.05) for 298 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis, which states that there is no **significant** relationship between students placed on related course of choice and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015 is rejected. It means that significant relationship exists between students' placed on related course of choice and academic performance in University of Ilorin **between** 2013 to 2015. The findings of the study, is similar to that of Okedele (1997) **observed** that students placed on the course related to course of choice perform **averagely** in their academic.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between students placed in a course not related to their course of choice and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015

Table 5**Students Placed on Course Not Related to their Course of Choice and Academic Performance**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	Cal r-value	P-value	Decision
Students on Not Related Course of Choice	300	2.41	.20	298	.039	.062	Ho Not Rejected
Academic Performance	300	164.65	12.71				

*Significant $P < .05$

Table 5 shows the calculated r-value of .039 while p-value (0.062) is greater than the significance level (0.05) for 298 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between students placed on not related course of choice and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015 is not rejected and thereby accepted. It means that significant relationship do not exists between students' placed on not related course of choice and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015. The findings of the study, is similar to Schiefele (1991) opined that students perform below average when given course that are not related to their course of choice.

Summary of the major findings of the study:

1. There was a significant positive relationship between students' course of interest and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015.
2. There was a significant positive relationship between students placed according to their course of choice and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015.
3. There was a significant moderate relationship between students placed in a course related to their course of choice and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015.
4. There was no significant relationship between students placed in a course not related to their course of choice and academic performance in University of Ilorin between 2013 to 2015.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study which stemmed from the data collected and analysed with the results obtained, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. It is evident from the findings that students' course of interest has been discovered to have a positive influence on academic performance of students, it will be of benefit to students if these their preferred course of interest is given because it is one of the a strong determinant of academic performance.
2. Students placed according to their course of choice has a strong influence on their academic performance.
3. It is also evident from the findings that students placed in a course related to their course of choice has moderate influence on their academic performance.
4. The ultimate conclusion is that there was no significant relationship between students placed in a course not related to their course of choice and academic performance. It is very clear that students' placed in a course not related to their course of choice do a weak important role in enhancing a sound academic performance.

Recommendations

From the findings and conclusions of this study, the following **recommendations** are made:

1. The Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) should constantly organize forum for students in the final year of secondary schools, stakeholders in the University admission processes, and parents on the consequences of choosing a career and the danger associated with being desperate for university admission.
2. The university admission committee should ensure that transfer of students from one course to another be based on students' preferred related course of choice, and not random placement of students on any course. Doing this would encourage good academic performance among students
3. All efforts are to be made by JAMB and University administration to ensure that Students who have satisfied all admission criteria's are placed according to their course of choice when applying for admission because it will bring the best out of the students.
4. Students should be given total freedom by parents and guardians to select their preferred courses that corresponded to their area of best performance when selecting subjects for both West Africa Examination Council (WAEC)/ Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (National Examination Council NECO) and JAMB.

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