MODE OF ENTRY AS A PREDICTOR OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN - NIGERIA.

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Abstract

There has been a continuous blame game among the stakeholders in education on who or what is responsible for the declining academic performance of university's students. Thus, the study examined the students' mode of entry through a comparative study of academic performance of direct entry and UTME students in the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. This study adopted descriptive research design with a target population which comprised all 2,316 Faculty of Education 300 level students for 2017/2018 academic session. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 1,373 UTME 300level students and 433 Direct Entry 300 level students that constitute the sample of this study. A students' academic performance pro-forma was used for data collection. Two research questions raised were answered using percentage while the four formulated hypothesis were tested using t-test statistic. The findings of the study revealed that there was significant difference between academic performance of UTME and Direct Entry students (in general, faculty and departmental courses) in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the Direct Entry students in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin performed better than the UTME students. It was therefore recommended that Government should consider the practice of admitting only the students that have passed through Colleges of Education otherwise the University should organize series of orientation programmes to prepare those students admitted through UTME so as to inform and prepare them ahead of the likely academic and moral challenges.

Keywords: Academic Performance, UTME students, Direct Entry Students

Introduction

University education is of immense importance in the development of needed manpower in the country. Developing this manpower requires series of activities that are processed to ensure the university effectiveness. The university system is charge with three mandates of teaching, research and community services. Teaching is one, if not the most important of these mandates. This is because it has the most direct link to the development of needed manpower that forms the premise of the development of university education in Nigeria.

Effectiveness of Teaching is usually measured by the performance of the students been taught. Their level of academic performance indicates the achievement of university goals in teaching. As observed by Ipaye (2004), the parents, society are more interested in the performance of students at the end of an academic session or the end of the programme. The level of the academic performance of students depends on so many factors which include attitude of students and students study technique, Mgbake (2006) and Agada (2008) observed.

University as a system operates with three factors, input, process and output. The input are the quality of candidates offered admission among others like the resources made available. These resources are

processed to produce outputs who are the graduates. The quality of this input goes a long way in determining the outcome of the system. The modes of admission of candidates into first degree programmes in the universities are in two major forms. These include admissions through the direct entry and admissions through the universities matriculation examinations (UME). Admissions through the universities matriculation examinations (UME) and direct entry are being handled by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board.

Over the years the university products have been tagged "half-baked" and teachers blame the government or parents while parents blame the teachers and the government for the declining academic performance of the students (Babalola, 2008). These blame game among the stakeholders has continued for several years without reaching conclusion. Hence it is necessary to investigate if mode of entry is the main factor responsible for the current level of students' academic performance in the university. Thus this study investigated made of entry as predictor of students' academic performance in University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

There have been conflicting findings on the predictive strength of modes of entry in forecasting performance in university students' academic performance. Mgbake (2006) stated that students' academic success is largely a function of the amount of efforts put into study and not necessarily as a result of mode of entry into university. Agada (2008) reported that students' study techniques and attitude to the study of a particular course among other factors influence their academic performance. Adeniyi (2004) reported that unified tertiary matriculation examination candidates performed poorer in their university examination. Ezema (2006) also compared the degree results of direct entry students, unified tertiary matriculation students and remedial students and reported that for the five academic sessions studied there was no significant difference between in the cumulative grade point average of the three groups prior to their degree examinations. Supporting this finding is the observation made by Angulu (2007) 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 preliminary programme.

The scope of the earlier conducted studies seems to be too wide. This wideness may likely affect the findings of the studies. Different universities may have their own unique culture which may in turn affect their conduct of examination, admission and administration in general. More so, many of the studies have been carried out over ten years ago. Thus, this study is limited to university of Ilorin alone in order to ensure accurate findings that are current to the existing situation.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to investigate the different between the academic performance of Direct Entry (DE) and Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) students in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin. Specifically, the purpose of this is to determine:

i. The level of academic performance of the students who are admitted into the university through Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination.
ii. The level of academic performance of students who are admitted into the university through Direct Entry.
iii. The difference between the academic performances of students who are admitted into the university through unified tertiary matriculation examination and direct entry in the general courses.
iv. The difference in the academic performance of students who are admitted into the university through unified tertiary matriculation examination and direct entry in the faculty courses.

v. The difference in the academic performance of students who are admitted into the university through unified tertiary matriculation and direct entry in the departmental courses.

Research Questions

The following research questions are to guide the study.

- What is the level of academic performance of the students who are admitted into the university through Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) in the departmental, faculty and general courses?
- What is the level of academic performance of students who are admitted into the university through Direct Entry (DE) in the departmental, faculty and general courses?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study;

Main Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students who are admitted through unified tertiary matriculation examination and direct into the university

Operational Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of students who are admitted into the university through tertiary matriculation examination and direct entry in the general courses.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of students who are admitted into the university through unified tertiary matriculation examination and direct entry in the faculty courses.

Ho_3: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of students who are adm university through unified tertiary matriculation examination and direct entry in the courses.

Methodology

The design of the study is an ex post research design. The population of the study comprises of students in the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin for 2017/2018 academic session. There are 2,316 students in the third year (300 level) in the Faculty of Education for the 2017/2018 academic session. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 1373 UTME students and 433 DE that constituted the sample of the study.

A researcher's designed pro-forma titled Students Academic Performance Pro-forma (SAPP) was designed and used for data collection. The research Proforma contained the following variables: mode of entry, academic level, course code, scores and grade. The letter was presented to the Level Adviser of the 300level students of each Department in order to get the permission for the data needed**.** The data collected was subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The two research questions raised were answered using percentage while t-test statistics was used to test all the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This section presents the analysis of data collected and discussions of findings from the research questions raised and the hypotheses set to guide the study.

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the level of academic performance of students admitted into the university through UTME in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin?

Table 1: Level of Academic Performance of UTME Students

Courses	*Number of Students*	*Students Score A(%)*	*Students Score B (%)*	*Students Score C (%)*	*Students Score D (%)*	*Students Score F (%)*
Departmental	1373	82 (5.97)	116 (8.45)	949 (69.12)	157 (11.43)	69(5.03)
Faculty	1373	109 (7.94)	173 (7.94)	904 (64.84)	131 (9.54)	56(4.08)
General	1373	135 (9.83)	206 (15.00)	867(63.15)	18 (8.59)	47(3.43)
Average	**%**	7.91%	10.46%	65.70%	9.85%	6.08%

Table 1 shows that 5.97% of UTME students scored A, 8.45% scored B, 69.12% scored C, 11.43% scored D and 5.03% failed in their departmental courses. In the same vein, 7.94% of UTME students scored A, 12.60% scored B, 65.84% scored C, 9.54% scored D and 4.08% failed their Faculty courses. Also, 9.84% of the UTME students scored A, 15.00% scored B, 63.15% scored C, 8.59% scored D and 3.43% failed their general courses. Finally, the average percentages for each grades in departmental, faculty and general courses are 7.91% A, 10.02% B, 65.70% C, 9.85% D and 6.08% F. Therefore, the level of academic performance of UTME students in general, faculty and departmental courses in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin were found to be average.

Research Question Two: What is the level of level of academic performance of Direct Entry (DE) students in general, faculty and departmental courses in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin?

Table 2: level of Academic Performance of Direct Entry students

Courses	*Number of Students*	*Students Score A(%)*	*Students Score B (%)*	*Students Score C (%)*	*Students Score D (%)*	*Students Score F (%)*
Departmental	433	37 (8.55)	83(19.17)	213 (49.19)	61 (14.09)	3(9.00)
Faculty	433	87 (20.09)	102 (23.56)	181 (41.80)	35(8.08)	28 (6.47)
General	433	96 (22.17)	96(25.64)	162 (37.41)	43(9.93)	21(4.85)
Average	**%**	7.91%	12.02%	66.04%	9.85%	4.18%

Table 2 shows that 8.55% of DE students scored A, 19.17% scored B, 49.19% scored C, 14.09% scored D and 9.00% failed in their departmental courses. In the same vein, 20.09% of DE students scored A, 23.56% scored B, 41.80% scored C, 8.08% scored D and 6.47% failed their Faculty courses. Also, 22.17% of the DE students scored A, 25.64% scored B, 37.41% scored C, 9.93% scored D and 4.85% failed their general courses. Finally, the average percentages for each grades in departmental, faculty and general courses are 7.91% A, 12.02% B, 66.04% C, 9.85% D and 4.18% F. Therefore, the level of academic performance of DE students in general, faculty and departmental courses in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin were found to be average.

Hypotheses Testing

There is one main hypothesis and three operational hypotheses set to guide the study. T-test statistics was used to test all the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Main Hypothesis

Ho: there is no significant difference between the academic performance of students of UTME and DE students in faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin?

Table 3: Difference Between academic performance of UTME and DE students in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin

Variables	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Df*	*T-Cal.*	*T-Crit.*	*P-Value*	*Decision*
UTME	1373	3.70	0.44					
				900	3.137	1.96	0.000	Rejected
DE	433	3.16	0.31					

Significant P< 0.05

Table 3 shows the p-value is 0.000 while the level of significance is 0.05. in otherworld the p-value is less than the level of significance. Hence, the main hypothesis is rejected. This means that there was significant difference between the academic performance of Unified Tertiary Matriculation Board (UTME) students and Direct Entry (DE) students in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Ho_1: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of UTME students and DE students in general courses in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin.

Table 4: Result of t-test comparing academic performance of UTME and DE students in general courses in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Kwara state, Nigeria

Variables	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Df*	*T-Cal.*	*T-Crit.*	*P-Value*	*Decision*
UTME	1373	3.27	0.49					
				1371	3.50	1.96	0.001	Rejected
DE	433	3.84	0.89					

Significant P< 0.05

Table 4 shows the p-value is 0.001 while the level of significance is 0.05. Since the level of significance is greater than the p-value, hence, the hypothesis is thereby rejected. This implies that there was significant difference in the academic performance of Unified Tertiary and Matriculation Board (UTME) and Direct Entry students in general courses in University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

H_{o2}: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of UTME and D E students in faculty courses in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin.

Table 5: Result of t-test comparing academic performance of UTME and DE students in faculty courses in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

VariableS	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Df*	*T-Cal.*	*T-Crit.*	*P-Value*	*Decision*
UTME	1373	2.285	0.47					
				1371	2.127	1.96	0.001	Rejected
DE	433	3.79	0.63					

Significant P< 0.05

Table 5 shows the p-value is 0.001 and the level of significance is 0.05. Since the p-value is lower than the level of significance, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the academic performance of UTME and D E students in faculty courses in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin thereby is rejected. This means that there was significant difference between the academic performance of UTME and D E students in faculty courses in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin.

Ho_3: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of UTME and DE students in departmental courses in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin.

Table 6: Difference in academic performance of UTME and DE students in Departmental courses in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin.

Variables	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Df*	*T-Cal.*	*T-Crit.*	*Sig(2tail)*	*Decision*
UTME	1373	2.44	0.64					
				1371	1.312	1.96	0.07	**Accepted**
DE	433	2.58	0.72					

Not significant P>0.05

Table 6 shows the p-value of 0.07 is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. Since the p-value is greater than the level of significance, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the academic performance of UTME and DE students in departmental courses in Faculty of Education University of Ilorin is not rejected. This means that there was no significant difference between the academic performance of UTME and DE students in departmental courses in Faculty of Education University of Ilorin.

Discussion of Findings

The hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of students who are admitted into the University through Unified Tertiary and Matriculation Board (UTME) and Direct Entry (DE) students in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria was rejected. This means that there was significant difference in the academic performance of the UTME and DE students in Faculty of Education University of Ilorin. The difference was more pronounced in the faculty courses compared to departmental courses. This may be because the De students have the advantage of earlier experience in college of education or polytechnics. from The findings is similar to the findings of Ishola (2011) who discovered that massive difference emerged between students admitted through Direct Entry (DE) students and Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) students in the general courses because most the courses have been offered by the students that attended Colleges of Education or Polytechnics.

The findings of this study revealed that there was significant difference in the academic performance of students who are admitted into the University through Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) and Direct Entry (DE) students in Faculty of course in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The faculty courses are those general courses offered by all students in faculty of education. This confirmed the findings of Adelodun (2010) who was of the opinion that there was significant difference in the academic performance of students who are admitted into the University through Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) and Direct Entry (DE) in the faculty courses.

The findings of this study revealed that there was significant difference in the academic performance of students who are admitted into the University through Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) and Direct Entry (DE) students in general of course in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. This commensurate with the findings of Ayoade (2013) who was of the opinion that there were differences in the academic performance of students who are admitted into the University through Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) and Direct Entry (DE) in the general courses.

The hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of students who are admitted into the University through Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) and Direct Entry (DE) students in general of course in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin,

Kwara State, Nigeria was rejected. This means that there was no significant difference in the academic performance of students who are admitted into the University through Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) and Direct Entry (DE) students in the departmental of course in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Conclusion

The view of the people over which mode of entry is better in terms of university academic achievement of students is different from one group to another. There have been conflicting findings on the predictive strength of modes of entry in forecasting performance in university examinations.

Contrary to the expectation that all students admitted into the University irrespective of their mode of entry will be able to cope with the academic rigors and perform relatively well in their academics, the findings of this study reveal that the students admitted through direct entry perform more better compared to the students admitted via UTME in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin. This might be as a result of the experience the Direct Entry students have acquired in their previous institutions of learning of the anxiety of the UTME students as a result of change of environment and their over joyous of their freedom from parents

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher thereby recommended the followings:

i. There is need for higher education planners to make upward review of it programmes to cater for the mode of entry of students. So, that the programmes will not favour a particular mode of entry than the other;
ii. There is need for students that are admitted through Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) to undergo orientation programmes and extra-curricular activities that will enhance their performance and meet up with their DE counterpart. The study revealed that no form of education is a waste. To this end parents should allow their children to attend Colleges of Education, Monotechnics and Polytechnics which can further prepare them for University Education;
iii. Since DE students performed better, government should consider given more quota to direct entry students in admission process.

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