PERCEIVED FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract*: The academic performance of students has been subject of discourse among social scientists from a wide range of disciplines in the last two decades. But unfortunately, very insufficient number of studies in this area has been conducted in Nigeria. This study was undertaken to fill this obvious research gap. Possible factors affecting students' academic performance in Nigerian universities were examined in this study. They were grouped into student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors. A descriptive method was adopted and data was collected via a survey of 400 respondents selected by means of stratified random sampling technique to ensure a balanced representation of age and gender. Data collected were analyzed using percentages, means, t-test and multiple regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. The findings indicated that the major factors affecting students' academic performance in Nigerian universities are student, lecturer and institutional related factors. The study also revealed a significant joint contribution of student, lecturer, institutional and home related factors on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. Requisite conclusion and recommendations were provided in the light of the empirical findings.*

Keywords: *academic performance; students; perceived factors; universities;*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a distinctive way in which the society inducts its young ones into full membership. It provides the platform for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, habits and values for productive living in the society (1). As a result of this, education equips individuals with the personal capabilities for survival in and contribution to the societal development (2-3). Similarly, the National Policy on Education (4) shapes the focus of Nigerian universities towards achieving the following objectives: the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and society; development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environments; acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individual to develop into useful member of the community; and the acquisition of an objective view of the national and international environments. Therefore, Nigerian universities are established with the aim of given any student who enrolls a very sound and qualitative education, to be able to function effectively in any environment in which he/she may find him/herself so as to become more productive, self-fulfilling and attain self-actualization. Nigerian universities are developed to achieve the above objectives through: teaching, research and dissemination of existing and new

information (especially through publication); and service-fostering community service and professional training for the development of intermediate and high level manpower (5). However, the education systems in Nigeria, most especially the universities have been too much confirmed to quantitative expansion trading in the complementary development in educational quality (6). Measures to promote higher education and improve the quality of university education to meet the challenges of a constantly changing environment are often constrained by inadequate financial resources and under-funding. The expansion of the universities in Nigeria, therefore without mankind funds has brought about dearth of other resources and facilities, for instance, unavailable and run-down physical infrastructure, inadequate laboratories and ill-equipped libraries (7-8).

Also, contributory factors to the decline of the university education system in Nigeria are leadership indiscipline and subversion of autonomy, which lead to the erosion of academic freedom (9-10). Thus, the failure of leadership in Nigerian universities is seen in the ethical and leadership indiscipline displayed by a crop of university administrators who have emerged on the landscape of university governance since 1970 to date. According to Akintayo (7), evidence of this can be seen in the high rates of admission racketing, scandals, bribery and graft, victimization, sexual harassment of female students, proliferation of male and female cult gangs, persistent incidence of rape, female prostitution, obscene dressing and soliciting for favors, homosexuality murder, extortion, intimidation of lecturers by students, examination malpractices, rumors mongering and other anti-social activities. These factors are the major causes of poor academic performance of students in Nigerian Universities. Despite the complexity of factors affecting students' academic performance, a number of studies are pointing to the evidence that institutional factors are more associated with poor academic performance of students. It was observed from the literature that students' academic performance is determined by a number of factors. The analysis of these factors is the mainstream of this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Globally, socio-economic and political developments are increasingly been driven by the advancement and application of knowledge (Education). This explains why education in general and higher education in particular is germane to the growth and development of knowledge and economy (9). The inculcation of academic knowledge, skills and abilities among the students is enhanced through learning and academic performance (10). Academic performance according to Eze, Ezenwafor and Obidile (11), is the outcome of students effort in examinations. It is defines as a student's ability to demonstrate the performance of professional skills or behavior (12). It is also described as the outcome that indicates the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in schools (13). Abdullahi (14) described poor academic performance as any performance that falls below a desired standard. A plethora of studies have been carried out to identify and analyze the range of factors that affect students' academic performance in various levels of educational attainment across the world.

Factors Affecting Students' Academic Performance

A cursory look at Nigerian universities reveals that several factors affect students' academic performance in recent times. These factors include:
i.   **Student Related Factors**

According to Ali, Zubair and Fahad (15), students related factors that affect the academic performance of students include insufficient effort, lack of self-motivation, learning preference, previous and recent academic performance, students' academic attitude and previous school. Udoh (16) alludes to examination malpractice, poor study habits, peer

influence, absenteeism and lack of self confidence. Newsberger (17) listed the causes of poor academic performance of students to include drugs, alcohol, crime, psychiatric or severe family problems and students' indiscipline. Absenteeism, study habits, indiscipline and cultism was established by Odumbe (18) as the major factors contributing to poor academic performance of students. Ukwayi, Lucy, Chibuzo and Underlikwo (19) posited that the use of alcohol and related drinks also influences academic performance among undergraduates. In their study, they reported a significant relationship between alcohol use and academic performance such that a unit increase in alcohol consumption would result in 61% decrease in examination success. Pettit and DeBarr (20) also reported that more consumption of energy drinks-drink that may have alcohol together with caffeine and other active ingredients in its content-was significantly negatively correlated with undergraduate GPA, suggesting that increased consumption is associated with a fall in GPA. Although students give several reasons for taking alcohol including keeping awake and for fun (19), perhaps alcohol drinks negatively affect the GPA by disrupting studies, reducing amount of study time, class attendance and concentration during examination. Issahaku (21) reported that students' attitudes to learning and students' use of social media influence academic performance among undergraduates in Ghana. Perhaps time spent in passive leisure negatively affect students' academic performance. Other student related factors affecting academic performance of undergraduates include persistent incidence rape, female students' prostitution, intimidation of lecturers by students, homosexuality, student's illness, visual or hearing impairment, insufficient sleep, negative youth exuberance and other anti-social activities. From the foregoing it is seen that student academic performance is affected by a good number of personal factors.

ii.   Teacher/Lecturer Related Factors

Poor performance or failure in class is likewise influence by lecturer related factors. Commenting on the lecturer related factors affecting students' academic performance among undergraduates, Killen, Marais and Loedoiff (22) allude to poor student-lecturer relationship, poorly coordinated supervisory activities, lack of commitment and poor attitude by lecturers, poor grounding in the subject area, poor teaching methods. Immoral, unethical behaviours and attitudes especially extortion, victimization and sexual harassment of female students was established by Akintayo (7) as lecturer related factors affecting students' academic performance in Nigerian universities. The problem was further compounded by economic and social effects of incessant closure of schools due to ASUU strikes, hikes in fuel price and the global economic recession among other which made the lecturers to extort students. Lecturer's stress was further identified by Womble (23) as a factor that affects academic performance of undergraduates. For students' academic performance to be enhanced, Azer (24) affirms that lecturers need to embody positive qualities such as commitment and passion and must be willing to pass these qualities to their students and peers, provide positive reinforcement to students by giving value to the inputs of students, provide constructive feedback which could help students grow, create a respectful, meaningful and trusting learning environment where open authentic communication can take place, seek and encourage understanding of unity in diversity that could eventually lead to teamwork among students and demonstrate leadership skills and effective teaching craft that could contribute to the overall development of the student and the school.

iii.   Institutional Related Factors

According to Alshammari *et al.* (12), institutional related factors that affect the academic performance of students include inadequate libraries, inadequate laboratories, lack of university accommodation, curriculum related factors, inadequate number of lecturers as well as academic policies implemented by the university. Universities in Africa and especially

in Nigeria are faced with the threat of anomie. This is seen in existence norms or even in absence of norms. To be more precise, there is a crisis of ethical values in the Nigerian universities. The situation has degenerated to a stage where virtually every cherished principles, moral integrity and ideal of university life has nearly been eroded, if not totally. In some instances, the general norms and ethical values guiding decent and peaceful but harmonious human interpersonal co-existence are absent altogether (7). The issue of leadership and integrity is central to the crisis in the universities in Nigeria. Thus, the failure of leadership in the Nigerian universities is seen in the ethical and leadership indiscipline by a crop of university administrators who have emerged on the landscape of university governance since 1970 to date. According to Taiwo, 2004 cited in Akintayo (7), this situation has therefore led to corruption, injustice, violence, moral decadence, examination malpractices and general apathy and anomie within Nigerian university system. In Nigerian universities today, there remains a high incidence of political and ethnic conflicts among the staff. There are conflict of interests and goals between university administration and various academic and non-academic unions. There are conflicts between factions of the students' union and organized students fraternity or cult groups. There are evidences that the much needed ethical values, such as dialogue, peace and discipline are lacking in most of the university systems across the nation. All these unethical behaviours and leadership indiscipline in addition to increase in tuition fees, inadequate school hostels, students unrest and incessant closure of schools for months have serious effect on the academic performance of students. Alshammari *et al.* (12) concludes that school facilities affect the health, behavior, engagement and improvement in academic performance of students. Also, Uline and Tschannen (25) reported in their study that school facilities affect lecturers' recruitment, retention, commitment and effort.

iv.   Home Related Factors

Home related factors that may affect students' academic performance include large family size, illiteracy on the part of the parents, poverty, family pressure, socio-economic status of parents, parent illness and death of a family member and lack of support and assistance from family members and friends (26-29). Alshammari *et al.* (12) posit that lack of support from home leads to a downslide or decline in the academic performance of students. Therefore, problems in the relationship such as lack of support and assistance from friends and family members can affect the academic performance of the student resulting to emotional problems, lack of concentration in class and lack of self-confidence. More so, students who lack self-discipline and self-confidence are likely to acquire problem behavior from their peers such as absenteeism, substance abuse and paying less time on their school work which influences their academic performance. According to Browny and Sunniya (30), family break up, parent illness and death of a family member contributed to low performance as it affected syllabus coverage and sometimes led to some students repeating a given grade, class or level. Odumbe (18) established that low family income had a negative influence on students' academic performance.

In line with the literature review, the following objectives and hypotheses were formulated for the study

Objectives of the study:

i.   To examine the level of perceived factors contributing to poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.

ii.   To examine if there is difference between the opinion of male and female students on factors contributing to poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.

iii.   To investigate the joint effect of students related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.

iv.   To access the relative effects of student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors on poor academic performance of students in Nigeria universities.

Hypotheses of the study:

H_1:   There is no significant difference between the opinion of male and female students on the factors contributing to poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.

H_2:   Student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors does not have a joint significant effect on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.

H_3:   Student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors does not have a relative significant effects on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted the survey research design to determine the effect of student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors on students' academic performance in Nigerian universities.

Participations

Four hundred (400) participants were drawn from four universities, representative of two private and two government universities in Edo State selected by means of stratified random sampling technique to ensure a balanced representation of age and gender. A visit to each university enabled us identify class times and venues where we introduced the study to student. All participants were guaranteed anonymity, confidentiality and the freedom to withdraw from the study at any stage. In addition, participants were given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire in English language at their respective schools. The administration of the questionnaires took place within a period of three weeks. Permission to involve undergraduate students in the study was obtained from the respective university Dean of student affairs.

Data Collection

The research instrument for the study was the structured questionnaire. This was a modified form of the research instrument used by Alshammari *et al.* (12). This was necessary to better address the new respondents in a different environment. Participants were given up to one week to complete and return the questionnaires. Out of 400 copies of questionnaire administered, 287 were retrieved giving us a response rate of 71.8%. Out of the 287 respondents, 132 were male students and 155 were female students.

Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using percentages, means, t-test and multiple regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. A pilot study to determine the level of reliability was carried out on 50 students who were part of the study within a time interval of one week. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics of Variables

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Students related factors	15	.729
Lecturer related factors	10	.810
Institutional related factors	7	.843
Home related factors	10	.785
Students academic performance	3	.847

The results yield a coefficient of .729, .810, .843, .785 and .847, which satisfied the general recommended level of .70 for the research indicators (Cronbach, 1951). Also, the questionnaire was validated by experts in management sciences. Hence, researchers' satisfied both reliability and validity of the scale.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION
Table 2: Respondents' Demographic Information

S/N	Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Gender of respondents	Male	132	46.0
		Female	155	54.0
		Total	287	100.0
2	Age of Respondents	15-20 years	66	23.1
		21-25 years	108	37.6
		26-30 years	71	24.7
		Above 30 years	42	14.6
		Total	287	100.0
3	Marital status of respondents	Single	186	64.8
		Married	79	27.5
		Divorced	17	6.0
		Widowed	5	1.7
		Total	287	100.0
4	Study level of respondents	100 level	54	18.8
		200 level	72	25.2
		300 level	96	33.4
		400 level	65	22.6
		Total	287	100.00

Source: Researchers' fieldwork (2018)

Gender of Respondents
Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents are female which are 155 in number making it a total of 54.0% of the respondents. Male respondents were 132, consisting 46.0%.

Age of Respondents
Age group of 21-25 years which comprised 108 (37.6% accounted for majority of respondents. The remaining respondents which fall into age bracket of 26-30 years, 15-20 years and above 30years accounted for 71 (24-7%), 66 (23.1%), and 42 (14.6%) respectively.

Marital Status of Respondents
Most respondents, representing 186 (64.8%) are single 79 respondents are married, this group constituted 27.5% of the entire respondents. Respondents that have been divorced were 17, representing 6.0% of the total respondents, while widowed were 5, which constituted 1.7% of the entire respondents.

Study Level of Respondents

A total of 96 (33.4%) respondents were in 300 level, while 72 (25.2%), 65 (22.6%), and 54 (18.8%) were in 200 level, 400 level and 100 level respectively.

Table 3: Perceived Factors Contributing Poor Academic Performance of Students in Nigeria Universities

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1	Students related factors	86	30.0	30.0
2	Lecturer related factors	73	25.4	55.4
3	Institutional related factors	91	31.7	87.1
4	Home related factors	37	12.9	100.0
	Total	**287**	**100.0**	

Source: From the Questionnaire Administered

In table 3, the results indicated that institutional related factors, student related factors and lecturer (teacher) related factors were the major causes of poor academic performance of students' in Nigerian universities.

Testing of Hypotheses

H_1:   There is no significant different between the opinion of male and female students on the factors contributing to poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.

Table 4: Opinion of Male and Female Students on the Factors Contributing to Poor Academic Performance of Students in Nigerian Universities.

S/N	Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	Cat.T	Crit.T
1	Students related factors	Male	132	4.57	0.53		
		Female	155	4.60	0.50	1.45	1.97
2	Lecturer related factors	Male	132	4.52	0.56		
		Female	155	4.38	0.52	1.63	1.92
3	Institutional related factors	Male	132	4.00	0.50		
		Female	155	3.29	0.58	1.51	1.99
4	Home related factors	Male	132	3.53	0.51		
		Female	155	3.34	0.57	1.64	1.96

$P<0.05$

Source: Authors' Computation (2018)

According to the results presented in table 4 above, all calculated 't' (1.45, 1.63, 1.51 and 1.64) are less than the critical 't' (1.92). The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This means that the male and female students perception do not differ in their expression on the causes of poor academic performance of students in Nigerian Universities.

Hypothesis 2

H_2: student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related does not have a joint significant effect on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Joint Effect of Student Related Factors, Lecturer Related Factors, Institutional Related Factors and Home Related Factors on Poor Academic Performance in Nigerian Universities

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.997	0.875	0.946	0.489

Model Summary[b]
a.   Predictors. (constant), perceived factors
b.   Dependent variable: Poor academic performance

Table 6: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of square	Df	Mean	F	Sig.	Remark
1	Regression Residual Total	17.230 9.748 26.978	2 283 285	247.519 4.838	412.834	.000[b]	Sig.

a.   Dependent variable: Poor academic performance
b.   Predictors: (constant), perceived factors

Table 5 reveals a significant joint effect of the perceived factors (student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. The results yielded a coefficient of multiple regression ($R = 0.997$ and a multiple adjusted $R^2 = 0.946$). This means that 94.6% variation in poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities is independently accounted for by the student related factors, lecturer related factors, institution related factors and home related factors. The F. statistics of 412.834 in table 6, revealed that the model is statistically significant at 0.05 significant levels. This implies that the joint effect of perceived factors on poor academic performance is significant.

Hypothesis 3
H_3:   Student related factors, lecturer related factors institutional related factors and home related does not have relative significant effects on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian Universities.

Table 7: Summary of Regression Analysis Showing the Relative Effects of Perceived Factors on Poor Academic Performance of Students in Nigerian Universities

Model		Unstandardized Standardized		Standardized Coefficient			
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig	Remark
1	(Constant)	4.563	1.342		3.139	.000	Sig
	Students related factors	1.217	0.044	0.830	7.229	.000	Sig.
	Lecturer related factors	1.251	0.028	-0.425	2.126	.000	Sig.
	Institutional related factors	3.083	0.030	0.967	9.564	.000	Sig.
	Home related factors	0.067	0.021	0.348	2.376	.000	Sig.

Table 7 shows the independent effect of the perceived factors on poor academic performance, expressed as Beta weights, viz: students related factors ($\beta = 0.830$, t=7.229, p< 0.05), lecturer related factors (β =-0.425, t=2.126, p<0.05). Institutional related factors (β =0.967, t =9.564, p<0.05) and Home related factors (β =0.348, t =2.376, p< 0.05) respectively. This implies that student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors significantly and independently contributed to poor academic performance in this study. Therefore, hypothesis three is confirmed.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Factors that could affect students' academic performance in universities were examined in this study. Results amongst others showed that student related factors (insufficient effort; lack of self-motivation; learning preference; poor study habits; examination malpractice; peer influence; absenteeism and lack self-confidence; alcohol consumption and drug abuse; students' use of social media; incidence of rape; female students prostitution; intimidation of lecturer by students; insufficient sleep; homosexuality; students illness, visual or hearing impairment and negative youth exuberance), lecturer related factors (lack of commitment and poor attitude by lecturers; poor teaching methods; poor student-lecturer relationship; extortion; victimization; lecturer's stress and sexual harassment of female students), institutional related factors (inadequate libraries, laboratories and lack of university accommodation; inadequate number of lecturers; leadership indiscipline; general apathy and anomie within Nigerian university system; conflict of interests and goals between university administration and various academic and non-academic unions and increase in tuition fee among others) and home related factors (large family size; family pressure; illiteracy on the part of the parents; socio-economic status of parents; parent illness and death of a family member; lack of support and assistance from family members and friends; poverty and family break up among others). However, the results of this study indicated that perceived institutional related factors, lecturer related factors and student related factors were the major causes of poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. This finding substantially supports those of Alshammari *et al.* (12); Ukwayi *et al.* (19); Pettit *et al.* (20) and Obidile *et al.* (29). The study also revealed that male and female perception to not differ in their expression on the causes of poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. This is in agreement with those of earlier researchers such as Bridgeman and Wendler (30); Issahaku (21) and Alshammari *et al.* (12).

The second and third hypotheses which tested the joint and relative effects of student elated factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors on poor academic performance of students were confirmed. The results indicated significant joint effect of all the perceived factors on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. This finding supports the findings of some researchers such as Womble (23); Mushtaq and Khan (28). The study further revealed significant and independent effects of perceived factors on academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. This finding is in partial agreement with the findings of Alfifi and Abed (31).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the present study has contributed to the literature on perceived factors that affect academic performance of students in Nigerian universities by investigating the effect of student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors on students' academic performance. The study have revealed through its perceived findings that student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors has a negative effect on students' academic performance in Nigeria. Findings of this study have implications for educational policy and practice in Nigerian universities. They call for transformed classrooms through innovations in curriculum design

and teaching pedagogy. A transformed classroom is a teaching-learning environment in which lecturers are less doctrinaire about students' curiosity, passion and vision for learning. Another implication is the need for educators and policy makers to acknowledge the fact that learning and performance is not so much about what we do as it is about students' disposition to learning. As result, flexibility will be better than rigidity, emergence and fluidity better than structure and determinism, and a focus on process better than a focus on content. From the findings of the study, it is therefore recommended as follows:

i.   An intervention program has to be carefully planned and implemented by university administrators. As stated by Pinehas, mulenga and Amadhila (32), the assessment will include students' time management skills, study skills, stress management skills, family responsibilities of the student, access to technology and the students' activities outside the school.

ii.   To enhance students' academic performance it is essential to influence students' attitudes and dispositions toward learning, including lecture attendance, participation in class discussion, self-initiated or independent learning, reduction in the use of social media, use of alcohol and drugs.

iii.   Parental education is very essential for students' academic performance. Therefore, Nigerian universities should strive to enrich the horizons of knowledge of ignorant parents and make them realize that education is as necessary for them as for their children.

iv.   The university management in Nigeria should intensify effort to provide effecting learning material and improve teaching methods to enhance students' academic performance. Also, adequate class size should be maintained to encourage academic performance.

v.   Parents/guardians should always support and encourage their wards by equipping them with the quality of necessary materials needed to excel in their academic pursuit.

vi.   The government of Nigeria should vigorously enforce the law prohibiting the existence of cultic organizations in order to eradicate cultism among the students in Nigerian universities.

vii.   The government of Nigeria should further encourage expansion of the existing universities by established more technology-based universities to cater for the problem of unsatisfied social demand for higher education and technological advancement in Nigeria.

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