

Factors Affecting the Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students' in University of Ilorin, Nigeria

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Abstract

The outcome of a process is very important in any enterprise. Student progress can only be measured through their academic performance. This paper examines the factors affecting academic performance of CRS students' at the university of Ilorin, Nigeria. One hundred and six three hundred level (300L) students were randomly selected for this study using structured questionnaire. Data collected were analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics. Results of the study showed that teacher effectiveness, study habits, family and environmental factors and school facilities significantly predicts the academic performance of university undergraduates. It was recommended that government should fulfill its agreement with academic staff of universities, teaching and learning resources such as internet facilities, library holdings should be provided by the school authorities and parents should provide moral and financial support to the children.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Undergraduate students, Education, Teacher effectiveness

Introduction

The main objective of the educational institutes is to help students to understand the course material and obtain a grade that facilitates academic and professional advancement. Education is one of the most important aspects of human resource development. The students' performance plays an important role in producing best quality graduates who will become great leaders and manpower for the country. Academic performance is one of the major factors considered by employers in hiring workers especially fresh graduates. Thus, students have to put the greatest effort in their study to obtain good grades and to prepare themselves for future opportunities in their career and at the same time to fulfill the employer's demand.

In the past few decades, there is a growing study of variables contributing effectively to the quality of academic achievement of students. Students learning performance is affected by numerous internal and external factors, including gender, age, study habits, discipline, class attendance, the contribution of a teacher in academic achievement of students, time management, socialization, teachers effectiveness, sleep patterns, partying behavior, socio-economic status, educational background of parents, etc. Government efforts to improve academic performance have led to series of interventions like scholarship, training of the lecturers, providing of infrastructure and soon.

Christian Religious Studies (CRS) as a subject has always played an important role in human and moral development. It is also one of the subjects that provide opportunity for the development of students cognitive and affective domains. It is at the university level that the manpower to train CRS teachers who in turn teach the students at the secondary level is been undertaken. However, the number of students studying this course is very low and their academic performance is not very encouraging. It seems as if the students are not ready to learn or forced to choose the subject and thereby resulting in poor performance. It is on the basis of this that the researchers intend to find out the factors affecting the performance of CRS at the university level.

Literature Review

Academic performance is mainly related to assessment and it is about a students success or lack of it in meeting short or long term goals in education. How students perform reflect how well they have mastered the content taught. However, there are various factors that ensure and are considered to be hindering good performance in educational setting. Some of these factors are ; teacher effectiveness, study habits, parental and family background, school facilities among others. Teachers Effectiveness

According to Adeyele and Yusuf (2012), the ability of the academic staff matters the most for students' good performance. Mlambo (2011) found that there is a positive impact on the performance of students in higher education and the lecturer's teaching style. The factor which motivates the students to attend classes is the way of teaching of the content using active learning approaches by the lecturer even if the topic under discussion is not interesting (Clay and Breslow 2006). Rahimpour and Magsoudpour (2011) studied teacher students' interactions in task-based versus form-focused instruction and found that students are motivated towards completion of a task when it is different and stimulating. In their study, Schwerdt and Wuppermann (2008) stated that the students' achievement is influenced by effective teaching practices. Lee and Rha (2009) concluded that the interactions and discussions of students with lecturer and the fellow students are important for the effective learning.

This implies that the school should be very effective in discharging their academic responsibilities to their students . Engin-Dermir (2009) explained that lecturers play crucial roles in promoting educational growth and performance, and that teacher's qualification, knowledge of the subject matter, enthusiasm, interaction with students, method of lecture delivery and encouraging participation in discussions have positive and significant impact on students' achievements. Heinesen (2010) maintained that teachers' ability and competence prove significant in improving students' performance and that instructors' teaching style enhances understanding of concepts taught. Abbasi and Mir (2012) opined that physical resources and staff competence are important in determining the performance of students.

Study Habits

Study habits play an important role in achieving higher grades. Few researchers have examined the effect of time studying on the academic performance (Rogaten, et al., 2013). The length of sleep is related to academic performance of university students (Pilcher & Walters, 1997; Kelly, et al., 2001). However, Nonis and Hudson (2006) found that the amount of time spent studying or at work had no direct influence on academic performance. Kleijn et al. (1994) gave emphasis on the fact that empirically, deep and strategic learning strategies results in success at final examinations, however the surface learning results in failure. Students mind set towards picky subject has a positive impact on academic performance (Bos & Kniper, 1995). The local environment and family traits with respect to study habits significantly influence academic performance (Linnakyl et al 2004, Henderson & Berla 2006). It can therefore be concluded that a student who is successful in his desired career has a good study habit.

Parental and Family Background

Socio-economic factors like attendance in the class, family income, and mother's and father's education, teacher-student ratio, presence of trained teacher in school, sex of student and distance of school also affected the performance of the students. (Raychauduri et al 2010). Better socio-economical condition and high parents' educational level and interest influence the quality of education for their children. (Bos & Kuiper, 1999, Rainey & Murovia, 2004).

Socio-economic status (SES) and education of parents have a significant role in the overall academic performance of the students. (Farooq et al 2011). He also opined that female students perform better than the male students. Educated parents can better communicate regarding academic activities and assist them in their work (Fantuzzo et al 2000, Trusty, 1991). So academic success depends on parental involvement as they help students to attain a higher level of quality. (Bernard 2004, Shumux & Komax 2001). Eamon (2005) concluded that students from low socio-economic status show low performance in studies and obtained low scores as compared to the other students. In other studies also, socioeconomic status of families is considered to have a direct impact on students' academic achievement (Rich, 2000; Battle & Lewis, 2002; McCoy 2005; Sirin, 2005). The interactions with peer groups are helpful for quality performance in higher education as friends having similar future plans get inspired by each other and perform better (Yousuf et al. 2011). Noble (2006), further opined that students' academic accomplishments and activities, perceptions of their coping strategies and positive attributions, and background characteristics (i.e., family income, parents' level of education, guidance from parents and number of negative situations in the home) were indirectly related to their composite scores, through academic achievement in high school.

School Facilities

Singh et al 2016) concluded that the factors which affects academic performance the most is learning facilities. Harb and El-Shaawari, (2006) have reiterated that students perform poorly when the institutions failed to create the environment that is accommodating and conducive to their learning and educational needs. Karemera (2003) found that students' performance is significantly correlated with satisfaction with academic environment and the facilities of library, computer lab

and etc. in the institution. Godfrey (2012) noted that adequate school facilities are vital since relevant and up to date information will be gathered from these facilities, thereby making teaching and learning to be carried out in a conducive and convenient environment.

Statement of the Problem

Students academic performance is one of the key determinants of assessing the impact of teaching and learning processes on the students. Students of tertiary institutions can state the factors contributing to their better performance in school. Research studies shows that students' performance depends on many factors such as learning facilities, gender and age differences, etc. that can affect student performance. Present study is to discover through literature review and to analyse those factors which have effects on their performance. The aim of the present study was to investigate different factors influencing the academic performance of undergraduate students and enhance the quality of education. To achieve this aim, well structured questionnaires were distributed to Christian Religious Studies students of the University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the impact of teachers' effectiveness on Unilorin CRS students performance
2. What are the impacts of Unilorin CRS students study habits their academic performance
3. What are the effects of parental and family background on Unilorin CRS students academic performance
4. What is the influence of school facilities on the academic performance of Unilorin CRS students

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised students in the faculty of education, University of Ilorin, Christian Religious Studies students of University of Ilorin who were in 300level were purposively selected to participate in the study. This category of students was sampled because they have had been in school for at least more than two years and therefore stood a better chance to provide useful information.

Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants for this study in order to ensure that the researcher could access a particular sub set (Trochim 2006) who would participate meaningfully in the survey. (Adler & Clarke (2007), so as to give better control of the research process (Keegan (2009) Well structured questionnaire using 5point Likert scale was developed for conducting the study. Respondents were asked to give rating on a scale 1-5 to different statement regarding the factors affecting academic performance of students. Questions with respect to teacher effectiveness on teachers' mastery of subject matter, lecture deliverance, frequency of attendance at lectures, teachers' behaviour towards student motivation in their studies. The researchers also included statements to access study habits of the students. Other variables such as parental and family background and availability of school resources and facilities were included.

To ensure face and content validity of the instrument, it was given to two lecturers in the Department of Social Sciences Education. After their corrections had been effected, 25 copies of the instrument were administered on students in the department of social sciences in order to determine its reliability level. The data collected were analysed using Cronbach's alpha technique and the instrument yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.81. The data collected were analysed using frequency count, percentages and mean. 115 students filled up the questionnaire out of which 4 were not fit for use due to inadequate information. Data was analysed on the basis of response provided by 106 respondents. 37(34.9%) of the respondents were males while 69 (65.1%) were females.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the impact of teachers' effectiveness on Unilorin CRS students' performance

Table 1 Teachers Effectiveness and CRS students performance

	TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS	SA %	A %	N %	D %	SD %	Mean
1	My teacher explains the objective of the lesson clearly at the start of the lesson	15(14.2)	31(29.2)	17(16.0)	23(21.7)	20(18.9)	2.98
2	My teachers are open to suggestion and opinion	11(10.4)	49(46.2)	12(11.3)	24(22.6)	10(9.4)	3.25
3	My teachers have mastery of the subject matter	21(19.8)	50(47.2)	8(7.5)	17(16.0)	10(9.4)	3.52
4	My teachers are organised in presenting subject matter	18(17.0)	34(32.1)	9(8.6)	21(19.8)	24(22.6)	3.01
5	My teachers are updated with present trend, relevant to the subject matter	27(25.5)	41(38.7)	10(9.4)	17(16.0)	11(10.4)	2.34
6	Lecturers are frequently absent from classes	7(6.6)	30(28.3)	12(11.3)	37(34.9)	20(18.9)	2.69
7	Lecturers discuss many topics in a short time	21(19.8)	26(24.5)	19(17.9)	23(21.7)	17(16.0)	3.10
8	Incessant strikes is affecting my performance	28(26.4)	37(34.9)	6(5.7)	15(14.2)	20(18.9)	3.36
9	Lecturers are motivating me to learn more	21(19.8)	39(36.8)	10(9.4)	22(20.8)	14(13.2)	3.29

Results on teachers' effectiveness on academic performance from table 1 showed that 29.2% agreed that their teachers explained the objective of the lesson clearly while 23% disagreed. 46.2% agreed that teachers are open to suggestion and opinion while 22.6% disagreed. 47.2% agreed that their lecturers had a mastery of the subject matter while 16% disagreed. On the issue of organisation and presentation of subject matter 32.1% agreed and 19.5% disagreed on the way teachers present their subject matter. The findings also showed that lecturers update their knowledge on relevant subject with 38.7% agreement while 16.0% disagreed. 30% also agreed that lecturers attend to their lectures regularly while 37% disagreed. Steenkemp et al. (2009) identified class attendance as a top success factor. The need for class attendance could be linked to formative assessments which are essential for students' progress. Teachers' effectiveness showed that 26% agreed that teachers discuss many topics in a short time and 23% disagreed to the statement. 34.9% agreed that incessant strike is affecting their academic performance while 14.2% disagreed. Ogbogu (2011) also corroborated this and said that incessant strike and trade dispute between government and staff unions

affects students' performance. This means that the intermittent closure of schools affects the students greatly because it leads to lack of concentration on the part of the students and some may even derail from their studies. Lecturers motivate me to study. 36.8% agreed to the statement and 20.8% strongly disagreed. Lecturers motivation go a long way in making the students to concentrate and be interested in the course even when the course is abstract to them.

Research Question 2: What are the impacts of Unilorin CRS students study habits their academic performance

Table 2: Students study habits and academic performance

	STUDY HABITS	SA%	A %	N %	D %	SD%	Mean
1	I study the lessons I missed if I was absent from class	19(17.9)	28(20.4)	16(15.1)	25(23.6)	18(17.0)	1.46
2	I listen attentively to the lecturers	24(22.6)	40(37.7)	21(19.8)	11(10.4)	10(9.4)	3.05
3	I study when there is test	21(19.8)	43(40.6)	13(12.3)	19(17.9)	10(9.4)	2.82
4	I am interested in studying Christian Religious Studies	10(9.4)	27(25.5)	18(17.0)	36(34.0)	15(14.2)	
5	I have low self esteem	22(20.8)	31(29.2)	15(14.2)	26(24.5)	12(11.3)	3.24
6	I engage in group discussion with my class mates	21(19.8)	39(36.8)	16(15.1)	19(17.9)	11(10.4)	3.38
7	I feel bored, tired and sleepy when studying	13(12.3)	38(35.8)	18(17.0)	20(18.9)	17(16.0)	3.09
8	I spend more time on extra curricular activities	20(18.9)	37(34.9)	15(14.2)	20(18.9)	14(13.2)	3.27
9	The course is abstract for my liking	24(22.6)	41(38.7)	17(16.0)	15(14.2)	9(8.5)	3.53

The results related to study habits shown in table 2 revealed that 20.4% of the students who missed lesson agreed that they study on their own, 23.6% disagreed, 37.7% agreed that they listen attentively to their lecturer's while 10.4% disagreed. But 40.6% agreed with the statement that they study only when there is test and 10.3% disagreed. James (2009) pointed out that a student who is successful in his desired career has good study habits. On the other hand, Kornell and Bjork's studies suggest that only about two third of students routinely quiz themselves, and a majority of students study only one time for upcoming examinations (Baker, 2012). Similarly, 25.5% of the students agreed that they are interested in studying CRS while 34.0% disagreed. Ojo, (2016) opined that some students offered CRS because they do not want to stay at home but just to acquire a university degree. Therefore, they may just be looking forward to obtain a degree and nothing more. 29.2% agreed that they have low self esteem and 20.8% strongly agreed that they have low self esteem. This shows that low self esteem have some influence on academic performance. About 36.8% agreed that they engaged in group discussion with their class mates but 17.9% disagreed with the statement. 35.8% agreed with the state that they feel bored and tired and sleepy while 18.9% disagreed with the statement. 34.9% agreed with the statement that they spend more time on extracurricular activities while 18.9% disagreed. This type of attitude would have a great impact on the academic performance of the students because the percentage of time devoted to academic activities will definitely determine the performance of the individual. 38.7% agreed that CRS is abstract while 14.2% disagreed. The implication of this statement is that where adequate strategies and instructional media is used, the course will become less abstract and students would be interested in studying the course, and where otherwise the academic performance will be low

Research Question 3: What are the effects of parental and family background on Unilorin CRS academic performance

Table 3: Academic Performance and Students parental and family background

	Parental and Family Background	SA %	A %	N %	D %	SD %	Mean
1	My parents involvement in my academics motivates me in my study	17(16.0)	40(37.7)	15(14.2)	19(17.9)	15(14.2)	1.46
2	Regular and timely payment of my fees encourages me	27(25.5)	36(34.0)	11(10.4)	21(19.8)	11(10.4)	3.24
3	I sponsor myself in school	17(25.5)	10(9.4)	9(8.5)	48(45.3)	22(20.8)	3.44
4	My parents are not interested in my course	28(26.4)	37(34.9)	6(5.7)	20(18.9)	15(14.2)	2.55
5	I accepted the admission because I don't want to stay at home	27(25.5)	43(40.6)	5(4.7)	18(17.0)	13(12.3)	3.50
6	My parents monitor my learning progress	17(16.0)	28(26.4)	17(16.0)	26(24.5)	18(17.0)	3.00

Results on parental and family background from table 3 revealed that 37.7% of the parents motivate them to study while 17.9% disagreed. 34.0% agreed to the regular and timely payment of school fees, 19.8% disagreed with the statement. 45.3% disagreed with the statement that they are the one sponsoring themselves but 9.4% agreed to the statement; 37% agreed that their parents were not interested in their course while 18.9% disagreed. 40.6% agreed that they accepted the offer of admission because they do not to stay at home while 17.0% disagreed with the statement. This is in agreement with the findings of Ojo, (2016) and Ajidagba, (2009) that some students only agreed to study religious studies as using it as a stepping stone to a better course or profession. Therefore, they would not concentrate and put in their best hoping that they would abandon the course later which invariably affects their academic performance. 26.4% agreed that their parents monitor their learning progress while 24.5 disagreed. It is a fact that when parents are interested in the course of their wards they would monitor the progress and thereby motivate the students to put in more efforts to improve their academic performance. These findings support the position of Lizzio, Wilson and Simons (2002) who noted that institutional environment and facilities have significant impact on students' academic performance.

Research Question 4: What is the influence of school facilities on the academic performance of Unilorin CRS students

Table 4: School Facilities and academic performance

	FACILITIES	SA %	A %	N %	D %	SD %	Mean
1	My university has comfortable lecture halls	22(20.8)	41(38.7)	13(12.3)	17(16.0)	13(12.3)	3.04
2	I have access to internet facilities	22(20.8)	36(34.0)	14(13.2)	24(22.6)	10(9.4)	3.34
3	Resources materials are available	10(9.4)	30(34.0)	12(11.3)	36(28.3)	18(17.0)	2.79
4	The is steady power supply	8(7.5)	27(25.5)	18(17.0)	37(34.9)	16(15.1)	2.75
5	The location of the classes are far from each other	10(9.4)	20(18.9)	11(10.4)	42(39.6)	22(21.7)	2.55

The findings from table 4 on school facilities revealed that 38.7% agreed, 16.0% disagreed to the statement that their university has comfortable lecture halls. In a study by Zhang and Aasheim (2011), affirmed that comfortable and conducive lecture halls was identified as significant factor for students success and good academic performance, 34.0% agreed that they have access to internet facilities, but 22.6% disagreed; 28.3% agreed that resource materials were available while 28.3.0%

disagreed. 25.5% agreed that there was steady power supply and 34.9% disagreed. Sign et. al concluded that the factor that affects academic performance the most is learning facilities. 18.9% agreed that the location of the classes were far from each other while 39.6% disagreed to the statement. Ogbogu. (2011) identified poor funding, lack of frequent curricular review, overpopulation, poor infrastructure, poor relations between the university and government and inadequate teaching and research facilities as factors which affect students' performance.

Conclusion

The study found out that teacher effectiveness, student study habits, family and environmental factors influence students performance in CRS. Teachers' expertise on the subject, ability to create interest in the subject, interaction with students in the subject play an important role in students' achievement. Also students effective study habits and motivation from family help the students perform better in academics. Up to date facilities also go a long way in making the teaching learning exercise to be successful and enduring which at the end leads to better academic performance on the part of the students.

Recommendations

Based on the result of this research, the researchers recommended as follows:

1. Government should fulfil all agreements and promises made to academic staff union to forestall incessant strikes due to breach of agreement.
2. Lectures should continue to motivate their students in order to carry them along in classroom interaction
3. Lecturers should engage in different teaching techniques and strategies in order to make abstract topics easy to comprehend by students
4. Students should be counsel on the choice of course of study so that they will be able to achieve the best at the end of their programme
5. Government should provide basic infrastructure and up to date facilities for optimum performance on the part of the students.

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