

## Original Research Article

# Age and Marital Status as Predictors of Undergraduate Students' Academic Achievement in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

### ABSTRACT

**Aims:** To determine marital status and age as predictor of undergraduate students' academic achievement in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

**Study design:** Ex-post facto research design.

**Methodology:** The sample for the study was 632 100 level students selected using simple random sampling technique of balloting without replacement. The data collected were pre-existing results of 100 level students on Use of English retrieved from the respective departments. Data collected was analyzed using simple regression analysis and multiple regression analysis.

**Results:** The findings of the study revealed that marital status of the undergraduate students had  $R^2$  change of 0.000. This indicates that marital status had the predictive power of 0.00 percent for undergraduates' academic achievement in Use of English. Also, at 1 df numerator, 631 df denominator and  $P = .05$  level of significant, the calculated F value 0.85 is less than the critical F value of 3.84. Therefore, marital status of the university undergraduates is not a significant predictor of their academic achievement in Use of English in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Similarly, age of the undergraduate students had  $R^2$  change of 0.020. This indicates that age had the predictive power of 2.00 percent for undergraduates' academic achievement in Use of English. Also, at 1df numerator, 631df denominator and  $P = .05$ , the calculated F value 14.06 is greater than the critical F value of 3.84. This implies that age of university undergraduates is a significant predictor of their academic achievement in Use of English.

**Conclusion:** Based on the analysis, it was concluded that age of university undergraduates is a significant predictor of their academic achievement in Use of English in tertiary institutions. It was also deduced that marital status of undergraduates is not a significant predictor of their academic achievement in tertiary institutions.

*Keywords: Age, marital status, undergraduate, students, academic achievement, tertiary institution.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Generally, academic achievement among undergraduates represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, or university (Steinmayr, Meibner, Weidinger & Wirthwein, 2014). The academic achievement of students at all levels in educational institutions in Nigeria has become an issue of heated debate, attracting criticisms from all and sundry. In the light of this growing challenge, guidance programmes and counselling strategies have incessantly been initiated in schools, with a view to improving the students' academic achievement.

Academic achievement is a product of education or learning which is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment. It is an educational goal that is achieved by a student, teacher, or an institution over a certain period. It is an obvious fact that students who achieve high grades are more likely to be employed, have stable employment, earn higher salaries, be less dependent on social

assistance, and less likely to engage in criminal and unwholesome activities. Undergraduate students are students who do not yet have first degree, but are studying to earn one (Dave, 2015). This definition is in line with this study in the sense that students in their first year to final year in Universities in Nigeria and are still aspiring to obtain their first degree.

Marital status, age, gender and faculty of study are some demographic features that could come into focus in the context of predictors of academic achievement of undergraduate students. For instance, a research carried out by Habibollah, Rohani, Tengku, Jamaluddin and Mallan (2009) revealed that various variables such as family influences, gender and age are correlates of academic achievement in Europe. That notwithstanding, there could be similar cases in Nigeria which is yet to be empirically established. Undoubtedly, marital status of an individual denotes whether a person is married or single. Being married involve being in a legal union with an opposite sex (Frances, 2015). Married life activities across the world change due to change of status of individuals. It is generally observed that married students in higher education of learning could be faced with the challenges of diminished financial resources, assumptions of new roles and responsibilities, reorganization of routines and schedules as a result of marital status, as these conditions are not conducive for attaining good academic achievement. Since it is perceived that married undergraduate students must cope with the multiple responsibilities of work at home and study, it may be more challenging for them to provide and maintain a supportive learning environment for themselves (Lasode & Fesyisola, 2014).

The second aspect of marital status is singleness. It is a state of one not being married or having a partner (Hornby, 2010). It must be stressed that singleness is a life stage when humans become more sophisticated in their notions of friendship and life style in general. It has been observed that factors such as, bad company, cultism in school, corrupt social activities like night club and unhealthy friendship with the opposite sex disrupt the academic achievement of the undergraduate students which contribute to the act of truancy among students. This implies that when a student gets involved in acts such as being absent from school, he may not have time to concentrate on his or her studies, thereby having negative impact on that student's academic achievement. In a similar vein, Amori, Anne and Janetta (2011), argued that the presence and negative impacts of friends are not just limited to married undergraduate students but to all students in general not minding their age or marital status.

Age is also considered as a predictor of academic achievement of students, as it has played a considerable part as regards education. Age can be defined as an individual's development measured in terms of the year's requisite for development of an average individual (Gibbon & Waldman, 2006). The age of an individual as it increases, usually affects the various developmental changes, hence determines a lot about how an individual relates with other people in learning environment which affects every area of human thinking and performance. Observation has shown that older students tends to be withdrawn and as a result do not fully participate in academic activities such as group discussion among students (Thomas & Daniel, 2008). Therefore, knowing the relationship between age and academic achievement

is important for education and teaching, and there is no sufficient data on the relationship between these variables.

Considering that the academic achievement of students are often dependent on demographic features such as marital status and age, it becomes essential to investigate these variables as predictors of academic achievement of undergraduate students in Use of English in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. In view of this unsatisfactory state of affair this study will determine:

1. Marital status as a predictor of academic achievement of undergraduate students in Use of English in tertiary institution.
2. Age as a predictor of academic achievement of undergraduate students in Use of English in tertiary institution.

### **1.1 Research Questions**

1. How does marital status predict academic achievement of undergraduate students in Use of English in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?
2. How does age predict academic achievement of undergraduate students in Use of English in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

### **1.2 Hypotheses**

1. Marital status is not a significant predictor of academic achievement of undergraduate students in use of English in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
2. Age is not a significant predictor of academic achievement of undergraduate students in Use of English in tertiary institutions in Nigeria

## **2. MATERIAL AND METHOD**

The study adopted the ex-post facto research design. An ex-post facto design according to Nworgu (2015) is the type of design in which data are collected after the event or phenomenon under investigation has taken place and for which the researcher does not have control over the variables of interest and cannot manipulate them. The population for the study consist of 7,077 100 level students across 14 faculties in selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The sample for the study is 632 100 level students selected using simple random sampling technique of balloting without replacement. The data collected were pre-existing results of 100 level students on Use of English retrieved from the respective

departments. Data collected was analyzed using simple regression analysis and multiple regression analysis.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

**Research Question 1:** How does marital status predict academic achievement of undergraduate students in Use of English in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

**Hypothesis 1:** Marital status is not a significant predictor of academic achievement of undergraduate students in use of English in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Result presented in table 1 reveals that marital status of the undergraduate students had  $R^2$  change of 0.000. This indicates that marital status had the predictive power of 0.00 percent for undergraduates' academic achievement in Use of English. Also, at 1 df numerator, 631 df denominator and  $P = .05$  level of significant, the calculated F value 0.85 is less than the critical F value of 3.84. Therefore, marital status of the university undergraduates is not a significant predictor of their academic achievement in Use of English in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

This finding is in line with the finding of Bitrus, Apagu and Hamsatu (2016) which revealed that marital status did not significantly predict academic performance in colleges of education in North eastern Nigeria.

Supporting the above finding, the study carried out by Ekundayo (2010) revealed that marital status and gender had no statistical significance influence on academic performance of students. This therefore means that university students irrespective of their marital status and gender could have a higher academic performance.

**Research Question 2:** How does age predict academic achievement of undergraduate students in Use of English in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

**Hypothesis 2:** Age is not a significant predictor of academic achievement of undergraduate students in Use of English in tertiary institutions in Nigeria

Data presented in table 2 shows that age of the undergraduate students had  $R^2$  change of 0.020. This indicates that age had the predictive power of 2.00 percent for undergraduates' academic achievement in Use of English. Also, at 1df numerator, 631df denominator and  $P = .05$ , the calculated F value 14.06 is

greater than the critical F value of 3.84. This implies that age of university undergraduates is a significant predictor of their academic achievement in Use of English.

The finding agrees with the study of Ogundokun and Adeyemo (2010) which revealed that age is a significant factor in learning as in most cases age is an index of maturity and maturity aids learning. This is also in line with the study of Akpan and Umobong (2013) whose finding revealed a significant influence of age on achievement motivation of students, with older students being more achievement motivated than others. This study further agrees with the study of Okoh (2010) which revealed that age among other studied variables is a significant predictor of academic output as there was significant difference in academic performance based on age. Finally, the study aligns with the findings of Malambo (2011) which confirmed that none of the investigated factors including age significantly affect academic performance suggesting that learning preferences are independent of some variables including students' age.

**Table 1: Regression analysis on marital status as predictor of academic achievement of undergraduate students in Use of English in tertiary institutions in Nigeria**

Variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> change	B	BETA	%variable change added	Cal. F	df	Crit. F	Decision
Marital status	0.036	0.001	0.00	- 1.855	- 0.036	0.00	0.84	631	3.84	Not significant

**Table 2: Regression analysis on age as predictor of academic achievement of undergraduate students in Use of English in tertiary institutions in Nigeria**

Variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> change	B	BETA	%variable change added	Cal. F	df	Crit. F	Decision
Age	0.148	0.022	0.020	- 5.234	- 0.148	2.00	14.06	631	3.84	Significant

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, it was concluded that age of university undergraduates is a significant predictor of their academic achievement in Use of English in tertiary institutions. It was also deduced that marital status of undergraduates is not a significant predictor of their academic achievement in tertiary institutions.

#### 5. COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

#### 6. REFERENCES

1. Amori YM, Anne G, Janetta L. Effects of a teacher professional development intervention on peer relationships in secondary classrooms. *American Journal of Education*. 2011; 8(3), 261–315.
2. Bitrus GA, Apagu, KB, Hamsatu PJ. Marital status and age as predictors of academic performances of students of colleges of education in the North-Eastern Nigeria. *American Journal of Educational Research*. 2016; 4(12), 896-902.
3. Dave K. Meaning of undergraduate, graduate or post-graduate in US. 2015; Retrieved from [http://ies.ed/ncee/edlabs/meaning\\_of\\_undergraduate\\_or\\_postgraduate/southwest/pdf/rel\\_2007033.pdf](http://ies.ed/ncee/edlabs/meaning_of_undergraduate_or_postgraduate/southwest/pdf/rel_2007033.pdf)
4. Frances C P. *Sexually open marriage*. 2015; Retrieved from <http://www.aabri.com/copyright.html>
5. Gibbon R, Waldman M. The impact of aging and age diversity on company performance. *Journal of Economics and Economic Educational Research*. 2006; 8(1), 21-31. Retrieved from <http://www.freepatentsonline.com/article/Journal-Economics-Economic-Education-Research/179817664.html>
6. Habibollah N, Rohani A, Tengku AH, Jamaluddin SV, Mallan K. Gender differences in creative perceptions of undergraduate students. *Journal of Applied Sciences*. 2009; 9(1), 167-172.
7. Hornby A. *Oxford learners' dictionary of current English* (8<sup>th</sup> ed). 2010; Oxford: University Press.
8. Lasode AO, Feyisola A. Challenges faced by married university undergraduates' female students in Ogun State, Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Leadership in Action*. 2014; 3(5), 167-176. Retrieved from <http://www.lindenwood.edu/ela/issue02/alao.html>
9. Malambo V. An analysis of some factors affecting student academic performance in an introductory biometric course at the University of the West Indies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 2012; 1(2), 79 – 92.
10. Nworgu BG. *Educational research: Basic issues of methodology*. 2015; Ibadan: Wisdom Publishers Ltd.
11. Ogundokun MO, Adeyemo DA. Emotional intelligence and academic achievement: The moderating influence of age, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. *Journal of Education and Practice*. 2010; 5(9), 314-321. Retrieved from [www.iiste.org](http://www.iiste.org)
12. Okoh EE. Influence of age, financial status, and gender on academic performance among undergraduates. *Journal of Psychology*. 2010; 1(2), 99 –103.
13. Steinmayr R, Meibner A, Weidinger AF, Wirthwein, L. Academic Achievement. *Oxford Bibliographies Online Datasets*. 2014; doi:10.1093/obo/9780199756810-0108
14. Thomas WH, Daniel CF. The relationship of age to ten dimensions of job performance. Article in *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 2008; 3(2), 392-423.