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 (Steinnmayr, 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 Academic achievement 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

Comment [WU1]: Would recommend simply reporting the p value and the F value to make the information presented in a more comprehensive manner.

It is also unclear what is meant by "Use of English"

Comment [WU2]: That are targeting what? Further elaboration warranted.

Comment [WU3]: References/ empirical evidence to support these statements.

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 or she may not have time to concentrate on his or her studies, thereby having a negative impact on the at student's academic achievement. In a similar veinSimilarly, , Amori, Anne and Janetta (2011), notedargued 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 ato be a predictor of academic achievement of students, as it has played a considerable part as regards education. Age can beis 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 a learning environment; which affectings every aspects 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). This highlights the importance for understanding the relationship between Therefore, knowing the relationship between age and academic achievement, however, limited

Comment [WU4]: It could also be with the same sex in some countries.

Comment [WU5]: Statement not entirely clear. Recommend revising for clarity.

Comment [WU6]: Not clear. Recommend rewording.

Comment [WU7]: Not clear. Recommend rewording.

Comment [WU8]: Would recommend using more up to date literature- specifically within the past 5 years.

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

Considering that the academic achievement of student's 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 the limited empirical evidence, ~~is unsatisfactory state of affair~~the aim of the study was to explore: ~~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

Comment [WU9]: What is meant by "Use of English"?

Comment [WU10]: Why are you proposing this when some of the empirical evidence noted in the background did find some significance?

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 was~~is~~ not found to be a significant predictor of students'~~their~~ academic achievement in Use of English in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

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

~~Supporting~~ Furthermore, ~~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~~ finding implies that ~~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 showed~~s~~ 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

Comment [WU11]: Information is warranted specific to the methodology. For example:

How was data collected? Using data from an electronic database? Specifically what data was collected, what data analysis software program (i.e., SPSS) was used to analyze the data. What was the p value set as?

Also, what programs were these students enrolled within? It would be helpful to provide some demographic information of this sample (i.e., age, sex, which year the students were in, percentage of married vs. single etc.).

Comment [WU12]: Not entirely clear. Recommend rewording.

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

This finding agrees is consistent with the study of Ogundokun and Adeyemo (2010) which revealed found that age wais 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 aligned agrees with the study of Okoh (2010), where it was found which revealed that age among other studied variables wais 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^2	R^2 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^2	R^2 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 was a small but statistically ~~is a~~ significant predictor of their academic achievement in Use of English in tertiary institutions. It was also deduced that marital status of undergraduates wa~~i~~s not a significant predictor of their academic achievement in tertiary institutions.

> **Comment [WU16]:** An implications section is warranted to answer the "so what" of this important study.
> What are the implications to education, research etc.
> Another section is warranted highlighting the limitations of this study.

5. COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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