

## **Mode of Admission of Education Undergraduates and Their Academic Performance in a Nigerian University**

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**Abstract:** This study investigated the mode of admission of education undergraduates and their academic performance in a Nigerian University using the students' scores in the two semesters of the 2006/2007 academic session. These scores were subjected to a t-test analysis. The findings revealed that education undergraduate who gained admission through the Pre-Degree (PD) programme performed significantly better than their counterparts who were admitted through the Joint admission and Matriculation Examination (JME) in all courses combined in education courses as well as in the teaching subjects. It was concluded that most JME candidates unlike their PD counterparts are not good materials for degree programmes. It was therefore, suggested that the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) be scrapped in Nigeria and the higher school certificate programme be reintroduced in addition to encouraging each university to run the school of basic or pre-degree studies.

**Key words:** Admission, undergraduate, pre-degree studied, encouraging, certificate, significantly, Nigeria

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### **INTRODUCTION**

A country's educational objectives as are usually spelt out in its national policy on education reflect those aspects of the national objectives that are deemed realizable through formal schooling. For more than three decades now, Nigeria has come to realize that the educational institutions in the country have been failing in the performance of their statutory roles.

The intellectual attainment as well as the acquired skills of the products of the universities and other educational institutions has been abysmally below expectation (Okpilike, 2001; Ihebuzor, 1987; Frazen, 1973). It is the discouraging state of affairs that gave rise to the phrase falling standard of education which has now become a household slogan among Nigerians today.

The situation has become so deplorable that a couple of years ago, an international organization in rating the intellectual standard of Nigerian undergraduates intimated that for about one and a half decades to that time most Nigerian universities had not been producing graduates (Bulus and Garara, 1977).

This assertion was further corroborated by the National University Commission's (NUC) executive secretary in a T.V programme while justifying the Post-JAMB examination for university bound candidates. The Post-JAMB examination is an innovation to ensure

that only good materials are offered university admission since there are doubts on the scores of candidates at JAMB examination.

It was also indicated by the NUC's executive secretary that beginning from the 2006/2007 admission exercise only first degree holders would be eligible to apply for university admission to read certain courses, e.g., medicine, law, engineering which hitherto have been open to senior schools certificate holders. This of course implies that the first degree from a Nigerian University is being equated to the senior school certificate.

Experience has also shown that people including university lecturers tend to believe that although most of the undergraduates seems intellectually inadequate generally, the education undergraduates in particular seem to be more intellectually sub-standard than the others (Shuiabu, 1984; Ihebuzor, 1987; Okpilike, 2001; Conkline, 1996). This assumption seems justified because of the low cut-off score for education courses in the universities.

Therefore, this study was aimed at comparing education undergraduates admitted through the Pre-Degree (PD) programme and those admitted through the Joint Admission and Matriculation Examination (JAMB) in their academic performance and hence the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in the investigation:

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the PD and education undergraduates in their academic performance.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between PD and JME education undergraduates in their academic performance in education courses.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference between PD and JME education undergraduates in their performance in the teaching subjects.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was a descriptive survey in which education undergraduates mode of admission (independent variable) were observed at once and compared without manipulating or controlling them. The population consisted of all the full-time education undergraduate of a Nigerian University namely Delta State University, Abraka.

A representative random sample consisting of six hundred level education undergraduate selected through stratification procedure was used. This number was made up of 300 subjects who were admitted on their successful completion of the pre-degree programme and another 300 who were admitted through the joint admission and matriculation examination.

The data collected were the students' scores in both education courses and teaching subjects in the two semesters of the 2006/2007 academic session (their 100 level scores in the university). The data collected from the study were analyzed using the t-test statistics. This statistics was employed to compare the means of two variables and to test for any significant differences.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With the application of the t-test of significance in Table 1, the calculated t value was found to be significant at 0.05 level as 30.80 is quite >1.96. Therefore, the results revealed that the difference between the academic performance of PD education undergraduates and that of their JME counterparts is statistically significant and not due to chance. This implies that the PD education undergraduates consistently performed better than the JME education undergraduates in academics.

The Table 2 shows that the difference between the performance of PE and JME education undergraduates in education courses is statistically significant since the calculated t-value (35.14) far exceed the critical t-value (1.96). This implies that the PD education undergraduates performed significantly better than their JME counterparts in education courses.

Table 1: A t-test analysis is PD and JME education undergraduates' performance in the 2006/2007 academic session

Admission mode	N	X	SD	SE	df	t-cal	t-crit	Conclusion
PD	300	70.40	9.98	1.4	598	30.80*	1.96	Reject Ho <sub>1</sub>
UME	300	39.13	14.50	-	-	-	-	-

Significant p<0.05

Table 2: A t-test analysis is PD and JME education undergraduates performance in education courses

Admission mode	N	X	SD	SE	df	t-cal	t-crit	Conclusion
PD	300	32.84	9.98	0.48	5.98	35.14*	1.96	Reject Ho <sub>1</sub>
UME	300	15.99	14.50	-	-	-	-	-

Significant p<0.05

Table 3: A t-test analysis is P.D and JME education undergraduates performance in teaching subjects

Admission mode	N	X	SD	SE	df	t-cal	t-crit	Conclusion
PD	300	32.84	9.96	0.48	5.98	35.14*	1.96	Reject Ho <sub>1</sub>
UME	300	15.99	14.50	-	-	-	-	-

Significant p<0.05

The difference between the performance of PD and JME education undergraduates in Table 3 is statistically significant since the calculated t-value (35.14) is exceedingly greater than the critical t-value of 1.96. This is course indicates that PD education undergraduates performed significantly better than the JME education undergraduates in their teaching subjects.

The findings of this study revealed that education undergraduates who gained admission via the Pre-Degree (PD) programme performed relatively better than their counterparts who gained admission through the Joint Admission and Matriculation Examination (JME).

The mean scores for the PD education undergraduates were found to be higher than that of their JME counterparts in all the courses put together as well as in education and the teaching subjects. Note that education was not offered as a course in the pre-degree programme. The following reasons could be adduced for these differences in performance:

- The PD education undergraduates were exposed to more advanced course content during the pre-degree year than their JMB counterparts most of whom were taught only ordinary level contents
- The PD education undergraduates are more accustomed to the rigors of university studies during their pre-degree year unlike most of their JME counterparts that got admitted direct from their secondary schools
- The screening procedures which the PD students underwent prior to admission were more valid and thorough than those undergone by the JME candidates

It is perhaps for these reasons that many stakeholders in the educational enterprises are advocating the scrapping of the joint admission and matriculation knowledge to the acquisition of new and sometimes more board (JAMB). This would pave way for each university to conduct valid and reliable examination for prospective students.

### **CONCLUSION**

In the study, the researcher is advocating the abolition of the JAMB, reintroduction of the higher school certificate programme and establishment of the school of basic/pre-degree studies. All of these will help in bridging the yawning gap that currently exists between the senior secondary school and university curriculum contents. These recommendations are being made in the light of the fact that the importance of relevant previous advanced knowledge cannot be overemphasized (Von Glasserfeld, 1989). Moreover, the findings have shown that most of the JME candidates are not good university materials.

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