EFFECT OF CHANGE OF COURSE ON THE INTEREST AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION STUNDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF JOS.

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the effect of changing courses on the interest and Academic performance of Social Studies Education students at the University of Jos. Specifically, it examines the number of students who applied for Sociology, History, or Social Studies but were admitted to Social Studies Education, their interest in Social Studies Education, and their academic performance. A descriptive survey design was used, with data collected from 200-level Social Studies Education students. The population consisted of 374 students, and a sample of 95 students was selected using simple random sampling. Data collection was done through a questionnaire titled "Student Interest and Academic performance Questionnaire (SIPQ)." The results indicate that a significant number of students (33.7%) who applied for Sociology were admitted to Social Studies Education. The study found mixed responses regarding students' interest in Social Studies Education. While some students expressed satisfaction and increased interest in Social Studies Education, many still preferred their initially chosen courses and would switch if given the opportunity. The mean interest and Academic performance of these students were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired-sample t-test. The findings revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean interest and mean Academic performance of students who applied for Sociology but were given Social Studies Education. The majority of students displayed satisfactory academic Academic performance despite the course change, though their initial preferences for courses such as Sociology, Social Studies remained strong. The study concludes that a change of course impacts both interest and performance, necessitating adequate support and counseling for affected students to help them adapt and succeed in their new fields. Recommendations include revising admission policies, providing counseling services, and conducting further research on similar issues in other educational fields.

Keyword: Effects, Change of Course, Academic Performance, University of Jos

Introduction

Education which involves teaching and learning process is considered the most effective means of bringing about total change that would ensure accelerated economic growth and national development for any country. The primary purpose of the teaching and learning process is to bring a significant change in behaviour through active participation and critical thinking of the learner (Obebe, 2019).

Social Studies as an integrated approach to the study of social science subjects like Political Science, Economics,Sociology, Anthroplogy, music, art and craft with the view of preparing students to fit into the society. Social Studies draw from the social sciences data that are related to societal values, problems, changing conditions and our democratic heritage,

it is a training given to individuals in order to enable them appreciate their environment and how to become useful to themselves and the society at large.

According to Adegbite (2017) Social Studies is introduced to Nigerian children from primary school, with the purpose of developing their interest in the subject, teaching them Social Studies concepts, and enabling them to contribute effectively to the nation's scientific and technological development. The foundation of Social Studies is established at the basic level of education, which was introduced as part of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in Nigeria. UBE is a reform program that covers primary one to junior secondary three, aimed at reinforcing the National Policy on Education (NPE) and providing greater access and ensuring quality learning throughout the country. The UBE program is structured into three levels: lower basic education (primary 1-3), middle basic education (primary 4-6), and upper basic education (junior secondary school 1-3). Additionally, UBE is free and compulsory for all students in Nigeria (Adomeh, 2020).

The need for access to university education has recently become vital in Nigeria as a result of an increase in college age population and awareness of the role of university education in the development of individual as well as the nation (Bakwaph and Peter Kanyip, 2013). Universities are establishments created to provide education to people who want to learn more about a certain subject. Students must decide for themselves whether or not to pursue knowledge in a particular subject of study. Selecting the right courses can help students learn more about a subject they are genuinely interested in studying and fit in with their interests. Understanding a student's enthusiasm and being clear about the course they want to take are very crucial (Team Leverage Education and Wings, 2022). Universities set their own requirements for higher education courses, which is unfortunate because most students are not always aware of or educated about the entry requirements and end up choosing the wrong course of study and subject combination. The requirements for the same course may differ between two or more universities offering it. During the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), students misunderstand this and choose the incorrect mix of subjects. The majority of students at Nigerian universities have been impacted, which presents a dilemma for young people and parents who are applying for admission.

The UTME subject combinations are a common cause of applicants' inability to be admitted into the course or university of their choice. Different courses and universities have different requirements for the UTME subject combination; if these are not met, a candidate may not be admitted to the chosen degree or university. Some institutions have stringent standards for the subjects that a candidate must take, and those who don't meet these requirements may not be admitted, according to The Guardian (2021). For example, a student who wants to study Sociology at the university can sign up for Social Studies, Science, and English language classes. Instead of choosing civic education, Government, Mathematics, and English Language for his or her UTME subject combination, which will undoubtedly cause a course correction. The intense rivalry for certain courses and colleges is another factor contributing to applicants' potential exclusion from their intended program or university. Vanguard News reported in 2021 that many colleges offer extremely difficult courses; hence, a large number of eligible applicants might not be accepted owing to a lack of

available spots. It may be difficult for applicants to get accepted into the course or university of their choice because of the intense competition.

Additionally, catchment areas influence admittance into certain colleges. The geographic region of an applicant's state of origin or place of residence is referred to as their "catchment area." It is possible that candidates from outside the catchment areas will not be admitted to the university or will be offered a different course because some universities give preference to applicants from the catchment areas. In Nigeria, certain universities have catchment areas, and applicants from outside of these areas may encounter difficulties getting admitted. The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, or JAMB, is a centralized federal government organization that oversees admissions to universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, and universities of Agriculture. For students wishing to enroll in Nigerian post-secondary institutions, the body administers the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). Individual post-secondary institutions invite students who meet the minimum cut-off score of 180 in the Joint Admission and Matriculation Examination (JAMB-UTME) to take the post-UTME aptitude test, which is a second entrance exam. It has been confirmed that while individual post-secondary institutions work to control the granting of admission into post-secondary institutions by administering different tests, the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, or JAMB, a Federal Government agency, there are certain factors that tend to tend to make achieving this goal challenging. This leads to competition among qualified candidates, i.e., those better qualified or eligible to be admitted into competitive programs like Sociology, Accounting, Law, and History.

Most applicants end up receiving courses for which they did not apply because of these circumstances. The majority of students in most of Nigeria's universities are impacted by this circumstance. The Nigerian government has been trying to reform the education system for a number of decades now, reshaping institutional mechanisms and implementing a number of policies. Numerous academic works about Nigeria's education system blame inadequate funding, oversight, and implementation for the sector's appalling state. This study aims to refute the notion that the issues facing Nigeria's education system extend beyond the designated bottlenecks. Using these. For example, ethnicity is more important in areas where religion is less prevalent. Another place where godfatherism is practiced is in places where religion and ethnicity are viewed as secondary. Godfatherism pertains to "who gets what, when, and how" in this context. Clandestine or sectarian conceptions of social life in Nigerian societies, which most people associate with political elitism and mind control, may be the driving forces behind the emergence of these identities in the country's educational system.

When a student applies for a course, they may be assigned to study a different course entirely, which may or may not be related to their original course preference. This is known as a change of course. A situation where a student receives advice from their level coordinator to switch to a different course because they are struggling in their current course can also be viewed as a change of course. A strong motivating factor that drives learning and promotes academic success is interest. Curiosity is both a a mental state of attachment and focus on a specific thing or subject. Students do not record success in their academic Academic performance because of a lack of interest that developed as a result of changing their course.

Academic performance refers to the extent to which students, educators, and institutions achieve established educational goals. It encompasses learning outcomes, skill acquisition, and overall academic progress, and is shaped by factors such as educational level, institutional standards, and specific learning objectives (Taiwo & Ajiboye, 2016). Academic performance metrics are essential tools for evaluating strengths and weaknesses within educational systems, guiding decisions on curriculum design, instructional methods, and resource allocation to enhance learning outcomes (Ako & Ojone, 2018).

Within this framework, students who switch into Social Studies Education from other disciplines may experience a mismatch between their initial academic interests and the new curriculum, potentially leading to reduced motivation and engagement. This shift can disrupt academic continuity and affect performance outcomes, especially if the transition is not supported by adequate orientation or academic counseling.

Ghanney and Wotordzor (2024) emphasizes that academic performance in Social Studies is significantly influenced by student interest, teacher quality, and curriculum alignment. When students enter the program without a foundational interest or understanding of the subject, their ability to meet academic expectations may be compromised. Similarly, Birabil and Henrietta (2023) found that instructional strategies tailored to students' learning preferences significantly improved outcomes in Social Studies, suggesting that students who change courses may require differentiated support to succeed. Moreover, the psychological impact of course changes such as uncertainty, reduced self-efficacy, or lack of peer support can further hinder academic success. Robbins (2024) argue that academic adjustment is a key predictor of student achievement and persistence, highlighting the need for institutions to provide structured support systems for students undergoing such transitions.

In the context of the University of Jos, understanding the implications of course change on Social Studies Education students is vital for improving academic performance. Academic performance data, when disaggregated by entry pathway and student background, can help policymakers and educators identify at-risk students and implement targeted interventions to foster interest, engagement, and academic success.

According to the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) grading system approved and practiced amongst universities, it is revealed that the cumulative continuous assessment and examination per course in a study programmed should be scored and interpreted as follows:

70 – 100 A = pass
60 – 69 B = pass
50 – 59 C = pass
45 – 49 D =pass
44 – 00 F =fail

Additionally, the rising failure rate among students studying Social Studies education is a problem that has spawned other issues like a bad attitude toward learning, which means that standards of behavior such as showing up on time for class, participating in academic activities like presentations and assignments, abstaining from exam malpractice, and so forth have been seriously compromised. The students' interests may be related to the previously

mentioned issue. The effect of a course change on students' interest and academic achievement at the university will be investigated in this study.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of change of course on the interest and Academic performance of Social Studies Education students in the University of Jos and the specific objectives are to determine:

1. To find out the number of students who apply for Sociology and are given Social Studies education
2. To find out the interest of students who applied for Social Studies and given Social Studies education
3. To find out the academic performance of students who applied for History and given Social Studies education in studying Social Studies education.

Research Questions

The following research questions are posed to give guidance and direction to this study. They include:

1. What are the numbers of students' who applied Sociology and are given Social Studies education?
2. What are the mean interest of students who applied Social Studies and are given Social Studies education?
3. What are the mean academic performance of students who applied History and are given Social Studies education?

Methods

The research design for this study is a descriptive survey. The population of the study consisted 100, 200 and 300 level students of Social Studies Education of the Department of Social Sciences Education in the University of Jos, Plateau State The sample consisted of 95 Students from 200 level. The instrument used for the data collection for this study was questionnaire, titled 'Student's Interest and Academic performance Questionnaire (SIPQ). The questionnaire was considered appropriate for the study because it merely seeks the opinion of the respondents on an already established and existing issue.

Results

Research Question One: What is the number students who applied for Sociology and were given Social Studies education?

Table 1

Number of Students Who Applied for Sociology but Were Given Social Studies Education

Course Applied For	Course Given	Frequency	Percentage
Sociology	Social Studies Education	32	33.7%
Other Courses	Social Studies Education	63	66.3%

Total	-	95	100%

The table reveals that 32 respondents, representing 33.7% of the sample, applied for Sociology but were given Social Studies Education at the point of admission.

Research Question Two: What is the mean interest of students who applied for Social Studies and were given Social Studies education?

Table 2

Mean Interest of Students Who Applied for Social Studies but Were Given Social Studies Education

S/N	**Statement**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Interpretation**
1.	I am satisfied with Social Studies Education as the course given to me at the point of admission.	2.78	1.21	Agree
2.	The change of course from Political Science to Social Studies Education at the point of admission has positively impacted my interest in studying Social Studies Education.	2.41	1.19	Disagree
3.	I find the study of Social Studies Education more appealing after my course was changed at the point of admission.	2.66	1.25	Agree
4.	The change of course from History to Social Studies Education has enhanced my understanding and appreciation for Social Studies Education.	2.53	1.18	Agree
5.	I will leave Social Studies Education if given the opportunity to study my desired course (Sociology, Political Science, History).	3.84	1.32	Agree

The table shows the mean interest of students who applied for Political Science but were given Social Studies Education. The results indicate that while some students agreed that they were satisfied with Social Studies Education (mean = 2.78) and found it more appealing after the course change (mean = 2.66), they also expressed a desire to leave Social Studies Education if given the opportunity to study their desired course, such as Sociology, Political Science, History, etc (mean = 3.84).

Research Question Three: What is the mean Academic performance of students who applied for History and were given Social Studies Education?

Table 4

Mean Academic performance of Students Who Applied for History but Were Given Social Studies Education

S/N	**Statement**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Interpretation**
1.	I believe that studying Social Studies Education aligns better with my academic and career goals compared to my previous course choice.	2.34	1.16	Disagree
2.	How could you rate your overall satisfaction with the new course compared to the previous one?	2.47	1.22	Disagree
3.	Did the change in course improve your understanding of the subject matter?	2.63	1.27	Agree
4.	Would you recommend the change in course to other students in Social Studies Education at the University of Jos?	2.19	1.14	Disagree

The table presents the mean Academic performance of students who applied for History but were given Social Studies Education. The results suggest that while some students agreed that the change in course improved their understanding of the subject matter (mean = 2.63), they generally disagreed that studying Social Studies Education aligns better with their academic and career goals (mean = 2.34), and they would not recommend the change in course to other students (mean = 2.19).

Discussions

Discussion of findings is done based on the research questions formulated as well as the tested hypotheses generated from the analysis of data generated by the researcher in the course of the study. From the foregoing analysis, the following findings are made:

The findings revealed that a significant proportion (33.7%) of the respondents initially applied for Sociology but were given Social Studies Education. Regarding the interest of these students in Social Studies Education, the results indicated mixed responses. While some students expressed satisfaction with Social Studies Education and found it more appealing after the course change, they also strongly agreed that they would leave Social Studies Education if given the opportunity to study their desired course, such as Sociology, Political Science, History, etc. This finding suggests that although the students may have developed some interest in Social Studies Education, their initial preference for Sociology, Political Science, History remained strong, and they were willing to switch back if given the chance.

In terms of academic performance, the results showed that the students generally disagreed that studying Social Studies Education aligned better with their academic and career goals compared to their previous course choice (Sociology, Political Science, History). They expressed dissatisfaction with the new course compared to their initial preference and indicated that they would not recommend the change in course to other students. However, it is worth noting that the majority of respondents had a CGPA ranging from 2.50 to 3.49, suggesting a satisfactory academic performance despite the change in course.

Conclusion

The following conclusions follow closely the structure of findings from the study as well as the answer to the questions posed in chapter one to ascertain whether change of course have significant effect on the academic performance of Social Studies Education student-teachers. From the result obtained in chapter four, the researcher, was able to analyse and concluded that there is no significant difference in mean interest and mean Academic performance of students who for applied Sociology, Political Science, History and are given Social Studies education. This implies that regardless of their lack of interest in studying Social Studies education, they were still performing well.

Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. JAMB, and tertiary institutions should review the current admission policy in the same vein TET-FUND (Tertiary institution trust fund) should see to it that the structural carrying capacity of the Nigerian institution is increased.
2. Teachers and tertiary institutions should create good impression on Social Science-Educational courses which students can apply voluntarily to study.
3. Teachers should also increase their knowledge of various instructional strategies in order to keep students engaged and motivated throughout the learning process.
4. Tertiary institutions should provide counseling units so as to enable students who have lost interest in studying a particular course, gain orientation, guidance and counsel on what to do.
5. Program like career week and the likes of them should be supported and encouraged among secondary schools so as to create awareness of courses offered in the university.

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