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THE IMPACT OF 75% NUC LECTURE ATTENDANCE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Attendance at lectures has become a vital area of concern in Nigerian universities. Attendance to lectures for students and lecturers plays a vital role in Nigerian Universities today. These apparent facts are very challenging. Most Educational Institutions' Administrators are concerned about students' irregular attendance at lectures. This research aims to determine the impact of the 75% NUC lecture attendance policy and its implementation in Nigerian universities. Implementing a 75% NUC policy on lecture attendance will go a long way in producing quality students in Nigerian universities. This 75% is because when we look at the students' performance based on the number of times the student attended Lectures, we find out that those who attended lectures regularly have the maximum score and highest pass mark. This research presents proof of students' performance based on the number of times they attend lectures to instigate the Nigerian Universities to implement the 75% attendant policy. When we look at the number of times the student attended Lectures, we will see that some of them may not be qualified to write examinations because they are lazy to attend lectures. Concerning the NUC policy on 75% attendance, students increase their performance if they attend classes regularly, producing quality students in Nigerian universities.

KEYWORDS: *impact, lecture, attendance, NUC, and students.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Regular attendance at lectures helps to improve students' academic performance. Therefore, a 75% NUC lecture attendance policy should be implemented because the issue of attendance to lectures has been an enormous challenge for both students and lecturers in Nigerian universities. It is important to monitor students' and lecturers' attendance at lectures because some students may not attend lectures at all in a semester, while some attend just a few times in a semester and still sit for the examination. Similarly, some Lecturers attend lectures haphazardly, while some do not attend lectures at all but end up giving photocopied materials, books, or notes to read.

The main purpose of this research is to determine the significant impact of attendance on the students' performance. It actually looks at the context of the students' performance based on the number of times the student attended Lectures. The regular attendance to classes for students based on the 75% NUC policy will qualify the student to write an examination in Nigerian universities. Some of the Institutions in their academic regulations maintain the 75 % attendance to lectures recommended by Nigerian University Commission (NUC, 2013) for a student to be allowed to sit for an examination. In some other Institutions, attendance merely forms part of the continuous assessment. The latter case can only be justifiably implemented if the Lecturer is candid enough always to maintain an accurate attendance list of students who attended the lectures each time. Bias on the examination result outcome is very obvious in this case.

The achievement of the NUC Benchmark of 75% attendance before participating in the examination made it apparent that any student with attendance less than 75% should be disqualified from the written examination. With the NUC policy on 75% attendance, the students will go a long way to increase their performance if they attend lectures regularly. If students attend lectures regularly, they will be disciplined, manage their time very well, improve overall performance, and their parents will be happy (Ugwuja and Onu, 2018). The fact that the amount of money that students pay for their education is high, and they are lazy to attend lectures leads to their poor academic performance. The overall academic performance of a student who is absent from lectures even for a day can be affected. Poor academic performance of students drags the reputation of the lecturer and that of the university in general down (Jain *et al*., 2015). Several previous studies have shown that lecture attendance is an important predictor of academic outcomes. (Cortright *et al.,* 2011), said that regular attendance on examination performance is more important for female students than male students. The female students earning above-average grades had attended more Lectures than female students earning grades below the class average. Such difference was not identified for male students. In a modern study, no statistically significant relationship between Lecture attendance and student performance was identified after adjusting for control variables, including gender and age, as

recorded by (Eisen *et al.,* 2015). It is essential to make 75% attendance per subject every semester compulsory for students as criteria for eligibility to appear for the examination. It will enable students and lecturers to attend all lectures regularly based on the timetable, enabling the student to learn effectively across the semester with the designed syllabus. The full implementation of the NUC benchmark of 75 % attendance policy goes a long way to improve the students' performance and has a considerable impact on their academic performance (NUC, 2013).

This paper present proof of students' performance and eligibility to appear for examination based on regular lecture attendance policy. The objective of this work is to capture the number of lecture attendance and evaluate the relationship between lecture attendance and examination performance based on NUC Benchmark of 75% attendance.

1.1. The Impact of 75% NUC Policy

The impact of attendance on the student's performance shows that if students do not miss their Lectures, it will improve their academic performance. (Aremu, 2014) adds that if the complex student knowledge and attendance difficulties in higher education are to be effectively addressed, it is obvious that academic development work is required. Students at a higher learning institution should be penalized by professors or institutions for lack of attendance. The anticipation of assured attendance levels at a specific result is crucial in determining the seating ability to be built and measuring performances (Appleton, 2012). If there is a periodic occurrence, the plan should stretch attendance across less popular days or widen performances over a longer time (McLean and Hurd, 2011). The impact of attendance associated with the realization of the 75% policy was identified as follows.

i. Frequent attendance at Lectures will create an opportunity to develop students' life skills.
ii. Making attendance to Lectures mandatory will improve the overall performance of the students, guarantee their satisfactory results, and encourage socialization.
iii. Good attendance is required to develop a strong sense of community in a Lecture Hall and encourage a healthy sense of Lecture participation.
iv. Enforcing mandatory attendance to Lectures could actually be treating students as adults. and a way of preparing students for the real world and reinforcing their sense of responsibility.
v. Students learn self-discipline due to mandatory attendance that helps them in their professional and personal lives.
vi. It is wasting of money to skip Lectures because paying for education is not a cheap endeavor.
vii. Students have to perfect time management skills to ensure they get to the Lecture Hall and still meet all their other obligations.
viii. Students could become better at multi-tasking in the process of learning how to balance all their responsibilities.
ix. Keeping an attendance policy, helps the department know which students have been enrolled and the number of question papers to produce during the examination.

1.2. The challenges in the realization of the 75% NUC attendance policy

The inbuilt capabilities to fulfill the demands of university tasks are in all the students, but in some cases, the learning-teaching condition will not extract these competencies and the desired performance level (Graig, 1989). (Van *et al.,* 1996) said that the examined skills and competencies are required for successful teaching and learning in the Lecture halls, particularly in higher education institutions, mainly in Africa. (Langer, 1987) show that the habitual vision of academic competence is primarily a question of practice in the lecture hall whereby a skilled teacher, through knowledge, methods, actions, and ability to exchange a few words, gets teaching conditions to a practical purpose and creates conditions for learning. Academic development is concerned with the processes of change in teaching and learning in higher education. Academic development no longer becomes a problem within specific groups of students; however, it is a process in which a range of personnel in different situations share responsibility for growing into academic life (Boughey, 1994; Olatunji, 2013).

Consequently, there is a need to develop academic literacy, not as an adjunct skill but by and through a commitment to learning in the mainstream academic disciplines themselves, which is aimed at preparing all students to deal with the set of competencies needed at the tertiary education level (Oldsjo, 2010 and Franklin *et al.,* 2008). However, implementing strict rules regarding attendance could be a way to ensure that students attend Lectures and are being evaluated regularly. It could also become difficult for some students, with major responsibilities and education; they can face the most inconvenience. Parents at times spend their hard-earned money in vain because their children neglect their studies; they are busy with their smartphones, chatting with their friends, or going to the shopping mall. During the examination, such students go for agitation because they do not have minimum attendance and are not prepared for the examination.

It was observed in this paper review the following were identified as a problem associated with the realization of 75% attendance before participating in the examination:

i. If NUC keeps a free attendance policy where no one is forced to attend lectures, there will be a very high probability that no one would even know where the Lecture Hall is.
ii. Making 75% attendance compulsory can actually work only if the teachers have great teaching skills. Almost 70% of teachers today are not well equipped with teaching skills.
iii. The attendance policy needs to be reformed with that the students would be guaranteed quality learning.
iv. Poor attendance can also reproduce problems in a students' state of affairs, and it is an indicator that shows students are not developing the knowledge and skills required for their future success (Van *et al.,* 1996).
v. As the government established many institutions, the number of available spaces has increased extensively in the modern years, but the nation is still far from meeting the demand for tertiary education pleasingly (McLean and Hurd, 2011).

1.3. Analysis of Data on 75% NUC Attendance policy

We investigate the relationship between university students' Lecture attendance based on the 75% NUC Benchmark and examination performance. We also use data from a course in a university in which attendance to lectures is mandatory (at least a student must attend 75% attendance for such student to sit for an examination for the course). The method used is cluster analysis. We find that student forms three distinct groups: (1) those who did not attend up to 75% attendance, (2) those that attended lectures up to 75 to 80% and sat for the exam, and (3) those that attended lectures for up to 90 to 100% and attend the examination. Most importantly, we find out that in groups 2 and 3, attendance is positively and significantly connected to performance, after controlling for the effect of other variables potentially linked to performance. We also find that students in groups 1 and 2 are characterized by compelling reasons for absenteeism and an excellent ability to search for information and study independently proactively. The results are applicable to lecturers and students alike. First and foremost, they can motivate students to attend lectures and for lecturers to bear in mind the relevance of lecture teaching for learning outcomes. Group 1 was added because the 75% NUC minimum standard has not been fully implemented in the Nigerian Universities. This paper assesses the relationship between lecture attendance and examination performance in Nigerian universities. Two key characteristics of Nigerian university system are - that it is not free of charge and has very little academic freedom. Following the fundamental value of non-academic freedom, attendance at lectures is generally mandatory and highly recommended based on the NUC regulation of 75% attendance as eligibility for participating in the examination. The course used is 3 credit loads, and it is not an optional course targeted to students at all levels. It comprises two types of classes, one for lectures and exercise sessions. Learning materials developed for the course are intended to use together with in-class teaching and can be deemed relatively poorly suitable for use as standalone for self-study. The course grade comprises the final examination (70%) and attendance (30%). Passing the course needs that one should pass the final examination and class attendance.

1.4. Data collection

The data set includes 30 students who took a computer science course across the selected universities in Nigeria. Those students have been included in the data set who had registered for the course and indicated actual participation by

i) Attendance of at least one lecture (excluding the first lecture, after which the dropout rate tends to be high),
ii) Attending at least one exercise session
iii) Take at least one set of class assessments.

A student cannot receive total points from the course in any Nigerian university without attending any teaching events. However, to incentivize students to attend exercise classes, a small symbolic increment to their grades was offered to students who actively attended exercise sessions. In this course, attendance at lectures is mandatory, and exercise sessions are not mandatory but necessary. Therefore, 30 points marks are offered to students who attended lectures up to 75%, which is not a stimulant offer for lecture attendance but a right due for such students. Data about attendance were obtained by circulating an attendance list at every teaching event, signed by present students. In order to make sure that students did not sign for absent colleagues, the number of attendants indicated by the list was cross-checked with the whole number of students in the lecture hall. After the course, we collected input from a subgroup of students who had attended the examination but not many teaching events.

1.5. Analysis of the Variables Used

The variables of our analysis are described as explanatory variable-total attendance, explained variable-examination points, and control variables-bonus motivation.

i. Explanatory Variable-Total attendance.

This refers to the number of teaching events attended by a student. While the maximum possible number of lectures to be attended is 30, including 15 lecture weeks and two times scheduled per week for a whole semester. All data exclude the first introductory lecture.

ii. Explained Variable-Examination points

The explained variable is the number of points received by the student in the final examination. It is used as an indicator of each students' course performance. The grading is on a scale from 0 to 100, with 45 points

required to pass, and we use examination points instead of the entire course grade. The course grade also includes class assessments and research work like term papers; this may have been done in groups and may thus not reflect an individual students' skill level. In addition, two examinations were offered, and students could choose whether to attend either one of them or both; in whichever case, the highest of the two examination results was recorded.

iii. Control Variables-Bonus motivation

The above is an indicator of a students' underlying motivation to do well in the course. For example, the number of bonuses points the student received from writing evaluations about their peers' course projects and attendance of lecture classes up to 75% and above.

1.6. Clusters of students

Total attendance and examination points can be seen when inspecting the data set along the dimensions of the explanatory and explained variables. The students were from three distinct groups. The first group is different from the other two. Group 1 is the students who did not attend lectures up to 75%; that is, they cannot attend lectures up to 75% of NUC Benchmark attendance policy. The second and third groups comprise those who received examination points with varying levels of lecture attendance (that is, from 75% to 100%). We performed a cluster analysis to form a clear separation between the two groups. The clusters, as well as the first group, are presented in the figure below. Groups 1, 2, and 3 comprise 30, 30, and 30 times respectively. Since the three groups are clearly different, it is justified to investigate them separately.

Table 1: Number of Attendance

VARIABLES	ATTENDANCE 0 – 30 TIMES
GROUP 1	0, 10, 20, 10, 3, 3, 7, 8, 8, 7, 0, 9, 16, 2, 18, 13, 19, 7, 17, 19, 4, 3, 20, 21, 20, 5, 5, 22, 16, 11
GROUP 2	23, 24, 23, 23, 23, 23, 24, 25, 23, 25, 24, 24, 24, 25, 23, 23, 24, 25, 25, 25, 24, 24, 24, 23, 25, 23, 25, 23, 24, 25
GROUP 3	30, 30, 26, 26, 29, 28, 26, 27, 28, 27, 29, 30, 28, 27, 29, 27, 28, 26, 29, 30, 27, 26, 26, 28, 28, 29, 27, 29, 30, 27

Table 2: Examination Score Table

VARIIABLES	TOTAL EXAMINATION SCORES (FROM 0 – 100)
GROUP 1 (Attendance 0-22)	30, 20, 30, 20, 1, 10, 0, 5, 7, 30, 48, 46, 49, 21, 12, 6, 0, 3, 7, 10, 7, 9, 17, 5, 25, 39, 20, 19, 50, 9
GROUP2 (Attendance 23-25)	50, 45, 30, 45, 67, 45, 46, 45, 60, 33, 67, 39, 32, 56, 58, 79, 80, 56, 45, 80, 35, 30, 20, 46, 39, 56, 66, 67, 29, 71
GROUP 3 (Attendance 26 – 30)	75, 71, 70, 88, 75, 30, 89, 85, 90, 50, 65, 79, 82, 97, 30, 89, 97, 62, 95, 80, 85, 60, 87, 88, 68, 61, 62, 71, 90, 83

Table 3: Analysis

GROUPS	Number of FAILURE	Number of PASSED	TOTAL Number of Observation	REM	MIN SCORE	MAX SCORE	MEAN-ATTENDANCE	MEAN-EXAMINATION
GROUP 1	26	4	30	FAIL	0	50	10.77	17.43
GROUP 2	9	21	30	PASS	20	80	23.93	50.57
GROUP 3	2	28	30	PASS	30	97	27.9	73.77

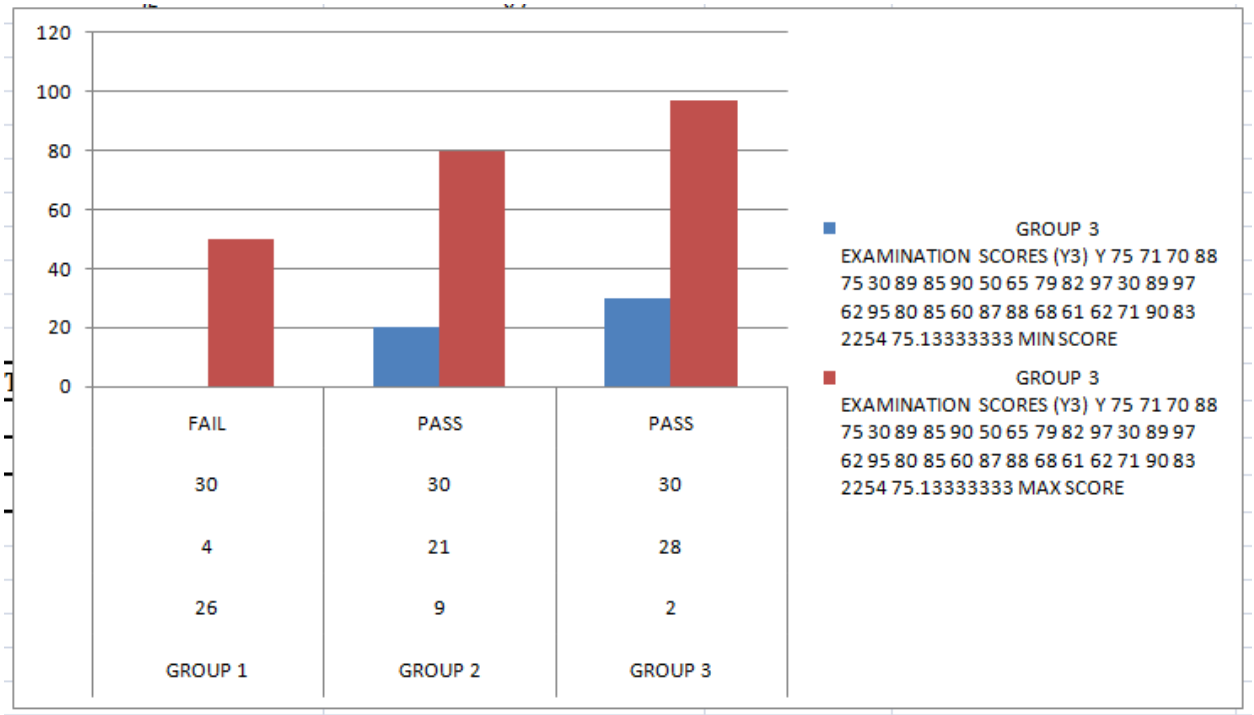

Figure 1: cluster analysis diagram

1.7. Analysis of data Used

Group 1: The number of students who failed is 26, and the number of students who passed is 4. Because their attendance is below 75%, the failure rate is high, the maximum score is 50, and the minimum score is 0.

Group 2: Those who attend lectures up to 75 to 80% and sat for the examination. The number of students who failed is 9, the number of students who pass is 21, and the maximum score is 80 while the minimum score is 20.

Group 3: Those who attended lectures up to 90 to 100% and attended the examination. The rate of the pass is high. The number of students who failed is 2, the number of students who pass is 28, and the maximum score is 97 while the minimum score is 30.

1.8. Relationship between this research and NUC policy

This research is actually working toward achieving a similar goal and objective to the NUC policy. The relationship is the statistical proof of student performance based on attendance. This system actualized the paperwork by implementing a system to support the achievement of the NUC policy based on the 75% student attendance toward their academic performance. Students' lecture attendance plays an essential role in today's university education. Lecture attendance is a vital analyst of academic outcomes. However, this paper is a complete one that captures student attendance at lectures and examination performance based on 75% NUC policy.

2. RESULTS AND REPORTS GENERATED

The impact of the 75% NUC Lecture attendance policy assesses the relationship between Lecture attendance and examination performance in the Nigerian University. The test parameter used is the final examination and attendance. The students' performance based on the number of times they attended lectures shows that those who attended lectures up to 90 to 100% have the maximum score of 97 and the highest pass mark. Therefore, Nigerian universities highly recommend attendance as criteria that enable students to pass and not cheat in the examination hall. Therefore, the full implementation of the 75% lectures attendance Policy of NUC to qualify a student for the examination should be considered in Nigerian universities.

3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper provided a platform that was able to capture and analyzed the number of lecture attendance and evaluate the relationship between lecture attendance and examination performance based on NUC Benchmark of 75% attendance. The scope of this work is lecture attendance and examination performance in Nigerian universities. Strict adherence and full implementation of the 75 % attendance policy by the NUC is highly recommended in Nigerian Universities. This should serve as criteria for students taking part in examinations to be qualified to write the examination. The idea behind this paper is that the students' and lecturers' will sit up to their responsibilities if the NUC 75 % attendance policy is fully implemented. Therefore, examination misconduct will be reduced to the barest minimal because the

performance of the students will increase due to regular attendance at lectures.

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