An Empirical Study of the Common Factors Affecting Students' Academic Performance in Gombe State University, Gombe-Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: Students' academic performance has been one of the major discourse among social sciences disciplines in tertiary institutions in the last two decades in Nigeria. But unfortunately, very insignificant number of studies in this area has been conducted in the north east tertiary institutions. This research was undertaken to fill this obvious gap. The objectives of the research study therefore includes; to examine the most common factors associated with poor academic performance of students in Gombe State University and to explore the consequences associated with poor academic performance of students in Gombe State University. Furthermore, the research employed a descriptive method and data was collected from a sampled of 584 respondents using Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Calculator via the aid of the questionnaire. The data was analysed with the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Version, 21). The findings of the study indicated that, the most common factors associated with poor academic performance of students in Gombe State University includes family stress, lack of proper orientation programmes and commitment of students to academic activities and overcrowding in class among others. Similarly, the consequences of poor academic performance of students in the university include poor academic semester results, probation and dismissal among others. Finally, the study recommends among others on the need for parents/guardians to support and encourage their wards by relieving them from family activities during school sessions. Also, the university management need to provide more facilities which will help in reducing congestions among students in class.

KEYWORDS: Academic Performance, Students, Common factors and Tertiary Institutions

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Schools attendance is increasing rapidly in Nigeria including secondary and tertiary schools. Over a decade, senior secondary schools increased with more infrastructural buildings which make many among them to be considered as miracle centres for examination malpractice during senior secondary school certificate examinations (Mujahid, 2019). The merit and downside of the rise in senior secondary schools buildings including public and private are subject to intense debate in academic and policy circles. Parents alleged that there is decline in quality academic programme in public and private secondary schools in Nigeria. Nigeria's ability to realise her vision of becoming one of the largest 20 economies in the world is largely dependent on the capacity to transform her population into highly skilled and competent educated citizens capable of competing globally.

The educational sector is consequently special to the actualization of the current national and global policy objectives. The broad objective of formal secondary and tertiary education in the country is to prepare individuals for useful living with the society and for higher education (Ministry of Education, 2014). Education especially secondary education in Nigeria therefore is aimed at promoting a progressive and united Nigeria. It is expected to function as a preparation for life and for higher education. Secondary in Nigeria is one of the levels of education for the achievement of the philosophy and objectives of Nigerian education as highlighted in the national policy on education (2004). The objectives include among others; a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, a united, strong and self–reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy and a land of bright and full opportunity for all citizens.

To achieve these objectives, the policy stated that the quality of instructions at all levels has to be oriented towards including the values among others: respect for the dignity of labour and shared responsibility of the common good of the society. Government recognised the importance of education and so asked for the cooperation of all other agencies concerned with education. The policy is not only confident that education is the greatest force that can bring about redress in these areas but also, the greatest investments that the nation can make for quick development of its economic, political and human resources.

However, there seems to be a persistent and wide-spread loss of confidence in both public and private educational institutions hence leading to failure of such schools to give quality education to the Nigerians children (Ajayi, 2012). These schools today face various challenges ranging from mismanagement of allocated resources to falling academic standards. Other important reasons for the loss

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of confidence in secondary level of education include poor planning and consistent lack of investment in the education system. This had led to a near collapse of the system, living the educational infrastructure in an appalling and dilapidated state. These challenges did not stopped only in the secondary level of education, but also have affected the standard of education in tertiary institutions leading to poor performance of students' in the colleges of education, polytechnics and universities.

  Furthermore, Institutions of higher learning exist because they have goals to attain, which includes providing accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities, preparing students with knowledge and skills for self-reliance, promoting and encouraging scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service and to contribute to national development through high level manpower training, among others (Baffa, Nasiru and Yila, 2022). These goals can be effectively attained when the human resources within the institutions are properly managed for their positive impacts on productivity. This also will help in enhancing the quality of education given in the institutions. Unfortunately in Nigeria, there were no serious programmes or policies put in place to promote academic excellence especially in tertiary institutions (Baffa and Nasiru, 2022). Similarly, increased number of students seeking admissions into tertiary institutions put more pressure on utilities, breakdown of sewage disposal system, unsanitary condition of some halls of residence and classes, overcrowding in classes and inadequate learning facilities among others. These are always being regarded as contributory factors to declining academic standard thereby contributing to poor academic performance among students in tertiary institutions of higher learning in Nigeria.

From the above therefore, this paper is aimed to examine the factors associated with poor academic performance of students in Gombe State University. To achieve this, the paper is divided into five sections. The section one deals with the introductory part of the paper. Section two is the objectives of the study. The section three is the methodology of the study. The section four is the discussion of findings and the section five is the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
i. To examine the most common factors associated with poor academic performance of students in Gombe State University.
ii. To explore the consequences associated with poor academic performance among students in Gombe State University.

3.1 METHODOLOGY
Gombe State University was established in 2004 and has commenced academic activities in 2006 after the first matriculation exercise with 370 students. The university had started with three faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, Education and Sciences. As at 2022, the university has six faculties including Arts and Social Sciences, Education, Law, Medical College, Pharmaceutical Sciences and Sciences. The faculties has the following number of students, FASS (7,405), Education (4,218), Law (93), Medical College (618), Pharmaceutical Sciences (344) and Sciences (8,809). The cumulative population of students at 2021/2022 academic session across all the faculties is 21,487 (GSU Reg, 2022). From the general population of the students, 584 were drawn as sample size for the research using sample size calculator with margin of error of 4% and 95% confidence level. This is shown in the table below.

Faculty	Population	Sample size
Faculty of Arts and Social Science	7,405	201
Faculty of Education	4,218	115
Faculty of Law	93	3
Medical College	618	17
Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences	344	9
Faculty of Sciences	8,809	239
Total	21,487	584

Registry GSU (2022)

The study employed descriptive research technique where simple random sampling was used in collecting the data. Questionnaires were distributed on the sampled respondents using convenient sampling method. The data obtained from the field was analysed using frequency tables and percentages. All the analyses were done using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Version 16).

4.1 RESULTS
Section A: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
16-20 years	78	13.4
21-25 years	336	57.7
26-30 years	132	22.7

	Frequency	Percentage
31 years and above	36	6.2
Total	**582**	**100.0**
Sex	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	294	50.5
Female	288	49.5
Total	**582**	**100.0**
Students' Academic Level	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
100 Level	75	12.9
200 Level	252	43.3
300 Level	165	28.4
400 Level	84	14.4
500 Level	6	1.0
Total	**582**	**100.0**
Faculty	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Arts and Social Science	201	34.5
Education	115	19.8
Law	03	0.5
Medical College	17	2.9
Pharmaceutical Sciences	7	1.2
Science	239	41.1
Total	**582**	**100.0**

The table shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents including age, sex, students' academic level and faculty. With regard to the age, 13.4% were between 16-20 years, 57.7% were between 21-25 years, 22.7% were between 26-30 years and the remaining 6.2% were between 31 years and above. The analysis shows that, majority of the respondents' falls below 31 years. The respondents' sex shows that 50.5% were male while 49.5% were female. The students' academic level shows 12.9% respondents were 100 level students, 43.3% respondents were 200 level students, 28.4% respondents were 300 level students, 14.4% respondents were 400 level students and remaining 1% of the respondents were 500 level students. With regard to the distribution of students across levels, its shows that majority of the respondents were 200 level students.

4.2: Section B: Most common factors associated with poor academic performance of students in Gombe State University

			Frequency	**Percentage**
4.2.1	**Family stress**		**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Agree		258	44.3
	Disagree		246	42.3
	Undecided		78	13.4
	Total		**582**	**100.0**
4.2.2	**Lack of students proper orientation**		**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Agree		369	63.4
	Disagree		168	28.9
	Undecided		45	7.7
	Total		**582**	**100.0**
4.2.3	**Lack of students' commitment to academic activities**		**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Agree		393	67.5
	Disagree		117	20.1
	Undecided		72	12.4
	Total		**582**	**100.0**
4.2.4	**Overcrowding in class**		**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Agree		456	78.4
	Disagree		96	16.5
	Undecided		30	5.1
	Total		**582**	**100.0**
4.2.5	**Lack of interest in the course students admitted to**		**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Agree		393	67.5

	Disagree	144	24.8
	Undecided	45	7.7
	Total	**582**	**100.0**
4.2.6	**Inadequate learning facilities in the university**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Agree	366	62.9
	Disagree	159	27.3
	Undecided	57	9.8
	Total	**582**	**100.0**
4.2.7	**Type of school attended**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Agree	453	77.8
	Disagree	69	11.9
	Undecided	60	10.3
	Total	**582**	**100.0**

From table 4.2.1, 44.4% of the majority respondents agreed that family stress was associated with poor academic performance of students in Gombe State University. Similarly, quite a significant percent of the respondents (42.3%) also have disagreed that, family stress is not associated with poor academic performance of students in the study university. The remaining 13.4% were undecided. The findings show that, family stress is one factor that contributes to poor students' academic performance in the university as revealed by the majority respondents. Furthermore, table 4.2.2 shows respondents views on lack of proper students orientation contributed to poor academic performance in Gombe State University. The majority respondents representing 63.4% have agreed with the claim, while 28.9 have disagreed and the remaining 7.7% were undecided. Similarly, table 4.2.3 indicated respondents' opinions with regard to lack of students commitments to academic activities. The 67.5% have agreed that, it contributes to poor academic performance in Gombe State University. Similarly, 20.1% and 12.4% were disagreed and undecided respectively.

Also, table 4.2.4 shows respondents views were 78.4% have agreed that, overcrowding in class contributed to poor academic performance among students in Gombe State University. So, also, 16.5 and 5.1 respectively were disagreed and undecided respectively. At the same vein, table 4.2.5 also shows respondents opinions regarding how lack of interest to the course students admitted contributed to poor academic performance in the university. The 67.5% of the majority opinions have agreed that, it does contribute to poor academic performance while 24.8 were disagreed. The remaining 7.7% were undecided. Furthermore, majority of the respondents (62.9%) have agreed that inadequate teaching facilities also contribute to poor academic performance in Gombe State University. The 27.3% disagreed and the 9.8% were undecided. Finally, the analyses have shown that, 77.8% of the respondents have agreed that type of secondary school attended by students contribute to their poor academic performance. The 11.9% and 10.3% were disagreed and undecided respectively.

4.3: Section C: The consequences associated with poor academic performance of students in Gombe State University

4.3.1	**Poor academic semester results**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Highly frequent	264	45.4
	Less frequent	318	54.6
	Total	**582**	**100.0**
4.3.2	**Examination malpractice**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Highly frequent	171	29.4
	Less frequent	411	70.6
	Total	**582**	**100.0**
4.3.3	**Probation**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Highly frequent	243	41.8
	Less frequent	339	58.2
	Total	**582**	**100.0**
4.3.4	**Dismissal**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Highly frequent	189	32.5
	Less frequent	393	67.5
	Total	**582**	**100.0**

The section C shows consequences associated with poor academic performance of students in Gombe State University. The table 4.3.1 shows that 54.6% of the respondents viewed poor semester results among students is less frequent in the university. Even

An Empirical Study of the Common Factors Affecting Students' Academic Performance in Gombe State University, Gombe-Nigeria

though, there is significant percent of the respondents that indicated that, poor academic semester results among students are highly frequent in the university. Similarly, examination malpractices among students are less frequently with 70.6% majority opinions. Though, 29.4% of the respondents opined that, it is highly frequent in the university. Furthermore, 58.2% of the respondents opined that cases of probation among students are less frequent in Gombe State University with majority views, while the remaining 41.8% viewed that, it is highly frequent. Finally, cases of dismissal among students in the university is less frequent (67.5%), which is the majority views, while the remaining 32.5% opined that, it is highly frequent in the university.

5.1 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study set out to examine the most common factors and consequences associated with poor academic performance of students in Gombe State University. The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents show that 21-25 years age brackets were the majority. The 200 Level students were also found to be the majority respondents. Similarly, respondents from the faculty of science were the majority as well.

From the findings of the study, family stress was found to be a major factor responsible for poor academic performance of students in Gombe State University with majority views (44.4%). This is also associated to the fact that, many students have family problems while undergoing their studies. Some of them were family men/women with burden of catering for children needs. Also, poor economic conditions of some students contribute to their poor academic performance in the university. Furthermore, lack of students proper orientations from their respective departments and faculties also contribute to poor academic performance with majority views (63.4%) in the university. Lack of proper students' orientation resulted to poor guide among students at the beginning of their studies in the university. Similarly, lack of students' commitment to academic activities in the university with majority views (67.5%) is associated with students' habit of not concentrating fully to their academic activities. This is equally associated to students' engagements to other social activities in the university which they were not part of their primary reasons of being in the university.

Overcrowding in classes in the university with majority views (78.4%) is attributed to the fact that, students' admission goes beyond the standard regulated by National Universities Commission. So, in class, students found it difficult to understand what the lecturers taught. This also contributes to poor academic performance at the end of the semester. At the same vein, 67.5% of the respondents admitted that, lack of interest in the course students admitted to also is associated with poor academic performance. Students in this respect, found it difficult to concentrate fully to their courses, because they always have a second thought of making change of course. Poor facilities especially laboratory equipments, insufficient teaching personnel among others are some of the reasons for poor academic performance of students in the university. For instance, many courses might not be taught at the beginning of semester because of insufficient teaching personnel and can only be taught sketchy when exams are approaching. This in many cases resulted to poor semester results in respect of those courses. Finally, type of secondary schools attended by students; some good and better ones, while some poor schools. This has implication on the performance indices of students. Majority (77.8%) viewed that, the type of secondary schools attended by students in the university contributed by making those that attended better ones to be good and make those that have attended poor one to perform poorer in the examinations.

Some of the consequences associated with poor academic performance among students in Gombe State University include among others; poor academic semester results, examination malpractice, cases of probation and dismissal of students from the university. These consequences even though are significantly affecting students' academic performance in Gombe State University, but they are less frequent in the university. This shows that, majority of the students scale through without finding themselves into such consequences/problems. The implication of these findings also shows that, the university despite such challenges is doing well in students discipline and training.

6.1 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the study has contributed to the literature on perceived factors associated with poor academic performance of students in Gombe State University by investigating the effects of these factors. The study have revealed through its findings that family stress, lack of students proper orientations and commitments to academic activities, students, lack of facilities and overcrowding among others were responsible for poor academic performance of students in Gombe State University. The study concludes that these factors negatively affected students through poor semester results, examinations malpractice, probation and dismissal. From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

i.   Parents/Guardians need to support and encourage their wards by relieving them from other family activities especially during session. This will help them to have full attention to concentrates' on their studies thereby achieving good results at the end of the semesters.

ii. The Gombe State University need to improve the contents of its orientation programmes. This will help in getting the students more knowledge about the university environment.

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iii. The university management needs to give students the courses they might have applied from the first place especially if they meet the minimum requirements. This will help the students to have full interest in the courses because they have applied them from the beginning.

iv. The university management needs to provide more infrastructural facilities which will help in reducing congestions and overcrowding among students. This will help in reducing burden on the existing infrastructure in the university.

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