

**ACADEMIC LOAD AND PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN COLLEGES OF  
EDUCATION**

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**BY**

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***ABSTRACT***

*Teacher education or teacher training refers to the policies, procedures, and provisions designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behaviour and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, schools and wider community. Colleges of Education are expected to perform these duties effectively within a time frame of three years. But the researcher noticed that most students do not complete their studies within these three years and she decided to conduct a research, as the students complain of the problem due to over-loaded academic work they have to undertake, unlike their counterparts in the Faculty of Education, in Universities. Two hypotheses were postulated to guide the study. The study compared the number of courses and their credit units as offered by Colleges of Education students and students in Faculty of Education in the Universities. The findings revealed that the number of courses offered by students has a direct influence on the way they perform in these courses. Also, it revealed that students in Colleges of Education offer more number of courses and more credit units than their counterparts in Faculty of Education, in the Universities. Thus, recommendations were made that; there should be reduction in the number of courses offered by students in Colleges of Education in order to raise their performance in these courses.*

**KEY WORDS:** Academic load, Academic performance, Credit unit or Credit hour

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**Introduction**

Teacher education programme that is run in Colleges of Education is a three-year full time programme, that grandaunts are expected to be awarded a Nigeria Certificate in Education (N.C.E) at its completion; according to the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) Brochure (2014).

According to Jibril, (2018) the current teacher education curriculum in Colleges of Education contains the following elements:

- a. General Education – 36 Credit Units: these include courses in the broad areas of Educational Psychology, Foundations of Education, Curriculum Studies and Special Education.
- b. First or Major Teaching Subject – 36 Credit Units: here, students are to take courses in the areas or subject discipline that they are interested in and competent to study as their first teaching or main teaching subject. These subjects can range from the arts and humanities, science (applied and pure), social sciences, and the vocational studies.

- c. Secondary or Minor Teaching Subject – 36 Credit Units: students to select a minor or subsidiary teaching subject to be studied with the main or first major subject. There are accepted and approved subject combination from which students make their selections. E.g. Maths/Economics, Primary/Education Studies/Social Studies, English/Ibibio, etc.
- d. General Studies –14 Credit Units: students are given a selection of courses to improve their overall general knowledge in language and communication, ICT, science and society, etc.
- e. Teaching Practice – 6 units: this is the practical and professional component of the entire programme. Students are expected to be on a practical teaching exercise that will expose them to rudiments of the actual teaching in the classroom. Thus, teaching practice is compulsory for all NCE students. It has to be done in the candidates' teaching subject (s) and has to be passed for the candidate to earn the 6 credits units required for graduation.
- f. Project: Every candidate for NCE, irrespective of any other departmental project is expected to offer EDU 323–Research Project, before graduating from the College. At the end of all these, a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) is calculated and a grade of Distinction, Merit, Pass or Fail Certificate would be awarded.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The increasing number of students staying in the College more than the required three academic sessions, to complete the NCE Programme has become a matter of serious concern in the educational circles, especially among lecturers, educational administrators, and the parents who bear the brunt of this, directly or indirectly.

Records from the Examination and Records Unit of Akwa Ibom State College of Education, Afaha Nsit, show that, as much as 70% of students spend more than three academic sessions in order to complete their academic work in the College. In response to this ugly situation, the College Management, in 2012, brought out a Memo that students who fail to graduate after five academic sessions automatically lose their studentship and must voluntarily withdraw from the College.

One therefore wonders why students should stay for five academic sessions, or more, without completing a programme that is structured for three academic sessions. This made the researcher to become interested in investigating into the possible reasons behind this “long-studentship”. From the empirical survey, the students gave the following as possible reasons, for this menace, in order of:

- i. Over-loaded Academic Programme
- ii. Insensitivity on the part of lecturers:
  - a. lecturers demanding money from students before they can pass the courses
  - b. late commencement of lectures or non completion of course outline before examination.
  - c. tough and twisted examination questions
  - d. sexual harassment of female students
  - e. lecturers delay in releasing results
- iii. Delay in correcting or supervising students' project and monetary demands by project supervisors.
- iv. High cost of schooling; school fees and other academic materials
- v. Incessant lecturers and staff strike actions
- vi. Day schooling system, i.e. students living outside the college premises
- vii. Long and tedious process, even, monetary demands from the staff, before obtaining “clearance” from the different units in the College.

viii. Delay or non-awarding of statement of result/certificate to graduates by the College Management.

Also, lecturers' opinions were sought, for possible reasons why their products cannot complete a three year programme within five years. They gave the following reasons:

- i. Very poor academic background of most students seeking admission into Colleges of Education, as most of them pass through rural schools, where there is great dearth in personnel and infrastructures in the schools.
- ii. Different cut-off points by Joint Admission and Matriculation Board for University applicants and applicants seeking admission into Colleges of Education. According to JAMB website, the cut off mark for 2017/18 admission into Universities is 120 while 100 is for Polytechnics and Colleges of Education.
- iii. Inability for most of the students to express themselves fluently in English Language and some of them cannot write simple and correct sentences due to their rural background. Thus, they are unable to "defend" the A's and B's in their Senior School Certificate Examination result.
- iv. Lack of proper screening exercise before students are admitted into the College
- v. Low socio-economic status of most of the students:
  - they cannot pay their fees on time and are not allowed to write some examinations
  - they cannot afford most of the learning materials
  - they have the problem of poor feeding habit which may cause them to miss school, due to ill-health.

With this background, the researcher decided to take up the first and the top most reason given by students, i.e. over-loaded academic programme in Colleges of Education.

As a lecturer, one sees that there has been a general outcry among students in Akwa Ibom State College of Education, Afaha Nsit that the number of courses they offer each semester do not encourage maximum academic performance from them, compared to their brothers and sisters who are studying in the Faculty of Education, in Universities. The researcher thus decided, using School of Science and School of Languages as the case study, to investigate and compare the number of courses offered and their credit loads, by second year students of the College and 200 level students of Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, and their credit loads were also compared.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Academic load:** Archibong (2018) defines it as the number of courses offered and their credit units, that a student is expected to offer each semester. In the study, it is the number of courses offered by Biology, Chemistry, English and Ibibio year two students both in Colleges of Education; Afaha Nsit and in Faculty of Education, University of Uyo.

**Academic Performance:** Ekeng (2017) defines it as the extent to which a student has achieved his short term or long term educational goals. This could be judged from the semesters' results (GPA) and the overall result (CGPA), at the end of the study. Put it simply, it is how well or badly students do in studies at school.

**Credit Unit or Credit Hour:** is the unit of measuring educational credit, usually based on the number of classroom hours per week throughout a semester. Thus a two credit unit course means that the course would be taught twice a week. It therefore means that the more credit units a course has, the more voluminous the course is.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study aimed at investigating into the relationship between the number of courses offered by students in Colleges of Education, compared to the number offered by their counterparts in Faculty of Education, in Universities, and how it affects:

- their performance in semester examination
- duration of the programme or the number of years they spend in the College
- their Grade Point, Average (GPA) and subsequently, their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)
- the final grading of their Certificate – Distinction, Merit. Pass and Fail.

**Research Questions**

1. Does the number of courses offered by students in Colleges of Education affect their performance in semester examinations?
2. Do students in Colleges of Education offer more courses with more credit units than their counterparts in Faculty of Education, in the Universities?

**Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between the number of courses offered by students in Colleges of Education and their performances in semester examinations.
2. There is no significant difference in the number of courses and their credit units, as offered by students in Colleges of Education and their counterparts in Faculty of Education, in the Universities.

**Methodology**

The research design adopted was a survey design. The study took place in Akwa Ibom State College of Education, Afaha Nsit, and the population of the study consisted of all the second year students of the College and 200 level students of the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo. The instrument used for collection of data was the Departmental Handbook where all the courses offered by the students in the department are clearly stated, with their credit units. The statistical tool used to analyze the data was descriptive statistics.

**Data Analysis**

Institution	Department	Year	Semester	No. of Courses	Credit Units
C.O.E.	BIO/CHEM	2	1 <sup>st</sup>	21	21
✓	✓	✓	2 <sup>nd</sup>	18	25
Uniuyo	BIO	✓	1 <sup>st</sup>	9	20
✓	✓	✓	2 <sup>nd</sup>	9	20
C.O.E.	PHY/ISC	✓	1 <sup>st</sup>	17	23
✓	✓	✓	2 <sup>nd</sup>	18	26
Uniuyo	PHY	✓	1 <sup>st</sup>	8	21
✓	✓	✓	2 <sup>nd</sup>	8	20
C.O.E.	ENG/EFIK	✓	1 <sup>st</sup>	15	23
✓	✓	✓	2 <sup>nd</sup>	16	24
Uniuyo	ENG	✓	1 <sup>st</sup>	8	21
✓	✓	✓	2 <sup>nd</sup>	8	21
C.O.E.	FRENCH (DM)	✓	1 <sup>st</sup>	16	25
✓	✓	✓	2 <sup>nd</sup>	12	24
Uniuyo	FRENCH	✓	1 <sup>st</sup>	8	17
✓	✓	✓	2 <sup>nd</sup>	8	19

### **Discussion of Findings**

Hypothesis 1 stated that there is no significant relationship between the number of courses offered by students in Colleges of Education and their performance in semester examinations. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant influence between the number of courses offered by students and their performance in examinations. This is in line with Ben (2018) who conducted a study among 100 Senior Secondary Two students in Rivers State. He followed their performances from junior Secondary Three to Senior Secondary One when they were offering 18 subjects per term. He noticed that most of the students' performance improved significantly in SS2 when they were asked to choose eight or nine subjects they will like to sit for in Senior School Certificate Examination. He then came to a conclusion that the fewer the subjects offered by students, the better their performances.

Hypothesis 2 stated that there is no significant difference in the number of courses and their credit units, as offered by students in Colleges of Education and their counterparts in Faculty of Education, in the Universities. The findings of the study, from the table above reveal that students in Colleges of Education offer more number of courses and more credit units than their counterparts in the Faculty of Education in the universities. Using Bio/Chem students as example, the number of courses they offered were 39 with credit unit of 46 while university Biology Education students offered 18 courses with 40 credit units. Also, among French Education students in the College, they did 28 courses with 49 credit units, while French students in the University offered 16 courses with 36 credit units. This may be due to the compartmentalization of courses for N.C.E programme into three years while their counterparts in the University stay for a period of four years. Thus there is need to study the total number of courses by students from year one to three, in the College and compare it with the number offered by Education Students in the University throughout their four years programme.

### **Conclusion**

1. Based on the findings of the study, there is a direct influence on the number of courses students offer in Colleges of Education and their performances in these courses.
2. Students in Colleges of Education offer more courses with more credit units than their counterparts in Faculty of Education, in the University.

### **Recommendations**

1. There should be a reduction in the number of courses offered by students in Colleges of Education, in order to raise their performance. Some of the courses that are related could be merged. For example, EDU 121 (Sociology of Education) could be merged with EDU 122 (Introduction to Teacher Education). Also EDU 215 (Education of Special Target Groups) could be merged with EDU 225 (Introduction to Special Education). This could be applied also in the different departmental courses and the General Studies courses.
2. The number of theoretical courses offered by students in Colleges of Education could be reduced while more courses that emphasize on the methodology of teaching in the Basic Education years, given more attention. For example, EDU 113 (Principles and Methods of Teaching in the Junior Secondary School) could be uplifted from two credit units to three; for a broader and in-depth mastery of the art of teaching.
3. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), the governing and regulating body for Colleges of Education should prioritize on regular revision of the NCE programme in order to meet the Nigerian socio-economic, political, science and technological needs. One notices that the last of this exercise was done in 2013, i.e. the last version of the Minimum Standards in College of Education.

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