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## Effect of Accidental Choice of Study Course on University Students' Interest in their Courses and Career Objectives in Sokoto State University

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### ABSTRACT

This paper is an assessment of effect of accidental choice of study course on university students' interest in their courses and career objectives in Sokoto state university. Accidental choice of course of study implies to admitting students to study a course they did not applied for without any option. The study argued that, accidental choice of course of study on university students' interest and career objectives. Objectives of the study include: to investigate the causes accidental choice of course of study, student's interest in it, how it affects students' academic performance, and how it affects students' career objectives. 200 university students admitted accidentally were used as sample of the study. Simple descriptive statistics was used analyzed the data collected. It was found that. Majority of the respondents were given courses of study accidentally on the ground of their low scores in JAMB examination or deficiency in JAMB examination scores or deficiency in SSCE and/or wrong combination of subjects for JAMB examination. Few among the respondents later developed interest in the accidental courses of study given to them. Majority of the respondent agreed that, the accidental courses of study given to them did not affect their academic performance, likewise it did not affect their career objectives. It was recommended based on the findings that, JAMB should review their admission policy to minimized the level of given applicants courses of study accidentally because it affects some of the student's career goals. At the same time, they should maintain their standard and reputation.

### INTRODUCTION

Considering the appraisals of the Nigerian education system and UTME policy reviews viz-a-viz the level of accidental choices of study course experienced by several students studying at different universities in Nigeria. This is consequently affecting some students' interests in the courses given to them for study. Likewise, some of the senior secondary school students become aware of career opportunities and the availability

of vocational pathways after given them areas of study or after their final year examination. One of these factors or their combination causes most of the accidental choices of courses experienced by some of the students. As a result of this some of them end up studying courses that they are not interested in. This starts in their first year of senior secondary school or while selecting JAMB subject combination or inability to meet up the required pass mark for their course of interest. Students need to make choices base on their interests because effective leaning depend on interest (Whiteley & Edge, 1998).

Many career theorists cautioned against making premature decisions in relation to children choice for course of study or career choice. But institutional and societal constrictions often necessitated that a choice should be made by students when they are relatively young. Transition or crisis points are thus enforced, in many instances prematurely by the educational system or parents despite the fact that many students have not made a firm decision about their choice of study or post-school careers. A number of studies have reconnoitered issues relating to irresolution about future careers and the impact this could have on choices related to accidental choice of course of study. Study or career indecision should be recognized as a normal stage in the career development process. Indecision may result from an inability to regard any careers viable, difficulties choosing between too many occupations or problems deciding on alternatives when the most preferred option is not a realistic possibility. In light of this, career guidance which emphasizes the identification of a goal and the systematic progression towards that goal fails to recognize appropriate changes of mind that can accompany increased educational or vocational maturity (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1993). According to Oleh, (2020) Life is all about choosing what you need most. People have the habit of choosing things in line with their passion, including students. Teachers and parents tend to observe students as children who need guidance to plan their life. In their opinion, children cannot differentiate between what is essential and what they like. Anyway, they do have their rights to decide on something, or in this case, choosing what subject area or course they want to study. Although people



think that, determining what subject students should learn is for their goodness. It is believed that students must have been let to choose what courses they want to study for some reasons. Educationists believed that, students at all levels will study only about their favourite subjects or courses and not be able to learn other subjects or courses effectively because they don't have interest in it. Students tend to learn what they like all over again and leave the least favourite subjects or courses behind. However, students only want to take courses or subjects they like most. When students have the ability to choose what they like to learn about, it makes them more eager to engage with the material. Students can study further about them as well. Hence, they will get better score on that subject. If they can master the courses and get better marks on them, it will motivate the students to continue their studies to further level of education. For instance, if you let your child study science, which is the subject they prefer to learn, they will be confident enough to take science major in college. They will study further about that subject, of course, it will make you proud as parent to let your children choose subjects or course as the best option.

The term interest could describe two distinct perspectives: an individual's momentary experience of being fascinated by an object as well as more lasting feelings that the activity or object is enjoyable and worth advance exploration. Interest is therefore, both a psychological state characterized by increased attention, effort, and affect, experienced in a particular moment (situational interest), as well as an enduring predisposition to reengage with a particular object or topic over time (individual interest). Encouraging choice allows Students to decide their path for life and career. Give students choices based on a variety of interests for subject area or course of study. Many students may share common ground, which means that there's often something for everyone (Harackiewicz, et al., 2016). Situational interest conglomerates affective qualities, such as feelings pleasure and excitement, with cognitive qualities, such as focused attention and perceived value, all fostered by features of the situation. For instance, a student might enjoy an entertaining lecture about tsunamis, become

captivated by their power, occupied more in the class, and appreciate the subject's personal relevance. Thus, being in a state of interest means that affective reactions, perceived value, and cognitive functioning intertwine, and that attention and learning feel effortless. Situational interest relates to self-regulation, task engagement, and persistence. Interest can directly promote learning by increasing attention and engagement. Interest, therefore, predicts traditional measures of educational success, including future course taking and performance.

Individual interest highlights individuals' stable preferences for specific content or course. The immediate experience of interest reflects a well-developed personal preference to enjoy and value a particular subject, course or activity. Individual interest is, therefore, a factor, underlying disposition activated in a particular situation. For example, students interested in geophysics might be likely in a state of interest during a lecture on tsunamis, whether the lecture is entertaining or not, because their interest is more developed and less dependent on situational factors Harackiewicz, et al., (2016). Student interest in a subject or course holds so much power. When a subject or course connects to what students are interested in, engagement deepens as they willingly take time thinking, dialoguing, and creating ideas in meaningful ways. Making learning contextual to real-world experiences is a key learning technique with differentiation for student interests as indicated in the following formula, Readiness + Interest = Engagement. Readiness combined with interest leads to students doing work at a respectable complexity level with the familiarity of a topic that they relate to. The first step to differentiate for interests is to find out what students' care about and like to do. Student surveys and learning profile cards are two methods for collecting the data. Parents and students providing these details send the message that their experiences matter (McCarthy, 2014). Career goals play a substantial role in shaping student's study behaviour while in tertiary institution because it serves as motivation factor for the students to achieve academic excellence. Lopez-Bonilla et al. (2012) identified that most common inspirations for course or programme



completion relate to career ambitions. Research findings revealed the importance of career aspirations on academic and career success. Students with high educational and career aspirations achieved better results than those with low career aspirations. Ambitious career plans are good predictors of higher school achievement because they help students demonstrate greater interest in their studies. Adeokun and Opoko (2015) also asserted that, students with good clarity about why they choose their course and whether the chosen course has a direct pathway to their preferred career have better outcomes in terms of academic performance (Arhin, 2018)..

Agbo et al. (2015) hold the view that career aspiration is the professional pathway one wishes to follow and uphold, it is a lifelong process that demands precise perceptions of ability, potential and accomplishment. Career aspiration is defined as long-term individual work-related goals. Career aspirations revolve around the ambitions and inspirations of students. Thus, if a student has the desire to achieve a future goal, she/he will be more ambitious and strive for the goal she/he has set for him/herself. Inspiration reflects activity which is exciting and enjoyable to the individual. Students' attitude towards achievement situations therefore explains the type of goal they set for themselves at the onset. Mesa (2012) asserts that individuals with positive career aspirations have high learning goal orientation because their characteristics of seeking to master new skills, complete tasks and overcome difficulties will be in line with their career pursuits. Students need to comprehend that the core skills learned in class are directly linked to their career interests and this will increase their motivation to perform well (Arhin, 2018).

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Given students a course of study with alternative and they did not apply it or a course related to it in the university is known as accidental choice. Ideally students used to apply for courses of their interest to study at the university. For one reason or the other some of the students at Sokoto State University were accidentally admitted to study courses either they are interested in it or not. This caused some of those students to reject

the admission or differ it while some accepts the admission, are such students really interested in such courses? If not sustainably addressed this policy may lead to series of academic problems to such students because students' interest in a course has a very high influence to their academic performance and career development revealed by several studies. Although several researches were found related to the study but not similar, among them were McCarthy, (2014) Learner Interest Matters: Strategies for Empowering Student Choice and Oleh, (2020) Should Student Choose Their Own Subjects? To provide sustainable and productive solution to the problem of accidental choice and university students' interest in their course of study in Sokoto State University, this research is highly needed.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

To guide conduct of the study, the following objectives were developed:

1. To explore the causes of accidental choice of course of study in Sokoto State University.
2. To identify students interest in such accidental courses of study after admitting them in Sokoto State University.
3. To investigate how accidental choice of course of study affect students' academic performance in Sokoto State University
4. To verify how accidental choice of course of study affect students' career objectives in Sokoto State University.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the causes of accidental choice of course of study in Sokoto State University?
2. How interested are students in such accidental courses of study after admitting them in Sokoto State University?
3. Does accidental choice of course of study affect students' academic performance in Sokoto State University?
4. To what extent does accidental choice of course of study affect students' career objectives in Sokoto State University?



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Survey Research Design was used to conduct this study. Babbie (1989) identified three purposes of Survey research design, which include exploration, explanation and description. Likewise, descriptive survey deals with any variable that can be counted, studied and that uses questionnaire, interview and observation to collect data. Descriptive survey is a method that involves asking a large group of people questions about a particular issue. Information is obtained from a sample rather than the entire population at one point in time which may range from one day to few weeks. The population of the study would comprise students from Sokoto State University who were given courses of study accidentally. (Research Advisor 2006) was used to take a sample of 200 students. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select the sample. The instrument for data collection was adapted from Oleh, (2020) and titled Accidental Choice and University Students' Interest Assessment Questionnaire (ACUSIAQ). The instrument was validated by two senior research experts from Sokoto State University. Similarly, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the instrument after a test retest of the instrument, where a reliability index of 0.85 was found. The data was collected through selection and hiring of ten students as research assistants across the three faculties in the university. The research assistants were a combination of five females and five male students. One-day training was organized for the research assistants to tactically explain the questionnaire and train them on the criteria for data collection. The research assistants would be directed to target students at lecture venues, social centers, hostels, cafeteria and other refreshment points on the campus to trace students who were admitted accidentally in the university. Simple Descriptive Statistics was applied to analyze the data using frequency and percentage. The justification was that, simple descriptive statistic describes the basic features of data in a research work and it provides simple summary about the sample and easy interpretation of the data (Babbie, 1989).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Research Question One:** What are the causes of accidental choice of course of study in Sokoto State University?

**Table 1:** Causes of accidental choice of course of study

Causes of accidental choice of course of study	A	SA		D	SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
I was given a course I did not applied for because of my low scores in JAMB examination	94	47	50	25	24	12
I was given a course I did not applied for because of my deficiency in JAMB examination scores	72	36	52	26	26	13
I was given a course I did not applied for because of my deficiency in SSCE	54	27	32	16	62	31
I was given a course I did not applied for because of my wrong combination of subject for JAMB examination	30	15	42	21	74	37
<b>Mean Percentage</b>		<b>32.2</b>		<b>22.4</b>		<b>23.4</b>
		<b>54.6</b>				<b>45.5</b>

The table above indicated that, 54.6% out of the 200 respondents agreed that, they were given courses of study accidentally based on the above reasons. While 45.5% disagreed that, they were given courses of study based on the above reasons. Conclusively, majority of the respondents agreed that they were given courses of study accidentally on ground of their low scores in JAMB examination, deficiency in JAMB examination scores, deficiency in SSCE and wrong combination of subjects for JAMB examination.

**Research Question Two:** How interested are students in such accidental courses of study after admitting them in Sokoto State University?



**Table 2: Students interest in accidental courses of study after admission**

	A	SA	D	SD				
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
<b>Students interest in accidental courses of study after admission</b>								
I was happy when I was admitted to study a course I did not apply for	56	28	22	11	76	38	46	23
I differed or delayed my admission to struggle for change of course	50	25	32	16	64	32	54	27
I later develop interest in the accidental course given to me	82	41	40	20	38	19	40	20
I'm just reading the accidental course given to me but I don't have interest in it to date	72	36	32	16	40	20	56	28
<b>Mean Percentage</b>		<b>32.5</b>		<b>15.75</b>		<b>27.25</b>		<b>24.5</b>
		<b>48.25</b>				<b>51.75</b>		

The table above shows that, 48.25 % among the 200 respondents agreed that, they later developed interest in the accidental courses given to them, while 51.75% disagreed that, they later developed interest in the accidental courses given to them. This indicates that, majority of the respondents disagreed that, they later developed interest in the accidental courses of study given to them based on the findings that, they were not happy with the courses given to them, some of them differed or delayed their admissions before accepting it later.

**Research Question Three:** Does accidental choice of course of study affect students' academic performance in Sokoto State University?

**Table 3: Effect of accidental choice of course of study on students' academic performance**

	A	SA	D	SD				
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
<b>Effect of accidental choice of course of study on students' academic performance</b>								
As a victim of accidental choice of course I'm performing above average	58	29	40	20	34	17	68	34
As a victim of accidental choice of course I have an average performance	54	27	54	27	50	25	42	21
As a victim of accidental choice of course I'm performing below average	42	21	24	12	62	31	72	36

**Effect of Accidental Choice of Study Course on University Students' Interest in their Courses and Career Objectives in Sokoto State University.**

The accidental choice of course has no 68 34 44 22 36 18 52 26 effect on my academic performance.

<b>Mean Percentage</b>	<u>27.75</u>	<u>20.25</u>	<u>22.75</u>	<u>29.25</u>
	<u>48</u>		<u>52</u>	

The table above indicated that, 48% among the 200 respondents agreed that, the accidental course of study given to them affected their academic performance while 52% of the same respondents disagreed that, the accidental course of study given to them affected their academic performance. Conclusively, majority of the respondents disagreed that their accidental courses of study affected their academic performance.

**Research Question Four:** To what extent does accidental choice of course of study affect students' career objectives in Sokoto State University?

**Table 4: Effect of accidental choice of course of study on students' career objectives**

	A				SA			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
<b>Effect of accidental choice of course of study on students' career objectives</b>								
My accidental choice of course is fully in line with my career objectives	76	38	44	22	34	17	46	23
My accidental choice of course is partially in line with my career objectives	68	34	38	19	26	13	68	34
My accidental choice of course is not in line with my career objectives	46	23	46	23	52	26	56	28
My accidental choice of course has no effect on my career objectives at all.	52	26	36	18	52	26	60	30
<b>Mean Percentage</b>		<u>30.25</u>		<u>20.50</u>		<u>20.05</u>		<u>28.75</u>
		<u>50.75</u>				<u>49.25</u>		

The table above shows that, 50.75% among the 200 respondents agreed that their accidental choice of course of study did not affect their career objectives, similarly 49.25% of the same respondents disagreed that, their accidental choice of course of study has effect on their career objectives. Majority of the respondents agreed that, accidental choice of course of study has no effect on their career objectives.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first research question revealed that, majority of the respondents agreed that, they were given courses of study accidentally on the ground



of their low scores in JAMB examination, deficiency in JAMB examination scores, deficiency in SSCE and wrong combination of subjects for JAMB examination. This finding disagreed with the findings of (Whiteley & Edge, 1998), in their findings that students need to make choices base on their interests because effective leaning depend on interest. The second research question also uncovered that, majority of the respondents disagreed that, they later developed interest in the accidental courses of study given to them based on the findings that, most of them had happily accepted the courses of study given to them, only few among them differed or delayed their admissions before accepting it later. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Mc McCarthy (2014) who revealed that, student interest in a subject or course holds so much power. When a subject or course connects to what students are interested in, engagement deepens as they willingly take time thinking, dialoguing, and creating ideas in meaningful ways.

The third research question discovered that, majority of the respondents disagreed that their accidental courses of study affected their academic performance. This finding disagreed with the finding of Harackiewicz, et al., (2016) as they revealed from their research that, students at all levels will study more effectively about their favourite subjects or courses only and less effectively learned other subjects or courses because they don't have interest in it . The finding also disagreed with the finding of Arhin (2018) who discovered that, career goals play a substantial role in shaping student's study behaviour while in tertiary institution because it serves as motivation factor for the students to achieve academic excellence. The last research question revealed that, majority of the respondents agreed that, accidental choice of course of study has no effect on their career objectives. This finding disagreed with the finding of Mesa (2012) who asserts that individuals with positive career aspirations have high learning goal orientation because their characteristics of seeking to master new skills, complete tasks and overcome difficulties will be in line with their career pursuits. This finding equally disagreed with the finding of Lopez-Bonilla et al. (2012) who identified that most common

inspirations for course or programme completion relate to career ambitions.

## **CONCLUSION**

Conclusively, the study discovered that, majority of the respondents agreed that, they were given courses of study accidentally for one reason or the other based on policies of the examination body. It was equally found that, majority of the respondents disagreed that, they later developed interest in the accidental courses of study given to them. This indicates that, they just accepted the accidental courses because they have no choice and they don't want to waste much time waiting for another year, but the accidental course does not develop their interest to passion for it at all. Majority of the respondents disagreed that their accidental courses of study affected their academic performance. This means that, upon that they were not interested in the courses given to them does not affect their performance, they still read the courses with good faith and performed better. Majority of the respondents agreed that, accidental choice of course of study has no effect on their career objectives. This indicates that, the accidental courses are closely related to their courses of interest or applied for as such it doesn't affect their career goals.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

1. JAMB should review their admission policy to minimized the level of given applicants courses of study accidentally because it affects some of the student's career goals. At the same time, they should maintain their standard also.
2. Accidentally admitted students should try to understand the difference between interest and destiny and take the courses given them with good faith and study it very well.



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## APPENDIX

### Accidental Choice and University Students' Interest Assessment Questionnaire (ACUSIAQ).

Dear respondent,

I am a researcher from Sokoto State University conducting a research on **Accidental Choice of course and University Students' Interest in such courses** in Sokoto State University. Any information you may provide would make relevant contribution to this research work and knowledge in general. All your responses would be taken and used confidentially. Thank you so much for your time and support.

**Instruction:** Choose the most applicable response with a tick in the box.

Key: A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

SN	Item	A	SA	D	SD
<b>Causes of accidental choice of course of study</b>					
1	I was given a course I did not applied for				
2	I was given a course I did not applied for because of my low scores in JAMB examination				
3	I was given a course I did not applied for because of my deficiency in JAMB examination				
4	I was given a course I did not applied for because of my deficiency in SSCE				
5	I was given a course I did not applied for because of my wrong combination of subject for JAMB examination				
<b>Students interest in such accidental courses of study after admission</b>					
1	I was happy when I was admitted to study a course I did not apply for				
2	I differed or delayed my admission to struggle for change of course				
3	I later develop interest in the accidental course given to me				
4	I'm just reading the accidental course given to me but I don't have interest in it to date				
<b>Effect of accidental choice of course of study on students' academic performance</b>					



1	As a victim of accidental choice of course I'm performing above average				
2	As a victim of accidental choice of course I have an average performance				
3	As a victim of accidental choice of course I'm performing below average				
4	The accidental choice of course has no effect on my academic performance.				
	<b>Accidental choice of course of study affect students' career objectives</b>				
1	My accidental choice of course is fully in line with my career objectives				
2	My accidental choice of course is partially in line with my career objectives				
3	My accidental choice of course is not in line with my career objectives				
4	My accidental choice of course has no effect on my career objectives at all.				