

Three Years of Post UME Screening: Influence on Science Education Students' Achievement, in Delta State University, Abraka

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ABSTRACT The purpose of this study was to monitor the performances of science education students admitted through Post UME screening since its introduction in 2005/2006 session. The design employed for the study was ex post facto. All the students admitted in 2005/2006 session for Biology Education, Chemistry Education, Mathematics Education and Physics Education and the equivalent number of students in similar programmes admitted through UME and now in 400 level formed the sample of the study of 214 students. Four research questions were raised and answered and two hypotheses stated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Two instruments were used for data collection, which included: Departmental admission list and students past results data cards. The major findings of this study include a consistent decline in the number of students admitted for Science Education Programmes since the introduction of Post UME screening; performances pattern of the students admitted through Post UME screening were found to have followed the normal pattern, of distribution, with few students appearing very good and very poor while a large number of students appeared as average students; a non-significant difference in CGPA score was found between students admitted through Post UME screening and those admitted through UME scores; and a non-significant difference in CPGA score was found between male and female students admitted through Post UME screening in various Science Education Programmes. It was concluded that what universities need are tools for teaching and learning and conducive environment that will guarantee effective learning rather than Post UME screening.

INTRODUCTION

The history of University education in Nigeria can be traced back to the setting up of the Elliot Commission by the then British Colonial Government in 1943. The commission recommended among others, the establishment of a university college in Nigeria. This resulted in the founding of University College, Ibadan in 1948. In 1960, University of Nigeria, Nsukka was established. The implementation of Lord Eric Ashby's commissions' report in 1962 started the country's march towards general access to University Education (Salim 2006). In 1962, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Ile Ife and University of Lagos were established. University of Benin was established in Benin City in 1970; initially as a College of Technology.

It is important to note at this point that of the

first six universities established in Nigeria before government took over all schools in 1974, only two, universities of Ibadan and Lagos were Federal Institutions. The remaining four: Ahmadu Bello, Ife and Nsukka were regional, state and later Federal Institutions at one time or the other.

The further increase in the demand for University education led to the establishment of seven new universities in 1975 by the then Military Administration, these seven new universities were sited at Calabar, Ilorin, Jos, Kano, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt and Sokoto. From the period of return to democratic rule in 1979 through the military intervention in 1983 and to another return to democratic rule in 1999, the Federal, State, even individuals and corporate bodies have established and are still establishing new universities.

After the establishment of the earlier universities, no thought was given to the possibilities of co-operative action in the matter of admission of students into universities. As a result of this position, every one of the existing universities conducted its own entrance examination and admitted its own students. Salim (2006) noted that after some time, these systems of admission revealed serious limitations and waste of resour-

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ces in the process of administering the entrance examinations.

One of the major limitations of the individual university admission procedure was the issue of multiple applications and multiple admissions inherent in the system then. It was possible in that system for an applicant to receive admission in more than one university. This development led to the establishment of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board in 1978 by the Federal Military Government.

The establishment of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) was a direct response to the failure of earlier system to effectively accommodate and guarantee the possibility of taking care of the growing aspirations of young school leavers seeking admission into the few universities in Nigeria. The responsibilities of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board as specified by the law establishing the board were to conduct entrance examination and co-ordinate admission into various universities in such manner that an applicant would not deprive some other qualified candidates of places in the universities by being offered admission into two or more different institutions. The board has also offered admissions to reflect a fair distribution of students to universities to reflect the Federal character.

The demand for university education in Nigeria has been on the increase than ever before. Both the public and private universities put together, have not been able to meet the admission spaces of candidates seeking admission into universities. In concrete terms, the number of students in the universities increased from an undergraduate student population of 210 in 1948 to an estimate of 600,000 in 2003 (Akinkugbe 2003). Professor Okoje (2008) who is the Nigerian Universities Commission Ssecretary General (NUC) speaking in university of Port Harcourt Alumni Association as the guest lecturer, lamented the inability of the Nigerian universities to provide admission to candidates seeking admission. He noted that out of the 1,500,000 candidates who wrote the 2008 university matriculation examination in Nigerian, only 7% of them were offered admission. This low number of candidates being offered admission annually in Nigerian universities has resulted in both candidates and parents being very desperate in the bid to be among the few admitted. This has ushered in different types of examination malpractices in the conduct of

matriculation examinations. The various forms of examination malpractices used include; alteration of scores by JAMB computer operators, bringing worked answers to examination hall; mass/organized cheating involving assistance from invigilators, supervisors and outsiders; and insult/assault on supervisors/invigilators (Oluyeba and Daramola 1992; Alutu and Aluede 2006; and Kpangban et al. 2008). Some JAMB officials seem to have fallen to the pressure mounted on them by admission seekers and their parents and consequently have compromised their positions in conducting credible matriculation examinations. This has manifested in the very poor performances of students who scored very high marks in JAMB examination in various disciplines in the universities. Ibidapo-Obe (2006) reacting to the situation noted that the failure rate among candidates who enter universities with high UME (University Matriculation Examination) scores is very disturbing. Continuing, he stated that when such people who do not merit university admission get into the universities, most of them find it difficult to cope with the academic rigour and end up being asked to withdraw from the university.

It is painful to note that Nigeria has been waging an unsuccessful war against examination malpractices since colonial era. The first examination malpractice in Nigeria was reported in 1914; when there was a leakage of question paper in the senior Cambridge examination. Since then, the incidence of examination malpractice has been on the increase and yearly reported. The conspicuous years reported include: 1963, 1967, 1970, 1973, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1985, 1987, 1991, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 (Oladope 1997; WAEC 2004; Alutu and Aluede 2006). The registrar of JAMB, Salim (2002) in his own contribution noted that thirty-one out of one hundred and sixty-six examination towns were involved in cheating and malpractice while forty-five thousand four hundred and thirty-eight candidates seeking university admission had their results cancelled in the year 2002 because of examination malpractice.

Generally, the universities have the following roles and responsibilities to perform: generation of new knowledge from all sectors from the society; to support economic growth and competitiveness of countries; and to address the developmental challenges facing societies (Ibidapoobe 2006). The primary and specific responsibility of the university is to impact knowledge on

students for the benefits of the society. The major responsibility in this regard is therefore research and production of quality graduates to function in various areas of the economy and society. Universities as citadels of knowledge-producing institutions are repositories of knowledge. They should reflect the best in terms of knowledge and academic content. The universities should be able to impart this knowledge to their students who will disseminate the knowledge to interested public for the benefit of the society (Ibidapo-obe 2006).

In the recent years, a lot of questions are being asked as to whether the Nigerian universities have been able to discharge their responsibilities towards the society? A lot of indices tend to suggest that there is a whooping gap between the expectations of the society and the performance of the universities. As the years roll by, more people have continued to raise alarm about the falling standard in education and criticized the quality of graduates being turned-out from Nigerian universities. Some employers of labour complain about the failure of graduates to meet their corporate expectations especially in terms of skills and competence. To buttress this point, a study sponsored by the National Universities Commission and Education Tax Fund (NUC 2004) found that lack of fit between university graduates and the needs of employers in various disciplines.

The obvious lapses noticed in the process of admission of candidates into Nigerian universities through University Matriculation Examination (UME) and the expected roles of universities in the society which is currently on the decline, necessitated the call for an alternative method of admitting students into Nigerian universities. This call resulted in granting universities the power to conduct Post-UME Universities conducted screening tests. It is believed by the proponents that Post-UME-screening test will ensure quality and that when the best students are admitted, the results will also be enhanced. It is also believed that quality admission will produce better quality of graduates, students committed to their studies, reduced incidence of examination malpractice and sex for marks.

Events of the past three years of Post-UME-screening tests among Nigerians universities tend to cast doubt as to whether it is for academic excellence alone that the test was advocated for. The activities of most universities during the exercise tend to suggest that financial gain is a

major reason for the advocacy. The indices to prove this include: lack of uniformity in the amount charged (some state universities charged as high as ₦10,000 in the first year of test conduct) for the test; lowering of cut-off marks to attract more candidates to register for the tests; very unfair tests which has no scheme of work to guide the candidates in preparation; lack of fair treatment of candidates during the conduct of the examination (some candidates fail even before the test is conducted because of lack of correct information on venue); unnecessary secrecy in the conduct of the test (for example, candidates are not given their question papers at the end of the test to serve as bases to predict their scores); and extreme difficulties encountered by rural dwellers in getting their results which are only published in the universities websites in the internet. Whereas the gains of the Post-UME-test seem clear and laudable it is skeptical if the corruption that bedeviled the UME centered admission will not shift its post from the JAMB office to universities. I hope that does not happen.

From the fore going, I have been able to trace the journey that brought us to Post UME-screening test conducted by universities. No matter how well packaged a programme is, it need periodic evaluation to provide evidences to prove if the objectives of the establishment are being achieved. With this in mind, the purpose of this study was to find out how the students admitted into science education department through Post UME screening test have fared in their academic achievement.

Statement of Problem

The study grew out of curiosity to find out how the science education students admitted through Post UME screening tests for three years running now are doing in their academic work. No study to my knowledge in the literature at my disposal has been carried out to evaluate the academic achievement of science education students admitted through Post UME screening test. The study is therefore well-timed and well positioned to generate data for improving the exercise. The statement of the problem therefore is, will the evaluation of science education student's academic achievement admitted through Post UME screening test generate data that will prove their superiority over their predecessors who were admitted through their UME scores?

Research Questions

To guide this study, the following research questions were raised:

1. What is the trend in the number of students admitted for the various programme under science education department since the inception of Post UME screening?
2. What is the pattern of performance of science education students in various programmes admitted through Post UME test?
3. Will there be any difference in academic achievement between students admitted through Post UME screening test and those admitted through UME scores?
4. Will there be any difference in academic achievement between male and female science education students admitted through Post UME screening?

Hypothesis of the Study

To compare the various groups in the study, two hypotheses were stated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1. There will be no significant difference in academic achievement between science education students in various programmes admitted through Post UME screening and those admitted through UME scores.

Ho2. There will be no significant difference in academic achievement between male and female science education students in various programmes admitted through Post UME screening test.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

The design employed for this study was Expost Facto. The design was most suitable and appropriate for the study since the past records and results of the students were used in reaching conclusions about the students' learning outcome and the entire Post UME selection strategy. The design, which employs students past records in reaching a conclusion about them, is described as Expost Facto.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population of study consists of all the

science education students in all the programmes in science education department. The population of the students is put at 1029 which consist of 261 students in biology education, 199 students in chemistry education, 287 students in mathematics education, 192 students in physics education, 16 students in computer science education and 74 students in integrated science education. The science education department houses six B.Sc Ed programmes leading to the award of degrees in biology education, chemistry education, mathematics education, physics education, integrated science education and computer science education.

The sample of the students consists of 214 in present 300 level and 400 level students in the various programmes when they were in 300 level. Computer science and integrated science students were not included in the study. For the students currently in 100, 200 and 300 levels in the various programmes, the entire population was used for the study. The reason being that their populations are low and their real numbers used.

Instrument

Two instruments were mainly used for the study. The first is the past admission lists consisting of the names of students admitted for the various programmes sent to the department. The second instrument is the Student Academic Record data card. The students' academic record cards data are kept by the course advisers of the various programmes.

No validation of any instrument was carried out. This was because the two instruments used for data collection were original records and all information collected from them are from the original sources and thus adjudged to be correct, authentic and reliable. This agrees with the recommendations of (Wiseman 1999; Johnson and Christensen 2000; Borich 2004; Thorndike and Hagen 1977).

Procedure for Data Collection

All the data used for the study were collected from the past records kept in the departmental office. The past admission records of students in the department were collected from the department's secretary by the researcher. For the students past results, the researcher directly

collected the sampled students academic record data cards from the various course advisers to the various programmes. From these data cards, information about students past cumulative grade point average (CGPA) and academic standing were collected. The collected data were summarized in tables to answer the raised questions and test the stated hypotheses.

RESULTS

Shown in table 1, the trend in admission of students into various programmes in science education department has been on the decrease since the implementation of the Post UME screening admission policy in 2005/06 academic session. The table shows that the trend in the

Table1. Trend in the admission of science education students for the various programme 2004-2007

Programme	Variables	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Biology education	Total admitted	124	29	24	14
	% decline since Post UME		73%	81%	89%
Chemistry education	Total admitted	81	27	16	20
	% decline since Post UME		67%	80%	75%
Mathematics education	Total admitted	118	31	28	22
	% decline since Post UME		74%	77%	81%
Physics education	Total admitted	44	28	26	23
	% decline since Post UME		37%	41%	48%
Total	Total for all programmes	367	115	94	79
Decline in admission	% decline for all programme since 05/06 session		69%	74.40%	78.50%

Table 2. Pattern of performance of post UME students in various programmes.

Programme	Variables	100 level	200 level	300 level
Biology education	% in 1 st class	0	0	0%
	% in 2 ¹	2 = 7%	0	0
	% in 2 ²	7 = 24%	11 = 38	5 = 17%
	% in 3 rd class	13 = 45%	11 = 38	14 = 48
	% in pass degree	5 = 17%	5 = 17	8 = 28
	% on probation	2 = 7%	2 = 7	2 = 7%
	% withdrawn	= 0%	0	
Chemistry education	% in 1 st class	0	0	0%
	% in 2 ¹	1 = 3%	3 = 12%	1 = 4%
	% in 2 ²	10 = 35%	15 = 58%	11 = 44%
	% in 3 rd class	15 = 52%	8 = 31%	13 = 52%
	% in pass degree	1 = 3%	0	= 0%
	% on probation	2 = 7%	0	0
	% withdrawn	= 0%	0.1	
Mathematics education	% in 1 st class	0	0	0%
	% in 2 ¹	10 = 32%	3 = 11%	5 = 19%
	% in 2 ²	7 = 23%	11 = 39%	9 = 35
	% in 3 rd class	7 = 23%	6 = 21	6 = 23
	% in pass degree	7 = 23%	7 = 25	6 = 23
	% on probation	0 = 0%	1 = 4	0
	% withdrawn	= 0%	0	0
Physics education	% in 1 st class	=	=	=
	% in 2 ¹	2 = 8%	2 = 7.5% 5	1 = 41%
	% in 2 ²	2 = 8%	7 = 26% 14	6 = 22%
	% in 3 rd class	19 = 69	13 = 48% 21	16 = 59%
	% in pass degree	3 = 12	3 = 11 3	3 = 11% 4
	% on probation	1 = 4%	2 = 7.5% =	= 1.4% =
	% withdrawn	= 0%	= 0% =	0
Summary for all programmes	% in 1 st class	0	0%	0%
	% in 2 ¹	12 = 3%	7.63%	6.70%
	% in 2 ²	22 = 3%	40.25%	29.50%
	% in 3 rd class	47%	34.50%	45.50%
	% in pass degree	13 = 5%	13.25%	15.50%
	% on probation	4.50%	4.63%	2.75%
	% withdrawn	0%	0%	0%

decrease of students admitted into programmes in science education department when compared with the number admitted through UME score in 2004/05 session follows this order; 69% in 2005/06, 73.4% in 2006/07 and 78.5% in 2007/08.

The trend in admission and decrease of students admitted into programmes in science education department is also illustrated in figure 1.

Table 2 shows the pattern of performances of science education students in various programmes admitted through Post UME screening since the past three academic sessions. Summary of performance patterns for all programmes as shown in table 2 indicates that in 100 level; no student was in first class, 12.3% were in second class upper division, 22.3% were in second class lower division, 47.6% were in third class, 13.5% were in pass, 4.5% were on probation and no student withdrawn. In 200 level, no student was in first class, 7.63% were in second class upper division, 40.25% were in second class lower division, 34.5% were in third class, 13.25% were pass, 4.63% were on probation and no student withdrawn. In 300 level, no student was in first class, 6.75% were in second class upper division, 29.50% were in second class lower division, 45.50% were in third class, 15.50% were in pass, 2.75% on probation and no student withdrawn. The performance pattern tends to follow the normal curve where the very good and the very poor students makeup the upper and lower 12.5% of the population.

The pattern of performances of the Post UME admitted students is also illustrated in figures 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d for the various programmes.

Shown in table 3, the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of students admitted through Post UME screening and those admitted through UME score at 300 level indicates marginal

Table 3: Comparison of CGPA of 300L students admitted through the Post UME and current 400L Students 300L result admitted through UME scores

<i>Programmes</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>X CGPA</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>X CGPA non Post UME in 300L</i>
Biology education	29	2.09	29	1.9
Chemistry education	25	2.56	25	2.29
Mathematics education	26	2.26	26	2.32
Physics education	27	1.97	27	2.31
Total average	107	2.22	107	2.21

differences in favour of Post UME screened students for biology and chemistry education. For mathematics and Physics education marginal differences where in favour of UME admitted students.

Table 4 indicates a non-significant difference between Post UME and UME students among the various programmes ($t=0.572, 0.989, 0.244$ and $1.645, P>0.05$). With this finding, H_0 is therefore retained because there is really no significant CGPA difference between students admitted through Post UME screening and those admitted through UME scores.

Shown in table 5, comparison of CGPA of male and female students admitted through Post UME

Table 5: Comparison of CGPA of 300L male and female students admitted through Post UME test.

<i>Programmes</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>X CGPA of males</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>X CGPA of females</i>
Biology education	8	2.06	21	1.94
Chemistry education	13	2.76	12	1.96
Mathematics education	18	2.01	8	2.83
Physics education	19	1.96	8	2.01
Total average	58	2.20	49	2.19

Table 4. Summary of t-test analysis comparing CGPA of Post UME students and non-post UME students in 300 level.

<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>T-cal value</i>	<i>P</i>
<i>Biology education</i>					
Post UME admitted	29	2.09	0.6707	0.572	0.05
Non Post UME admitted	29	1.9	0.724		
<i>Chemistry Education</i>					
Post UME admitted	25	2.56	0.5283	0.989	0.05
Non Post UME admitted	25	2.29	0.6715		
<i>Mathematics education</i>					
Post UME admitted	26	2.26	0.9564	0.244	0.05
Non Post UME admitted	26	2.32	0.5046		
<i>Physics Education</i>					
Post UME admitted	27	1.97	0.671	1.645	0.05
Non Post UME admitted	27	2.31	0.6312		

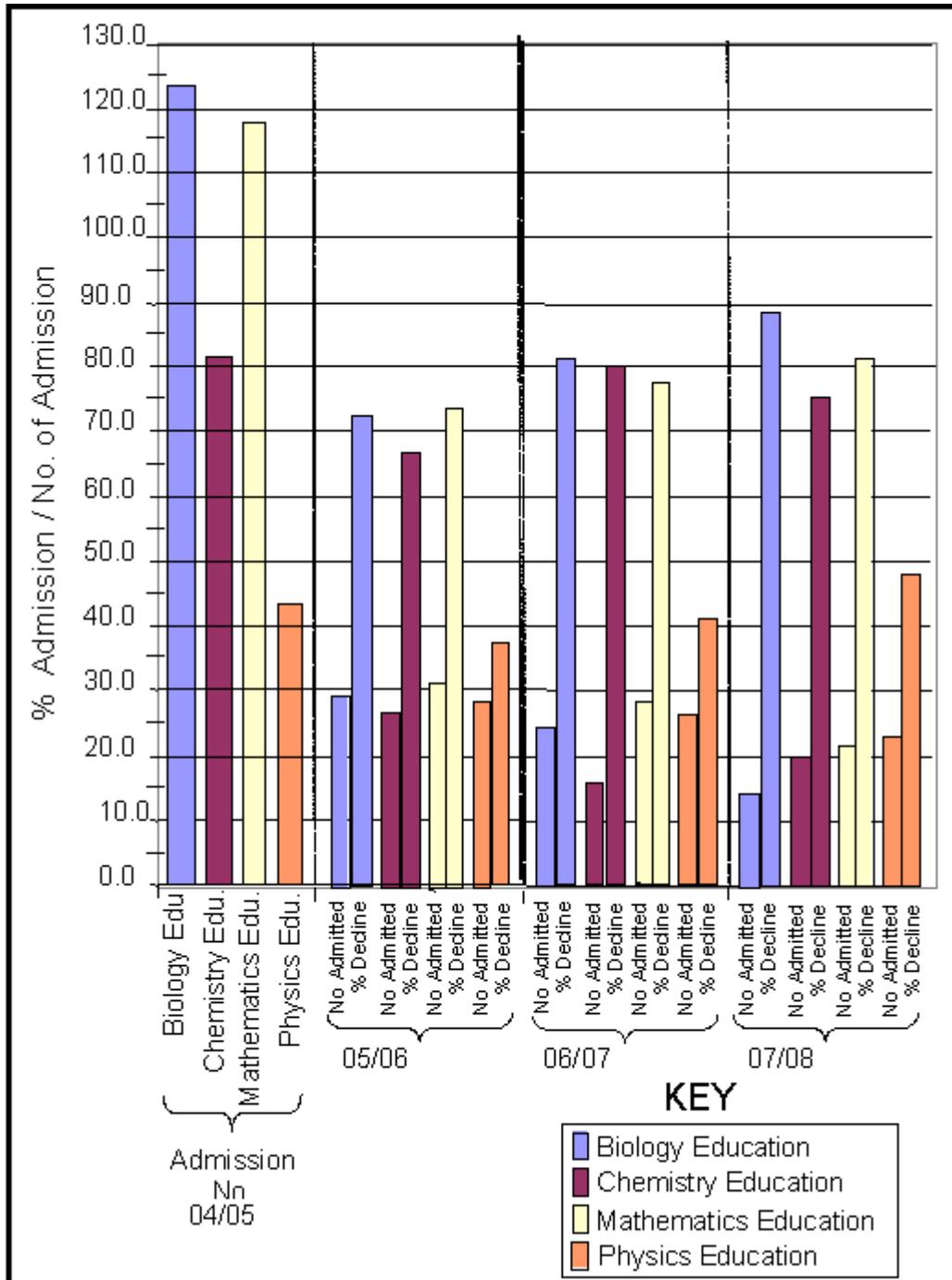


Fig 1. Science Education Students.
Trend in the Admission of Science Education Students 2004-2007.

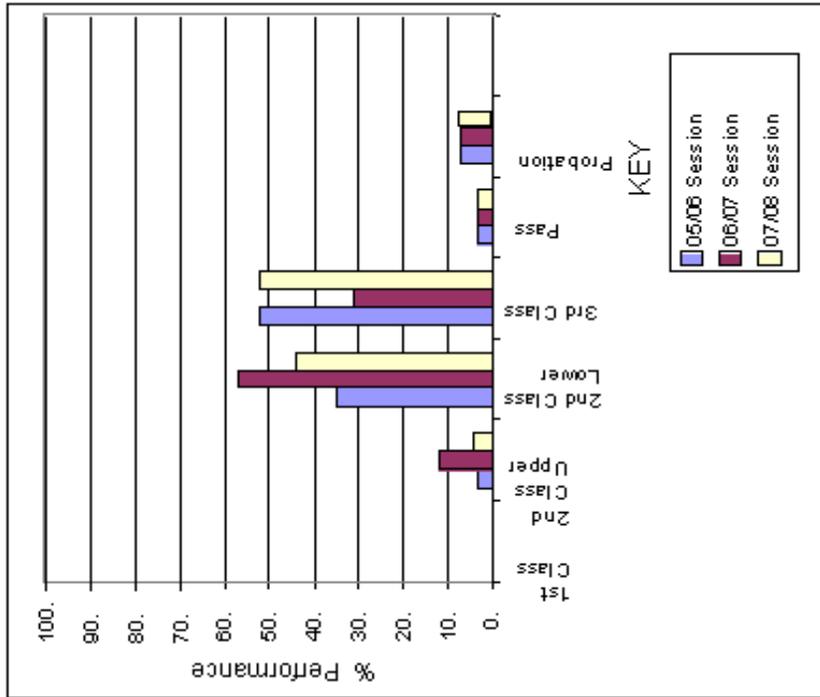


Fig. 2b. Chemistry Education Students.
Pattern of performance of Post UME Admitted

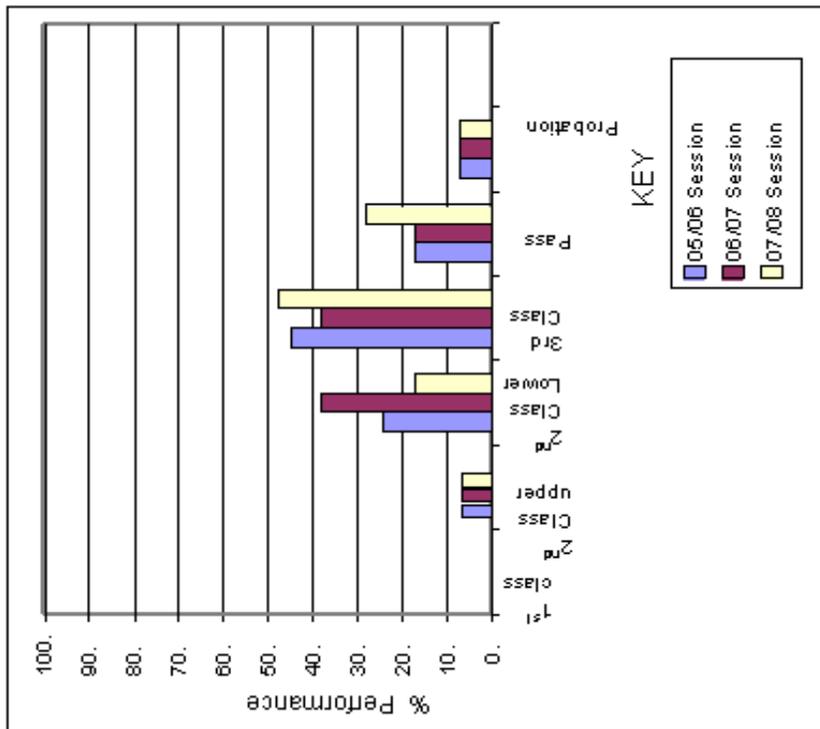


Fig. 2a. Biology Education Students.
Pattern of performance of Post UME Admitted students.

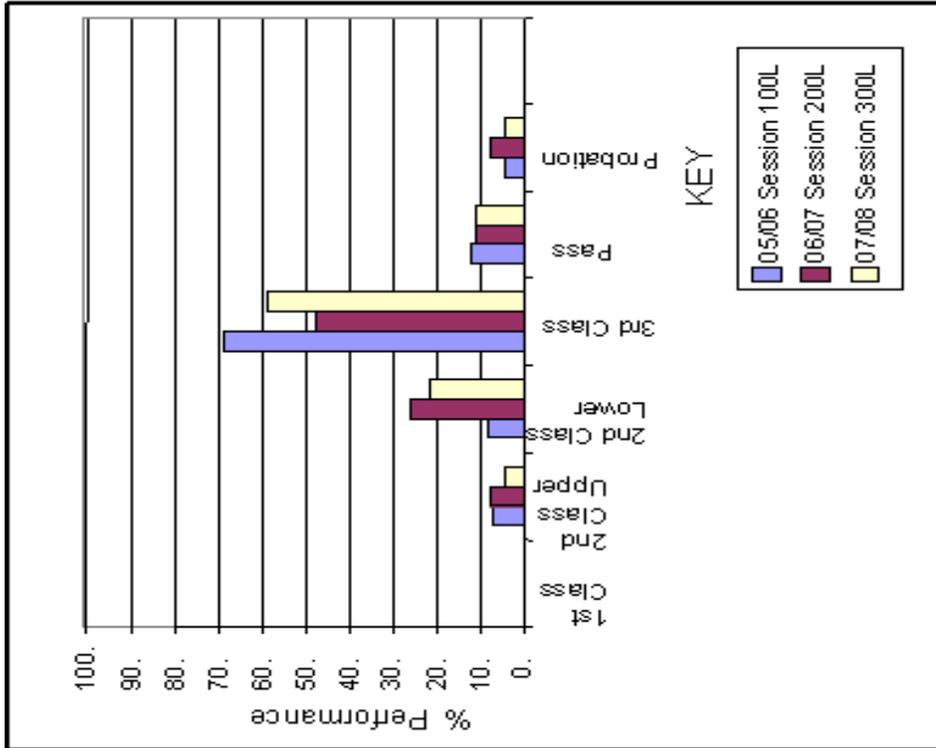


Fig. 2d. Physics Education Students.

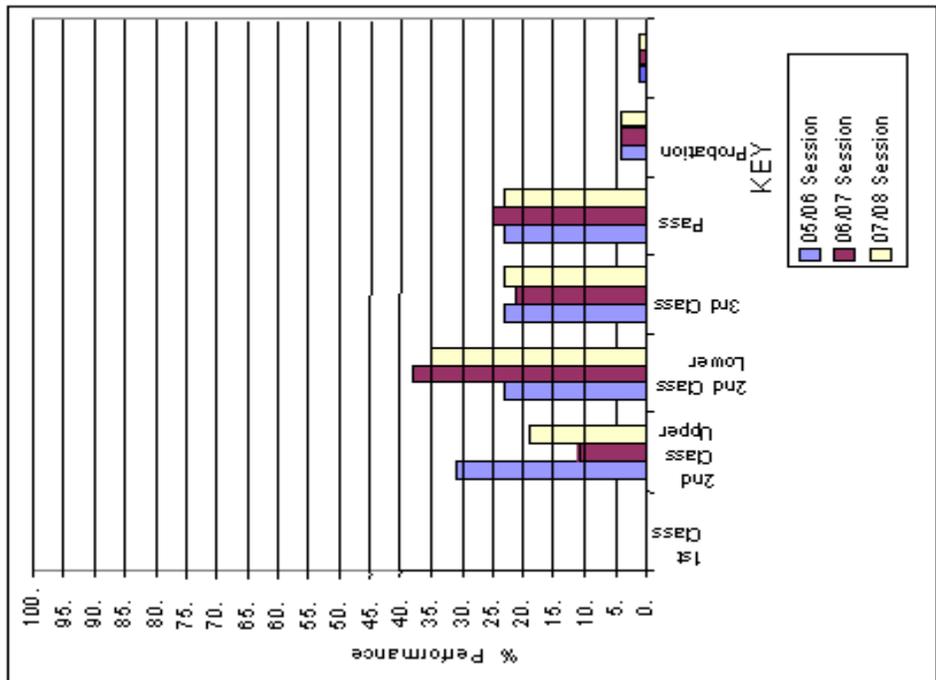


Fig. 2c. Mathematics Education Students.
Pattern of performance of Post UME Admitted students

screening indicates marginal differences between male and female students in favour of the males when taken together. However, little differences were found in biology and chemistry education in favour of males while in mathematics and physics education in favour of females.

Table 6 shows that t-test analysis of CGPA of male and female students admitted through Post UME did not significantly differ. This is shown as ($t = 0.65, P > 0.05$). With this finding, H_0 was therefore retained.

Table 6: Summary of t-test Analysis comparing CGPA of male and female students admitted through Post UME test.

Group	N	Mean	Sd	T-cal value	P
Male students	58	2.2	0.96	0.65	0.05
Female students	49	2.19	0.68		
Difference		-0.01			

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study have been able to unmask the Post UME screening in its ability to turn the academic fortunes around. The findings clearly show that Post UME screening cannot do better than UME in influencing students' achievement. The findings of this study has proved the proponents of Post UME screening wrong who before now believed that the only solution to the problem of under-achievement noticed among university undergraduates is through rigorous screening and selection of top ten percent of the candidates seeking admission into the universities. The practice apart from being too stressful for the candidates has the potential of breeding and nurturing corruption in the university system since both parents and candidates are unnecessarily desperate. The way and manner the Post UME screening is being conducted in universities now, has the potential of eliminating the average students from the university education, which will create a problem of scarcity of skilled manpower later.

It is very true that the way JAMB conducts the university matriculation examination leaves much to be desired. The examination is characterized by all forms of malpractices with most of them perpetuated by JAMB officials. With this type of trend, naturally the university administrators will have no option than to seek for alternatives to correct the ills. This may be the initial reasons why the university administrators proposed the post UME screening.

The universities cannot entirely exonerate themselves from the issue of poor quality products. The university system has internal mechanisms for eliminating very poor students from various programmes which are not strictly adhered to. In the University system, there are provisions for probation, and withdrawal of students because of academic incompetencies. Rather, what we find these days is watering down of standards to enable "them" graduate. The university system should first of all purge itself of internal fraud that enable very poor students to remain in the system. How do universities react to lowering of cut-off point for qualification to write Post UME screening test that attracts 26,000 and 33,000 students from where 1,000 and 3,000 are to be admitted respectively?

One major findings of this study is that since the introduction of Post UME screening exercise and the allocation of number of candidates to be admitted by NUC, there has been a steady and consistent decline in the number of students being admitted in Science Education Department. This will definitely create a very serious problem in the teaching of sciences as schools will soon run short of qualified and competent science graduate teachers. Most secondary schools in Delta State are already suffering from acute shortage of graduate chemistry and physics teachers. This agrees with the findings of (Urevbu 1997; Baike 2000; Ajaja 2002; Ajaja and Kpangban 2007; and Ajaja 2008).

On the pattern of performances of Post UME screened students after three years in various programmes, study shows that the very good and very poor students formed the upper 12.5% and lower 12.5% while the remaining 75% are made of the average students. This agrees with the normal curve in binomial distribution. The pattern of performances of Science Education students indicates that Post UME screening was unable to produce any outstanding student in all the programmes. This development rather than admission criteria, can be explained to be the result of poor state of infrastructure for teaching and learning, poor teaching methods by lecturers and poor quality lecturers in the universities. Trowbridge and Baybee (1996) stressed the importance of the use of resource material for effective learning.

Another finding of this study indicates that there is no significant difference in the C.G.P.A.

earned between students admitted through Post UME screening and those admitted through UME scores. Although the summary of mean CGPA for all programmes indicated a marginal higher CGPA for Post UME screened students, the difference was not high enough to make it significant. The finding therefore clearly indicated that the problem of under-achievement of students found in Nigerian universities is not entirely the problem of poor screening into the system. The problem is mainly the inability of the University to process and refine the students to make them better than when they were admitted. I don't think what Nigerian universities need is Post UME screening since their systems already have internal mechanisms to deal with students admitted through fraud. What universities need are better infrastructure, equipment, facilities and conducive environment that will guarantee effective teaching and learning. Bankole (2006) lamented how poor funding has contributed to fall in standard and quality of tertiary education because of dearth of facilities for teaching and learning in most universities.

On the finding of non-significant difference between male and female students admitted through Post UME screening the study indicates that the students scored similarly irrespective of sex differences. This study tends to invalidate earlier findings on effects of sex on science achievement, which tend to suggest in most cases that male students always perform better than the female students. The findings of this study on the effect of sex on achievement, agrees with the position held by Good and Braphy (1980) that there is no consistent research evidence on the effects of sex difference on students achievement. They maintained that it is unreasonable to explain differentials of achievement on the basis of biological differences between sexes. This again agrees with Spencer (1996) who found no gender difference in CGPA of students. However, this study indicates that biology education study is dominated by females while males dominate the study of mathematics and physics – education. The study of chemistry education is shared about equally by both males and females. This findings tend to agree with some earlier findings which found attitude towards some science subjects to go along sex line. Jeje and Olagoke (2006) found male students showing higher attitudes towards mathematics than the females.

CONCLUSION

The problem of poor quality graduates cannot be certainly solved by Post UME screening. It will in no distant time worsen our skilled manpower needs and take us back to the period when we import labour from Europe, America and Asia. What the universities and indeed schools at all levels need are working tools and conducive environment for effective teaching and learning. The universities need to strengthen their teaching to enable their students learn. They must also seriously scrutinize the quality of lecturers they employ. The quality of lecturers in Nigerian universities will not be better than what it is now until postgraduate programmes are taken very seriously. Some universities are in the habit of awarding postgraduate certificates to poorly exposed and supervised students in various fields. Most external examiners find it very difficult to fail very poor post graduate students because of the fear of not going to be invited again. These poorly trained students go back to their respective fields and perform poorly. Nigerian universities must rise up to the challenges of the 21st century if they are to remain relevant in scheme of things. Standard in universities should be raised, maintained and sustained. Internal mechanisms for dealing with very poor students who enter through the back door should be invoked by the universities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

Arising from the Post UME screening experience, on the long run, more universities should be built in Nigeria to meet the demand for university education.

In the interim, the owners of universities should provide more infrastructure and resources in the existing universities to enable them admit more students into their programmes.

All existing, universities should strengthen their teaching and learning processes to enable them produce quality graduates that will stand the test of time.

The current system of admission of students into Nigerian universities should be scrapped and replaced with Europe and American options, where student's secondary school records form the major basis for admission.

NOTES

- (1) Education Tax Fund: This is the fund generated from company tax to fund education.
- (2) Screening: This is the giving of tests to determine the academic abilities of students.

ABBREVIATIONS

- (i) UME: University Matriculation Examination
- (ii) CGPA: Cumulative Grade Point Average
- (iii) JAMB: Joint Admission and Matriculation Board
- (iv) ETF: Education Tax Fund
- (v) NUC: University Commission
- (vi) WAEC: West African Examination Council

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