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LECTURERS SALARY AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

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Student engagement has become a recurring issue in universities across the globe. This may be due to the geometric increase in student enrolment in the universities and the desire of the universities to meet their demands on campus. As a result, this study investigated the level of student engagement and the influence of salary on student engagement in public universities in southwestern Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all lecturers in the seven federal government owned universities in southwest states of Nigeria with a sample size of 1,250 calculated and derived using Research Advisor's Table at 95% degree of confidence with 5% error margin. Questionnaire was used to elicit information from respondents. The study found that, the level of students' engagement is low and teachers' salary has significant influence on student engagement in public universities in southwestern Nigeria. The study recommended that students should be more engaged by lecturers, and that government should increase salary of lecturers in Nigerian Universities.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent time, student engagement has become a recurring issue in universities across the globe. This may be because, students are the main reason for establishing the universities and employing lecturers. It may also be due to the geometric increase in student enrolment in the universities and the desire of the universities to meet their demands on campus. As the number of candidates desiring university education increases, Rotham et al., (2017) informed that students showed preference for world class universities where their cognitive, psychomotive and affective domains are adequately engaged. According to Salako and Nome (2018) the involvement, engagement and activities of students in the universities are key issues in attracting and retaining students in the university.

Student engagement in the universities centered round activities that would assist a student become a productive individual on graduation. Salau et al. (2020) posited that student will benefit more in the university if they are actively engaging in activities that would improve their overall performance while in the school and after graduation. Student engagement can be viewed as the various areas of involving the students in the curricula and co-curricular activities that would assist in developing their domains of learning in and out of the class. Students' engagement has to do with the rate of allowing student to take active roles during teaching and learning in the class. This according to Agboola, et.al (2018) would lead to improvement in comprehension of the concept taught in particular and subject matter generally.

Student engagement in the university would be a lip story without conviction and willingness on the part of the students as well as commitment on the part of the lecturers. Obviously, if students are engaged in class, the efforts displayed at this period of engagement will be of help to that particular individual, the entire members of the class, and the lecturers. However, in a situation where students are not engaged in the class, such a situation creates issues for the cognitive, affective and psychomotive domains of the students.

In the opinion of Saks (2006) student who are not engaged in school activities struggle with the domains of learning. Such student struggle with, depression, unimpressive academic performance, self-talking, self-help and coming to school late and leaving early. However, Demetria (2018) informs that engaged students will always put in their best in their private study ahead of the class with total concentration. However, those who are not engaged will be battling with ways to concentrate on their study and interaction with peers in the class and school. Those engaged are building their academic career consciously and unconsciously by sacrificing enjoyment to internalize the content covered and how to apply the learning in daily activities in the real-life situation. There is need for students to be engaged by lecturers to understand the concept thought in the class unambiguously.

Student engagement cannot be without the efforts of lecturers and university administration. This is because, In the classroom or at the institution, the lecturers have a direct relationship with the pupils. Hence, lecturers are key in engaging student in the university for a better output. Specifically, lecturers are custodian of support and repository of what student can do and can be involved in to become a refined product in and within the system. Faloba et.al (2021) concluded that the content covered in the class when students are engaged is crucial to their life on campus. Student engagement according to Markos and Srideri (2017) could be influenced by many factors such as: lecturers and students' attitude, home background, social class, peer groups, age, location of the university and student level of intelligent. The factors contributed in no small measure to their general performance. Lecturers the world over, are

responsible for imparting knowledge in the university. Hence, they are directly involved in student engagement. However, Fabayo et.al (2020) pointed out that lecturer's salary is a motivation to do more in encouraging, molding and refining undergraduate through their engagement in various activities on campus.

Demetria (2018) noted that universities in Tnazania are making concerted efforts at engaging students. However, studies by Akpa et al., (2016), Agbionu et al., (2018) and Demetria (2018) revealed that lecturers who are key in the area of student engagement are disengaging and moving from one university to another for better salary package. In addition, Adejobi and Famade (2017) argued that a considerable number of instructors have left Nigerian universities, both in terms of their physical departure and in terms of their engagement with students. Teaching, research, and community service are not the only areas impacted by lecturers' movement; it has an impact on students' engagement as well. Against this background, studies have identified cognitive, affective and psychomotive as the different areas of student engagement (Senior, et.al 2018, Sesmiyanti, 2018).

It is disturbing that graduate unemployment is on the increase in Nigeria. The National Bureau of Statistics (2024) reported 5.3% graduate unemployment as at quarter 1 of 2024. The implication is that university graduates are jobless after years of study. This is frustrating for the graduates and their parents who, given the economic issues went extra mile to source for finance to see their children through university. This graduate unemployment demands urgent attention because it deplete the national workforce and lowers productivity. Hence, the Gross Domestic Product is negatively affected. This makes Nigeria to be at the mercy of foreign money lenders such as World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), European Investment Bank (EIB), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Developmenty Association (IDA), and many more

To Punch Editor (2024), graduates' unemployment has dire consequences for individuals and the country as a whole. When graduates are unemployed, the secondary school students and younger ones develop a distaste for education generally and university education in particular. This might be why some of them referred to education as a scam. That is no jobs despite the investment in university education, making it to look like a deceit. This issue might be traced to their inadequate engagement in the university to build their interactive, communication and interpersonal skills in school. This is corroborated by Adebakin et. al (2015) who concluded that for student to be engaged in university's activities other than teaching and learning, concerns about their academic achievement, interpersonal skills, and communication had to be taken into account. In addition, the level of lecturer's commitment to provide assistance for student engagement seems unimpressive. Some of the lecturers in public universities in southwestern Nigeria do not engage the students during teaching and learning and in activities outside the class. Some do not provide opportunity for student engagement in the class; some do not belief in engaging student in the class and some do not encourage student to participate in other university activities. Some are of the opinion that students on campus are mature enough to know what to do and not to do in the class and school. These are a few of the problems with school-related student engagement

Various scholars have given different definitions of student engagement. To Karly (2018) It is the degree to which students pay attention, are curious, hopeful, and interested in the lessons being taught. It might also be called students' cognitive investment in their education, which includes their commitment to and involvement in their studies. To Ozurumba and Amasuomo (2015) It is the readiness of students to engage and succeed in their educational journey. In the

opinion of Barkley and Major, (2020), It is the students' emotional and cognitive states during class that symbolizes the meeting point of both. Engaging students is more than just having them consume information; they should be able to use their intellect and work through difficult concepts to understand what they are reading. To Goodall (2017), student engagement is any form of student enthusiasm and interest in the school activities, which directly or indirectly influences student academic output

Kewhil (2014) defined Student engagement, which may be measured by their cognitive, affective, and psychomotive behaviors, is a state in which students devote themselves both cognitively and physically to the academic program. Bridget et.al (2017) stated that the dynamics of students' positive attitudes toward the institution and its principles are known as student engagement. An involved student works with teachers and peers to ensure their success and the school's success, and they are completely aware of the school environment. Expanding on these ideas, Barkley and Major (2020) suggested that active learning, what students do to develop their skills, and motivation, the factors that influence an individual's behavior, are the results of student engagement. It is critical to realize that every student has a different combination of motivation and active learning, and that engagement varies over time and for each individual. The degree and context of engagement might differ; in one class, a student might be thrilled about every new development, but in another, they might be terrified of another minute. Additionally, motivation interacts with other learning-related factors including self-efficacy, or the conviction that one can do a task.

It's also critical to recognize that different student groups may exhibit varied levels of participation. Students may find it difficult to participate fully in class discussions if they were brought up in a society that views interrupting an elder or other authority figure as disrespectful. They might still be paying close attention and considering the material, though, and they might find a small group discussion or writing exercise enjoyable. Additionally, students may decide not to take part if they fear criticism for providing the incorrect response or if they feel unsafe in any other way.

The importance of lecturer's salary in the university needs to be recognized so that all efforts and resources will be concentrated on it to get the best required of the them to move the university forward by discharging their responsibilities appropriately. Baumruk and Gorman (2006) found that teachers are likely to engage students appropriately if their monthly emolument is enough to take care of their basic needs of life. According to Getsmay, et.al (2016) regardless of whether students are from economically or socially disadvantaged or relatively affluent backgrounds, teacher compensation has been demonstrated to be one of the most reliable indicators of student engagement in the classroom. Kaplan (2017), and Grove (2019) in their studies concluded that teacher's income is directly connected with student engagement through an analysis of teachers' compensation expectations, educational institutions may be able to improve student engagement. Employers are to ensure payment of adequate salary that will make teachers happy and deliver their statutory duties. It is frequently asserted that educators use salary-related data in determining the level of their contributions to the school (Gallup & Hopkins 2017; James 2021; Madruk, et.al, 2009). These include student's engagement in curricula and non-curricula activities as well as activities to assist students with risk factors connected with academic failure.

Rubie-Davies, et.al (2016), reported that the degree of student engagement in each area of learning determines the student's academic success. However, the study of Arrainy, et.al (2015), emphasized the need to understand how student engagement impact student outcome,

because student engagement may influence extracurricular school activities outside of the classroom. In the opinion of Bland (2017), one of the student activities is engagement which is expected to be devoted to student domestic and personal needs to allow full concentration in their chosen career. A university that prioritizes student achievement is expected to give attention to student engagement among other things.

Students that are engaged in the school exhibit consistent positive contribution in class activities in a friendly manner. They choose a challenging task, and use their initiative in solving issues arising thereof. They put in their best whenever any task is assigned. When performing the specified task, these student types display positive emotions including passion, optimism, curiosity, and interest (Guvenc, 2015). Student success in the school depends on the levels of engagement. Every student benefit when teachers engage them regularly because it gives them the confidence to take charge of their own learning.

The degree of lecturers' dedication to the institution's vision and mission is correlated with the degree of student engagement. According to a study conducted by Ibrahim, et.al (2017) on student engagement and university enrolment. The study found the high level of student engagement by the lecturers and school administration in state universities in south west Nigeria. In order to engage students, the teacher's role cannot be underestimated. The teacher and classroom variables can account for a sizable amount of student engagement and accomplishment (Hill & Rowe, 2016). It has been demonstrated that teacher's salary and confidence in their ability to teach positively impact their affective orientation toward their pupils, resulting in more fruitful interactions between students and teachers. Students that enjoy good teacher-student interactions seems more motivated and engaged. Students who think their teacher cares about them also learn more, according to Skinner, et.al, (2008). Student engagement levels are correlated with positive teacher-student interactions.

High-engagement pupils find it easier to develop, assess, analyze, apply, understand, and retain what they have learned. (Skinner, et.al, 2017). To support this, Ran and Daler (2018), posited that the foundation of student engagement is the idea that learning increases when students are involved and declines when they are not. A longitudinal study by Nafasa and Oblinger, (2014), found that distance learners are well engaged in tutorials hence, those who demonstrated engagement traits like attending tutorials, being organized, and putting effort into tutor-marked assignments had a higher chance of succeeding academically. This was as a result of their engagement in learning activities. In a study conducted by Gallup and Hopkins (2017), it was found that students in the remote areas are less engaged in teaching and learning activities but in activities that are not specifically connected to instruction and learning.

One factor that cannot be disregarded when discussing student engagement is salary by lecturers in the university. It involves lecturers' take home at the end of the month (Nyamubarwa, 2013; Ahmad & Ibrahim, 2015). Previous researchers have also looked into how salary affects student involvement and has concluded that salary encourages instructors to adequately engage students in the classroom. (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). In the academic environment, Rotham et al. (2017) revealed poor monthly pay as a determinant of lecturers' instability Increased income is frequently cited as the primary factor influencing lecturers' ability to effectively engage students. Lecturers find their ways outside engaging students to engage in other income driven activities due to poor monthly pay of lecturers in public universities in Nigeria (Al-Mamun & Hasan, 2017).

A study conducted by Chepchumba and Kimutai (2017) showed a negative association between lecturers' salary and student engagement. Lecturer's personal satisfaction has additionally been explained by Giunchi et al., (2016) as a driving force in student engagement. As puts it *"When lecturers discharge their responsibilities diligently but paid peanut can lead to departure of student engagement in the class"*. The Expectancy Theory confirms this, as discussed by Giunchi et al. (2016) that workers engagement is characterized by how the workers think or view the remuneration they receive. With the rising numbers of student enrolment, uncommitted academics will find it unrewarding to engaging students actively in the class. (Rotham et al., 2017) showed that student involvement and remuneration had a negative connection. Lecturer commitment tends to decline when work and pay satisfaction is low, which impacts the degree of student engagement (Singh & Loncar 2017).

Any university's student engagement is defined by three primary areas: cognitive, behavioural and affective engagement (Okpe et al., 2013; Sulaiman et.al, 2018; Mutabuzi, 2019). Universities have a longstanding tradition of cognitive, behavioural and affective engagement. Students' success and progress at any university are mostly dependent on the number and caliber of these important metrics, which also impact a university's performance and ranking (Mushemeza, 2016).

Cognitive engagement to Tracy et al. (2021) is the extent to which is the degree to which students are paying attention to and exerting mental energy on the assigned learning assignments. This is the level of student curiosity, wanting to understand something. It has to do with student investment in intellectual or psychological learning and use of various strategies towards deep learning. Cognitive engagement according to Richardson and Newby, (2006) is "the incorporation and application of students' learning strategies and motivations." Teachers can better understand how students learn and whether their past experiences aid in new learning when they are cognitively engaged. To Shukor et.al (2014) The degree to which students are prepared and able to tackle the current learning task is known as cognitive engagement. This involves how long students persevere and how much effort they are willing to put into the assignment.

Interactions with the academic environment that are proactive, goal-oriented, adaptable, constructive, and persistent are referred to as behavioral engagement (Wu, West, & Hughes, 2011; Martin, 2008; Skinner & Pitzer, 2012). These writers claim that planning, effort, on-task attention, focus, hard work, perseverance, time spent, attendance, voluntary participation, task involvement, and adherence to classroom rules and norms are some markers of behavioral engagement in academic settings. Emotions like zeal, curiosity, pleasure, contentment, pride, and vigor frequently accompanied this practice. To Fredricks et al., (2024) It is the degree to which students are actively responding to the assigned learning activities. Posing or responding to inquiries, attending lectures promptly and regularly and paying attention in the class. It is the attention given to learning to achieve the best

The degree to which students are emotionally invested in and respond to the learning activities is known as affective engagement. Students are invested in their education. It is the passion, zeal, and excitement they have for their studies and classes. They are inherently driven and challenged by novel concepts in the classroom and school environment and are willing to participate actively in the teaching and learning process. To Fredricks et al., (2024), affective engagement, commonly referred to as emotional engagement, is defined as the emotional reaction of students to learning. It's a component of learner engagement, which also includes cognitive and behavioral engagement. To Richardson and Newby, (2006) it is referred to as

student's feelings, attitudes, and perceptions about school, teachers, and classmates. It's a measure of how much a student enjoys learning, how much they value it, and how connected they feel to the school. It's also a measure of how much a student is motivated to learn, and how well they regulate their emotions.

One of the students' primary performance metrics is their level of engagement. Numerous studies' conclusions have shown this to be a measure of students' performance. (Kasule et al., 2016; Ozurumba & Amasuomo, 2016; Atwebembeire & Malunda, 2019). The degree of class involvement, the quality of that participation, the preparation of the students, the number of courses completed, the help given to classmates, and the overall success of the students are all used to measure student engagement. (Collinson, 2000; Kasule et al., 2016; Mushemeza, 2016; and Kasule et al., 2016). Likewise, numerous research has demonstrated a favorable correlation between lecturers' pay and students' engagement. (Ozurumba & Amasuomo, 2015; Walters & Openjuru, 2016). The engagement function includes the regular and prompt class attendance, active class participation, writing of test and examination, and writing of the final year project on record time

Other aspects of student engagement include developing and promoting innovative teaching methods, consulting lecturers when necessary, and helping other students when needed. (Agbionu et al., 2018). Despite the importance of student engagement to all stakeholders of the universities. Walters and Openjuru (2016) showed that the majority of lecturers are unable to keep students interested. They frequently engage in interaction are not consistent in class or only spend half of the anticipated contact hours with students.

The Problem

Engagement of university students actively in the classroom and school activities is expected to contribute positively to the students, lecturers and university output. However, it seems lecturers in public universities in southwestern Nigeria did not engage the students actively in the teaching and learning and other university activities. This might be the reason why students come to lectures at will, with no remorse for coming late to the lecture and perform unimpressive in the university. This might also be one of the reasons why the zone has the highest number university graduate unemployment in Nigeria. Therefore, this study looked on the salaries of lecturers and student engagement in public universities in southwest Nigeria.

Research Question

What is the level of student engagement in public universities in southwestern Nigeria?

Hypothesis

H₀: Lecturer's salary has no significant influence on student engagement in public universities in southwestern Nigeria

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive and correlational research design. The use of a descriptive survey enabled the researchers to collect relevant data using a structured questionnaire, while the correlational component allowed for determining the nature of the relationship between lecturer salary and student engagement in the selected tertiary institutions. This design was

deemed appropriate as it facilitated both description and examination of associations among variables without manipulation.

Setting and Participants

The population for the study comprised lecturers across all academic cadres in the seven federal government-owned universities located in Southwestern Nigeria, namely: **University of Lagos**, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, University of Ibadan, Obafemi Awolowo University, Federal University of Health Sciences, Ila-Orangun, Federal University of Technology, Akure, and Federal University, Oye-Ekiti.

A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed. In the first stage, purposive sampling was used to select five universities that have been in existence for a minimum of ten years: University of Lagos, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, University of Ibadan, Obafemi Awolowo University, and Federal University of Technology, Akure. In the second stage, simple random sampling was used to select 250 lecturers from each of the five universities, resulting in a total sample size of 1,250 participants.

Data Collection Method(s) and Analysis

Data were collected using a self-designed questionnaire titled *Lecturer's Salary and Student Engagement Questionnaire (LSSEQ)*. The instrument comprised sections addressing respondents' demographic information, lecturer's salary, and student engagement.

The questionnaire was subjected to content validation by experts in item construction within the faculty, whose feedback informed revisions to enhance clarity and relevance. To ascertain the instrument's reliability, a test-retest procedure was conducted on 30 lecturers at the Federal University of Health Sciences, Ila-Orangun, which formed part of the study population but was excluded from the main sample. The resulting reliability coefficient of 0.91 was considered satisfactory for the study.

Data analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics to answer the research questions, while inferential statistics were employed to test the study's hypothesis.

FINDINGS

Findings

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 1,250)

Demographic Indicators	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	795	63.6
	Female	455	36.4
Age (As at last Birthday)	30 – 40	400	32
	40 – 50	270	21.6
	50 – 60	260	20.8
	60 - 70	320	25.6

Highest Academic Qualification	Ph.D	746	59.7
Cadre	Master's Degree	315	25.2
	Bachelor's Degree	189	15.1
	Professor	240	19.2
	Associate Professor	285	22.8
	Senior Lecturer	330	26.4
	Lecturer I/II	225	18
	Assistance	170	13.6
	Lecturer/Graduate Assistance		
University Teaching Experience (In Years)	1 – 10	275	22
	11 – 20	360	28.8
	21 – 30	385	30.8
	31 and above	230	18.4
University and Sample	University of Lagos	250	20
	University of Ibadan	250	20
	Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	250	20
	Obafemi Awolowo University	250	20
	Federal University of Technology, Akure	250	20

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The study included 1,250 lecturers in total, 250 from each of the five federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria: Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Obafemi Awolowo University, Federal University of Lagos, Federal University of Ibadan, and Federal University of Technology Akure. The gender distribution of the sample was typical of Nigerian academia, with 63.6% of the sample being men and 36.4% being women, as indicated in Table 1. With the majority of respondents (32%) being between the ages of 30 and 40 and 21.6% being between the ages of 40 and 50, the workforce was primarily in the middle of their careers. Regarding qualifications, 15.1% had bachelor's degrees, 25.2% had master's degrees, and 59.7% had doctorates. In terms of academic cadre, 13.6% were assistant lecturers and graduate assistants, 19.2% were professors, 22.8% were associate professors, 26.4% were senior lecturers, and 18% were lecturers I and II.

In terms of years of teaching experience in the university, 22% had one to ten years, 28.8% had eleven to twenty years, 30.8% had twenty-one to thirty years, and 18.4% had thirty-one years or more. According to these demographic statistics, the sample fairly reflects the range of backgrounds and levels of experience found at the chosen universities.

Research Question: What is the level of students' involvement in public secondary school in southwest states of Nigeria?

Table 2*Level of Student Engagement in Public Universities in Southwestern Nigeria*

Aspects Measured	Yes	No
Class Participation	335 (26.8)	915 (73.2)
Prompt in the Class	375 (30)	875 (70)
Regular in the Class	445 (35.6)	805 (64.4)
Assist other Students when needed	248 (19.84)	1.002 (80.16)
Create new Learning Techniques	355 (28.4)	895 (71.6)
Consult Lecturers for Assistance when Needed	262 (20.96)	988 (79.04)
$N=1,250; \bar{x} = 22.61; Sd = 3.10$		

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From Table 2, the overall weighted average for level of students' engagement in public universities in southwestern Nigeria is 0.84 out of 2.00. This means that the level of students' engagements was low.

Summary of Findings: Level of Student Engagement

The respondents' opinions about student engagement in six areas at public colleges in southwest Nigeria are shown in Table 2. Overall student engagement is comparatively low across all examined variables, according to the data. While 73.2% of respondents said that students actively participate in class, just 26.8% said that they do. According to reports, 70% of pupils do not answer swiftly in class, whereas 30% do. The percentage of students who attended classes regularly was slightly higher, 35.6% than the percentage who attended sessions irregularly, 64.4%. With only 19.84% of pupils helping other students when necessary and 80.16% not helping, peer support was noticeably lacking. According to reports, 28.4% of students developed novel teaching methods, compared to 71.6% who did not. Finally, while the majority (79.04%) did not seek such counsel, 20.96% of students sought help from instructors when necessary.

These findings point to possible areas for policy and instructional intervention since they imply that student participation in public universities in the region is generally low, especially in areas that call for initiative, peer support, and interaction with lecturers.

Hypothesis Testing

Lecturer's salary has no significant influence on student engagement in public universities in southwestern Nigeria

Table 3

Influence of Lecturer's Salary on student engagement in public universities in southwestern Nigeria

Variables	X	SD	N	Df	Cal. r	Critical r
Lecturer's Salary	34.77	18.31	1080	106	.64	.197
Student Engagement	46.38	24.12				
Significant. P< .05						

Table 3 showed that salary has significant influence on students' engagement in public universities in southwestern Nigeria. The hypothesis raised is hereby rejected because there is significant influence of salary on student engagement as presented on Table 2.

Summary of Findings: Influence of Lecturer's Salary on Student Engagement

The association between student participation and lecturers' salaries in public universities in southwest Nigeria is seen in Table 3. The mean score for student engagement was $\bar{X} = 46.38$, $SD = 24.12$, and the mean score for lecturers' pay was $\bar{X} = 34.77$, $SD = 18.31$. The remuneration of lecturers and student participation were shown to be positively and significantly correlated ($r = 0.64$, $df = 106$, $p < .05$), surpassing the critical r -value of 0.197, according to a correlational study. This suggests that income satisfaction may be a significant element in encouraging instructors to interact with students in an effective manner, as better levels of student engagement are linked to higher lecturers' compensation.

DISCUSSION

The finding from the research question might be due to meagre salary of Nigerian lecturers and non-availability of modern teaching facilities. The lecturers in public universities in southwestern Nigeria may need to look for other places to get additional income to meet their domestic and other needs. Hence, they resulted to giving lecture or sending notes to students. It might also be because the university administration does not in any way give any form of incentive or training to the lecturers on when, where and how to engage the students. Student engagement is a task that requires more efforts and resources from the lecturers. It might be due to non-replacement of the disengaged lecturers. Those on ground has so many other activities in addition to student engagement. It might also be due to epileptic supply of electricity which have turn on lecturers' preparation of activities to engage the students in the class. It might also be due to non-readiness and willingness on the part of the students. Most of the students in the university of today are not committed to their study. They are more into online trading activities. All they are looking for is to be certificated even if they know next to nothing.

This result is consistent with the finding of Ibrahim et.al (2017) who found high level of student engagement in state universities in southwest Nigeria. It is also in line with the finding of Gallup and Hopkins (2017), who found that students in the remote areas are less engaged in teaching and learning activities. This might be one of the reasons why students do not benefit more as revealed by graduate unemployment in southwest Nigeria and as stated by Sala et.al

(2020) that student will benefit more if they are actively engaged in activities that will improve their performance in the school and after graduation.

The result of the hypothesis tested might not be unconnected to the crucial roles of salary to lecturers in the university. They depend on salary for their own survival. As a result, salary is one of the motivations for lecturers in the universities to be productive or not. The findings supported that of Gandor et.al (2015) who found teachers remuneration as the most robust predictor of student engagement. It also supported the finding of Hopkin (2017) and Grave (2019) who found teachers income having direct connection with student engagement. It also supported the findings of Ozurumba and Amasuomo (2015), Walters and Openjuru (2016) who concluded that salary has positive relationship with student engagement.

However, the result negated the finding of Hill and Rowe (2016) who found teacher and classroom variables accounted for student engagement. In addition, Rotham et.al (2016) and Chepchumba (2017) also found negative association between salary and student engagement. The finding did not also support the finding of Glunchi et.al (2016) who found lecturers personal satisfaction as a driving force in student engagement as against lecturers' salary.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the connection between student participation and teachers' pay at five universities in southwest Nigeria: Federal University of Technology, Akure; University of Lagos; Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta; University of Ibadan; and Obafemi Awolowo University. The results showed that student engagement was low across all institutions, and that the pay of professors had a big impact on this result. According to the findings, professors who receive little or inconsistent compensation are less motivated, which has a detrimental effect on students' engagement and educational experiences. In order to improve staff welfare, student involvement, and the general standard of higher education in Nigeria, it is imperative that salary issues be resolved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, the following are suggested:

Lecturers in public universities in southwestern Nigeria should improve in the area of student engagement due to the important role of student engagement in teaching and learning. This will reduce the number of dropouts from the university. This will also assist in building students' self-confidence and improve their academic performance.

University administration and lecturers should involve students in other university activities to increase student's behavioral and affective engagement. The students need more than the cognitive engagement to survive in life hence they must also be actively engaged in those two areas.

Government should increase lecturers' salary and ensure it is at par with what is operating in African countries. A well-paid lecturer will likely devote more time to student engagement. If a lecturer salary can take care of his or her needs, all attention will be given to lecturing and research. There will be no need looking for means of survival that takes much of the time to be used in engaging students in the place of primary assignment

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Authorship Contribution Statement:

The project was developed and designed by Professor Olugbenga Timothy Ajadi, who also gathered and analyzed the data, interpreted the results, and prepared the report for publication. The author bears full responsibility for the truth and integrity of the work and is entirely in charge of all facets of the research.

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