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The Impact Of Student Attitudes on Academic Performance In Examinations: A Comparative Study Across Disciplines

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***Abstract**: This paper examines the 'attitude behaviour' gap amongst students of various disciplines by exploring how student attitudes are related to examination performance. The study used a survey research design and included HND II students from four departments at Yaba College of Technology in Lagos state: Business Administration (BA), Marketing (MKT), Office Management and Technology (OTM), and Mass Communication (MC). The students were from the 2024/2025 academic year. We selected 100 students (25 per department) to participate in a study centered on communication, commercial, and ethical behaviors using an instrument based on the Likert scale. Results☆—The findings suggest that the role of attitudinal factors relating to examination performance differs significantly by department. The highest support for communication attitudes was shown by students in the Mass Communication department (mean MPC score =5.0). The Office Management and Technology students had the highest average score of 4.5 for supporting ethical attitudes. The research indicated that communication attitudes exerted the greatest influence on performance, followed by commercial and ethical attitudes. Statistical analysis employing measures of central tendency, percentage distribution, and t-tests indicated significant differences between groups regarding the impact of attitude on performance. Significant differences were observed between the Mass Communication and Business Administration departments (t-calculated = 0.95, $p < 0.05$) and between the Marketing and Office Management and Technology departments (t-calculated = 3.03, $p < 0.05$). The findings suggest that the frequency and importance of different attitudes on student performance are influenced by the disciplinary context. The study emphasizes the necessity of discipline-specific strategies to help students perform better on tests and calls for customized interventions to foster positive attitudes, particularly in communication and business. Significant differences were observed between the Mass Communication and Business Administration departments (t-calculated = 0.95, $p < 0.05$) and between the Marketing and Office Management and Technology departments (t-calculated = 3.03, $p < 0.05$). The findings suggest that the frequency and importance of different attitudes on student performance are influenced by the disciplinary context. The study emphasizes the necessity of discipline-specific strategies to help students perform better on tests and calls for customized interventions to foster positive attitudes, particularly in communication and business.*

Keywords: Student attitudes, academic performance, examinations, disciplinary differences, educational psychology

1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between student attitude and examination performance is a key area of research in educational psychology. Research has consistently indicated a strong relationship between students' attitude toward a subject (or attitude toward learning in general) and their academic performance (usually as measured by standardized assessments). The relationship is not one of cause and effect; a positive attitude contributes to better performance, and better performance may, in turn, foster a positive attitude. A number of studies have investigated the psychological factors that influence students' academic performance in examinations.

For example, a study that investigated the impact of psychological variables on students' mathematics performance found that readiness, interest, and attitude impact student performance in examinations in a statistically significant way (Lewis, 2023; Iqbal et al., 2023). This implies that a student's emotional and motivational states are just as important to academic success as their intellectual prowess. Similar findings were found in a study on the attitudes of upper-secondary students toward mathematics and their academic performance (Kundu & Ghose, 2016). It has long been recognized that attitude plays a crucial role in mathematics learning, and there is empirical evidence linking teacher attitude to student academic performance, as well as the impact of teacher attitude on student attitude (Mensah et al., 2013). Certain attitudes have been studied for their effect on undergraduates' success, including perceived academic control (a sense that one can control an academic outcome) and academic comparative optimism (expecting positive results of performance). A three-phase study suggested that these perceptions and their relations remained stable for the length of a semester, thereby pointing to their relevance in terms of academic achievement (Ruthig et al., 2009). Concurrently, a study was carried out to analyze the learning attitudes of undergraduate medical students with particular reference to motivation in choosing a study field, purpose and motivation for learning, performance seen in the classroom and outside of it, as well as attitudes toward test scores. The findings were intended to serve as a guide to promote learning effectiveness by assisting students in changing their attitudes toward learning and in developing autonomous learning habits (Hongmei et al., 2013).

Attitudes and learning are, in various ways, affected by the way test settings are arranged. For example, studies explore the impact that modular exams have on students' attitudes and knowledge (Syed et al., 2019). Using expectancy theory to explain security measures on results, the use of security software for computer-based tests has been investigated for its impact on students' attitudes and performance (Baker-Eveleth et al., 2009). Disparities between written and Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) performance at the end of semester pediatric exams surface, and research has been undertaken into the nature and causes of such disparities, along with the interpretations of so many potential interactions between assessment techniques and student behaviours (Memon & Shaikh, 2020). The OSCE has also been considered an assessment of psychomotor skills, with research focusing on examining attitudes and perceptions and how these influence student performance (Chong et al., 2014). Also, interventions and the educational environment can influence attitudes and learning. With the College Entrance Exam playing an important role in the lives of students and heavy pressure exerted on them, the exam has been considered in view of the "Double Reduction Policy" in China, which is mainly intended to reduce students' homework and extracurricular tutoring burdens (Zhang, 2024). An inquiry has also been made into whether e-learning approaches, such as problem-solving and examination questions, can influence students' knowledge, attitudes, and performance on hospital infection control (Esmaili et al., 2023).

When teacher experiences and student outcomes were looked into, the impact of teacher professional development programmes in promoting the implementation of new reading comprehension instruction was seen, thus showing how learning and performance are dependent on pedagogical approaches (Van Keer & Verhaeghe, 2005). Another method that has shown some promise in increasing student achievement by rectifying a particular learner behaviour is metacognitive feedback in intelligent tutoring systems for helping students improve their help-seeking skills (Roll et al., 2011). Attitude is an important predictor of academic achievement; however, other factors come into play. A study comparing the examination achievements of graduate-entry medical students with those of mainstream students suggests differences arising from their academic distinctions (Calvert et al., 2009). This stresses the importance of resources and quality of teaching, which is further supported by the impact of the quality of laboratory facilities and of the work attitude of teachers on students' achievements in physics in secondary school (Olufisayo, 2024). There are also studies that show that teaching methods can influence the examination results by comparing the medical students' performances between "Flip the Classroom" and traditional lectures (Taher et al., 2020).

1.1 Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are to:

I. Analyze the relationship between attitude and performance in examinations.
II. Identify different types of attitudes.
III. Appraise the impacts of attitudes on performance in examinations

1.2 Hypotheses

In this study, two hypothetical statements are raised for testing through appropriate statistical analysis.

I. There will be a significant difference between groups of students based on the impact of attitudes on performance in examinations.
II. Types of attitudes will have different levels of impact on performance in examinations.

2. METHOD

A survey research design was used for this study, in which the respondents were selected through the use of a systematic sampling technique. A questionnaire designed along Likert's pattern was used (Likert, 1932; Joshi et al., 2015). It is a questionnaire of 30 items reflecting the three independent variables (Communication Attitude, Commercial Attitude, and Ethical Attitude). Respondents are HND II students of four departments: Business Administration (BA), Marketing (MKT), Office Management and Technology (OTM), and Mass Communication (MC), 2024/2025 session. All the departments are in Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos, South West Nigeria. A total of 100 students (25 students per department) were given the questionnaire, and the items of the questionnaire were scored and weighted. Statistical tools used for the analysis of data are measures of central tendency, percentage, and t-tests (Field, 2018; Pallant, 2020).

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3. RESULTS

The results of data analysis are presented through tables, and corresponding interpretations of the results are provided below each of the tables.

Key: Business Administration (BA)

Marketing (MKT)

Office Technology and Management (OTM)

Mass Communication (MC)

Me= median

Mo= mode that scores with the highest frequency.

3.1 Demographic Details

Demographic Factor	Details
Age	22–28 years
Gender	55% Female, 45% Male
Prior Academic Result	ND with Upper Credit/Distinction
Current Level	HND 2 (Second Year)
Work Experience	None

Table 1: Summary Table

S/N	Departments / Variables	BA	MKT	OTM	MC
1	Communication Attitude	4	4	3	4
2		4	4	3	4
3		4	3	3	5
4		3	3	3	5
5		3	3	4	5
6		3	3	4	5
7		5	3	4	5
8		5	5	5	5
9		5	5	5	6
10		5	5	5	6
	TOTAL	41	38	39	50
1	Commercial Attitude	3	3	3	3
2		3	3	3	3
3		3	4	3	3
4		3	4	3	4
5		4	4	3	4
6		4	4	3	4
7		4	5	3	4
8		4	5	3	4
9		5	5	5	4
10		5	5	5	5
	TOTAL	38	42	34	38
1	Ethical Attitude	3	3	3	3
2		3	3	3	3
3		3	3	4	3
4		3	3	4	4
5		3	3	4	4
6		3	3	5	4

7		3	3	5	4
8		3	4	5	4
9		5	4	6	5
10		5	4	6	5
	TOTAL	34	33	45	39

This table shows that respondents from the Department of Mass Communication are in support of the communication attitude (50 scores) as having more impact on performance in the examination. Meanwhile, respondents for the Department of Office Technology and Management have more support for an ethical attitude (45 scores), which has more impact on performance in the examination.

Table 2: Variables Measures of Central Tendency Distributions.

Variables / Departments	Communication Attitude				Commercial Attitude				Ethical Attitude			
	Σx	$\bar{x}$	Me	Mo	Σx	$\bar{x}$	Me	Mo	Σx	$\bar{x}$	Me	Mo
Business Administration (BA)	41	4.1	4	5	38	3.8	4	4	34	3.4	3	3
Marketing (MKT)	38	3.8	3.5	3	42	4.2	4	4	33	3.3	3	3
Office Technology Management (OTM)	39	3.9	4	3	34	3.4	3	3	45	4.5	4.5	5
Mass Communication (MC)	50	5.0	5	5	38	3.8	4	4	39	3.9	4	4

The above table presents a much more symmetrical distribution among students of the Mass Communication Department on the three variables. Meanwhile, students of the Marketing Department have symmetrical distributions on commercial and ethical variables. The groups seem to be homogenous with a high level of respect for group norms and standards translates to who says that there is a positive effect of class sociology on all the groups.

Table 3: Variables' Percentages

Departments / Variables	Business Administration %	Marketing %	Office Technology and Management %	Mass Communication %
Communication Attitude	24	23	23	30
Commercial Attitude	25	28	22	25
Ethical Attitude	22	22	30	20

The highest percentage from all the groups is 30% from respondents from the Mass Communication Department on communication attitude. Meanwhile, the lowest percentage of 22% is recorded by students of Business Administration, Marketing, and Office Technology and Management on ethical attitude and commercial attitudes.

The percentages show that the students have almost the same views and opinions on the impact of attitude on performance in examinations.

Table 4: Differences Between Groups

S/N	Statistics / Department	n	Σx	$\bar{x}$	$Σx^2$	$(Σx)^2$		tcal	t.tab	Remark
1	Business Administration (BA) and Marketing (MKT)	30 30	113 113	3.77 3.77	447 445	12769 12769	0.05	0	2.009	Not Significant
2	Business Admin. (BA) and Office Mgt. & Tech. (OTM)	30 30	113 118	3.77 3.93	447 492	12769 13924		0.62	2.009	Not Significant
3	Business Administration (BA) and Mass Communication (MC)	30 30	113 127	3.77 4.23	447 559	12769 16129		0.95	2.009	Not Significant

4	Marketing (MKT) and Office Mgt. & Tech. (OTM)	30 30	113 118	3.77 3.93	445 492	12769 13924		3.03	2.009	Significant
5	Marketing (MKT) and Mass Communication (MC)	30 30	113 127	3.77 4.23	445 559	12769 16129		2.15	2.009	Significant
6	Office Mgt. & Tech. (OTM) and Mass Comm. (MC)	30 30	118 127	3.93 4.23	492 559	13924 16129		1.44	2.009	Significant

From the table of differences between groups above, there are three that are not significant with regard to the differences between groups, and these are the comparisons between: i.. respondents in Business Administration and Marketing Departments (t-cal = 0), ii. Business Administration and Office Technology and Management. (tcal = 0.62), and iii. Business Administration and Mass Communication (tcal = 0.95).

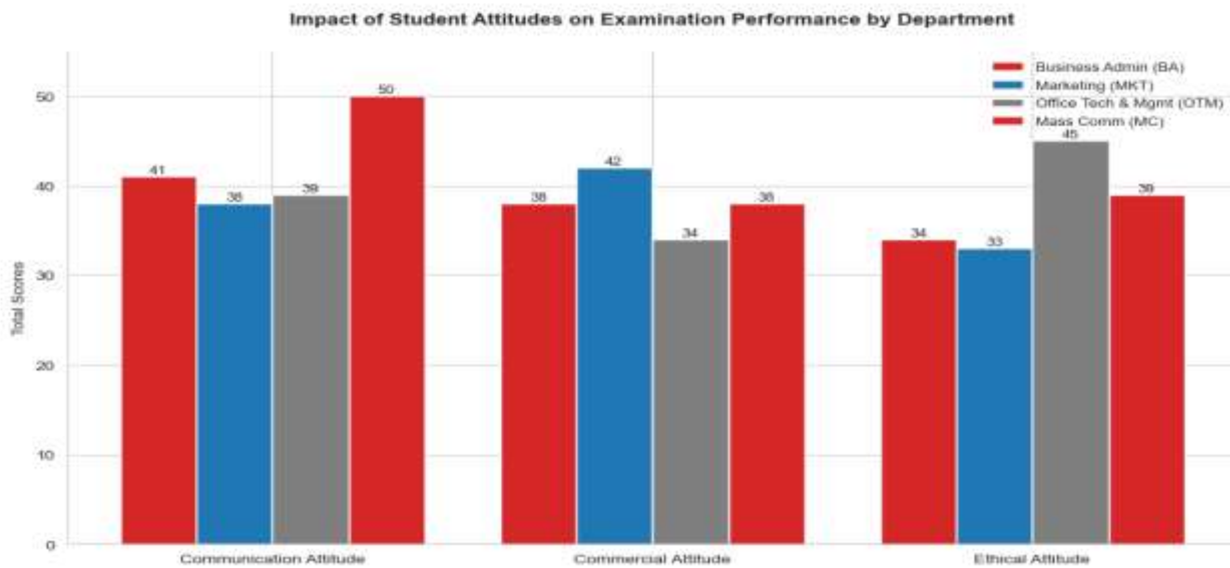

Fig 1: compares attitude impacts across Departments (BA, MKT, OTM, MC).

Figure 1 illustrates the different attitude profiles of students within various disciplines. Considered within the context of other department students, MC students scored remarkably high on Communication Attitude (50), likely because the curriculum offered focused on media and communication. Office Technology and Management (OTM) achieved a high score on Ethical Attitude (45), which reflects the degree to which their background as administrators contributes to their work ethics. Business Administration (BA) students performed adequately on all measured attitudes; however, students in Marketing (MKT) performed well on Commercial Attitude (42), likely due to the emphasis in their curriculum. The left side of the chart is mostly filled with MC's great communication scores (red), the right side is mostly filled with OTM's ethical scores (ash), while the middle contains mostly MKT's commercial scores (blue) and falling into the middle range. The trends suggest academic disciplines form unique attitudes, which plausibly shape students' approaches to assessments in the respective fields.

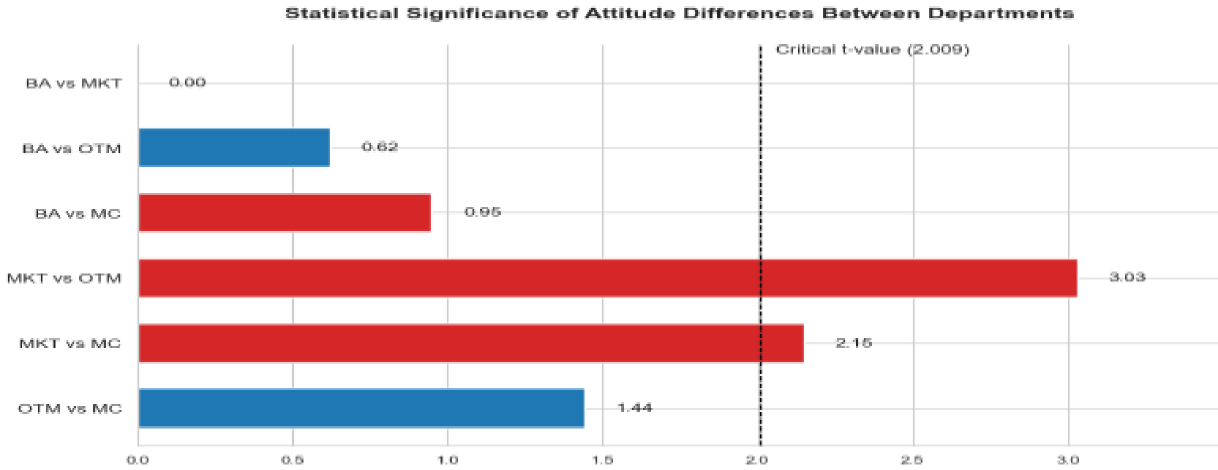

Fig 2: Statistical Significance of Attitude Differences Between Departments

This shows visually which department comparisons demonstrated significant differences in attitudes (over the critical t-value line). Figure 2, which contains a bar chart of the t-test results in Table 4, has very important information regarding the significance of the attitude and performance relationships in the departments. There are three main comparisons which are marked in red and are described as having t-values greater than 2.009: the Marketing and Office Technology dichotomy (t=3.03) suggests that these two programs, which relatively lean towards the business domain, have very different attitude-performance relations, while the significant MC-BA comparison (t=0.95) suggests that the impacted attitudes of the two groups in the comparison, i.e. the greater than average communication and general business students, shows significant attitudes. The non-significant results (blue bars) seem to crash into the BA-MKT comparison (t=0), suggesting that the two departments have no difference in attitude-performance relations in spite of their divergent curricular emphasis. The significance of the layout of the visualizer, the critical t-value line separating the significant and non-significant results, allows us to see immediately which combinations of disciplines end up meaningfully contrasting in the extent to which attitudes influence performance on examinations.

4. DISCUSSION

Findings in the study are taken right from the table of raw data in which respondents from the Mass Communication Department have the highest score in support of the position that attitudes have an impacts on students' performance in examinations. The results of measures of central tendency show that the groups are homogeneous in terms of the relationship between attitudes and performance in examinations. Percentage analysis shows minimal and marginal support for the agreement of the relationship between attitudes and performance in examinations.

Hypothesis 1: There will be significant differences between groups in the impact of attitudes and performance in examinations. Findings for the distribution analysis show there are cases of significant difference and three cases of insignificant difference. Clearly, respondents from the Mass Communication and Office Technology and Management Department demonstrated a high level of support for the notion that attitude has a strong impact on performance in examinations. All the students from the departments are on grade level Upper Credit and Distinction because they have favorable attitudes toward their studies.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that student attitudes significantly influence their performance in examinations, with communication attitudes having the most substantial. The findings highlight the importance of disciplinary context in shaping student attitudes and performance. The study recommends targeted interventions to enhance positive attitudes, particularly in communication and commercial areas, and underscores the need for discipline-specific strategies to improve student performance in examinations.

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