

IMPACT OF ORIENTATION PROGRAMMES ON AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES AT TAI SOLARIN UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, IJAGUN, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the impact of orientation programmes on awareness and engagement of Educational Management undergraduates at Tai Solarin University of Education. It aimed to determine whether orientation programmes enhance students' awareness and engagement while on campus. This study adopted a survey research design, and the population comprised 361 (100 level) undergraduates in the Department of Educational Management. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 131 students from the population. The study used a self-designed questionnaire tagged "Orientation, Awareness and Engagement Questionnaire (OAEQ)". Data collected were analysed using *t*-test at .05 level of significance. The results indicated no significant difference: in the understanding of the academic structure between students' who attended orientation and those who did not ($t = 1.031$, $df = 129$, $p = .305$); in awareness of student support services between students who attended orientation and those who did not ($t = .909$, $df = 129$, $p = .365$); in academic engagement between students who attended orientation and those who did not ($t = -.368$, $df = 129$, $p = .713$); and in participation in social and extracurricular activities ($t = .286$, $df = 129$, $p = .775$). These outcomes concluded that while orientation programmes are conceptually valuable, their practical impact may be limited, perhaps due to content, delivery method, or student participation rates. It was recommended, among others, that the university should revisit the design and execution of its orientation programmes to include interactive, student-centered approaches such as workshops, mentorship, and digital 'walkthroughs' of campus resources.*

Keywords: Orientation programmes, student awareness, student engagement, higher education, educational management

Introduction

The familiarity with a new institution is crucial for new students because it could help them feel a sense of belonging, which is vital for their academic success, emotional well-being and better relationship. When students feel accepted, respected, and supported in their learning environment, they are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and productive. By fostering familiarity,

institutions can help new students transition smoothly, build confidence, and achieve their academic goals. This process is essentially imperative for first-year students who may be experiencing independence for the first time, including managing personal responsibilities and adapting to a new academic environment filled with diverse expectations. In fact, awareness and proper engagement can indeed facilitate a smooth transition for individual learners from diverse

background to a new environment.

The transition to university life involves a complex set of academic, social, and psychological adjustments for new entrants. Consequently, orientation programmes have become a foundational practice in higher education institutions worldwide, serving to introduce students to institutional expectations, academic procedures, support services, and social networks (Brownell & Swaner, 2012). These programmes are strategically positioned to support first-year students in navigating the university environment, fostering a sense of belonging and enhancing academic and social integration (Arhin & Wang'eri, 2018). Orientation, when well-executed, has been associated with improved student outcomes, including higher levels of engagement, academic persistence, and eventual retention. Mohzana (2024) noted that such programmes are most effective when they incorporate holistic approaches blending informational content with interpersonal interaction, mentorship, and participatory learning experiences.

Osoro and Nyamwange (2023) conducted a comprehensive study in nine Kenyan public universities to examine the influence of orientation programmes on first-year students' emotional and academic adjustment. Using a mixed-methods design, they administered questionnaires to 479 students and conducted focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The study found that students in urban-based universities benefited more from structured orientation activities compared to their rural counterparts. Emotional adjustment metrics such as stress

reduction, self-confidence and peer interaction showed substantial improvement among those who attended orientation programmes. The researchers concluded that holistic orientation experiences not only enhance students' emotional resilience but also foster deeper engagement with institutional resources and policies.

Quadri and Olutoki (2022) focused their study on Tai Solarin University of Education, assessing the effects of library orientation on undergraduates' awareness and utilization of information resources. Employing a descriptive survey design, they gathered data through questionnaires administered to 180 first-year students. The study revealed that students who received formal library orientation were significantly more aware of and adept in utilizing library services, including digital databases and referencing tools. These findings affirmed that orientation interventions directly contribute to increased academic awareness, particularly in resource navigation, which is essential for sustained academic engagement.

Ndah et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative case study at Saint Monica's College of Education in Ghana to assess the impact of orientation programs on first-year students. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing questionnaires, interviews, and observations to gather data from 85 participants, including lecturers, counselors, and students. The findings revealed that orientation programmes significantly aided students in acclimatising to the college environment. Specifically, the programmes helped students understand

institutional rules, norms, and expectations, thereby reducing anxiety and misconceptions about their courses of study. Lecturers and counselors noted that orientation sessions facilitated better socialisation among students and provided clarity on acceptable behaviours within the college. The study recommended extending the duration of orientation programmes and integrating them into Student Representative Council activities to enhance participation and effectiveness.

Zweig and Hanita (2021) conducted a randomized controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness of online orientation modules for high school students enrolled in virtual courses. The study aimed to determine whether participation in an orientation programme would lead to improved course outcomes. Results indicated no significant differences in course outcomes between students who completed the orientation and those who did not. However, the timing of enrollment emerged as a moderating factor, suggesting that early engagement with orientation materials may influence student success in online learning environments. They concluded that while orientation programmes alone may not directly impact course outcomes, their timing and integration into the learning process are critical factors to consider.

Smith et al. (2021) examined the effectiveness of orientation programmes at Stephen F. Austin State University by analysing pre- and post-orientation survey data from incoming freshmen. The study utilized the Student Voice higher education assessment platform to collect data from 834 students who

completed the pre-orientation survey and 331 students who completed the post-orientation survey. Findings indicated that students demonstrated significant improvements in their understanding of academic policies, campus resources, and institutional expectations following orientation sessions. These results highlight the role of orientation programmes in enhancing student preparedness and promoting engagement with university services.

This study is anchored on Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation, which posits that individuals are driven to act based on the expected outcome of their actions (Vroom, 1964). The theory described three key components: expectancy (the belief that effort leads to performance), instrumentality (the belief that performance leads to outcomes), and valence (the value an individual places on the expected outcome). Based on this theory, students perceive that attending an orientation programme will enhance their understanding of university life (expectancy), increase their chances of academic and social success (instrumentality), and lead to valuable outcomes such as improved engagement (valence), they are more likely to actively participate. The Expectancy Theory suggests that orientation programmes will affect awareness and engagement among undergraduates.

Despite the implementation of orientation programmes in several universities including Tai Solarin University of Education, there is limited empirical evidence on their effectiveness in enhancing students' academic awareness and engagement. Concerns persist as to whether these programmes

adequately support students' understanding of the university's academic structure, their awareness of institutional support services, and their level of involvement in academic and social activities. Without clear data, it remains uncertain whether orientation programmes serve their intended purpose or require restructuring to meet the developmental needs of undergraduates especially those in Educational Management who are expected to serve as future institutional leaders. This study, therefore, investigated the impact of orientation programmes on the awareness and engagement of Educational Management undergraduates at Tai Solarin University of Education. Specifically, the study:

1. examined the difference in understanding of the academic structure between students' who attended orientation and those who did not.
2. assessed the difference in awareness of student support services (such as library, e-learning, student union) between students' who attended orientation and those who did not.
3. investigated the difference in the academic engagement of students' who attended orientation and those who did not.
4. determined the difference in the social and extracurricular activities of students' who attended orientation and those who did not.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested:

H0₁: There is no significant difference in understanding of the academic structure of students' who attended orientation and those who did not

H0₂: There is no significant difference in the awareness of student support services (such as library, e-learning, student union) of students' who attended orientation and those who did not.

H0₃: There is no significant difference in the academic engagement (such as class attendance, group study) of students' who attended orientation and those who did not on.

H0₄: There is no significant difference in the social and extracurricular activities of students' who attended orientation and those who did not on.

Research Method

This study adopted a survey research design. The target population comprised 361 (100 level) undergraduates in the Department of Educational Management at Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 131 students who had completed their first semester, ensuring they had adequate exposure to the academic and social environment of the university. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire tagged "Orientation, Awareness and Engagement Questionnaire (OAEQ)". The data collected were analysed using inferential statistics of Independent Samples t-test at .05 level of significance.

Presentation of Results

Table 1: *Difference between students' who attended orientation and those who did not on understanding of the academic structure*

	Students who attended orientation ^a		Students who did not attend orientation ^b		df	t	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
The orientation program has helped me understand the university's academic structure.	3.18	.470	3.09	.545	129	1.031	.305**

Note: N= 131, M= mean, SD= standard deviation; ^an = 84, ^bn = 47; *p < .05, **p > .01

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2025

Table 1 shows the difference in the understanding of the academic structure of students' who attended orientation and those who did not in Tai Solarin University of Education. The mean score for those who attended orientation is M = 3.18 (SD = .470), while for those who did not attend is M = 3.09 (SD = .545). With t value of

1.031, degree of freedom (df) of 129 and p-value of .305, the result indicates that there is no significant difference in the understanding of the academic structure between students' who attended orientation and those who did not in Tai Solarin University of Education. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 2: *Difference between students' who attended orientation and those who did not on awareness of student support services*

	Students who attended orientation ^a		Students who did not attend orientation ^b		df	t	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
The orientation program provides information about library services.	3.04	.447	2.96	.464	129	.909	.365**
I understand how to access the university's e-learning platform.	2.88	.568	2.83	.637	129	.473	.637**
Orientation helped me understand student leadership structures (e.g. Students' Union).	3.00	.466	2.98	.608	129	.224	.823**

Note: N= 131, M= mean, SD= standard deviation; ^an = 84, ^bn = 47; *p < .05, **p > .01

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2025

Table 2 shows the difference in the awareness of student support services of students who attended orientation and those who did not in Tai Solarin University of Education. The table presents results for three different aspects: information about library services, students who attended

orientation reported a mean score of M = 3.04 (SD = .447), while those who did not attend reported M = 2.96 (SD = .464). With a t value of .909, degree of freedom (df) of 129, and p-value of .365, the result indicates no significant difference in awareness of library services between the two groups.

Regarding understanding how to access the university's e-learning platform, students who attended orientation had a mean score of $M = 2.88$ ($SD = .568$), compared to $M = 2.83$ ($SD = .637$) for non-attendees. With $t = .473$, $df = 129$, and $p = .637$, there is no significant difference between the groups. For understanding student leadership structures (e.g., Students' Union), orientation attendees reported $M = 3.00$ ($SD = .466$) compared to $M = 2.98$

($SD = .608$) for non-attendees. With $t = .224$, $df = 129$, and $p = .823$, there is no significant difference between the groups. However, these results indicate that there are no significant differences in awareness of student support services between students who attended orientation and those who did not in Tai Solarin University of Education. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 3: *Difference between students' who attended orientation and those who did not on academic engagement*

	Students who attended orientation ^a		Students who did not attend orientation ^b		Df	t	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
I attend all my scheduled lectures and tutorials.	7.27	.700	7.32	.629	129	-.368	.713**
I participate actively in classroom discussions.	7.05	.743	6.83	.868	129	1.514	.132**
I engage in group study sessions or academic collaborations with peers.	6.81	.857	6.51	.975	129	1.821	.071**

Note: $N = 131$, $M =$ mean, $SD =$ standard deviation; ^a $n = 84$, ^b $n = 47$; * $p < .05$, ** $p > .01$

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2025

Table 3 shows the difference in the academic engagement of students who attended orientation and those who did not in Tai Solarin University of Education. The table presents results for three different aspects of academic engagement: Regarding attendance at scheduled lectures and tutorials, students who attended orientation reported a mean score of $M = 7.27$ ($SD = .700$), while those who did not attend reported $M = 7.32$ ($SD = .629$). With a t value of $-.368$, degree of freedom (df) of 129, and p -value of $.713$, the result indicates no significant difference in lecture attendance between the two groups. For active participation in classroom discussions, students who attended

orientation had a mean score of $M = 7.05$ ($SD = .743$), compared to $M = 6.83$ ($SD = .868$) for non-attendees. With $t = 1.514$, $df = 129$, and $p = .132$, there is no significant difference between the groups. For engagement in group study sessions or academic collaborations with peers, orientation attendees reported $M = 6.81$ ($SD = .857$) compared to $M = 6.51$ ($SD = .975$) for non-attendees. With $t = 1.821$, $df = 129$, and $p = .071$, there is no significant difference between the groups. However, these results indicate that there are no significant differences in academic engagement between students who attended orientation and those who did not in Tai Solarin University of Education. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 4: *Difference between students' who attended orientation and those who did not on social and extracurricular activities*

	Students who attended orientation ^a		Students who did not attend orientation ^b		df	t	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
I am actively involved in a student club or organisation.	5.88	1.046	5.74	.920	129	.746	.457**
I attend social or cultural events organised by the university.	6.36	1.083	6.13	.900	129	1.234	.220**
I participate in extracurricular activities (e.g. sports, debates).	6.01	1.092	5.96	.955	129	.286	.775**
I interact with other students during university events or programs.	6.61	.892	6.45	.904	129	.982	.328**

Note: N= 131, M= mean, SD= standard deviation; ^an = 84, ^bn = 47; *p < .05, **p > .01

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2025

Table 4 shows the difference in the social and extracurricular activities of students who attended orientation and those who did not in Tai Solarin University of Education. The table presents results for four different aspects: For active involvement in a student club or organisation, students who attended orientation reported a mean score of M = 5.88 (SD = 1.046), while those who did not attend reported M = 5.74 (SD = .920). With a t value of .746, degree of freedom (df) of 129, and p-value of .457, the result indicates no significant difference in club involvement between the two groups. Regarding attendance at social or cultural events organized by the university, students who attended orientation had a mean score of M = 6.36 (SD = 1.083), compared to M = 6.13 (SD = .900) for non-attendees. With t = 1.234, df = 129, and p = .220, there is no significant difference between the groups. For participation in extracurricular activities (e.g., sports, debates), orientation attendees reported M = 6.01 (SD = 1.092) compared to M = 5.96 (SD = .955) for non-attendees. With t = .286, df = 129, and p = .775,

there is no significant difference between the groups. For interaction with other students during university events or programmes, students who attended orientation had a mean score of M = 6.61 (SD = .892), compared to M = 6.45 (SD = .904) for non-attendees. With t = .982, df = 129, and p = .328, there is no significant difference between the groups. However, these results indicate that there are no significant differences in social and extracurricular activities between students who attended orientation and those who did not in Tai Solarin University of Education. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Discussion of Findings

The result of hypothesis one tested revealed that there is no difference in the understanding of the academic structure between students' who attended orientation and those who did not on. This finding lends credence to Mohzana (2024) who found that students who participated in orientation programmes experienced significantly better academic adaptation and performance, driven by improved academic knowledge, social

integration, and psychological support. Similarly, Nyaboke et al. (2020) revealed that the design, length, and delivery of orientation programmes influenced academic adjustment in Kenyan public universities, particularly highlighting better outcomes in well-established institutions.

The result of hypothesis two tested revealed that there are no significant differences in awareness of student support services between students who attended orientation and those who did not which aligns with Abdulsalam et al. (2020) that students gained significant awareness of academic library resources through structured orientation programmes, particularly emphasising the need for adequate content and qualified facilitators for effectiveness.

Furthermore, the result of hypothesis three revealed that there are no significant differences in academic engagement between students who attended orientation and those who did not. The finding lends credence to Owusu et al. (2014) who found that orientation programmes were significantly linked to improvements in CGPA and academic involvement, suggesting orientation can enhance classroom participation and collaborative behaviors. Hypothesis four tested revealed that there are no significant differences in social and extracurricular activities between students who attended orientation and those who did not which corroborates with Webster (2016) who found that orientation programmes only modestly influenced social integration unless they incorporated peer bonding elements such as team-building workshops, mentorship, and interactive activities. Also, Grout (2009) showed that

orientation programmes which included curriculum- integrated and challenge-based elements significantly improved students' academic self-efficacy and engagement, especially in collaborative activities.

Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of orientation programs on the awareness and engagement of Educational Management undergraduates at Tai Solarin University of Education. Despite the theoretical expectation, findings revealed no statistically significant differences between students who attended orientation and those who did not in terms of academic structure understanding, awareness of support services, academic engagement, and participation in social or extracurricular activities. These outcomes suggest that while orientation programmes are conceptually valuable, their practical impact at higher education institutions may be limited, perhaps due to content, delivery method, or student participation rates. Therefore, there is a pressing need to critically reassess and restructure the orientation experience to align with the needs of contemporary undergraduates.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following were recommended:

1. The university should revisit the design and execution of its orientation programmes to include interactive, student-centered approaches such as workshops, mentorship, and digital 'walkthroughs' of campus resources.
2. Combining academic guidance with student networking and extracurricular involvement during orientation to

- improve both cognitive and social outcomes.
3. Implement regular feedback mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of orientation programs and make data-driven improvements.
4. Orientation leaders and facilitators should be adequately trained to deliver content that is engaging, relevant, and supportive of students' academic and social transitions.

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