

Impact of Orientation Programme on University Freshmen: The Example of Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria

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The study surveys the impact of orientation programme on university freshmen at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. A sample of two hundred questionnaires was administered on the freshmen across the four Faculties of the University namely: Agriculture, Engineering, Humanities and Social Sciences and Science, with a response rate of 197, representing 98.5%. The findings revealed that orientation was educative, enlightening and interactive and it allowed for question and answer opportunity. The results further showed that direct contact and familiarity with the Principal Officers of the university is ensured while accommodation and other challenges of freshmen are addressed. Orientation programme/tours equally allow for the familiarity of freshmen with the institution. As to whether orientation was a waste of time, 193 respondents (96.5%) disagreed while 4 respondents (2%) agreed. Likewise, on whether orientation should be cancelled, 195 respondents (97.5%) said no while only 2 respondents (1%) said yes. In like manner, 192 respondents (96%) claimed that orientation talks/speeches motivate and encourage freshmen but 5 respondents (2.5%) disagreed. However, 193 respondents (96.5%) opined that orientation should be held consistently annually for freshmen while 4 respondents (2%) were against this opinion/option. Recommendations were made as appropriate in line with the findings to enhance and sustain orientation programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Key words: *Impact, Orientation Programme, University Freshmen, Nigeria.*

0 INTRODUCTION

Orientation for freshmen is denoted by different terminologies, all referring/pointing to the same thing. The week before the term starts is known as: *Frosh* (or *frosh week*) in some colleges and universities in Canada. In the US, most call it by the acronym SOAR for Student Orientation And Registration; *Freshers' week* in the majority of the United Kingdom and Ireland and *Orientation week* or *O-week* in countries such as Australia, South Africa and New Zealand, and also in many Canadian universities. In

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Sweden, it is known as *nollning* (from *nolla*, “zero”, in this case meaning zeroth-year student, i.e., before the first university year starts) or *inspark* (being “kicked in” to university life).

Orientation week is the coming phrase in the United States. Some schools use the acronym WOW for Week of Welcome. In Canada, first year students are called “Frosh” or “first years.” The terms “freshies” and “freshers” are also emerging. In the United States, first year university students are typically referred to as freshmen. In Australia and New Zealand first year students are known simply as “first years”, although in some colleges of the University of Melbourne and the University of Sydney they are also called “Freshers”. In the U.K. and Ireland first year students are known as *freshers* or *first years*. *Freshies* is also an emerging term in New Zealand. In Sweden, the student is a *nolla* (a “zero”) during the orientation period and usually upgraded to the status of an *etta* (student who is in his/her first college term) at a ceremony involving a fancy three-course dinner and a lots of singing.

Freshmen orientation or new student orientation (often encapsulated into an Orientation week, Welcome Week or Freshers’ Week) is a period of time at the beginning of the academic year at a university or other tertiary institutions during which a variety of events are held to orient and welcome new students. The name of the period varies by country. Although usually described as a *week*, the length of this period varies widely from university to university and country to country, ranging from about three days to a month or even more, which could be four or five weeks, depending on the programmes organized. The length of the week is often affected by each university’s tradition as well as the financial and physical constraints as opined by the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia (2004). During this period, students participate in a wide range of social activities, including talks by the Principal Officers of the concerned institutions, Health talk, Guidance and Counselling talk, live music, sport activities, stunts, and other open-air activities/performances. Thus, educating and enlightening the freshmen.

Education and educating people is in the real sense a lifelong project in the life of not only the individual involved, but also that of the society within which the individual lives.

In general terms, education involves both formal and informal aspects. The more formal aspects include teaching/learning in a classroom, laboratory, studio etc settings depending on the peculiarities of a given

subject area or discipline and usually with a planned curricula.

The informal aspects involve everything outside the formal aspects. Anything we learn a new including especially through socialization as a member of society. In fact, education is daily living; it is a way of life. It is a culture itself. Orientation for freshmen, no doubt, is a form of education.

1 BRIEF ON FEDERAL UNIVERSITY, OYE-EKITI

The Federal University, Oye-Ekiti established in 2011, has a vision and mission. FUOYE aspires to become an institution of first choice recognized for providing critical opportunities for students success, acknowledged as a primary and engaged regional and global resource for entrepreneurial education and best practices in mining and farming technology and valued as a university where there are facilities, students and professional staff who are active in cutting-edge technology in multidisciplinary research.

The mission of the university (FUOYE, Information Brochure 2014) is to advance the community of learning by engaging in scientific research, humanistic scholarship and multidisciplinary research, entrepreneurship and technological integration. In doing this, the University is committed to provide a robust and high quality educational experience for students in a diverse learning that is responsive to the needs of our society and to prepare the next generations of skilled and ethical professional by providing robust curricula across and within disciplines that prepares graduates to be research minded and be able to compete effectively in a diverse world market.

The Student Affairs Division coordinates all matters relating to students orientation and welfare within the university system. The Division is responsible for the general welfare of the students and covers all committees and Boards relating to students matters including the students' orientation planning committee members. The Division carries out its welfare duties through different sub-units such as General Administration and Students Welfare Unit and Administration of Halls of Residence (FUOYE, Third Orientation Programme 2014).

2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The university orientation introduces the students to the school calendar, lifestyle, activities and directions. It begins to help the freshman understand the history, founding and founding members of the university and how the university has developed and grown so far. The orientation also helps the freshmen interact among themselves at the event leading to cultural integration even before their first day in class. Their university life starts off

from the orientation venue, helping them make friends and feel at home with the university, knowing that they are among themselves. The orientation also helps them organize and run their personal programmes to suit them, their studies and the university at large. At the end of the orientation, the freshmen understand that the university learns from them as much as they learn from the university-UNN 2010/2011 Orientation for freshman.

3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study is intended to allow for a feed-back from freshmen as to what impact orientation, which is an annual event in the university system, for new entrants, has made on students. In other words, the study would reveal whether orientation has made any impact, be it positive or negative on the academic life of the freshmen. The recommendations there from would allow university management know whether there is need to appraise the orientation programme where necessary, to make the programme impactful for the benefit of the freshmen and for the good of the university system.

4 LITERATURE REVIEW

Orientation for fresh students are variously called different terms and is common to virtually all tertiary institutions both within and outside Nigeria. At the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), the department usually charged with the duty of organizing orientation for fresh students is Students Affairs. Hence, at UNN the content of the orientation indicate the University's central concern to ensure that their fresh students are not only assisted to get familiar with their new environment but more importantly doing this essentially within the framework of inculcating the vision and the mission statements as well as the core values of the university into their fresh students using the philosophy of "catch them young". The task of doing so is usually enormous ranging from identifying appropriate resource persons, determining the most appropriate time, arranging venue(s), mobilizing the students for the programme, to assessing the impact of the programme on the fresh students.

The week before the term starts is known as: *Frosh* (or *frosh week*) in some colleges and universities in Canada. In the US, most call it by the acronym SOAR for Student Orientation And Registration; *Freshers' week* in the majority of the United Kingdom and Ireland and *Orientation week* or *O-week* in countries such as Australia, South Africa and New Zealand, and also in many Canadian universities. In Sweden, it is known as *nollning* (from *nolla*, "zero", in this case meaning zeroth-year student, i.e., before the first university year starts) or *inspark* (being "kicked in" to university life).

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In Australia, some universities require students to arrive at university a week before classes start in order to gain course approval. This also allows students a chance to orient themselves to student life without the pressure of lectures - hence the term *Orientation week* is used to describe this week of induction into university life. In Australian universities, such as the University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales and University of Sydney, the last or second last night is usually celebrated with a large-scale event such as a famous band playing at an entertainment venue on campus. This is generally followed by continued partying and drinking, especially among students living in residential colleges such as Janet Clarke Hall and Ormond College.

The Adelaide University O-Week runs from Monday to Thursday in the week before lectures begin. During O-Week sporting clubs and societies set up a variety of tented areas where clubs display their activities. The Adelaide University Union coordinates a variety of events centering around beer, bands and barbecues on the lawns near the Union complex. A major event for the week is the O-Ball (live entertainment and licensed areas) which takes place in the Cloisters (Union House). The O-Ball attracts many thousands of revellers, not all of whom are Adelaide University students. In recent times Sports and Clubs have sought to distance themselves from the student union and student association controlled activities and have set themselves up on the Maths lawns.

The Australian National University has a full week (Sunday to Sunday) of events, parties and social activities open to all students of the university, organised by the Australian National University Students Association. The

residential colleges often have their own “O-week” activities catered primarily for residents as well as “Toga Night” held at Burgmann College open to students from all residential colleges.

5 METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at the beginning of the 2013/2014 academic session on the freshmen who were in 100 Level immediately after the orientation programme. The administration of the questionnaire was easy and successful because it was administered on the students when they were being taught the Use of Library and Introduction to ICT (GST 103) by the researcher. The researcher, with the assistance of a research assistant (a Higher Library Officer) administered and retrieved the questionnaire at the end of the class, hence, the impressive response rate realised. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed, while 197 copies were duly completed, returned and used for this study, representing a response rate of 98.5%. The distribution of respondents by Faculties and the analysis of findings are as shown in Tables 1 and 2 below:

TABLE 1
Distribution of Respondents by Faculties

S.No	Faculties	No of responses	Percentage of responses
1.	Agriculture	23	11.68
2.	Engineering	50	25.38
3.	Humanities (Arts)	25	12.69
4.	Humanities (Social Sciences)	52	26.39
5.	Science	47	23.86
	Total	197	100.0

As shown above, the university took off with four Faculties namely: Agriculture, Engineering, Humanities/Social Sciences and Science. The Faculties of Agriculture and Engineering are at the Ikole campus while the Faculties of Humanities/Social Sciences and Science are based at the main campus in Oye-Ekiti. The response rate shows Humanities (Social Sciences) as the highest with 52 (26.39%), followed by Engineering with 50 (25.38%), Science has 47 (23.86%), Humanities (Arts) has 25 (12.69%) and Agriculture has 23 (11.68%) responses.

Table 2 above highlights the responses of the students to the various questions raised to enhance the study. The discussions below shed more light on the outcome of the findings.

TABLE 2
Tabular Analysis of Findings

S.No	Items (Questions)	Agreed/Yes	Disagreed/No
1.	The Orientation programme is quite educative	196 (98%)	1 (0.5%)
2.	I am more enlightened through the orientation programme	193 (96.5%)	4 (2%)
3.	The Orientation programme was interactive and it allowed for question and answer opportunity	186 (93%)	11 (5.5%)
4.	Orientation allowed for direct contact and familiarity with the Principal Officers of the university	169 (84.5%)	28 (14%)
5.	Orientation helps to address accommodation and other challenges of freshmen.	169 (84.5%)	28 (14%)
6.	Orientation programme/tours allow for the familiarity of freshmen with the Institution.	183 (91.5%)	14 (7%)
7.	To me, Orientation programme is a waste of time	4 (2%)	193 (96.5%)
8.	Orientation talks/speeches motivate and encourage freshmen.	192 (96%)	5 (2.5%)
9.	In my own opinion, Orientation programme should be cancelled.	2 (1%)	195 (97.5%)
10.	Orientation should be held consistently annually for freshmen.	193 (96.5%)	4 (2%)

6 DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the study are as highlighted below:

- 196 respondents (98%) agreed that orientation was educative,
- 193 respondents (96.5%) claimed that they were more enlightened through the orientation programme.
- Likewise, 186 respondents (93%) saw orientation as being interactive and that it allowed for question and answer opportunity.
- 169 respondents (84.5%) agreed that orientation allowed for direct contact and familiarity with the Principal Officers of the university.
- Also 169 respondents (84.5%) claimed that orientation programme helped to address accommodation and other challenges of freshmen.
- 183 respondents (91.5%) opined that orientation programme/tours allowed for the familiarity of freshmen with the institution.
- As to whether orientation was a waste of time, 193 respondents (96.5%) said it was not a waste of time while 4 respondents (4%) saw orientation

as a waste of time.

- 192 respondents (96%) agreed that orientation talks/speeches motivate and encourage freshmen while 5 respondents (2.5%) disagreed.
- As to whether orientation programme should be cancelled, 195 respondents disagreed while 2 respondents (1%) agreed that it should be cancelled.
- However, 193 respondents (96.5%) supported that orientation should be held consistently annually for freshmen while 4 respondents (2%) disagreed.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are being recommended based on the findings of the study:

- (a) Orientation programme is impactful as it is educative, enlightening and interactive as revealed by the study and should be sustained.
- (b) Orientation allowed for direct contact and familiarity with the Principal Officers of the concerned institution and allowed for the accordance of honour and dignity.
- (c) Orientation programme helped to address accommodation and other challenges of freshmen which is a relief on the university management.
- (d) Orientation programme/tours allowed for the familiarity of freshmen with the institution, this would enable students not to go astray.
- (e) Orientation was applauded by the students and was never seen as a waste of time and should be enhanced.
- (f) Orientation talks/speeches motivate and encourage freshmen and it's an academic impetus.
- (g) Orientation programme should not be cancelled or waived, but should be held consistently annually for freshmen by tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

8 CONCLUSION

Orientation programme for freshmen in tertiary institution is quite impactful as it educates, enlightens and is also interactive. It is beneficial to the freshmen as it helps to address many of their academic challenges including accommodation needs. By extension, the institution in question also benefits because the respective principal officers of the institution, including the Director of Health Services and the Chief Security Officer

would address the freshmen on the ‘do’ and ‘don’ts’ of the institution and where to find help when the need arises. It can be inferred from the findings obtained that orientation for freshmen is quite impactful and should not be waived in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It is often being said that where there is no law, there is no sin. Orientation programme allows for the rules and regulations of the respective institutions concerned be clearly spelt out for freshmen’s information and compliance.

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Orientation for freshmen in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria: University of Nigeria-UNN example

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, 2004: O-Week tour leaders at the University of New South Wales.

Appendix – The questionnaire to the study

IMPACT OF ORIENTATION ON FRESHMEN: THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OYE-EKITI EXAMPLE

Dear respondent,

Accept my warmest congratulations on your admission to FUOYE. Please; spare the time to quickly fill this questionnaire, which is intended solely for

research, to contribute to knowledge and to enhance students' welfare.

I appreciate your cooperation.

Mr. I. O. Busayo CLN.

Principal Librarian, (FUOYE LIBRARY)

SECTION A: BIO-DATA OF RESPONDENT (Please, tick/fill as appropriate)

Sex: (a) Male () (b) Female () Level.....

Faculty.....Department.....

SECTION B: Please, tick the option of your choice from the following options provided to answer the questions hereunder.

(i) The Orientation programme is quite educative. (a) Yes () (b) No ().

(ii) I am more enlightened through the orientation programme. (a) Yes () (b) No ().

(iii) The Orientation programme was interactive and it allowed for question and answer opportunity. (a) Yes () (b) No ().

(iv) Orientation allowed for direct contact and familiarity with the Principal Officers of the university. (a) Yes () (b) No ().

(v) Orientation helps to address accommodation and other challenges of freshmen. (a) Yes () (b) No ().

(vi) Orientation programme/tours allow for the familiarity of freshmen with the Institution. (a) Yes () (b) No ().

(vii) To me, Orientation programme is a waste of time. (a) Yes () (b) No ().

(viii) Orientation talks/speeches motivate and encourage freshmen. (a) Yes () (b) No ().

(ix) In my own opinion, Orientation programme should be cancelled. (a) Yes () (b) No ().

(x) Orientation should be held consistently annually for freshmen. (a) Yes () (b) No ().