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## **The interest of Hausa language students in Usmanu Danfodiyo University towards the course**

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### **Abstract**

The relationship between students' interest and their academic performance has never been a doubtful phenomenon. Notwithstanding, many scholars were interested in finding why and how as to the interconnectivity between students' interest and performance. This study is set to investigate the interest of Hausa language students at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria, towards the course. The population of the study consists of 168 students of the Department of Nigerian Language UDUSOK, Nigeria, out of which one hundred and forty-seven students are selected as the population sample. The instrument was validated by experts and a reliability index of 0.74 was drawn using Pearson correlation moment. Descriptive statistics is used for the data analyses, in which the researchers used frequency count, simple percentages and tables. Major findings of the research are discussed thereafter. In accordance with the findings, the researchers offered some recommendations thus, teachers, school authorities and others concerned should orient students at O-levels on how equally all courses are important and prestigious; and that, there should be seminars and public lectures, among other ways, to guide the students on how best they could utilize their course as a life career.

**Keywords:** interest, career, hausa language

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### **Introduction**

Hausa has been taught outside Africa since 1885, when the first the course was offered in Berlin, Germany. Today Hausa is taught on a regular basis throughout the world, mainly at universities that have a department specializing in African languages (Ekkehard, 2012; Thompson, 2015; ALS, 2015). More than any other language in Africa, the Hausa language has the highest number of specialists, ranging from holders of NCE, Diploma, B.A., M.A. Mphil, Ph. D. and indeed a number of professors (Bunza, 2015).

However, Nigerian universities that offer Hausa language include; Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria; Bayero University in Kano, Federal University Kashere in Gombe, the University of Maiduguri in Maiduguri, Sokoto State University in Sokoto, Umaru Musa 'Yar'adua University in Katsina and Usmanu Danfodiyo University in Sokoto among others (Adejala, 2014). Hausa is also taught, especially in the form of linguistics, in countries other than Nigeria. They include African as well as Non-African countries such as Warsaw University in Poland, the University of London in the United Kingdom, Research Institute for the Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (ILCAA) in Japan, the University of South Africa in South Africa and the University of Ghana, in Ghana among others (SBA, 2012).

However, students studying other courses, especially science courses, and sometimes the community at large, positioned Hausa language students at a lower elevation. This is for the fact that Hausa is an indigenous language in Nigeria. Thus, it is regarded as local, common and which has less importance to the political and socio-economic climate of the country. As such, only a few are into the study of the course willingly. More so, many Hausa

students feel ashamed to show out their course of study (Bunza, 2010).

On the other hand, the interest of students on a course is a determining factor in their academic achievements. Chang, (1996) defines interest as an individual's internal orientation when he/she expresses the choice of someone or something. According to Lai (2010), interest in learning is personal preferences with regard to learning, which sometimes means what an individual chooses on one thing rather than other things. That, sometimes, resulted in the positive psychological state during interaction with circumstances that engenders further learning motives. It is a condition that occurs when someone sees a characteristic of a situation that is correlated with his/her own need and desire (Sardiman in Firmani, 2009). This is indeed a great threat against the academic pursuit of the students concerned. Thus, especially considering the relationship which students' attitudes have with learning.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Previous pieces of literature have proved that the motivation, self-esteem, self-concept and indeed interest of a learner, among others, directly or indirectly affect his/her learning outcomes. Learning results from the active involvement of the learner. Meanwhile, the learner's involvement is, to a high extent, determined by his/her attitudes towards the course in question. However, it has been observed that many undergraduate Hausa Language students did not choose to study it willingly. Thus, they are given the course to study out of volition. More so, many of the students find the course difficult than they expected (i.e. a

mere language that is used in everyday communication). Perhaps, these could be the genesis of the low proficiency in both the oral and written aspects of the course (Hausa Language).

Therefore, if a step is taken towards ascertaining the real causes of this reluctance and lack of pride which Hausa language students treat their course with, a better end could be met. It is therefore of paramount importance to conduct research on this phenomenon, so as to study the attitudes of undergraduate Hausa language students towards the course at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria. The result could be generalized on other Hausa language students studying in various institutions of education other than the location of this research or serve to open the gate for similar and/or further studies.

### Objectives of the Study

The study strives to determine:

1. Determine the status of interest, which undergraduate Hausa language students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University have in the course,
2. Determine the extent to which the undergraduate Hausa language students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto would willingly continue with the study of the course as a life career.

### Research Questions

This research is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent are the undergraduate Hausa language students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto interested in the course?
2. To what extent the undergraduate Hausa language students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto would willingly continue with the study of the course as a life career?

### Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to be relevant to the government, educational planners and administrators, parents, language educators and indeed students. The aforementioned categories of beneficiaries will be provided with knowledge of the attitudes of the undergraduate Hausa language students towards the course at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria.

Perhaps, it will provide to the educational planners and administrators, relevant information on the attitudes of undergraduate students towards the Hausa language. This could be worthy of consideration during the process of educational planning. More so, guidance and counseling officers could use the findings during ascertaining the causes of failure or the success of students. It could as well be useful when sending feedback information to students' parents.

Finally, the findings could serve reference functions to researchers who wish to conduct related researches. This is because the research highlights the attitudes of students towards a language (i.e. Hausa), which could be a reason for the failure and impediment of smooth flow of teaching and learning process with respect to the field of study in question.

### Relationship between Students' Interest and Learning

Previous researches have proved the relationship between students' interest and learning. Yi-je, (2011) opines that, in a classroom setting, interest is required to meet students'

intellectual as well as emotional needs. However, interest can never be imposed on an individual by external forces, but a teacher can help increase the learners' interest. In 2008, Yang studied students from seven countries. The result of his study shows that those who have both confidence and interest in learning science always showed positive achievements in the area of science. That is simply to say, students with higher levels of interest in science performed better in science, than those with mid and lower-level interest (Ye-je, 2011).

However, life career is an important phenomenon, which experiences a significant shift in understanding it with the global shift in understanding the purpose of education in general. This shift has had implications for ideas about effective career education (Ivan, 2009). Career is defined as a series of jobs that a person has in a particular area of work, usually involving more responsibility as time passes (Turnbul, J. *et al* eds, 2015).

### Methodology

The research design employed for the study is a descriptive survey. The population of the study consists of all undergraduate students of the Department of Nigerian Languages, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. This department has the total number of one hundred and sixty-eight students (168) (as of 2016/2017 session) of which are all adults. However, to select the sample of the study, a proportionate sampling technique was used to select one hundred and forty-seven students. This is in line with Krejcie & Morgan, (1970:30) table for determining sample size.

**Table 1:** Population Sample of Undergraduate Hausa Language Students

S/N	Level	Number of Students	Sample Size
1.	100L	24	24
2.	200L	19	19
3.	300L	29	28
4.	400L	96	76
	Total	168	147

*Source:* UDUS Web Team, (2014); Department of Nigerian Languages, (2016)

An instrument, questionnaire, however, was constructed in a Likert form using three response categories. The response categories are yes, no and undecided. The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Curriculum and Educational Technology and the Department of Educational Foundations respectively, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. However, section A of the instrument is the respondent's bio-data while section B with seven (7) items sought for the extent to which the undergraduate Hausa language students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto are interested in the course. Section C carries four (4) items that ascertain the extent to which the undergraduate Hausa language students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto are willing to continue with the study of the course as a life career. The final version of the instrument was subjected to a test re-test method that yields a reliability index of 0.74. Descriptive statistics is used for the data analyses, in which the researchers use frequency count, simple percentage and tables.

## Data Presentation and Analysis

The data obtained during the study is presented and analyzed under this session.

**Table 2:** Students' interest in learning the Hausa language

S/N	Item Statement (Students & Teachers)	Yes	No	Undecided
1.	Did you willingly apply to study the Hausa language?	84%	16%	0%
2.	Were you interested in the Hausa language during your O-level education?	70%	22%	8%
3.	Do you think you would have been performing better if you study another course other than the Hausa language?	70%	27%	3%
4.	Would you like your children and/or younger ones to study the course?	70%	30%	0%
5.	Do you derive pleasure when participating in studying pieces of literature/works on Hausa?	74%	26%	0%
6.	Do you buy and/or study Hausa books, which are not part of your curriculum?	89%	10%	1%
7.	Do you follow Hausa programs on the various media available?	85%	15%	0%

Table 2 above shows the extent to which the undergraduate Hausa language students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto are interested in the course.

**Table 3:** Students' Preference of Hausa Language as a Life Career

S/N	Item Statement (Students & Teachers)	Yes	No	Undecided
1.	Would you like to further your education on Hausa language after the first degree?	73%	15%	12%
2.	Under normal circumstance (i.e. favorable salary), would you like to teach the Hausa language as a career.?	85%	10%	4%
3.	Do you have a vision towards the development of the language?	78%	22%	0%
4.	Do you have research efforts on Hausa Language?	73%	19%	8%

Table 3 above shows the extent to which the undergraduate Hausa language students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto are willing to continue with the study of the course as a life career.

## Major Findings

The major findings of the study are:

1. To a highly significant extent, the undergraduate Hausa language students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto are interested in the course. Yet, the majority developed the interest only after they are given the course to study.
2. Majority of the undergraduate Hausa language students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto would willingly like to continue with the study of the course as a life career.

## Discussion of the Major Findings

According to the data obtained during this research, the majority of the undergraduate Hausa language students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto (80%) applied to study the course willingly. Notwithstanding, during the research, the researchers learned that these responses are contrary to reality. That is to say, the majority of the undergraduate Hausa language students of the Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto is given the course out of their will rather than applying to study it willingly (as the data claim). By interaction with some of the students, the researchers learned that the undergraduate Hausa language students of

Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto developed an interest in the course only after been admitted. Thus, to a high extent that they wished they had applied for it initially.

However, this interest, which the students developed towards the course after been given the admission to study it, makes the majority of them to have good attitudes towards the course. Yet, about 70% of the participants agreed that, from amongst the students, those with bad attitudes towards the course are affected negatively in terms of academic achievements. This justifies the opinion of Robert, (1992) where he opines that, without positive attitudes to learning, students have little chance of learning proficiency. In addition, about seventy percent (70%) of the undergraduate Hausa language students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto will like their children and/or younger brothers to study the course. It is also due to the interest they have in the course, they buy and/or study Hausa literary works, which are not even part of their curriculum as well as follow Hausa programs on various media available.

Moreover, the data obtained by this research show that, majority of the undergraduate Hausa language students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto have the will to maintain the Hausa language as a life career. Thus, about 73% of them will like to further their education on Hausa after the first degree, while about 12% are indecisive on this. This is to say; only about 15% of them are not willing to further their education on the Hausa language. Similarly, about 85% of them will, under favorable salary, like to teach the Hausa language as their life career. Finally, about 78% of the undergraduate Hausa language students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto has a vision towards the development of the language and about 73% have been attempting to enrich its literature by writing books for publications. It is clear from the findings above, therefore, the students (majority) have held the Hausa language with high esteem and as a life career.

## Conclusion

Learners' interest is, without a doubt, a variable affecting their learning outcome. Therefore, as an implication for language educators, educational planners, and implementers as well as teachers', it (students' interest) should be taken into consideration and be treated with attention. However, the following recommendations are offered in line with the major findings of the study:

1. Since the Hausa language students develop an interest in the course mostly after been given the course to study, teachers, school authorities and others concerned should orient students at O-levels on how equally all courses are important and prestigious. This will help the students to choose courses of study not based on the choices of the majority of friends, rather, based on potentialities bestowed in each student.
2. There should be seminars and public lectures, among other ways, to guide the students on how best they could utilize their course as a life career. This might include the spelling out of its job opportunities.

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