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University Entrants Age and Intellectual Readiness of Undergraduates in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract
This study investigates the relationship between the age of university entrants and their intellectual readiness for undergraduate education in Nigerian universities. Despite the regulatory minimum admission age of 16 years set by JAMB and NUC, a growing trend of underage admissions persists. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 382 undergraduates in two public universities in Osun State through a structured questionnaire. Results reveal that nearly half (48.1%) of the students gained admission below the stipulated age. Younger entrants were found to face significantly more academic and psychological challenges, including difficulties with complex concepts, stress, and poor emotional preparedness. Conversely, older students exhibited greater intellectual readiness, including better coping mechanisms and academic adaptation. A positive and statistically significant relationship ($r = 0.144$, $p < 0.05$) was established between admission age and intellectual readiness. Respondents strongly endorsed interventions such as pre-university preparatory programs, mentorship, counseling, and study-skills training. The study concludes that intellectual readiness, not merely chronological age, should be prioritized in admission decisions. It recommends policies and support structures to enhance younger students' preparedness for higher education.
Keywords: Entrants Age, Intellectual Readiness, Undergraduates, Academic Performance, Nigerian Universities

Introduction

Education is a crucial determinant that steers individuals towards a fruitful existence. People receive education in order to enhance and expand the development of their immediate living environment. An individual who has received a formal education has the ability to not only provide sufficient financial support for themselves and their family but also to actively contribute to the betterment of the community.

Higher education institutions are widely recognised as vital. Enhancing higher education and planning for the promotion of both quality and quantity can enable the acquisition of new technologies, innovative strategies, and sophisticated knowledge. These attributes are essential for identifying and expediting the progress of a country's social and economic development (Kayode, et al, 2014). Various factors, including

Al-Hikmah Journal of Education (AJE)
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gender, age, intellectual readiness, academic competence, teaching staff, student background, parental socioeconomic status, residential location, language of instruction, educational expenses, study time, and living arrangements, all influence students' learning outcomes when pursuing higher education.

Currently, degree-seeking students exhibit a broader diversity of origins and present a greater array of needs. Typically, students are required to adhere to the dominant epistemologies, organisational structures, cultures, and practices. They are required to conform to the university's prescribed criteria for studenthood. Variations in cognitive capability, motivation, and prior knowledge, together with environmental factors such as the quality of instruction, availability of resources, and support from family and peers, can all influence a student's learning outcome. Students who perceive greater support from their parents, peers, and teachers are more likely to exhibit higher levels of engagement (Botch & Piolat 2015).

The age at which students gain admission into Nigerian universities has been a subject of concern among educators, policymakers, and parents. Traditionally, students in Nigeria enter the university at an average age of 17–19 years, but recent trends indicate a rise in younger entrants, with some as young as 14 or 15 gaining admission due to early completion of secondary education (Ofoha & Uchenna, 2023). While age is often linked to maturity and cognitive development, intellectual readiness, which includes critical thinking, emotional stability, and adaptability, plays a crucial role in determining students' academic success in higher institutions (Okon et al., 2024).

The concept of intellectual readiness encompasses the systems that govern the development of individuals' thinking and behaviour, including the factors that limit and incentivize their actions, such as the standards used to evaluate new ideas in academic grading. The definitions and explanations provided above indicate that a learner's intellectual readiness is a crucial factor in achieving academic excellence.

Underprepared undergraduates may encounter difficulties managing the rigorous responsibilities associated with pursuing a university degree. A person's capacity and inclination to participate in intellectual pursuits and engage in critical and analytical thinking is referred to as intellectual readiness. It involves possessing a responsive mindset, being curious, and being open to new perspectives. To be deemed intellectually ready, one must possess the requisite level of knowledge and skills, along with the capacity to apply them across many situations. It involves possessing a strong basis in reading, numeracy, and critical thinking skills, along with a comprehensive understanding of diverse subjects and academic disciplines.

In a similar vein, intellectual readiness refers to the cognitive abilities, learning skills, and preparedness of students to handle university-level education. Studies have shown that younger students may struggle with independence, academic pressure, and social integration, which can negatively affect their performance (Adesina & Bello, 2023). On the other hand, older students may have gained more experience and emotional maturity but may face other challenges such as balancing responsibilities and financial constraints. Being intellectually ready requires a willingness to question assumptions, seek knowledge, and analyse evidence critically. It involves the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and incorporate new knowledge while also being comfortable with ambiguity and unpredictability. Intellectual readiness, characterised by the capacity to engage in critical thinking, problem-solving, and informed decision-making,

Al-Hikmah Journal of Education (AJE)
Volume 12 Number 1 May, 2025
e-ISSN: 2705-2508; p-ISSN: 2384-7662

is a crucial attribute for achieving success in academic, professional, and personal pursuits. However, the learner's age can be a contributing factor to this. The age of learners greatly influences their intellectual readiness, as individuals experience cerebral growth alongside physical development. According to Yilmaz (2017), the age at which a student enters school greatly influences their scholastic advancement. Hall et al. (2017) argue that the age of undergraduate students has an impact on their academic performance in higher education. College students are required to exhibit their ability to effectively tackle challenging subjects within limited timeframes, with various forms of academic pressure.

Admission age pertains to the specific age when a student commences their university education, whereas intellectual readiness relates to the student's cognitive and academic competence at admission. Academic competence, however, pertains to the student's degree of accomplishment in academic endeavours. Younger students who enrol in universities may face difficulties in terms of intellectual readiness if they are not adequately equipped to manage the academic rigour of higher education. This can result in a diminished degree of academic competence in comparison to their classmates who enrolled in university at a more advanced age. While this may seem hypothetical, it is necessary to empirically examine and analyse the relationship between those factors. Students who are intellectually ready for university generally exhibit superior academic competence. This underscores the utmost importance of ensuring that students possess the necessary intellectual readiness prior to commencing their university courses. Various interconnected and intricate factors, such as admission age, intellectual readiness, and academic competence, can impact a student's success in higher education. Aside from socioeconomic status, educational history, and personal drive, the age at which a student enters may also impact their level of readiness and competence.

Despite existing policies that require students to be at least 16 years old to gain admission into Nigerian universities (JAMB, 2023), cases of underage admissions persist, raising concerns about whether these students are intellectually ready for university education. The issue becomes even more significant in the context of Nigeria’s academic environment, where self-directed learning and critical thinking skills are essential for academic success. Therefore, it is necessary to examine how age influences the intellectual readiness of undergraduates in Nigerian universities.

Relevant Prior Contributions

The term "intellect" originates from the Latin root intellectus, which encompasses the meanings of "understanding," "knowledge," and "reason." The lack of a precise definition for the concept of "intelligence" in terms of its psychological essence is not a coincidence. Intelligence tests are commonly believed to be a means of assessing Intelligence Quotient (IQ) by many individuals. At times, the term "intelligence" represents a specific overarching biological function or element, the ability to engage in formal operations, thinking related to speech, meanings, and personal interpretations, and lastly, a broadly interpreted "cognition" as a facet of consciousness or a general ability for contemplation. In the latest occurrence, consciousness is associated with intelligence.

Having a clear understanding of one's attitudes, values, perceptions, limitations, and strengths, as well as understanding oneself in relation to one's intelligence, is crucial for

Al-Hikmah Journal of Education (AJE)
Volume 12 Number 1 May, 2025
e-ISSN: 2705-2508; p-ISSN: 2384-7662

being intellectually ready. These qualities, such as self-monitoring, self-evaluation, self-control, and self-reward, enhance learners' confidence in their ability to handle challenges and achieve their goals, even in the presence of obstacles.

Intellectual readiness refers to the capacity to sustain optimal performance and respond appropriately when confronted with uncertain and challenging situations. Intellectual readiness is the capacity to effectively participate in academic pursuits, including learning, problem-solving, critical thinking, and applying knowledge. Individuals with a heightened level of intellectual readiness are more likely to achieve academic achievement.

The organisation and criteria employed for admission vary significantly among nations, exemplifying the substantial differences in admission techniques. Policy choices made at the institutional or governmental level shape admissions systems, closely linking them to the educational system and historical development. Consequently, admissions procedures might significantly differ even within different countries. Higher education (HE) utilises either decentralised or centralised admission systems. In the United States, a decentralised admission system is in place, wherein each higher education institution has the authority to determine whether or not to admit a candidate. In centralised systems, students have the ability to prioritise a specific number of possibilities. Admission in these systems is usually based on the programme itself, or a mix of the programme and the institution. The organisation responsible for centralised admissions often functions autonomously from institutions; hence, they are the regulatory authorities responsible for formulating and overseeing the implementation of admission policies.

In Nigeria, the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and the National Universities Commission (NUC) are the regulatory authorities responsible for overseeing the admission process at each institution. They ensure that every candidate meets the entrance requirements before granting admission. One of the prerequisites for admission in Nigeria is that candidates must be at least 16 years old by October of the admission year. The regulatory agencies (JAMB and NUC) impose a minimum age criterion of 16 years for admission into Nigerian universities, ensuring that students have reached a specific level of intellectual readiness prior to enrolling in higher education. The purpose of this age requirement is to guarantee that students have finished their secondary education, which is commonly the fundamental degree of education in many countries, including Nigeria.

Secondary education equips students with vital academic skills, topic expertise, and critical thinking capabilities, which provide the basis for further education. Furthermore, the implementation of a minimum age limit serves to guarantee that students have attained a specific degree of maturity and readiness to cope with the challenges and expectations of higher education. University courses typically entail self-directed learning, intricate coursework, and a heightened level of scholarly involvement, in contrast to secondary education. Universities establish a minimum age criterion to ensure admission of students who possess the necessary skills and capabilities to effectively manage academic demands and obligations. Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognise that age alone cannot be the main determinant of intellectual readiness. Although, the age requirement can give a general idea of a student's readiness, it is not an infallible criterion.

Al-Hikmah Journal of Education (AJE)
Volume 12 Number 1 May, 2025
e-ISSN: 2705-2508; p-ISSN: 2384-7662

Several elements, such as individual ability, motivation, previous learning experiences, and personal growth, influence intellectual readiness. Consequently, universities generally evaluate various admission factors, such as academic achievement, entrance exams, and interviews, in order to gauge a student's overall readiness for higher education. Age at admission to university can determine individuals' intellectual readiness, as indicated by the following indices: for instance, according to Delaney and Devereux (2020), an individual's academic performance when they enter university can be a reliable measure of their intellectual readiness and ability in school. The prerequisites may encompass a high school diploma, performance on standardised assessments (such as the WAEC, JAMB, SAT, or ACT), and other academic achievements. Meeting the required age and successfully fulfilling the academic requirements for university admission demonstrates a specific degree of intellectual readiness.

According to a 2019 study by Memduhoğlu and Keleş, college students with stronger critical thinking skills outperformed others on tasks requiring creative problem-solving techniques. Additionally, research by Chikeleze, Johnson, and Gibson (2018), showed a favourable correlation between critical thinking abilities, adaptability, and the capacity to deal with uncertainty. Critical thinkers are more likely to engage in reflective thinking, come up with original solutions, and approach new problems with an open mind. Nosich (2016) carried out findings on the relationship between intellectual readiness and critical thinking abilities. Greater intellectual readiness was associated with higher levels of critical thinking, indicating a positive relationship between intellectual readiness and critical thinking abilities. The study did highlight the impact of additional elements, including motivation and self-regulation.

Statement of the Problem

The entrance age for Nigerian undergraduate students is governed by the Joint Entrance and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and the National University Commission (NUC). It is required that students be 16 years old as of October of the year of admission. This is to guarantee that learners are adequately prepared intellectually, psychologically, and emotionally for the academic challenges they will face. Before being accepted into the university, it is assumed that a 16-year-old youngster should possess the necessary maturity to handle the academic challenges that lie ahead.

A very common phenomenon in the country now is to see young boys and girls who ordinarily should not have gone out of secondary schools in the universities roaming about, looking confused, unguided and unguarded; when anyone moves closer to ask about what their age is, it becomes astonishing to hear ‘I’m 14 or 15years and the likes’. Youthfulness is written all over them, some even look homesick feeling the parental affections that they should still be enjoying at home. The increasing number of underage students gaining admission into Nigerian universities has sparked debates on their intellectual readiness for higher education. While some scholars argue that younger students can cope academically due to their high cognitive abilities, others suggest that emotional and psychological immaturity hinders their overall university experience (Eze, 2023).

Additionally, many Nigerian universities have recorded high dropout rates and academic struggles among students, which raises questions about whether intellectual readiness is adequately assessed during university admissions (Ogunleye & Adeyemi,

Al-Hikmah Journal of Education (AJE)
Volume 12 Number 1 May, 2025
e-ISSN: 2705-2508; p-ISSN: 2384-7662

2024). Despite the importance of this issue, there is limited empirical research exploring the relationship between university entrants' age and their intellectual readiness. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining the intellectual preparedness of undergraduates in Nigerian universities based on their entry age.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to:

i. assess the diverse range of entrance ages into Nigerian universities
ii. examine if younger university entrants face more academic and psychological challenges than older students
iii. assess if age affect students' ability to adapt to the university learning environment in Nigeria
iv. identify measures that can be implemented to ensure that university entrants are intellectually ready for higher education
v. examine the relationship between the age of university entrants and their intellectual readiness for undergraduate studies?

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

a. What is the diverse range of entrance ages into Nigerian universities?
b. Do younger university entrants face more academic and psychological challenges than older students?
c. How does age affect students' ability to adapt to the university learning environment in Nigeria?
d. What measures can be implemented to ensure that university entrants are intellectually ready for higher education?

Research Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was tested for the study:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between university entrants' age and their intellectual readiness for undergraduate education in universities in Osun State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for this study comprised 8,464 admitted undergraduates for the 2021/2022 academic session of the two public universities in Osun State (National Universities Commission Statistical Digest, 2022).

Table 1:
New Entrants into Universities in Osun State, Nigeria

Institution	Numbers of Students
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	5,547
Osun State University, Osogbo	2,915
Total	8,462

Source: NUC Statistical Digest 2021/2022 Session

Table 1 shows the new entrants into universities in Osun State, Nigeria. The sample consisted of 382 undergraduate students from six faculties at Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, and Osun State University. The Yamane sample size formula was used to determine the sample size. Three faculties were randomly selected from each of

Al-Hikmah Journal of Education (AJE)
Volume 12 Number 1 May, 2025
e-ISSN: 2705-2508; p-ISSN: 2384-7662

the two chosen universities using the simple random sampling technique. A convenience sample technique was employed to choose 64 students from each of the four faculties (Education, Arts, Social Sciences and Science) and 63 students from the remaining two faculties (Health Sciences and Administration), resulting in a total of 382 undergraduates in order to ensure adequate representation for the study. The researchers designed an instrument titled "Admission Age and Intellectual Readiness Questionnaire" (AAIRQ) to elicit information from the respondents, aiming to assess the relationship between admission age, intellectual readiness, and academic competence among the respondents.

The (AAIRQ) has four sections. The first section contained demographic information of respondents which contained seven items, the second section has five items which are used to elicit questions on the level of the universities adherence to the stipulated admission age while the third section has 15 items which are used to measure the undergraduates' intellectual readiness and the fourth section which contained 10 items answered issues related to the academic competence of university undergraduates in Osun State, Nigeria. The instrument was subjected to a pilot study after which data obtained were analysed to get a correlation coefficient of 0.73 that was considered usable for the study. The questions were answered using percentage while the hypothesis was tested using the Pearson's-Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) statistical tool.

Results

Research Question One: What is the diverse range of entrance ages into Nigerian universities?

To answer this question, respondents' responses were calculated and subjected to analysis. The results are as presented in Table 2.

Table 2:

Age at which the respondent got admitted in to university

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Age 13	7	1.83
Age 14	101	26.44
Age 15	76	19.90
Age 16	46	12.04
Age 17	80	20.94
Age 18	29	7.59
Age 19	15	3.90
Age 20	10	2.62
Age 21	5	1.31
Age 22	9	2.36
Age 23	4	1.05
Age 24	-	-
Age 25	-	-
Total	**382**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 presents the age distribution at which the respondents were admitted. This is aimed at providing insights into the deviation from or adherence to the mandated age of

Al-Hikmah Journal of Education (AJE)
Volume 12 Number 1 May, 2025
e-ISSN: 2705-2508; p-ISSN: 2384-7662

16years set by higher education governing bodies. From the analysis, the frequencies and percentage shows that individuals below the legally required age (184) accounted for 48.1% of the respondents that were offered admissions to study in the universities. Whereas, those respondents who are of the required age (198) accounted for (51.9%). Findings from the study as shown in the Table indicates that not all admissions conform to the specified age requirements as stated by the NUC and JAMB.

In summary, the data shows a diverse range of entrance ages, which includes both compliance with and divergence from the standard age requirement of 16. There are both early and late admissions, which means we need to fully understand the factors that affect both trends. This could mean that current regulatory frameworks need to be reevaluated to accommodate this range.

Research Question Two: Do younger university entrants face more academic and psychological challenges than older students?

Table 3:

Challenges Faced by Younger University Entrants.

S/N	Items	SA (n/%)	A (n/%)	D (n/%)	SD (n/%)
1	Younger university entrants face more academic and psychological challenges than older students	153 / 40%	134 / 35%	57 / 15%	38 / 10%
2	Younger university entrants find it difficult to understand complex academic concepts	145 / 38%	126 / 33%	76 / 20%	35 / 9%
3	Younger university entrants experience anxiety or stress due to academic workload	160 / 42%	115 / 30%	69 / 18%	38 / 10%
4	Younger university entrants feel emotionally and socially prepared to handle university life	77 / 20%	96 / 25%	115 / 30%	96 / 25%
5	Many younger university entrants considered dropping out or deferring due to challenges	96 / 25%	107 / 28%	103 / 27%	76 / 20%

The data in Table 3 reflect significant concern about the challenges faced by younger university entrants. A total of 75% (287 students) believe younger students face greater academic and psychological strain. Emotional preparedness and dropout contemplation remain notable, showing the importance of age in coping mechanisms.

Research Question Three: How does age affect students' ability to adapt to the university learning environment in Nigeria?

Table 4:

Effect of Age on Students' Ability to Adapt to University Learning Environment

S/N	Items	SA (n/%)	A (n/%)	D (n/%)	SD (n/%)
1	Younger entrants quickly adjust to the academic demands of university life	69 / 18%	96 / 25%	122 / 32%	95 / 25%
2	Younger entrants find it difficult to participate in group discussions	134 / 35%	115 / 30%	76 / 20%	57 / 15%
3	Younger entrants know how to manage time between academics and social life	76 / 20%	103 / 27%	115 / 30%	88 / 23%

Al-Hikmah Journal of Education (AJE)
Volume 12 Number 1 May, 2025
e-ISSN: 2705-2508; p-ISSN: 2384-7662

S/N	Items	SA (n/%)	A (n/%)	D (n/%)	SD (n/%)
4	Younger entrants feel confident engaging with lecturers in class	84 / 22%	96 / 25%	107 / 28%	95 / 25%
5	Younger students struggle more in coping with university life	153 / 40%	134 / 35%	57 / 15%	38 / 10%

Table 4 shows that a combined 75% (287 respondents) believe younger students struggle more to cope with university life. Indicators like poor time management, low confidence in class participation, and difficulty adjusting academically suggest age-linked adaptability gaps.

Research Question Four: What measures can be implemented to ensure that university entrants are intellectually ready for higher education?

Table 5: Strategies to prepare younger entrants.

S/N	Items	SA (n/%)	A (n/%)	D (n/%)	SD (n/%)
1	Pre-university preparatory programs should be introduced for younger students	172 / 45%	134 / 35%	46 / 12%	30 / 8%
2	Academic mentorship programs would help younger students adjust better	191 / 50%	115 / 30%	38 / 10%	38 / 10%
3	Psychological counselling services help younger students adjust better	153 / 40%	145 / 38%	46 / 12%	38 / 10%
4	Study skills and time management training are needed for younger students	210 / 55%	115 / 30%	38 / 10%	19 / 5%
5	Social integration programs are necessary for better adjustment to university	183 / 48%	122 / 32%	38 / 10%	38 / 10%

The data in Table 5 indicate a strong support for multiple strategies to prepare younger entrants. Most notably, preparatory programs (79%), mentorship (80%), and study skills training (85%) received wide backing. These findings suggest that stakeholders should focus on proactive interventions to enhance readiness for university.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significance relationship between admission age and undergraduate intellectual readiness in universities in Osun State.

To test this hypothesis, responses were calculated and analysed using Pearson's-Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). The results are presented in Table 6

Al-Hikmah Journal of Education (AJE)
Volume 12 Number 1 May, 2025
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Table 6.
Relationship between admission age and intellectual readiness

		INTELLECTUAL READINESS	ADMISSION AGE
INTELLECTUAL READINESS	Pearson Correlation	1	.144**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	8722.241	203.969
	Covariance	22.953	.537
	N	382	382
ADMISSION AGE	Pearson Correlation	.144**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	203.969	235.332
	Covariance	.537	.618
	N	382	382

The Table presents the correlation analysis of the relationship between admission age and intellectual readiness among university undergraduates in Osun State. Having subjected this analysis to PPMC at 0.05 level of significance, r value of 0.144 was obtained. This shows that the null hypothesis is rejected thereby upholding the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between admission age and intellectual readiness of university undergraduates in Osun State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that university entrants' ages vary widely, ranging from 13 to 25 years, with 48.1% of the respondents gaining admission below the stipulated age of 16. This implies a substantial level of non-compliance with national regulations (JAMB & NUC). The implication is that current admission enforcement mechanisms may not be effective, and younger entrants are gaining access without due consideration for maturity or readiness. This challenges the sufficiency of the age-based admission policy, prompting a review toward enforcing not just chronological but intellectual maturity standards. This echoes concerns raised by scholars like Adesina and Bello (2023), who emphasized the psychological and cognitive challenges faced by younger undergraduates.

Al-Hikmah Journal of Education (AJE)
Volume 12 Number 1 May, 2025
e-ISSN: 2705-2508; p-ISSN: 2384-7662

The second key finding showed that younger entrants face significant academic and psychological challenges. A combined 75% of respondents agreed they experience stress, difficulty understanding complex concepts, and low emotional preparedness. This supports the view that age correlates with cognitive and emotional readiness, justifying the argument that simply being cognitively able is not enough without emotional maturity for university success. These findings align with Eze (2023), who reported that underage students often lack the emotional and intellectual maturity needed for higher learning.

It was also confirmed that younger students experience more difficulty in adapting to the academic and social expectations of university life. They struggled with time management, class participation, and confidence, again with 75% of respondents affirming this trend. University environments may not be adequately structured to support younger entrants, emphasizing the need for adaptive support systems like guided orientation, academic coaching, and social mentorship. This finding is supported by George Kuh et al. (2008), who found that engagement and maturity are critical to successful academic integration.

Another finding highlighted strong support for pre-university preparatory programs, mentorship, counseling, and study skills training as measures to improve readiness. Each intervention received between 75% and 85% approval from respondents. This emphasizes a shift from reactive to proactive strategies in educational planning—universities must institutionalize support systems rather than assume entrants are uniformly prepared. These suggestions echo earlier studies by Gill
(2016) and Halpern (2014), who emphasized the need for structured preparatory experiences to enhance students' cognitive readiness and resilience.

Though indirectly, the data reflected a systemic issue in policy enforcement. Nearly half of all admitted students were underage despite the official policy of a minimum age of 16. This suggests not just institutional laxity, but possibly parental and societal pressure driving early university entry. There is a policy-practice gap in Nigeria's higher education admissions system that weakens regulatory intent and exposes students to premature academic challenges.

Using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, the study found a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.144$, $p < 0.05$) between age and intellectual readiness. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding provides empirical validation for the argument that age influences readiness—not absolutely, but significantly. It suggests admission frameworks should incorporate readiness screening beyond age criteria. This aligns with Delaney and Devereux (2020), who noted that age and prior educational maturity are important predictors of university success.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the age at which students enter university significantly affects their intellectual readiness. While age alone does not determine academic success, younger entrants often struggle more with academic and psychological demands. The current admission age policy, though necessary, is insufficient to ensure readiness; intellectual maturity, cognitive ability, emotional resilience, and social adaptability must be considered. The study clearly demonstrates that younger students, though academically qualified, are often not intellectually or emotionally prepared and that admission age correlates with university adaptability and success. The findings

Al-Hikmah Journal of Education (AJE)
Volume 12 Number 1 May, 2025
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emphasize the importance of equipping younger students with appropriate academic and psychological support to navigate university life successfully. Policy reforms, readiness assessments, and preparatory interventions are essential for bridging the readiness gap.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Strict Enforcement of the Minimum Admission Age**: Regulatory bodies such as JAMB and NUC should enforce the 16-year minimum age policy to reduce the likelihood of admitting underage students who may be intellectually unprepared for university education.
- **Introduction of Pre-University Preparatory Programs**: Universities should implement foundational programs for students below 17 years to strengthen their academic and social readiness before beginning full undergraduate coursework.
- **Establishment of Structured Mentorship Programs**: Academic mentorship initiatives should be institutionalized to help younger students adapt through guidance from senior students and faculty.
- **Provision of Psychological and Counseling Services**: Dedicated counseling units should be made accessible to undergraduates, particularly younger entrants, to help manage anxiety, stress, and adjustment challenges.
- **Implementation of Study Skills and Time Management Training**: Orientation programs should include compulsory modules on study techniques, time management, and critical thinking to build essential learning competencies.
- **Review of Admission Processes to Include Intellectual Readiness Screening**: Universities should consider incorporating screening methods—such as cognitive assessments or structured interviews—to evaluate intellectual preparedness during admissions.
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Volume 12 Number 1 May, 2025
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