

Effect of Java Intelligent Tutor System (JITS) on students' Interest in Learning Java programming language in federal Universities in Nigeria.

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Abstract

This study focused on the effect of Java Intelligent Tutor System on the interest of students in learning Java programming language in universities in Nigeria. The population for the study is 136 third year undergraduate students of computer science education from the three federal universities offering computer science education in south-eastern Nigeria. Total population sampling technique was used. Instrument for data collection was a structured Java Programming Interest Inventory Questionnaire (JPIIQ). The entire population was subjected to the JPIIQ before any treatment. After the initial interest survey, the students were taught using the JITS for ten weeks after which the JPIIQ was again administered to them. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the null hypothesis formulated at 0.05 level of significance with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science. Data analyzed reveal that there was an increase in students' interest level in Java programming language when taught using Java Intelligent Tutor System, furthermore, findings show that the Intelligent Tutor System increased the mean interest gain in male students more than it does in their female counterparts. Also, it was identified that there is a significant difference between the mean interest scores of male and female students taught Java programming language using the Intelligent Tutor System.

Keywords: *Java Intelligent Tutor System, Students' Interest and Java Programming Language*

Introduction Background

Computer programming is the art or craft of writing useful, maintainable, and extensible source code which can be translated by a computing system to perform one or more specific tasks. Vangie (2019) noted that computer programming is the process of designing and building a workable and executable computer program to accomplish a specific computing task in a chosen programming language. Jegede and Owoelabi (2019) refers to programming as all the technical activities ranging from analysis of requirement to implementation, involved in the production of a computer program and must be accomplished in a programming language.

Programming language is a formal language, which comprises of a set of instructions used to implement algorithms that produce specified kinds of output. According to Aayushi (2019), a computer programming language is a language with strict syntaxes used to write computer programs, which makes a computer perform tasks. Cay (2020) refers to programming language as a language used to express algorithms in computer executable source codes. The authors outlined four programming language types as procedural programming language like C, Pascal; functional programming language like C#, C++; scripting language like Python, Ruby; and Object-oriented programming language like Java, JavaScript. Procedural programming is easier to code and use than others, but is not secure (Aayushi, 2019). The advantage of object-oriented programming language over other types is its robustness and security. The object-oriented programming languages that is most commonly used in computer programming in industries, due to its efficiency in software

development is Java programming language (Cay, 2020).

Java programming language is an object-oriented programming (OOP) language. This indicates that it is a programming language that is executed based on the concept of "objects", which may contain data, in the form of fields, usually termed attributes; and code, in the form of procedures, usually called methods (Aayushi, 2019). Although, there are many object-oriented programming languages, Java is regarded as the most highly used, both in the industries, as well as in academia, owing to its robustness, security and capabilities (Dasuki & Quaye, 2016). Savitch (2017) stated that Java is used in developing diverse applications that can be used across different devices, such as Mobile phones, Network devices, Televisions, Automated Teller Machines (ATM), Photocopiers, Motherboards, Microprocessors and others. So, Java is believed to be widely used in developing applications for a diverse number of devices.

Java as an Object-Oriented programming language is taught in both formal and informal settings. Many learners of Java programming enroll in schools, private training centers, as well as engage in self-learning practices (Galadanci, Mukhtar & Muaz, 2019). A large number of students of Java programming are trained through Computer (Science) Education programs offered in Universities (Jegede & Owoelabi, 2019). Thus, Java is taught as both theory and practical in most Federal Universities in Nigeria and is seen as abstract by students as it involves the manipulation of a huge amount of unnatural codes and its practical involvement demands huge time of manipulation of codes (Nandom, 2018; Chima, 2021).

Due to the abstract nature of Java programming, students find it difficult to understand and thus lose interest in it (Jegade, Olajubu, Ejidokun & Elesemoyo, 2019). Yang, Hicks and Chang (2015) pointed out that object-oriented programming in Java has been widely adopted as a programming course in the field of computing, in many Universities, and identified that it has become a difficult course to learn. According to findings from Nandom (2018), the average performance of students in Java programming showed that 11.5% of the population had A, 17.9% had B, 22.3% had C, 12.7% had D, 18.1% had E and 17.5% had F, describing the average achievement of students in Java programming as low. According to Osima (2019), the average performance of students in Java programming in Universities in south east Nigeria is low with more than 70 percent failure in performance. The average performance of students in Java programming class especially in developing countries such as Nigeria is below average when compared with those in the developed world (Galadanci, Mukhtar & Muaz, 2019). This results to students going through the course without a grip of the required programming skills thereby making the students enroll in private training centres after graduation to acquire Java programming skill which they supposed to have gotten when offering the course in their third year. This is evident in the assertion according to Dasuki and Quaye (2016) and Aayushi (2019) who found out that there was a wide gap between industry expectations and knowledge of computer graduates in Java programming. The authors further highlighted that the gap can only be bridged by using requisite interactive training guide for self-learning by students of computer education and related fields. One of such training guides for self-learning of Java programming is Java Intelligent Tutor

System (JITS) (Nandom). In support of Dasuki and Quaye, Nandom noted that the challenges students encounter when learning with conventional method of instruction can be solved by the use of an intelligent tutor system.

Intelligent Tutor System is an interactive system that aims to provide immediate and customized instruction or feedback to learners. An intelligent tutor system according to Okpanachi (2019), is a machine with an embedded, Internet-connected computer that has the capacity to gather and analyze data and communicate with other systems and being capable of guiding the learner through the process of learning. Pedersen (2018) defined an Intelligent Tutor System as a computer program that helps the learner to learn through the help of on-screen instructions. Thus, an Intelligent Tutor System is a computer programme designed to help in the teaching and learning process in an interactive fashion, most especially for the students self-learning of both theory and practical courses like Java programming.

Various online and offline Intelligent Tutor Systems and interactive training packages have been developed by various authors and developers for self-learning of Java programming languages but were not developed in accordance with special focus on learners' and teachers' needs and the curriculum of computer education in Federal Universities in Nigeria. According to Modebelu (2015), in order to facilitate instructional delivery, researchers and developers need to design tutoring systems with appropriate usability and in line with the appropriate curriculum. Therefore, those online intelligent/interactive training packages and tutoring systems are not suitable as training tutors for self-learning by students in computer education in Nigerian

universities due to cost as well as non-curriculum compliant. However, Nandom developed an intelligent tutor system for learning of Java programming in tertiary institution which was designed following the computer education curriculum in federal universities in Nigeria.

The intelligent tutor system developed by Nandom called Java Intelligent Tutor System contains concepts and terminologies, methods, modifiers and basic syntaxes of object-oriented programming with Java programming language which are the key topics as enshrined in the curriculum of Java programming in Computer education in the federal universities in Nigerian. Owing to the fact that Nandom's intelligent tutor was designed according to the curriculum of computer education in federal universities in Nigeria, it has been adopted by the researcher for this study. This tutor presents series of lessons to the student after which it gives interactive questions that the student responds to, then it gives reply to the student by giving the correct response to the question. In this way, the student is constantly evaluated and so he practices and is drilled. Nandom's intelligent tutor through this process may positively impact student interest in learning Java programming.

Interests is a critical factor in enhancing academic achievement. Interest according to Odo and Odo (2016) is a driving or motivating force in a student that enables him/her pursue a course or topic with passion or vigor. Interest is described as being engaged, engrossed, or entirely taken up with an activity, object, or topic (Akunne and Anyanmene, 2021). In learning environment, interest can be boosted, such as when students encounter an interesting activity or lesson, or an unexpectedly new situation that arouses their curiosity. In the context of this study, interest is a driving or motivating force

that enables a student pursue the learning of Java programming with passion or vigor. According to Ugwuanyi and Okeke (2020), interest is a mental resource or disposition that improves learning leading to enhanced achievement. Thus, interest in students' learning of Java programming is a disposition taken by the students for personal motivation for learning Java programming where long-time skill acquisition is required. Interest, like academic achievement can either be high or low in the students.

Low interest in Java programming refers to low driving or motivating force that enables a student pursue the learning of Java programming with passion or vigor. Low interest usually results in students changing their career or even entirely dropping out of the school system. According to Odo and Odo, low interest brings about fatigue and disappointment. Chima noted that lack of interest in Java programming results in the student dropping out of the programming career as managing programming codes only requires self-motivation. This interest can be boosted by changing the strategy for instructional delivery with one totally different from the conventional methods already in use like JITS. The author also highlighted on a very important variable whose interaction with the intelligent tutor system imparts the students' interest and that is gender.

Gender significantly impact students' academic achievement. Akinbi and Akinbi (2015) identifying gender as one major factor that influence academic achievement, described it as the kind of features in humans relating to feminineness and maleness and distinguishing among them. According to Fapohunda (2017) gender signifies one of the two sexes namely: male or female, especially when the reference is more on cultural and social differences other than biological ones.

Gender disparity has been a source of concern as it has influence on the use of Information and Communication Technology the world over, thus, it has also been observed that there exists a gap in gender issues as relates to using technology thereby leading to disparities in the performances of male and female learners when taught practical and skill acquisition courses like Java programming (Fapohunda). However, this relative disparity between gender performances in Java programming is likely to be minimized when appropriate Intelligent Tutor System is employed in teaching and learning of computer programming courses such as Java programming. Therefore, an attempt was also made to identify the effect of gender on the interest of students in Java programming language when using intelligent tutor system.

Based on the above, it is presumed that introduction of Java Intelligent Tutor System in the Java programming language education may have the latency for bringing knowledge and building skills in a proficient and more effective way of meeting the demands of the teachers and learners. Therefore, this study seeks to determine the effect of Java Intelligent Tutor System on students' interest in learning Java programming language in federal Universities in south east Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The teaching and learning of computer programming is such that when appropriate infrastructures such as computer hardware and software systems and other learning resources are put in place to encourage students to learn and improve on their interest, students can easily go through self-learning of programming and then master the requisite theoretical and practical skills in programming without stress and in good time, thereby becoming employable in

the programming world of work, irrespective of gender differences.

Unfortunately, students' interest in Java programming in Nigeria universities have been discouraging irrespective of the conventional teaching method used. This brings about students' non regular attendance to classes, failure to due assignments and exercises resulting in their going through the course without a grip of the required programming skills making them to lose interest in the course and then either change their desired career or even entirely drop out of school to enroll in private training centres to acquire Java programming skills.

This persistent low interest and subsequent poor performance of students in Java programming have become a source of concern to the researchers, lecturers and stakeholders leading to development of Java Intelligent Tutor System (JITS) locally designed according to the curriculum. Therefore, the problem of this study is to investigate the effect of the Java Intelligent Tutor System on the interest of Students in Java programming in federal Universities in South East Nigerian.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to determine the effect of Java Intelligent Tutor System on students' interest in Java programming language in Nigerian Universities. Specifically, the study determined the:

1. mean interest gain of students taught Java programming language using Intelligent Tutor System,
2. interest level of male and female students taught Java programming language using Intelligent Tutor System,

Research Questions

The study sought answers to the following questions

1. What are the mean interest score of student taught computer programming using Java programming language using Java Intelligent Tutor System and those taught with lecture method.?
2. What are the interest level of male and female students taught Java programming language using Java Intelligent Tutor System?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference the mean interest of male and female students in Java programming language using Java Intelligent Tutor System.

Methodology

The study adopted quasi-experimental research design. This study was carried out in South East, Nigeria and was delimited to the effect of Intelligent Tutor System on interest of students in Java programming language in the three federal universities that offer computer (science) education where Java programming is taught. These universities are Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAAU), Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (NAUA) and University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN). These three Universities are where the effect of intelligent tutor system on the computer education students' interest in Java programming was determined. The population for the study used is 136 third year undergraduate students and a total population sampling technique was used. The instruments for data collection was a structured Java Programming Interest Inventory Questionnaire (JPIIQ). The questionnaire was developed by the researcher following strictly the standard

interest inventory questionnaire template and having scaled through a four-point rating scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. In a positive statement, strongly agree has the highest point followed by agree, disagree, and strongly disagree with assigned weights of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The initial draft of the instrument was subjected to face and content validation by five experts. These experts comprised of three lecturers from the Department of Computer and Robotics Education and two from Department of Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of JPIIQ was obtained using Cronbach's alpha with a reliability index of 0.78. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

Experimental Procedure

The procedures used for data collection involves the use of Pre-Interest test, Treatment and Post-Interest test.

i. Pre-Interest test

The JPIIQ was administered to the experimental groups before treatment with the help of research assistants in the universities before treatment (teaching using JITS)

ii. Treatment

The treatment lasted for Ten (10) weeks during which the experimental group was taught using the Intelligent Tutor System strategy by the lecturers teaching the course who have been trained on the use of the tutor. The control group was taught with the conventional method (lecture method) on the same content used for experimental group

iii. Post-Interest test The JPIIQ were administered among the experimental groups with the help of the same research assistants in the universities after treatment and all

completed copies of questionnaires were collected immediately after completion.

Results

This chapter deals with the analysis and presentation of data collected for the study. The data were presented based on the research questions and hypotheses of the

Table 1: Mean and standard Deviation of (Interest) pre-test and post-test of students taught Java programming language using the Intelligent Tutor System.

N	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean gain
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	
136	31.5	2.97	46.19	3.82	14.26

KEY: \bar{X} = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, N = Number of Students

The result in Table 1 shows that the mean interest score of students taught Java programming language using JITS is 31.50 and standard deviation of 2.97 in the pre-test and mean interest score of 46.19 and standard deviation of 3.82 in the post-test, having a mean gain of 14.26. This indicates that there was an increase of 14.49 scores in the interest scores after the treatment. This shows that

Table 2: Mean and standard Deviation of pre-test and post-test interest scores of male and female students in learning Java programming language using the Intelligent Tutor System.

Groups	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean gain
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	
Male	75	31.33	2.79	46.67	3.65	15.34
Female	61	32.57	3.15	45.70	3.98	13.13

KEY: \bar{X} = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

study. The Findings of the study were also discussed.

Research Question I

What are the mean interest gain of students taught Java programming language using Java Intelligent Tutor System?

there was a mean gain in interest in the students learning Java programming language using the Intelligent Tutor System.

Research Question 2

What is the interest level of male and female students in learning Java programming language using the Intelligent Tutor System?

The result in Table 2 shows that the mean interest score of male students taught Java programming language using JITS is 31.33 and standard deviation of 2.79 in the pre-test and mean interest score of 46.67 and standard deviation of 3.65 in the post-test, having a mean gain of 15.34. On the other hand, the female students taught Java programming language using JITS had a mean interest score of 32.57 and standard deviation of 3.15 in the pre-test and mean interest score of 45.70 and standard deviation of 3.98 in the post-test, having a mean gain of

13.13. This shows that there was mean gain in interest in the students learning Java programming language using the Intelligent Tutor with a higher mean gain in the male students than the female ones.

Hypotheses 1

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean interest of male and female students taught Java programming language using the Intelligent Tutor System.

Table 3: Summary of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) mean interest scores of male and female students taught Java programming language using Java Intelligent Tutor System.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	55.055 ^a	2	27.527	1.780	.176
Intercept	1734.628	1	1734.628	112.181	.000
Interest Pre-test	38.702	1	38.702	2.503	.118
Gender	7.196	1	7.196	.465	.497
Error	1066.931	69	15.463		
Total	155227.000	72			
Corrected Total	1121.986	71			

a. R Squared = .049 (Adjusted R Squared = .022)

The result in Table 3 shows that the F-value is 0.47 with a significance of F at 0.50 which is greater than 0.05 alpha value at which the hypothesis is being tested, this means that the null hypothesis is upheld. Inference drawn is that there is no significant difference between the mean interest scores of male and female students taught Java programming language using the Intelligent Tutor System.

Findings

Based on the research questions and hypotheses from this study, these findings emerged:

1. There was an increase in students' interest level in learning Java programming language with the use of the Intelligent Tutor System.
2. The mean interest gain in male students using the Intelligent Tutor System is higher than the mean interest gain in female students using the same tool.
3. There is no significant difference between the mean interest scores of male and female students taught Java programming language using the Intelligent Tutor System.

Discussion of Findings

Interest level of students in Java Programming language

The findings on interest level of students reveal that there was an increase in students' interest level in learning Java programming language with the use of the Intelligent Tutor System. The result in Table 1 shows that the mean interest score of students taught Java programming language using JITS is 31.50 and standard deviation of 2.97 in the pre-test and mean interest score of 46.19 and standard deviation of 3.82 in the post-test, having a mean gain of 14.26. This indicates that there was an increase of 14.49 scores in the interest scores after the pretest. In Table 2, the male students taught Java programming language using JITS had a mean gain of 15.34 while the female students taught Java programming language using the JITS had a mean gain of 13.13 showing that there was mean gain in interest in the students using the Intelligent Tutor with a higher mean gain in the male students than the female ones. The finding affirms the study of Okpanachi (2019) on Intelligent Tutoring System for Learning Object Oriented Programming Language. The findings of the study reveal that the interest of students is boosted through the use of intelligent tutor system. From the study, all the students that were taught using JITS agreed that the intelligent tutor system improved their interest in learning object-oriented programming language. However, the study differs from the present study, as there existed a significant difference in the interest level of male students and female students in learning object-oriented programming using intelligent tutor system.

In a similar vein, this finding is confirmed by the study of Chima (2021) on the impact of flipped learning on interest of students in Java programming language in

Federal Colleges of Education. The study reveals that students were found to have increased interest level in learning Java programming language when taught using an interactive training tutor like flipped learning approach. However, the study showed that the female students have higher interest than the male ones when using the intelligent tutor. The two studies are related in that both test effect on students' interest in Java programming language but differ in learning tools used and the population targeted.

The findings in Table 3 shows that the null hypothesis is upheld and the inference drawn is that there is no significant difference between the mean interest scores of male and female students taught Java programming language using the Intelligent Tutor System. This result revealed that both male and female students taught using Intelligent Tutor System had an improved interest in learning Java programming. This then indicates that the high mean interest scores in Java programming language resulted mostly by the use of the Intelligent Tutor System not gender, and no significant difference exists between male and female students' interest in Java programming language. This finding confirms the study of Alao and Ibam (2017) on Web-based intelligent tutor for Career Guidance System for Pre-Tertiary Science Students in Nigeria. The finding showed that both male and female students taught using Web-based intelligent tutor for Career Guidance System resulted in an improved interest and that there is no influence of gender on the interest of the students in using the tool for teaching object oriented-programming.

Conclusion

Owing to the high failure rate in Java programming coupled with the increasing number of learners in the field of programming and the difficulty in provision of

adequate human and material infrastructure to cushion the effect, their arose a need to find an intelligent tutoring system. A system that designed in accordance with the curriculum of computer education programme in Nigeria. This study therefore tested and revealed the effect of the intelligent tutor system on students' interest.

The study revealed that the use of the intelligent tutor system in learning Java programming language is effective. The use of the intelligent tutor system resulted in improvement on students' interest in learning Java programming language. Again, male students taught Java programming language using the Intelligent Tutor System had higher interest than the female students taught using the same tool.

Finally, it was concluded that the Intelligent Tutor System is useful for self-learning of Java programming language at one's own pace without stress. This is an approach to the much-desired individualized instruction that has been the wish of educational systems as it addresses the need of learners or group of learners with different needs.

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