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## Editorial Desk

I have the honour of introducing the inaugural issue of the *LASU Journal of Multidisciplinary Nigerian Studies (LASUJMNS)*, Volume 1, Number 1 (December 2025). This maiden publication represents a significant step in the commitment of Lagos State University to advancing rigorous, multidisciplinary scholarship focused on Nigerian realities.

LASUJMNS was established to provide a credible academic platform for high-quality research that interrogates the social, economic, political, educational, cultural, and technological frameworks in Nigeria. The journal responds to the growing need for scholarly work that moves beyond single-discipline approaches and offers integrated, evidence-based perspectives capable of informing policy, practice, and public discourse.

As a peer-reviewed, biannual, open-access journal, LASUJMNS is committed to academic excellence, ethical publishing, and accessibility. All submissions undergo a rigorous double-blind peer review process in line with international best practices and the principles of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Only original, methodologically sound, and relevant manuscripts are considered for publication.

The articles featured in this inaugural issue reflect the multidisciplinary scope and scholarly standards of the journal. They address contemporary Nigerian issues across key sectors, which offers insightful analyses, empirical findings, and practical implications that contribute meaningfully to national development discussions.

I sincerely appreciate the dedication of the Editorial and Advisory Boards, the professionalism of our reviewers, and the confidence of the authors who contributed to this first volume. Their collective efforts have laid a strong foundation for the journal. On behalf of the Editorial Board, I invite scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to engage with this issue and to partner with us in building a vibrant platform for multidisciplinary Nigerian studies.

**Prof. M. O. B. Mohammed, FNAEAP**

Editor-in-Chief

*LASU Journal of Multidisciplinary Nigerian Studies (LASUJMNS)*

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## **FIRST-YEAR GENERAL NIGERIAN STUDIES (GNS) COURSES IN LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY: WHAT OUR STUDENTS HAVE TO SAY**

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### **Abstract**

*An integral part of curriculum planning and development is course evaluation but previous studies have shown that it is rarely given the attention it deserves in Nigeria universities. General Nigerian Studies (GNS) courses in Lagos State University (LASU) are designed to match the needs of students, especially those in the first-year of the undergraduate programme. To justify the efforts of LASU-CGNS, this study investigated first-year students' on 100-level GNS courses. The snowball non-probability technique was used to select respondents. 318 first-year students responded. Data collected were analysed using bar charts, pie charts and simple percentages. Findings show that first-year students agreed with the quality of course content, instructor's efficacy and the learning support strategies. Also, majority of respondents described their GNS experience with positive words such as 'impactful', 'valuable', and 'enjoyable' while some considerable numbers said they were 'frustrated'. Some of the words that were scarcely mentioned are 'toxic', 'disengaged' and 'downplayed'. In conclusion, the study served as appraisal for first-year LASU-GNS courses where the 30% autonomy granted by the National Universities Commission (NUC) had been implemented. Recommendations include provision of extra-classes on GNS courses that students find difficult to understand and organising regular workshops for resource persons.*

### **Keywords:**

Course Evaluation, First-Year Students, CCMAS-GNS Courses, Lagos State University

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### **Introduction**

The recent change in the country's National Universities Curriculum (NUC) from Benchmark for Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) to Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) arrived with a shrink of 36 credits unit to 12 credits unit of 6 General Studies (GST) courses, giving individual universities the autonomy to introduce university-specific courses that they find relevant to the academic programmes they offer to balance up the required credit for graduation (NUC-CCMAS, 2022). This came as a challenge as well as an opportunity for Lagos State University Centre for General Nigerian Studies (LASU-CGNS). Considering the observed skill gaps among its' new entrants, the university leveraged the 30% autonomy that NUC granted universities and introduced courses that could teach first-year students basic communication skills, information literacy skills, computer literacy skills, and Nigeria cultural norms.

For the first semester of first year (100 level/DE), LASU-CGNS combined a previously taught course to the approved GST course which is designed to strengthen 100 level or DE students'

with English communication skills, library use skills, and computer literacy skills. The course, under the BMAS curriculum, was taught separately as GNS 101 (Use of Library) and GNS 102 (Use of English) but CCMAS curriculum expunged GNS 101 and left GNS 102 to be taught as GNS 111. Being a higher learning institution that is forward-looking and determined to produce only thorough-bred and job-market ready graduates, LASU-CGNS decided to take the bull by its' horns - retaining a significant content of GNS 101 and spicing it with computer technology literacy skills to emerge with a 'fortified' course tagged "GNS 111 - Communication in English, Use of Library, & ICT" (LASU-CGNS, 2024). The emerging course content matched the requirement of CCMS and at the same time the vision of Lagos State University for its students.

The second semester of first year birthed a totally new general course that could be referred to as blueprint for local content immersion into university curriculum; a course labelled GNS 104 – Use of Yoruba Language and Culture: Basic Communication Concepts. The course was designed to promote culture alongside western formal education. Students, regardless of their state of origin or place of birth, are required to take this course and pass it as part of the graduation requirement. GNS 104 propagates the cultural identity of Lagosians and other Yoruba speaking communities. Another first year GNS course in the second semester is GNS 112 – Nigerian Peoples and Culture which cover topics such as arts and culture in pre-colonial times, challenges of the Nigerian state, acceptable norms and values of major ethnic groups, judiciary's role in upholding people's fundamental right amongst others (NUC-CCMAS, 2022). This course existed just as it is in the previous NUC-BMAS curriculum.

The university records show that all the aforementioned innovations have been running in LASU-CGNS for the past two academic sessions i.e. 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 academic sessions, with significant investment from the university management targeting quality instruction delivery and learning outcomes. Specific areas of intervention include publication of the GNS Compendium that contains lecture notes for all GNS courses based on CCMAS curriculum, studio production of audio lessons for first-year GNS courses, GNS physical workshop on all campuses for first-year students, and the use of GNS e-portal for course notes and course weekly assessment. Regardless, it is expected that more needs to be done to cater for the increase in population of students subscribing to the university and to ensure that GNS courses, especially those that are taught to first-year students fulfils its' purpose. It is against this background that this study planned to examine students' perception of first-year LASU-GNS courses to justify university management's intervention, provide new perspectives for planning purposes, and ultimately sustain unparalleled support for CGNS impact on student overall academic standing. The specific objectives for this study were as follows:

- i. To examine students' state of preparedness before taking first-year GNS courses'
- ii. To seek students' evaluation on first-year GNS courses in terms of course content, instructors' efficacy, and learning support strategies.
- iii. To identify areas of improvement for first-year GNS courses as perceived by students

## Literature Reviewed

The NUC's decision to give autonomy to develop 30% of the curriculum taught in Nigerian universities, GNS courses inclusive have received criticisms from stakeholders. However, it is possible that the decision if given a chance to survive could birth creativity, innovation, and 21<sup>st</sup> century soft skills across our higher institutions. Despite the dearth of literature on the outlook of things in each university at present, there is hope that much has been activated in this aspect to derive immense benefit. An example of this has happened in the Lagos State University with the introduction of a fully packed GNS 111 that covers English communication skills, Library skills, and Information and Communication Technology skills. Accordingly, the 30% autonomy was to achieve a responsive curriculum in the 21<sup>st</sup> century therefore GNS courses/subjects ought to be evaluated so as to identify possible gaps. Adekeye (2023) mentioned that course evaluation helps to measure quality of input (instruction) and output (learning experience) via course content, teaching methods and learning support strategies. It encourages accountability among instructors while building the trust of instructee in the instruction activity (Diaz *et al*, 2022). Assessment of educational programmes (Ehiemere, 2022) with the mindset of improving learning outcomes of participating students is germane while ensuring that both teaching and learning contents aligns with set objectives. Curriculum planners or researchers embark on course evaluation studies using variety of tools e.g. surveys or questionnaires. Surveys are meant to reveal issues concerning the course structure, quality of instruction, teaching environment as well as course grading processes. Centoni and Maruotti (2021) opined that learners or students most likely respond to course evaluation surveys based on their experience of the instruction. This stance confirms that students are primary nodes when it concerns instructors and course efficacy. It is likely that students' feedbacks reflect relevant experiences throughout the instruction session and could determine teaching quality and teaching effectiveness. Surveys could be time-dependent i.e. diagnostic, formative or summative. Surveys could also be mode-dependent i.e. paper-mode or online-mode (Nyabero, 2016).

It is worthy to note that beyond the improvement of course quality, institutions also gain from course evaluation programmes. According to Ganagalla (2023), innovative educational policies and practices are developed through instructee feedbacks; and perhaps drawbacks that learners/students are experiencing are equally identified. Benefits such as evidence-based solutions as well as the worth of time, energy and other resources invested in the programme is ascertained (Nyabero, 2016). Meanwhile, concerned universities have the prerogative to either continue or discontinue a course if its impact is not felt. If a certain course fulfils its purpose, it will act as a touch-bearer for other innovative courses but if otherwise, the institution might need to take a stance that benefits the system and its stakeholders. All learners are not equal, therefore due consideration for learner's preferences during the teaching of general courses should be considered germane for positive learning outcomes. Mavuso (2014) mentioned assessment grading, giving learners extra-work, re-teaching, peer support, appropriate teaching periods, and adequate learning spaces as strategies used by teachers in providing learning support for diverse group of learners. Overall, course evaluation is a

systematic way of doing 'check and balance' for all forms of resources that have gone into course instruction and delivery. It could seem judgemental but it appears to be one of the ways to ensure accountability and prudence in the curriculum planning process.

### **Methodology**

This study employed descriptive survey design. The target population were 12,873 undergraduates' that matriculated in 2024/2025 academic session of Lagos State University. Using Krejcie & Morgan sample size determination table, 374 were selected as sample for the study. Snowballing technique was employed with the help of GNS class representatives. Data were collected using a self-designed online survey. It consists 20 closed-ended and 1 open-ended questions adapted from the course evaluation tool developed by University of Wisconsin Madison (UW-Madison) Testing and Evaluation Services. Research data were collected within 3 weeks and analysed using descriptive statistics such as simple percentages and charts. Respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality during and after the investigation.

### **Presentation of Results**

At the end of three (3) weeks, the online survey was automatically closed and the demographic data collected revealed the following:

- 318 first year students responded across 8 faculties in Lagos State University;
- Faculty of Arts, Education, Clinical Sciences, and Management Sciences had 5% of the total respondents respectively;
- Faculty of Allied Health Sciences and Faculty of Engineering had 10% of the respondents respectively;
- Faculty of Environmental Sciences had 20% of the respondents; and
- Faculty of Science had 40% of the respondents.

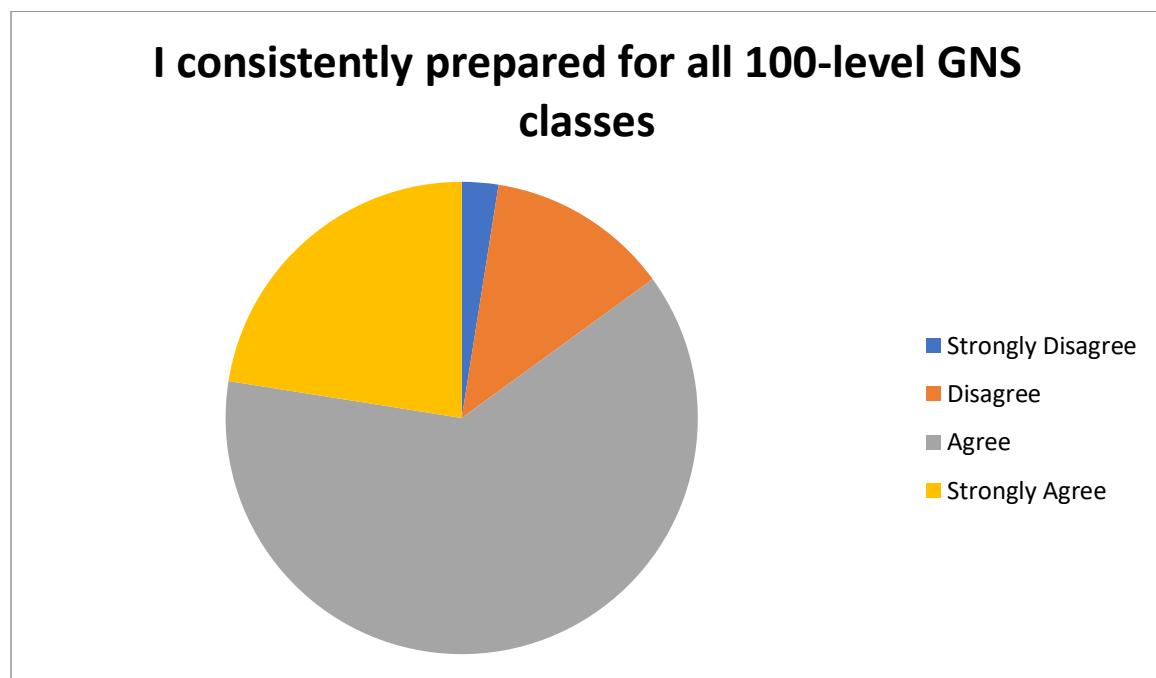


Figure 1: Pie Chart showing responses of students on their preparedness for GNS classes.

Based on 4-point rating scale of agreement i.e. strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree, Figure 1 shows that 2.5%, 12.5%, 62.5%, and 22.5% of students responded respectively. This result indicated that majority of students consistently prepared for all 100 level GNS classes.

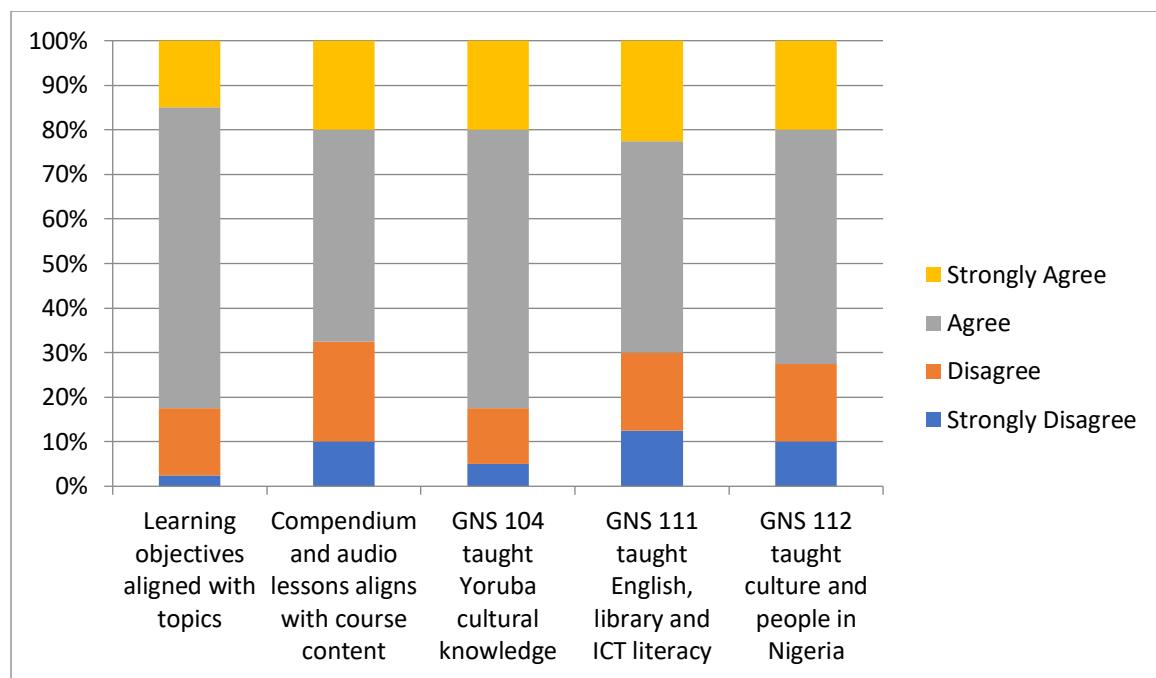


Figure 2: Column Chart showing responses of students on their perspectives on quality of course content of first-year GNS courses.

On the GNS course content where students gave their opinion on the statements: “learning objectives aligned with topics”, “compendium and audio lessons aligns with course content”, “GNS 104 taught basic Yoruba cultural knowledge”, “GNS 111 taught English, Library and ICT skills”, and “GNS 112 taught culture and people in Nigeria”, Figure 2 shows findings (based on 4-point likert rating scale of agreement i.e. strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree) 2.5%, 15%, 67.5% and 15%; 10%, 22.5%, 47.5% and 20%; 5%, 12.5%, 62.5%, and 20%; 12.5%, 17.5%, 47.5% and 22.5%; and 10%, 17.5%, 52.5% and 20% respectively for each statement. These results indicated that majority of students agree with all the statements on course content.

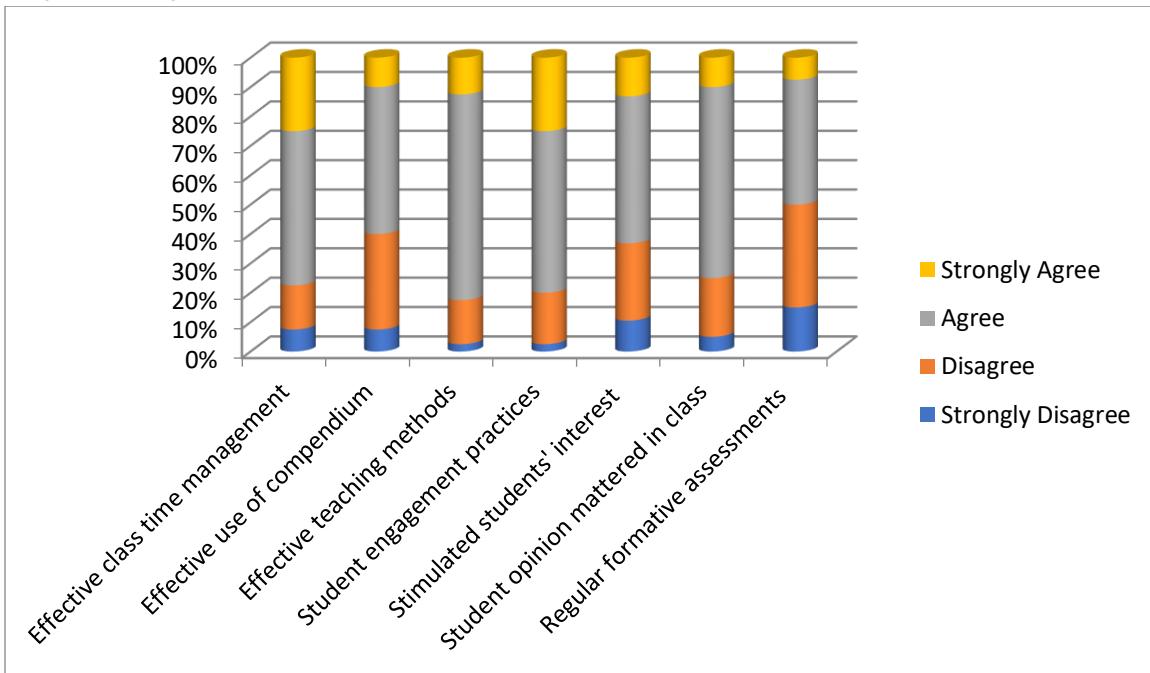


Figure 3: Cylinder Chart showing responses of students on their perspectives on instructors' efficacy regarding first-year GNS courses.

For instructors' efficacy where students gave their opinion on the statements: "effective class time management", "effective use of compendium", "effective teaching methods", "student engagement practices", "stimulated students' interest", "student opinion mattered in class", and "regular formative assessments", Figure 3 shows (based on 4-point likert rating scale of agreement i.e. strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree) 7.5%, 15%, 52.5 and 25%; 7.5%, 32.5%, 50%, and 10%; 2.5%, 15%, 70%, and 12.5; 2.5%, 17.5%, 55% and 25%; 10%, 25%, 47.5% and 12.5%; 5%, 20%, 65%, and 10%; and 15%, 35%, 42.5%, and 7.5% respectively for each statement. These results indicated that majority of students agree with all the statements on instructor's efficacy.

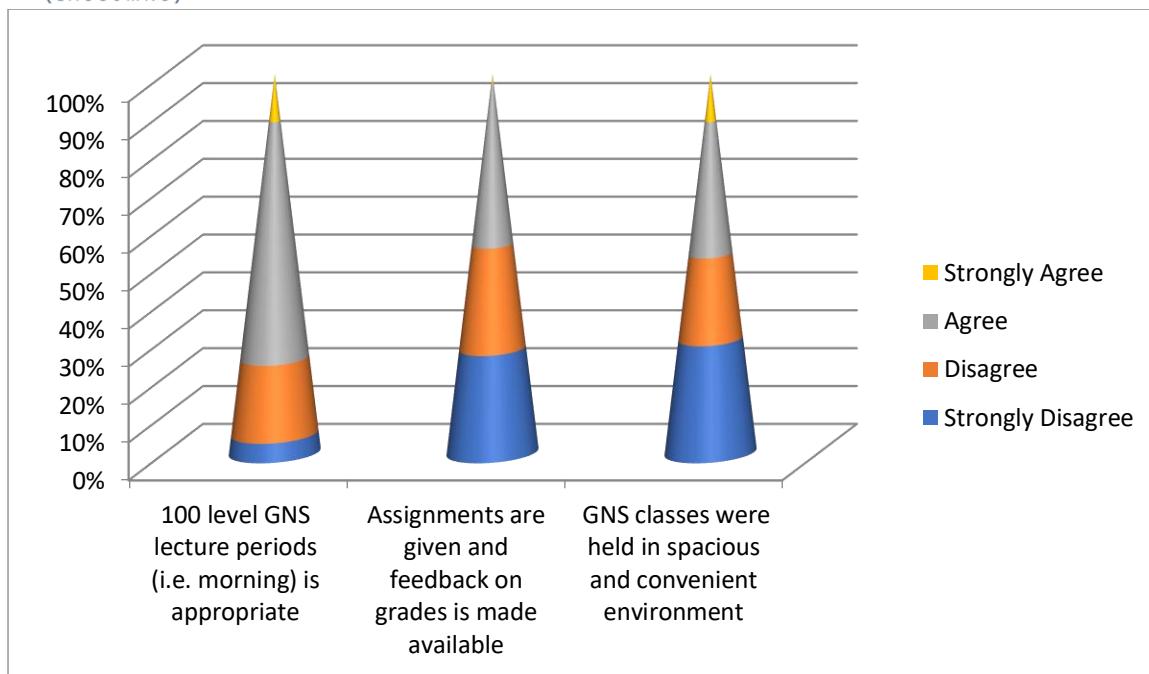


Figure 4: Cone Chart showing responses of students on their perspectives on learning support strategies regarding first-year GNS courses

For learning support strategies, where students gave their opinion on the statements: “100 level GNS lecture periods (i.e. morning) is appropriate”, “assignments are given and feedback on grades is made available”, and “GNS classes were held in spacious and convenient environment”, Figure 4 shows (based on 4-point likert rating scale of agreement i.e. strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree) 5%, 20%, 62.5 and 12.5%; 27.5%, 27.5%, 42.5%, and 2.5%; and 30%, 22.5%, 35%, and 12.5% respectively for each statement. These results indicated that majority of students agree with all the statements on learning support strategies.

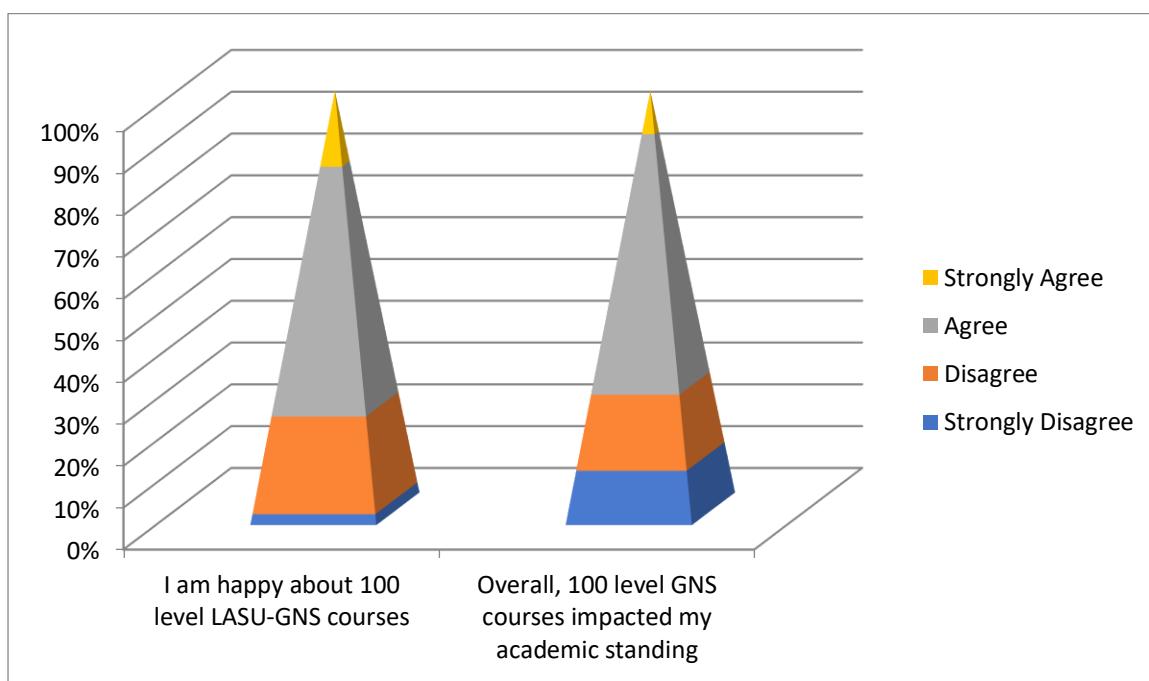


Figure 5: Pyramid Chart showing responses of students on their perspectives on overall course impact regarding first-year GNS courses.

With regards to overall course impact, where students gave their opinion on the statements: "I am happy about 100 level LASU-GNS courses" and "overall, 100 level GNS courses positively impacted my academic standing", Figure 5 shows (based on 4-point likert rating scale of agreement i.e. strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree) 2.5%, 22.5%, 57.5 and 17.5%; 12.5%, 17.5%, 60%, and 10% respectively for each statement. These results indicated that majority of students agreed that 100 level GNS courses had impact on their overall academic standing.

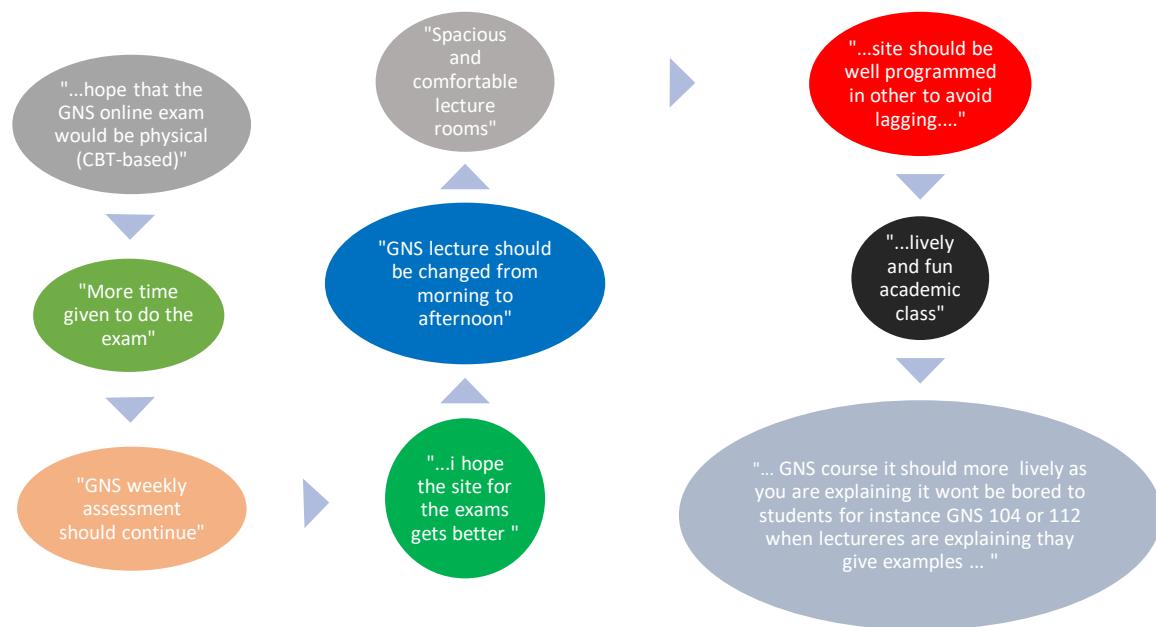


Figure 6: Graphical art showing first-year students' expectations for next GNS courses

The open-ended question requested first-year students to mention the improvement they would like to see in subsequent GNS courses. The comments are displayed in Figure 6.

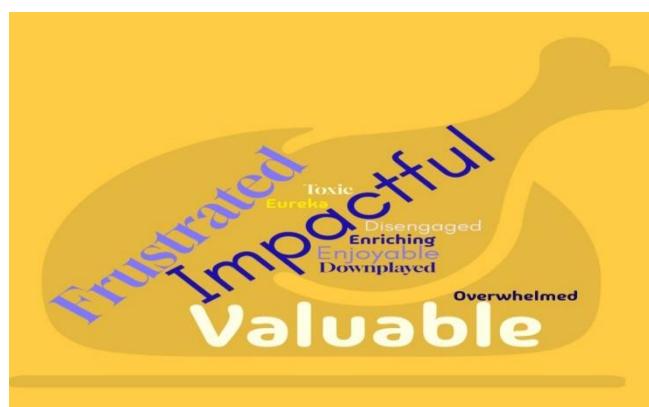


Figure 7: Word cloud (turkey laps) showing first-year students GNS experience

First-year students were asked to describe their GNS experience in one word. The number of times each word was used determined its' size on the turkey laps on Figure 7. GNS experience was described as Impactful (32%), Valuable (22%), Frustrated (17%), Enjoyable (10%), Disengaged (4%), Overwhelmed (1%), Enriching (1%), Eureka (11%), Toxic (1%), and Downplayed (1%).

### **Discussion of Findings**

It does not come as a surprise that majority (62%) of first-year students agreed that they were consistently prepared for GNS classes. GNS courses are major requirements for graduation hence most students see them as compulsory courses that must be taken seriously. In Lagos State University, GNS courses must be taught across all faculties at first-year until third-year. These courses are examined online in the objective format, with questions ranging from fifty to one hundred questions. Questions are drawn from all the topics in the course (LASU Policy & Guidelines for Conduct of Examinations, 2019) and to pass, students must score a minimum of forty marks i.e. 1 point, hence consistent and thorough preparation could help students get high grades.

Course content is designed to help achieve learning outcomes; however, if both the course content and learning objectives do not align then it could affect students' assessment scores even if the teaching and learning process had been properly delivered. Majority of students agreed that learning objectives that are set at the beginning of a class reflected in the topics they were taught. Most first-year students also confirmed that the compendium and audio lessons held contents that aligned with the learning objectives. Three GNS courses i.e. GNS 111, GNS, 104, GNS 112 that are taught in 100 level had content that matched their learning objectives, respectively. All these reflects that first-year GNS courses have been carefully structured in line with the CCMAS which reflected in the course content presented in physical classes and learning resources provided by the Lagos State University Centre for Nigerian Studies (LASU-CGNS). These findings confirmed Ehiemere (2022) that mentioned evaluation of courses as a means of assessing programme effectiveness thereby projecting the CGNS as a unit that is working assiduously to strengthen the academic standing of students and the university as a whole.

As part of findings from this study, first-year students agreed on the efficacy of GNS course instructors' with majority of respondents affirming that lecture periods were judiciously managed during which GNS compendium was effectively used. Students said that instructors used effective teaching methods and engaged them in ways that stimulated their interest in the course. They also agreed that instructors made their (students) opinions matter by allowing questions to be raised during classes. Formative assessments in form of weekly test were a regular feature for GNS courses. This aspect of the course evaluation provides a clear opportunity to examine the expertise that GNS lecturers display in the course of delivering their course content to first-year students. Interestingly, these findings confirmed LASU-CGNS

statement concerning the recruitment of experts in related fields into the team of instructors used for the teaching of GNS courses in Lagos State University (GNS Compendium, 2024). The evaluation of a course also includes the learning support strategies that are implemented by those in charge. Findings indicated that majority of first-year students agreed that they experienced learning support strategies in relation to GNS courses. Assignment grading and feedbacks, appropriate teaching periods, and spacious and convenient learning environment were all confirmed as the learning support strategies for GNS courses. These findings are in support of Mavuso (2014) who considered providing appropriate referral system and/or peer support to students that may find it difficult to learn during scheduled class periods. However, the fact that GNS courses are part of the requirement for graduation makes them germane to overall academic standing. First year students agreed that they were happy about the GNS courses they offered and that their 100 level GNS courses had overall impact on their academic standing. LASU-CGNS design of the course instruction and delivery of first-year GNS courses is a testament to these findings. The compendium containing lecture notes for all GNS courses, pre-recorded audio lessons, and physical classes that are facilitated by seasoned academics are all meant to serve the best interests of students (GNS Compendium, 2024).

The open-ended question generated differing views on students' expectation in relation to upcoming GNS courses. Statements that were clearly stated revealed that students would like to see improvements in areas of course content, instructors' efficacy, and learning support strategies. Despite having most respondents saying "not available" some students appreciated the CGNS and hoped that they will have better experience in upcoming GNS courses. Lastly, the use of positive words in the description of GNS experience indicated that students had positive experience while negative words implied negative experience. These findings supported Centoni & Maruotti (2021) that mentioned that responses on course evaluation are most likely the accumulation of experience and observations over a specified period. It is therefore pertinent to understand the different learning experiences that students have accumulated in the process of taking a course and decipher the likely cause and effect of such experience on students' academic standing and to plan for future programmes.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The course evaluation of GNS courses has become necessary in view of recent adoption of CCMAS in Nigerian universities. Institutions that have implemented the 30% curriculum autonomy should consider the perspectives of students on respective courses to ensure that their university-specific curriculum satisfies students' educational needs and as well build them into all-round learners. Based on the study findings, the following are recommended:

- There should be extra-classes on GNS courses that students find difficult to understand.
- Regular workshops that align with CGNS's mission and vision should be organised for resource persons.
- There should be room for students-resource person interactions outside lecture periods
- A 24/7 dedicated online communication channel should be created for GNS-related enquires.

- Students should be allowed to choose their preferred mode of weekly assessments and end-of-semester examinations.

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