

Effect of Gender on Academic Competence of Primary Education Department Students of College of Education Akwanga Nasarawa State Nigeria

Odagboyi, Isaiah Amedu

Department of Primary Education. College of Education Akwanga
Adagonye, Emmanumel Osoku Department of Primary Education
College of Education Akwanga

Abstract

This study was undertaken to find out if there is any significant difference in the performance of males and females in the Primary Education Department of the College of Education. Akwanga. The sample for the study was made up of a set of students admitted into the department in the 2011/2012 academic session. There were 127 males, and 74 females, making a total of 201 students. One null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. Session results of the students that have been summarized into Grade Point Average (GPA), were obtained from the department and separated according to gender. The data so obtained were subjected to the t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Results showed that there was no significant difference between the performance of the males and the females. It was suggested that more research be conducted to find out the influence of culture on gender as it affects achievement of students in schools, taking note of such differences at the various levels of education from primary to tertiary levels.

Key words: Gender, Performance, students, comparison.

INTRODUCTION

In September 2000, world leaders gathered in their numbers in New York to discuss issues of common interest. The meeting saw a coming together of 189 countries from all over the world, culminating in setting some goals to be pursued for the prosperity of mankind. By the year 2015, the world leaders pledged that they would achieve measurable improvements in the most critical areas of human development (UNICEF). One of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is to promote gender equality and empower women (UNDP 2015). By accenting to this as a challenge that has attracted the attention of the whole world, implies that there is a general agreement that the female gender has been denied opportunities to be what they ought to be in the nations. As Adetutu (2015) noted, Nigerian women especially in the 19th century were not rated equally, nor given the same status as the men. They were to bear children and assist their husbands in the farms. One of the areas where the women folk lagged behind their male counterparts is in the area of education. According to Abdu (2015), the female folk are left behind in accessing formal education. To her the reasons are varied from early marriage, poverty of parents that gives preference to the training of boys with the available resources, street hawking, teenage pregnancies, and the like. Another area where women are behind the men according to Adetutu (2015) is economic empowerment. The main reason for this to her is cultural. Women have been made to see themselves as inferior to men. Some fought that, while others have come to settle with that inferior status, and this has made them to lack the zeal to pursue viable economic ventures.

Many of the aspects where there has been agitations of gender inequality are quantitative in nature. They emphasize number. However, there has been an increase of concern in education circles about the disparity in academic achievement between males and females in schools. Research is inconclusive as to whether males or females do better academically in schools. Zembar and Blume (2011) noted that most studies show that girls do better than boys in schools. They reported a research covering 35 countries, to see if males or females achieve more in literacy and mathematics skills. Results show that females outscored males on reading literacy in every country. There was no significant difference in mathematics scores in the males and females. They however noted that from the age of 12, the boys begin to do better than girls in mathematics and science related courses. In another study, Weis, Hiecamp and Trommsdorff (2013) tested 53 German fifth graders (19 boys and 34 girls). The participants were tested in German and mathematics. Results showed that girls performed better than the boys. Dayioglu and Turut-asit (2004) discovered that girls, though enter the university in turkey with lower grades compared with their male counterparts, on the long run performed better than the boys. Odagboyi (2015) in a study with a sample size of 88 Senior Secondary (SS1) students including 49 males and 39 females. The participants were tested in biology after 12 weeks of exposure to concepts in micro organisms. A Biology Achievement Test (BAT) with 20 objective questions was administered to them. Results showed that there was a significant difference in the performance of the males and females in favour of the males. In a study with 342 SS2 students from nine secondary schools comprising 228 males and 114 females, Igbo, Onu and Obiyo (2015), males performed better than females on Student Mathematics Achievement Test (SMAT). However, Abubakar and Oguguo (2011) and Uduosoro (2011) found no significant difference between males and females. Various reasons have been advanced for this disparity in academic performance. Sutton (2013) cited in Weiss et al (2013) noted that boys develop gender stereotypes according to which girls are perceived as academically superior with regard to motivation, ability, performance and self regulation. In the same vein, Igbo et al (2015) attributed the poorer performance of girls compared to the boys to stereotypic views that affect individual's self cognitive development as well as their feelings, actions, and attitudes. To them, a stereotype is a rigid, simplistic caricature of a particular group of people.

While research efforts should continue, it seems more likely that this disparity in academic performance could be due to cultural influences that have effects on motivation and other affective factors. This study looks at the effect of gender on the academic competence of Primary Education Department students. The rationale for the study is to repeat the studies in different cultures to generate enough evidence to make acceptable generalizations.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is expected that students who have been exposed to secondary education, and passed the prescribed examination, should upon gaining entrance to the college of education, should perform creditable well regardless of gender. This is more so because the students are exposed to the same curriculum and similar environmental conditions.

However research reports indicate that there is disparity in academic performance between males and females. While some reports favour males to perform better than females, others report the contrary. Still others find no significant difference. Some of the reports reviewed from the Western world show the females as doing better than the males, while those in Nigeria show the contrary.

Could these differences be arising from differentia in cultural settings? This study therefore is conducted to see whether students in the College of Education Akwanga in Nigeria, Department of Primary Education shows this disparity in performance due to gender.

HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant difference in the academic competence of males and females in Primary Education Department.

SAMPLE

The sample for the study is 201 students admitted in 2011/2012 academic session in the department of Primary Education, made up of 127 males, and 74 females.

DATA COLLECTION

The compiled examination results for the whole set of students sampled for the study were collected for the three academic sessions beginning from the first to the last session.

PROCEDURE

Students' results are collated according to the various courses taken in the department, educational courses, and those from the general studies department. The scores are compiled per student, and the Grade Point Average (GPA) determined for each session. The GPA for each session are collected and grouped according to gender.

PROCEDURE FOR DATA ANALYSIS

For each semester, the GPAs are sorted according to gender. Means and standard deviations are determined, and the means are subjected to t-test to determine the differences.

RESULTS

Table 1: t-test comparing male and female performances (NCE1)

	Male	Female
Mean	1.540157	1.396351
Variance	0.591505	0.565714
Observstions	127	74
Hyphthesized mean difference	0	
Df	156	
T stat	1.296535	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.098353	
T critical one-tail	1.65468	
P(T<=T) two-tail	0.196706	
T critical two-tail	1.975287	

Table 1 shows that the calculated t is 1.29, while the critical value 1.65. this implies that there is no significant difference in the performance of the male and female students in the first session.

Table 2: t-test comparing male and female performances (NCE2)

	Male	Female
Mean	1.923622	1.893103
Variance	0.808803	0.093673
Observations	127	87
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	178	
T stat	0.235768	
P(T<=t)one-tail	0.406942	
T critical one-tail	1.653459	
P(T<=t)one-tail	0.813884	
T critical two-tail	1.973381	

Table 2 shows that the calculated t is 0.23, while the critical value 1.65. This implies that there is no significant difference in the performance of the male and female students in the second session.

Table 3: t-test comparing male and female performances (NCE3)

	Male	Female
Mean	1.952288	2.01375
Variance	0.480384	0.434284
Observations	118	80
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	175	
T stat	-0.6306	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.264563	
T critical one-tail	1.653607	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.529126	
T critical two-tail	1.973612	

Table 3 shows that the calculated t is - 0.63, while the critical value 1.65. This implies that there is no significant difference in the performance of the male and female students in the final session. Thereby, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the academic competence of males and females in Primary Education Department, is not rejected.

DISCUSSION

Results as shown in tables 1,2 and 3, shows that in all the sessions, the academic competencies of males do not differ significantly from those of the females. This agrees with the findings of Dayioglu and Turut-asit (2004), Zembar and Blume (2011), Abubakar and Oguguo (2011), and Uduosoro (2011), but differs from those of Weis, Hiecamp and Trommsdorff (2013) who found that girls performed better than boys. Results of this study also differs from those of Odagboyi (2015), Igbo, Onu and Obiyo (2015), Alordia, Akpadaka, and Oviogbolu (2015) who found that boys performed better than girls.

Research reports on achievement based on gender are varied, evidence from recent literature are showing that while in Africa, boys tend to do better than girls, Odagboyi (2015), Igbo, Onu and Obiyo (2015), Alordia, Akpadaka, and Oviogbolu (2015), those of the European countries show the contrary. However, when students are subjected to the similar conditions, and

experience the same curriculum, they are expected to perform more or less equally. The factors that contribute to the differential achievement could be cultural.

CONCLUSION

This study found that students who are exposed to similar conditions, exposed to the same curriculum over a period of three years did not differ in performance on the basis of gender.

SUGGESTION

More studies should be carried out on the influence of culture on gender, and the performance of students in schools. Such studies should take into consideration, levels of education from the primary to the tertiary levels, and at what levels do these differences show the most.

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