

Short Communication

Gender issue in the performance of students admitted through UME and pre-degree into the Nigerian Universities

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This study examined the gender issue in the performance of students admitted through UME and pre-degree into the Nigerian Universities. Ex-post facto design of descriptive research was adopted for the study. A proforma was used to collect data from a sample of two hundred and fifty students from the faculties of Science in the Nigerian Universities. Purposive, stratified and proportional sampling techniques were employed in the selection of the sample. Data collected were analyzed using student t-test. Four null hypotheses were generated and tested at 0.05 level of significant. Results of the study revealed that there is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female students in the Nigerian Universities. Based on the findings, it was recommended that both male and female students should be given equal chances of admission in the UME and Pre-Degree programmes.

Key words: Gender, pre-degree, performance, competitive, imbalance.

INTRODUCTION

Western Education was much valued in Nigeria and people pursued this knowledge with such fervency and vigour. The need for high skilled manpower in all sectors of the country's economy made higher education more valued by all the stake-holders and the general public.

At the time of independence in Nigeria, any one who found himself/herself in any higher institution was considered intelligent and academically superior to their colleagues. They got there through hard work. Gaining admission into tertiary institution was then one daunting task. It was not for the intellectually lazy people (Erigha, 2001). Up till 1976, each university was conducting its own admission. The candidates were made to sit for the competitive entrance examination, and candidates were finally selected for admission on the basis of their performance in the competitive entrance examination and other criteria set by each university. There were some problems then like education imbalance, leakage, cheating and so on, which led the Federal Government of Nigeria to establish the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) in 1977. The board was saddled with the responsibility of conducting a common competitive entrance examination called University matriculation Examination (UME) for all the universities in Nigeria. These institutions do not seem to have confidence in the JAMB result. Hence, students on entering the various higher institutions are subjected to post-JAMB assessment with a view

to ascertaining the validity of such assessment and the suitability of the candidates.

Some universities started pre-degree programme as another means of admitting students into the various Universities. In this programme, the eligible candidates must possess a minimum of five credits in WASCE or NECO, which must include English Language, Mathematics and at least three other subjects. Candidates are subjected to a competitive placement examination before they are finally selected for the pre-degree programme, based on their performance in the competitive examination.

There is a conception that the Universities Matriculation Examination (UME) candidates are superior to the pre-degree candidates. Some people felt that it is because candidates cannot perform well in the Universities Matriculation Examination (UME) conducted by Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), hence they opted for pre-degree programme. Others have the belief that even the UME results are not reliable and valid, that at times, candidates have score (s) in the subject(s) they did not sit for in UME and such fictitious results are used for admission. There are others, who believe that some UME candidates made high scores through examination malpractices of which the situation is not common with pre-degree examination. Yet, others are of the opinion that male candidates perform better in JAMB than female can

Table 1. T-test summary table for the performance of male and female UME students.

Variable	N	X	SD	DF	t _c	t _t
Male (UME)	80	10.60	7.0	146	0.19	1.96
Female (UME)	68	10.49	4.4			

P>0.05

Table 2. T-test summary table for the performances of male and female pre-degree.

Variable	N	X	SD	DF	t _c	t _t
Male (Pre-degree)	69	9.86	5.0	105	0.42	1.96
Female (Pre-Degree)	38	9.53	3.0			

P>0.05

didates and also in the pre-degree examination.

In view of the above, this research work attempts to have a look at gender issue in the performance of students admitted through UME and pre-degree into the Nigerian Universities.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There are minimum entry requirements that students have to meet before they can be admitted to pursue any course in any of the Nigerian Universities. Students are expected to possess senior school certificate or equivalents with credits in five (5) subjects (including English Language and Mathematics) relevant to their course at not more than two sittings. It is presumed that all those who meet the ordinary level (O/L) and UME requirements are capable of pursuing certain course successfully in the university, regardless of their sex. Also those admitted through the pre-degree programme possess the minimum O/Level requirements, and are judged capable, and hence are admitted to pursue some courses in the University.

The matter of concern is that not all the students who got admission into the university are able to cope with the academic rigours, some drop out of the university without graduating, yet some change their courses and others spend extra years(s) before they can graduate. Some even end up with poor grade/class. This is contrary to the expected performance of students who attained high scores in either UME or pre-degree examination. There is a claim that male students are better than female counterparts in both UME and pre-degree examinations.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Four null hypotheses were generated and tested at 0.05

significance level.

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the performances of male UME and female UME students.

HO₂: There is no significant difference between the performances of male Pre-degree and female Pre-degree students.

HO₃: There is no significant difference between the performances of male UME and male Pre-Degree students.

HO₄: There is no significant difference between the performances of female UME and female Pre-Degree students.

METHODOLOGY

The study used the ex-post facto design of descriptive research, as it deals with current issue relating to admission into the universities and its mode of admission. The UME and Pre-degree results of both male and female students were used for the analysis, using student t-test statistical method.

The population for the study consisted of 425 students, who were admitted either through UME or Pre-Degree. This was made up of 244 UME and 181 Pre-Degree students. This number also consisted of 277 male and 148 female students.

The sample consisted of 225 students, out of which 148 students got admission through Universities Matriculation Examination (UME) and 107 students through Pre-Degree Examination. The sample was made up of 149 male and 106 female students. The sample was selected using the purposive, stratified and proportional random sampling techniques.

A self-constructed profoma was used to collect data for the study. Data collected were analyzed using student t-test.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the performances of male UME and female UME students.

Table 1 show that the t-calculated value of 0.19 is less than the t – critical of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that the result is not significant.

Hence, the stated null hypothesis is up-held. That is, there is no significant difference between the performances of male UME and female UME students.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the performance of Male and Female Pre-Degree students.

Table 2 shows that the t-calculated value of 0.42 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the result is not significant. Hence, the stated null hypothesis is up-held. That is, there is no significant difference between the performances of male and female pre-degree students.

Table 3: reveals that the t- calculated value of 0.82 is less than the t-critical of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that the result is not significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is up-held that is, there is no significant difference between the performances of male UME students and Male Pre-degree students.

Table 3. T-test summary for the performances of male UME and male pre-degree students.

Variable	N	X	SD	DF	t _c	t _t
Male (UME)	80	10.67	7.0	147	0.82	1.96
Female (UME)	69	9.86	5.0			

P>0.05

Table 4. T-test summary table for the performances of Female UME students and Female Pre-degree students

Variable	N	X	SD	DF	t _c	t _t
Female (UME)	68	10.49	4.4	104	1.33	1.96
Female (Pre-degree)	38	9.53	3.0			

P> 0.05

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the performance of the Male UME and Male Pre-degree students.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference between the performances of Female UME students and Female Pre-degree students

Table 4 reveals that the t- calculated value of 1.33 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05level of significance. This indicates that the result is not significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is up-held. That is, there is no significant difference in the performances of female UME students and female Pre-degree students.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study have shown that there is no significant difference between the academic performances of male UME and female UME students. This contradicted the findings of Lincon (1972) which revealed that girls tend to perform better than boys. This study further revealed that there is no significant difference in the performance of male pre-degree and female pre-degree students. This implies that sex has no effect on the academic performance of undergraduates.

This result agreed with that of Owolabi and Bandele (2002). However, this result contradicted the work of Lincon (1972) who found out that girls tend to perform better than boys and also Terman (1952) who reported that girls read imaginative stories of schools and home life more than boys while boys showed predominant interest in books on information, History, Biology and information fiction and adventure tales.

However, the findings of this study agree with that of Daramola (1992), who found out that gifted girls do not differ from gifted boys.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) Both UME and Pre-degree should be used as modes of admission into Universities.
- 2) Sex should not be used as a condition for admission into the Universities through the UME or the Pre-degree programme.
- 3) Pre-degree should not be seen as inferior, to the UME, since they have the same entry requirements.
- 4) Efforts should be made to encourage female students to sit for UME and should not see it as an Examination meant for only male students.

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