

Comparing the Academic Performance of Male and Female Pupils in Private Primary Schools in Sokoto State

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Abstract

This research aimed at comparing the performance of male and female pupils in private primary schools in Sokoto state. Four leading private primary schools were purposively selected to meet the target. Primary six pupils were also selected for the research since it is the certificate class. There were a total of two hundred and thirty-five primary 6 pupils from these four schools in the following proportion; Federal Government Staff School (n=89), Federal Staff School (n=23), Alheri Schools (n=29) and Blue Crescent Schools (n=94). The total population was used since they are not too many due to acceleration of pupils from primary 5 to JSS I. Using the entire population gives a more reliable result also. Academic achievement tests in English Language and Mathematics were administered to the pupils, from one school to another. Every rule of examination was observed. The test were judge to have good content validity and reliability of 0.86 (English) and 0.88 (Maths). Pupils' scripts were retrieved, marked and scored, compiled and analyzed. The results showed that there were significant differences in the pupils' performance generally and in English Language in particular in favour of the females. However, there was no significant difference in Mathematics performance of males and females. It was recommended that every child should be given equal opportunity and access to education irrespective of sex.

Keywords – Comparing, Performance, Male, Female, Private.

Introduction

From the creation of the world, women are seen to be second to men. The society has higher expectation for boy than girls in nearly every sphere of life e.g. home, school and work. This disparity is seen in most African societies, Nigeria inclusive and Sokoto state in particular. However, for over 3 decades now there has been a campaign for equal opportunities to male and female children. This campaign became more serious when the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1981), as contained in the National Policy on Education, emphasized that children should be given equal opportunities and access to education irrespective of class or gender. Nigerian government has gone further by giving women 35% seat in the government, advocating that this should be done from Federal to State levels. Researchers like Njoku & Idoko (2012) attests to

improvement in girls' attitude to school and life in recent times. Schools are beginning to experience a healthy competition among the boys and girls.

Review of Related Literature

Gender issues and academic performance has been a subject of interest to the media and many researches in over 3 decades. Varied results have emerged some concluding that males perform better than females, most of them maintaining that there is no significant difference in the performance of the males and females while some recent researches are noting an outstanding performance of the girls over boys.

In this important subject Kolawole (2007) in his research on gender issues and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Mathematics computation noted generally students in single sex schools performed better than students in mixed schools. However, boys in single sex schools performed better than girls in single sex schools. Jegede & Inyang (1990) also worked on gender differences in academic achievement in Integrated Science in Junior Secondary Schools; they confirmed that males performed better than females. They also affirmed that males demonstrated a significantly more positive attitude towards Science subjects than females. Owuamanam & Babatunde (2007) noted that girls tend to go for courses that do not require much energy and brain tasking.

Abubakar & Adegboyega (2012) observed that there is no significant difference in the performance of male and female College students in Mathematics. In the same way, Abubakr & Eze (2010) reported that there is no significant gender difference in academic achievement in Mathematics. Adeosun (2002) confirmed that there is no significant difference in the achievement score between males and females in his research on effect of multimedia packages on students' achievement and retention in Social Studies. Abdul-Raheem (2012) concluded in his research that gender does not play any significant role on students' achievement in Social Studies.

Croxford (2000) study explained that average level of attainment for girls is higher than that of the boys. This support the campaign of Balogun (1983) that the intellectual potential of girls is an untapped labour resource for Science and Technology. Similarly, Younger, Warrington and Gray (2005) observed a similar picture in England and Wales where they reported on raising boys' achievement.

With current trend of achievement in schools, the assertion that boys perform better than girls will, if not reversed, be discarded. Children should be given equal opportunity, access and encouragement to do their best in school.

Statement of the Problem

The development of any nation or society is a collective responsibility of its citizens irrespective of gender of tribe. This truth is yet to be embraced by many African countries, Nigeria inclusive where women are still being discriminated. The role of women in home-keeping and child rearing is enough to attest to the high intellectual endowment of women yet many of them are denied access to school. Osler, Street, Lall & Vincent (2000) confirmed that African girls were more excluded from school than white girls. Schools and the nation at large are creating more positive learning environment for boys than girls. If females that constitute about 50% of our national population are neglected then the possibility of realizing the dream of being among the top 20 economically strong nations by 2020 will be a wild elephant dream.

The main target of this research is to compare the performance of male and female pupils in private primary schools in Sokoto state.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to find out if:

1. There is any significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils in private primary schools in Sokoto state.
2. There is any significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils in English Language in private primary schools in Sokoto state.
3. There is any significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils in Mathematics in private primary schools in Sokoto state.

Hypotheses of the Study

Three null hypotheses were generated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils in private primary schools in Sokoto state.
2. There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils in English language in private primary schools in Sokoto state.

3. There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils in Mathematics in private primary schools in Sokoto state.

Significance of the Study

This research is of great benefit to parents and teachers who need to be enlightened on supporting and encouraging education in general and that of the girl child in particular. It will also be useful for policy makers who need something to fall back and build upon for encouraging girl education in areas previously considered as beyond their abilities.

Scope of the Study

This study covers all private primary schools in Sokoto metropolis. It compared the academic performance of male and female primary 6 pupils in the core subjects of English language and Mathematics.

Research Design

The technique adopted for this study was the correlational design since the aim of the study was to compare the performance of male and female pupils in private primary schools.

Population of the Study

This study covered all private primary schools in Sokoto metropolis during the 2011/2012 academic session.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Four (4) leading private primary schools in Sokoto metropolis were purposely selected for this study. The schools have high academic standards and parents are investing more in the education of their children in these schools. Primary 6 pupils were purposively selected for this study since it is a certificate class. The entire population of primary 6 pupils was used since they are not too many due to acceleration from primary 5 to JSS I. Purposive sampling was used to select the schools in order to reach the target schools and the target pupils. These schools are Federal Government Staff School ($n = 89$), Federal Staff Primary School ($n = 23$), Alheri Primary School ($n = 29$) and Blue Crescent Primary School ($n = 94$). Thus, a population of 235 pupils, comprising of 95 females and 140 males, were used. This method was adopted since researchers like Shaughnessy, Zechmeister and Zechmeister (2000) confirmed that the best research is the one that involved the total population, pointing out that sampling came on board

because of the inability of researchers to cover the total population. It was also necessary to adopt this method since primary 6 pupils are scarcely seen in schools. Many private schools do not have primary 6 and those who have them, have limited number of pupils.

Instrumentation

The instruments used for the research are:

- i. A questionnaire that captured the pupils' data including sex and age.
- ii. Academic achievement tests in English language and Mathematics adopted from Njoku (2010). The academic achievement tests in English language and Mathematics were designed from primary 6 syllabuses, first school leaving certificate examination question papers and common entrance question papers. The tests have very high content validity and a reliability of 0.88 for English language and 0.86 for Mathematics. The English language has 40 items (20 questions on lexis and structure and 20 questions on verbal aptitude). The Mathematics test also has 40 items (20 questions on basic Mathematics and 20 questions on quantitative aptitude). The tests have been found useful in many researches involving primary 6 pupils in Sokoto state.

Administration and Scoring of the Instruments

The achievement tests in English language and Mathematics were administered to the pupils by the researchers from one school to another; the English language was administered first and the pupils were timed as in external examinations. The English language papers were retrieved from all the pupils and after some interval of rest the Mathematics test was administered. It was ensured that the pupils adhered to the instructions and finished their work. After all the papers were retrieved, the researchers marked and scored them accordingly.

Presentation, Analyses and Interpretation of Results

H₀1: *There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils.*

This hypothesis was tested by subjecting the test scores of the male and female students to t-test analysis as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Mean scores, SD and t-value of Performance of Male and Female Pupils.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Males	140	40.58	13.62	1.852	.067	Rejected
Females	95	45.57	13.31			

From table 1 above, a paired sample t-test indicated that scores were significantly higher for the female students ($M = 45.6$, $SD = 13.3$) than for the male students ($M = 40.6$, $SD = 13.6$), $t(92) = 1.85$, $p = .067$. This indicates that there is difference in the performance of the male and female pupils. Therefore, H_{01} which stated that there is no significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils is rejected.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils in English language.

This hypothesis was tested by subjecting the English language test scores of the male and the female students to t-test analysis as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Mean scores, SD and t-value of Performance of Male and Female Pupils in English Language.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Males	140	24.09	8.94	2.56	.012	Rejected
Females	95	27.37	7.39			

From table 2 above, a paired sample t-test indicated that scores were significantly higher for the female students ($M = 27.4$, $SD = 7.4$) than for the male students ($M = 24.09$, $SD = 8.94$), $t(92) = 2.56$, $p = .012$. This indicates that there is difference in the performance of the male and female pupils in English language. Therefore, H_{02} which stated that there is no significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils in English language is rejected.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils in Mathematics.

This hypothesis was tested by subjecting the Mathematics test scores of the male and the female students to t-test analysis as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Mean scores, SD and t-value of Performance of Male and Female Pupils in Mathematics.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Males	140	17.65	7.52	.417	.678	Accepted
Females	95	18.12	7.25			

From table 3 above, a paired sample t-test indicated that scores were slightly higher for the female students ($M = 18.12$, $SD = 7.3$) than for the male students ($M = 17.7$, $SD = 7.5$), $t(92) = .42$, $p = .678$. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the performance of the male and female pupils in Mathematics. Therefore, H_0 which stated that there is no significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils in Mathematics is accepted.

Summary of Findings

- i) There is significant difference in the general performance of male and female pupils in the 2 core subjects i.e. English language and Mathematics in favour of females.
- ii) There is significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils in English language in favour of the females.
- iii) There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils in Mathematics.

Discussion of the Findings

The major aim of this study was to compare the academic performance of male and female pupils in private primary schools in Sokoto state. The results showed that there is significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils in favour of the females. This is in line with the finding of Croxford (2000) who noted that average levels of attainment for boys is lower than that of girls. Young, Warrington, Gray, Rudduck, McLellan, Bearne, ...Brieheno (2005) also observed a similar thing in England and Wales. This study also confirmed a significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils in English Language; a difference that is also in favour of the females. However, some researchers like Jegede and Inyang (1990) observed that males performed better than females in schools. Likewise, Kolawale (2007) also noted that males performed better than females in Mathematics computation. Interestingly, this study noted that there is no significant difference in the

performance of male and female pupils in Mathematics. This is in line with the findings in the study of Abubakar & Adegboyega (2012) conducted to find out the effect of age and gender on the achievement of College Mathematics. Abubakar & Eze (2010) also reported that there is no significant difference in the achievement of students in Mathematics. Likewise, Adeosun (2002) in his work on achievement and retention of multimedia packages in Social Studies also affirmed that there is no significant difference in the performance of male and female students. Akinbote (1999) research centered on cognitive achievement and attitude towards Social Studies also noted no significant difference in the achievement of male and female students.

With the on-going it can be seen that the disparity and inequality peddled by some people between male and female students is baseless and defunct. Equal opportunity, exposure and encouragement should be given to both sexes so that the females can equally demonstrate that they have the intellectual endowment and self-discipline needed to achieve the expected national development.

Conclusion

This research was carried out to compare the academic performance of male and female pupils in private primary schools in Sokoto state. It has been confirmed that that there exists significant difference in the performance of males and females in favour of the females. When performances of English language and Mathematics were taken independently, it was also noted that there is significant difference in the English language performance of the males and females in favour of the females, however, no significant difference was found in their performances in Mathematics.

Recommendations

From the results of this study the researchers presented the following recommendations;

- i. Every child should be given equal opportunity and access to education irrespective of sex.
- ii. Female students should be exposed to science related courses and be encouraged to study them.
- iii. The campaign against discrimination of the girl-child should be carried to the grass root.

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