

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN UNIFIED TERTIARY MATRICULATION EXAMINATION IN DELTA AND EDO STATES, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed university students' performance in Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination in Delta and Edo states of Nigeria with a view to determining whether the performance of university students in UTME is dependent on their gender and faculty of study. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated and tested. The study had adopted the ex-post facto design. The population of the study comprised the students in all universities in Delta and Edo states that took the UTME in 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 academic sessions and a sample size of 6000 students from three universities was selected through stratified random sampling technique. Instrument used for this study was students' records containing UTME scores. The data collected were analyzed using statistical mean, z – test and one way analysis of variance. The findings from the analysis of data showed that a not significant difference of 0.30 was established between the performance of male and female university students in UTME and a significant difference was established between the performances of students in different faculties, since the calculated F- ratio of 489.89 was greater than table values of 2.60 at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the performance of university students in UTME is not dependent on their gender. Furthermore, it was concluded that performance of students varied from faculty to faculty. On the basis of this conclusion, it was recommended that the current practice of maintaining different bench mark or cut- off points for different departments/ faculties should be maintained and the same cut off point for both male and female university students should also be maintained.

Keywords: JAMB, UTME, Students performance and Admission.

INTRODUCTION

In every institution, including universities, there is always an entry point. The entry point, feeds the system with the required raw materials (input), and the system processes the input, to obtain output. The process of feeding the system with input (students) is called admission.

Admission, according to the advanced learner dictionary (1996), is the act of accepting potential candidates into an institution of higher learning. There are different models of admission to higher education. According to Ajani (2000), they include: Competitive selection, Non competitive selection and Adaption through placement. The competitive selection model is the one that is commonly used when the number of available places is less than the number of qualified candidates seeking admission. The competitive selection model is the model being used in Nigeria. This is so because the number of applicants applying for entry into universities far outnumbered the available spaces. For instance, in 2006, 850000

candidates applied for entry into universities, only about 15% were granted admission (Bello, 2006).

In Nigeria, every higher institution has a section or office or department, responsible for admission of candidates. Such an office is called admission office, headed by a competent admission officer, placed under the registrar (head of administration) in the institution.

Before a prospective or potential candidate can apply to be admitted into any higher institution in Nigeria, he/she must possess certain general qualifications or attainments. The qualifications or attainments are as follows:

1. The candidate must have completed a full course of training in a secondary school, technical college or teacher training college or an approved institution of equivalent status and obtained five ordinary level credits passes in relevant subjects.
2. The candidate must also have attained the age of at least 16 years (JAMB, 2006).

The candidate is also expected to write an admission or matriculation examination called Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) organized and conducted by Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB).

JAMB handles the admission and matriculation matters of universities, colleges of education and the polytechnics in Nigeria. Every year, it conducts examinations for candidates seeking admission into all higher institutions in Nigeria. After the results of the examination are out, based on recommendation from the institutions, the board approves the placement of the recommended candidates into the various institutions. As a result, the board gets involved in university administration through its admissions and matriculation policies (Akinola, 1993).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Students' performance in examination is dependent on many factors and these factors are varied and depend on the situations in which the examinations were taken. The factors include: school and outside the school experience of the students, parental background (Adepoju, 2000), availability and utilization of resources (Oni and Iluyomade, 1988) and personality variables of the students (Fagbemi, 1995). Thus this study had analyzed the performance of university students in UTME with a view of to determine whether their performance is dependent on their gender and the faculty of study.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to investigate the above study, the following research questions were raised and answered:

1. Is there any significant difference between the performance of male and female university students in UTME?
2. Is there any significant difference in the performance of university students in UTME in the faculties of social sciences, science, education and law?

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

In order to answer the above research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study.

1. There is no significant difference between the performance of male and female university students in UTME.
2. There is no significant difference in the performance of university students in UTME in the faculties of Social sciences, Science, Education and Law.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Research Design

The research design of this study is an Expo facto using the co relational method. This is so because it tries to analyze already existing conditions or variables, which cannot be controlled and to find out if the independent variables (students' gender and faculty of study) are related to the dependent variable (UTME performance).

Population and Sample

The population of this study comprises the university students in all public and private universities in Delta and Edo states that took the UTME in 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 academic sessions.

The proportional stratified random sampling techniques were used to select 6000 students from three universities and four faculties. The sampled universities were: University of Benin, Benin City, Delta state University, Abraka, and Igbenedion University, Okada.

Also from among the nine available faculties, four faculties common to all the universities were selected as sample. The sample faculties were: Faculty of Social sciences, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Science and Faculty of Law.

Research Instrument

The instrument was students' results on performances in Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 academic sessions obtained from students' records with the aid of trained research assistants. The validity and reliability of the research instruments (students scores on UTME) have been determined by specialists who designed them. The statistical techniques used in analyzing the collected data include: statistical mean, z-test, and one way Analysis of variance (ANOVA). All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research Question 1: What is the difference between the performance of male and female university students in UTME?

In order to answer research question one, hypothesis one was formulated and tested;

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the performance of male and female university students in UTME.

In order to test hypothesis one, data on mean performance of male and female university students in UTME were computed and shown in table 1 below. The z- test was used in testing this hypothesis.

Table 1. Z – test analysis of the significance of the difference between the two groups (male and female university students) in UTME.

<i>Groups in UTME</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D</i>	<i>Z- cal</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>z- crit</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>Remark</i>
Male students	3000	54.20	7.69	1.43	0.05	1.96	0.30	Not significant
Female students	3000	53.90	8.46					

P<1.96 Source: computed from field work (2013)

The analysis presented in table 1 reveals that the mean performance of male university students was 54.20, while that of female university students was 53.90. Thus the mean difference was therefore 0.30. The computed z- test produced an output of 1.43 which was less than the critical value of 1.96 at the 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the mean performance of male university students was not significantly different from the mean performance of female university students in UTME. Thus the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference between the performance of male and female university students in UTME, was therefore not rejected. The conclusion drawn from the result was that there is no significant difference between the performance of male and female university students in UTME.

Research Question 2: What is the difference in the performance of students in UTME in the faculties of Social sciences, Science, Education and Law?

In order to answer research question two, hypothesis two was formulated and tested:

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the performance of students in UTME in faculties of Social sciences, Science, Education and Law.

In testing hypothesis two, data on the sum of squares between and within faculties were computed and shown in table 2 below. The One way analysis of variance test (ANOVA) was used in testing this hypothesis.

Table 2. Analysis of variance of the significance of the difference between the mean performance of students in the faculties of Social sciences, Science, Education and Law in UTME

<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>Sum of Squares (SS)</i>	<i>D.F</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F- ratio Calculated</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>F- ratio Critical</i>
Between group	165000	3	55000			
Within group	79626.88	5996	13.28	20.54	0.05	2.68
Total	244626.88	5999				

P<0.05

Source: computed from field work (2013)

The analysis presented in table 2 revealed that the computed F- ratio produced an output of 20.54, while the table value at 0.05 level of significance was 2.68. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the performance of university students in UTME in the faculties of social sciences, science, education and law, was therefore rejected, since the calculated F- ratio of 20.54 exceeded the table (critical) value. The conclusion drawn from this was that there is a significant difference between the performance of university students in the faculties of the social sciences, science, education and law in UME. This means that the performance varied from faculty to faculty.

However, in order to differentiate the source of the difference and specify the faculties that made the difference, the scheff'e post hoc test for all possible comparison was applied. The results were as shown in table 3.

Table 3. Scheffé multiple comparison of the mean performance of University students in UTME in the faculties of social sciences, science, education and law

Faculty	F- ratio	Decision
Social sciences Vs Science	2277.86 *	Reject
Social sciences Vs Education	3181.48*	Reject
Social sciences Vs Law	2710.84*	Reject
science Vs Education	75.30*	Reject
Science Vs Law	18.83 *	Reject
Education Vs Law	18.83 *	Reject

* F Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$

Source: computed from field work (2013)

The findings in table 3 above show the sources of the variation. The mean performance of university students in the faculty of social sciences was significantly different from the mean performance of students in the faculties of Science, Education and law. Also the mean performance of students in the faculty of law was significantly different from the mean performance of students in the faculties of education and science. Furthermore the mean performance of students in the faculty of Science was significantly different from the mean performance of students in the faculties of Education. This shows that the findings did not support the null hypothesis 2 stated above. It can therefore be concluded that there is a significant difference between the mean performances of university students in the different faculties. This means that performance varied from faculty to faculty.

DISCUSSION

It was established from the data analyzed that the mean performance of female university students in UTME was 53.90, while that of males was 54.20. Though, the females seem to have performed better than the males, the difference between their performances was very small (0.30) and was not significant. The above is in agreement with the study of Akabogu (2006), which revealed that gender has no significant influence on performance in achievement and selection tests. However, the above finding was contrary to the finding of Nash (1998), which suggested that females tended to do better than males in achievement and selection tests. The difference in finding between that of Nash and this researcher could be attributed to difference in samples and setting in which the studies were conducted. The researcher used performance of students in UTME, while Nash used performance in English as a subject. More so, from the study, it can be inferred that scores of male and female students in UTME were generally high. These high scores could be linked to involvement in examination malpractices, pointing to the fact that male and female candidates were equally involved in examination malpractices.

It was also established from the data analyzed that in UTME, there was a significant difference between the mean performance of university students in the faculties of Social sciences, Science, Education and Law. This finding agrees with that of Osawe (2005), which stated that different faculties performed differently, with the faculties of social sciences and law performing significantly higher than other faculties in university of Lagos. The difference

in faculty performance could be due to the perception that some courses are more demanding than others. Thus students tend to put in more effort in such courses/ faculties than others. This effort could be in terms of reading and 'burning the midnight candle', or by intensifying different tactics of examination malpractices.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the performance of university students in UTME was independent on their gender, since the study revealed that there is no significant different between the performance of male and female students in UTME .Furthermore, it was concluded that performance of university students in UTME varied from faculty to faculty;

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made, which if carried out would improve the administration of university education, through improved admission procedure or policy:

1. The current practice of maintaining different bench mark or cut- off points for different departments/ faculties should be maintained. This is so because performance of students varied from faculty to faculty.
2. The current practice of maintaining the same bench mark or cut- off points for male and female university students should be maintained. This is so because there is no significant difference between the performance of male and female university students in UTME.

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