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PROCEEDINGS OF THE 5TH TEACHING AND LEARNING IN AFRICA CONFERENCE



**AVANI Hotel, Livingstone,
Republic of Zambia,
May 23-27, 2016**

Edited By

Prof. Steve Nwokeocha | Eunifridah Simuyaba | Dr. Eddy Mubanga | Fred Medison Mwale

Proceedings of the 5th Teaching and Learning in Africa Conference

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5th AFTRA

Teaching and Learning in Africa Conference

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Teachers' Gender Disparity as Correlates of Students' Academic Performance in Mathematics

¹Akanmu, M. A., ²Koroma, A. ³Omosewo, E. O. And ⁴Fajemidagba, M.o.

^{1,3,4}Department Of Science Education, University Of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

²C/o Department Of Social Science Education, University Of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

akanmuaalex@yahoo.co.uk; akanmu.ma@unilorin.edu.ng; 08034811990

Abstract

The study investigated disparity in teachers' gender in relation to students' academic performance in mathematics. The study was carried out in Oyo State, Nigeria with a sample drawn from 9 Senior Secondary Schools from the 3 Senatorial districts of the State. A population of 270 students (m=116; f=154) and 9 teachers (m=4; f=5) participated in the study. The instruments used were a pro-forma of already conducted mathematics test scores of students retrieved and used for analysis; and, a teacher-centred questionnaire to elicit relevant data on teachers' gender and qualification. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and t-Test to test the hypotheses formulated as guide for the study. The findings showed that generally, there was a difference with respect to students' academic performance, in that female students obtained higher mean gain score in mathematics, though this difference was not statistically significant. Across the board, students taught by male or female teachers performed almost in the same pattern. The implication of this is that, teachers' gender disparity has no role or does not influence the performance of students in mathematics.

Key words: Correlates, Disparity, Gender, Performance, Teacher.

Introduction

The issue of gender in achievement remains a source of concern to scholars world all over. According to Bandura (1989), many aspects of human functioning, such as the interests and competencies people cultivate, the occupational paths they pursue, and the conceptions they hold of themselves and others are prescribed by cultural sex typing. The stereotypic gender conceptions that people adopt have lasting effects on how they perceive and process experiences and how they use their capabilities. This, according to the scholar, is so because so much of human experience is affected by gender differentiation, hence, the processes of sex typing have been the subject of much developmental theorizing and research. Although biological characteristics form a basis for gender differentiation, many of the social roles that get tied to gender are not ordained by biological differences. The kinds of attributes and social roles that are culturally linked to masculine and feminine gender should therefore be distinguished from biological sex differences.

With respect to academic performance, many studies such as those of Mills (1993); Sandra (2002); and Eniajeju (2010) identified gender, attitude and teaching methods amongst others as predictor variables in mathematics classroom. In their submission, Agwagah and Harbor-Peters (1994) opined that there exists a gender issue in students' performance in mathematics. Corroborating this assertion, Alebiosu (2003) noted

that certain factors are attributed to gender gaps and stereotyped images of sexes in school. Researches, therefore, abound on teachers' and students' gender differences in academic performance in mathematics (Adegboye, 1998; Abubakar & Eze, 2010).

Mathematics, being a science subject, is not without gender gap issues and some gender based researchers seem to have agreed in principles that, given the rigour of scientific inquiry and increasing male teachers' dominance, female teachers will produce exactly the same scientific knowledge as male teachers (Carrington & McPhee, 2008; Skelton, 2002). Myhill and Jones (2006), after interviewing a number of students found out that, on one hand, teachers of either gender tend to treat boys negatively as compared to girls and, they also expect girls to perform better both in terms of behaviour as well as academics. Based on this, the researchers submitted that it is more logical to appeal that boys' underperformance is due to differential treatments between boys and girls. The study by Myhill and Jones (2006) also found out that male teachers tend to be biased by gender whereas female teachers are perceived to be less influenced by gender expectations. On the contrary, a large scale study done in Hong Kong by Lam, Lam and Loh (2010) with 148 primary teachers and 4867 grade 4 pupils found that students of both gender perform better when taught by female teachers. This study found contrary evidence to those studies which report that boys perform better when taught by male teachers. Nevertheless, other studies have found that the gender of the teacher has no effect on the performance of students. For instance, a study conducted among year 3 elementary school pupils and their teachers revealed that both students and teachers indicated that the gender of the teachers does not matter with regard to student motivation, interactions, and consequently the performance of the students (Skelton, Carrington, Francis, Hutchings, Read, & Hall, 2009). In this study, attempt has, therefore, been made to reconcile students' academic performance in mathematics and teachers gender disparity. The objective was to determine if there would be any difference or not with regards to students' academic performance in mathematics when exposed to either of the gender of the teacher.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. Is there any difference between male and female students' academic performance in mathematics?
2. Will there be any difference in the academic performance of students in mathematics when taught by male teachers compared to those taught by female teachers?

Research Hypotheses

In line with the research questions raised, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study:

Ho₁: *there is no significant difference between male and female students' academic performance in mathematics.*

Ho₂: *there is no significant difference in the academic performance of male and female students in mathematics when taught by female teachers.*

Ho₃: *male and female students will not perform significantly different in mathematics when taught by male teachers*

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive research survey design with a sample drawn from 3 schools from the 3 senatorial districts (Central, North and South) of Oyo State, Nigeria. A total of 9 teachers (M=4, F= 5) and 270 senior secondary school 2 students (M=116, F=154) formed the sample frame for the study. Table 1 indicates the distribution of students and teachers based on gender. A pro-forma of already conducted mathematics test scores of students and teacher-centred questionnaire were the instruments used to gather relevant data. At 0.05 level of significance, the data collected was analyzed using t-Test statistics.

Table 1***Respondents Frame (Teachers and Students)***

SCHOOL	TG	SG	
		M	F
A	M	10	20
B	M	12	18
C	F	15	15
D	F	14	16
E	F	07	23
F	F	15	15
G	F	18	12
H	M	15	15
I	M	10	20
Total	9	116	154

KEY: TG- Teachers' Gender; SG- Students' Gender

Results

The results of the analysis are presented below:

Ho₁: there is no significant difference between male and female students' academic performance in mathematics.

Table 2

t- Test Analysis showing differences between male and female students in their performance in Mathematics

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-value	Sig	Remarks
Male	116	55.4865	16.92597	268	-.336	..737	Accepted
Female	154	56.1950	17.12740				

Results in Table 2 shows that the female students obtained higher mean performance score in mathematics ($x = 56.20$; $SD = 17.13$) than their male counterparts ($x = 55.49$; $SD = 16.93$). However, this difference was not significant ($t = -.336$; $df = 268$; $p > 0.05$). Hence, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the performance of male and female students in mathematics. Thus, hypothesis 1 was accepted.

Ho₂: there is no significant difference in the academic performance of male and female students in mathematics when taught by female teachers.

Table 3

t- Test Analysis showing differences between male and female students' performance in Mathematics when taught by female teachers

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-value	Sig	Remarks
Male	69	51.1731	15.90625	119	-.546	..586	Accepted
Female	81	52.7101	14.87013				

Results in Table 3 shows that the female students obtained higher mean performance score in mathematics ($x = 52.71$; $SD = 14.87$) than their male counterparts ($x = 51.17$; $SD = 15.90$). However, this difference was not significant ($t = -.546$; $df = 119$; $p > 0.05$). Hence, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the performance of male and female students in mathematics when they are taught by female teachers. Thus, hypothesis 2 was accepted

Ho₃: Male and female students will not perform significantly different in mathematics when taught by male teachers

Table 4

t- Test Analysis showing difference between male and female in their performance in Mathematics when taught by male teachers

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-value	Sig	Remarks
Male	47	59.3500	16.87624	148	.163	.870	Accepted
Female	73	58.8667	18.30835				

Table 4 indicates that the male students obtained higher mean performance score in mathematics ($x = 59.35$; $SD = 16.87$) than their female counterparts ($x = 58.87$; $SD = 18.31$). However, this difference was not significant ($t = .163$; $df = 148$; $p > 0.05$) when they are taught by male teachers. Hence, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the performance of male and female students in mathematics when taught by male teachers. Thus, hypothesis 3 was accepted.

Discussion and implications of Findings

The findings of this study showed results which are consistent with many other researches that have reported that female students perform, though not significant higher but comparatively, better than male students. In the current study, students taught by either male or female teachers performed almost in the same pattern, though female students performed higher than the male students but the difference was not statistically significant. This study thus lay credence to studies such as those of Luschei, (2011); Skelton, Carrington, Francis, Hutchings, Read, and Hall (2009). The implication of this, is that, teachers' gender disparity has no role or does not influence the performance of students in mathematics.

Recommendations

Given the similarities of the findings of this study to many others across the globe which report that gender stereo-type is not a major factor in students' academic performance, it may be more logical to consider the effect of other teacher variables such as experience, qualification and self-efficacy and, student variables such as attitude, interest and learning styles independently or combined on the performance of male and

female students in mathematics. On tendency of bias towards a particular gender, mathematics teachers should be encouraged to note that irrespective of rigour involvement in scientific inquiry, male and female students will produce exactly the same scientific knowledge given similar task.

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