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**Modes of Admission and differential Academic Achievement between Male and Female Students
in South-West University, Nigeria.**

BY

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Abstract

This study investigated admission policies and academic achievement among male and female students of public universities in South-West Nigeria (2008-2012). The design encompasses descriptive, ex post facto and correlational types. The sample of the study consisted of 3000 males and 3000 females (400 level) students who graduated from both state and federal public universities, purposively selected for sampling. The only instrument consisted of record observation format to collect secondary data. Three research questions were raised and answered. The three hypotheses formulated were tested using t-test. The dependent variable was indicated by the academic achievement, moderating variable by gender, while the independent variable was indicated by the modes of admission. Findings show that the percentage academic achievement of male students admitted through post-UTME, ELDS and direct entry that had first class and second class upper was higher than their female counterparts whereas the percentage academic achievement of students admitted through merit that had first class was higher in female students than in male students. However, inferential analysis of the data indicated the differences are not statistically significant. The findings conclude that there was no consistent research evidence of the effects of gender difference on students' academic achievement. What the universities need are resources for teaching and learning and conducive environment that will guarantee effective learning rather than

differential admission process. Hence, efforts should be made by university authorities to ensure no student is discriminated against based on gender for admission but all students be treated the same way so as to produce good quality graduates.

Keywords: *Academic Achievement, Modes of Admission, Gender difference*

Background to the study

The concept of academic achievement is inevitable in any formal educational institution. It expresses the learning achievement of an individual or a group at the end of an academic programme. Academic achievement is generally used to determine how well an individual is able to assimilate, retain, recall and communicate the knowledge of what has been learnt in school subjects without reference to possible sources of information, usually designed by test scores or marks assigned by the teacher. The academic achievement of a student may depend to an extent on many variables which include funding, student readiness, home-school relationship, school administration, culture and policy or legal factors (Puccioni, 2018).).

Academic achievement in Nigeria universities are reported based on Grade Points A (5 points), B (4 [points), C (3 points), D (2 points) and E (1 point). The Cumulative Grade Point Averages (CGPAs) are graded into First Class (4.50-5.00), Second Class Upper (3.50-4.49), Second Class Lower (2.50-3.49), Third Class (1.50-2.49), Pass (1.00- 1.49), and Fail (0.00-0.99) (Joe, Kpolovie, Osonwa and Iderima, 2014). For a candidate to be admitted into the University in Nigeria to study any first degree programme, such a candidate is expected to get the minimum point in a combined Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) and/or National Examination Council (NECO) and Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination/Post Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME/PUTME) cumulative scores as well as other requirements by the department into which the candidate is seeking admission.

An analysis of results in the department of History and Diplomatic Studies, University of Port Harcourt shows that 9.2% of the 65 Graduates of 2007/2008 came out with Second Class Upper, 69.2% graduated with Second Class Lower, while 21.6% came out with Third Class, in the Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology, 3.6% of the 137 Graduates

Unizik Journal of Educational Management and Policy (UJOEMP), Vol 7, No. 1, September, 2025. ISSN: 2276-7630 came out with Second Class Upper, 49.6% graduated with Second Class Lower, while 46.8% came out with Third Class and Pass. No first class in both cases. It becomes a point of much concern that in spite of the rigorous screening exercises, many of the students still come out with Second Class Lower and below (Joe, Kpolovie, Osonwa and Iderima, 2014). This suggests that the variations in the academic achievement of the graduates of Nigeria universities are predominantly as a result of factors inherent in the students which could have been sorted out during the admission selection process.

Modes of admission, otherwise known as entry modes refer to the various means through which a candidate may be admitted to run a degree programme of choice or another related programme as deemed fit by the department, faculty or admission authority. Hence, the efficiency of the modes of admission of a school might have an influence on the academic achievement of her graduates. This view is in consonance with the findings of Abiodun and Isaiah, (2015) in Adeyemi (2009) that the mode of entry significantly predicted the success in degree examinations of the Final Year Bachelor of Education Students. Over the years, academic achievement as it relates to mode of admission and set quotas has attracted the attention of many researchers. In Nigeria, there are various modes of admissions into bachelor degree programmes. These include admissions through the UTME, Direct Entry, and Pre-Degree Programmes. Evrora (2009) in Yusuf (2023) examined the relationship between the mode of entry and performance of students in Delta State University, Abraka using disproportional stratified random sampling technique, the result at 0.05 level of confidence revealed that there was no significant relationship between mode of entry into the university and students academic performance. This implies that the performance of students in Universities has no bearing on entry modes.

The issue of gender differences in academic achievement has been in existence for quite a long time. Gender refers to the socio-cultural and psychological characteristics associated with being male or female. Yusuf (2023) in Oguta (2021) defined gender as the range of physical, biological, mental and behavioural characteristics pertaining to and differentiating between masculinity and femininity. Several studies have shown a significant gender difference in academic achievement. Nasir, Almuraikhi, Alkusayer, Saeed, Alkushi Alowfi, and Nasir (2025), reinforced the notion of males' intellectual superiority over females. Recent studies in the developed world have shown a reversal in academic performance between males and females, with females outperforming males in almost all disciplines at various levels of the educational ladder (Workman and Heyder 2020). Contrary to the studies pointing to the improved academic performance of females, the majority of the studies conducted in Ghana show

that males outperform females, especially in mathematics and science subjects (Armah, Akayuure, & Armah, 2020).

Puccioni (2018) reported that female students outperform their male counterparts. However, Wangu (2014) in Yusuf (2023) a study conducted among the students of secondary schools in Kenya observed boys are passing more than girls. Akpochafo (2010) in Yusuf (2023) reported that there was gender bias in Nigeria like in many African societies, a situation in which cultural beliefs and structural arrangement favoured men over women. Aiken (2007) reported that males are superior to females in academic achievement. The evidence of the existence of gender gap in American schools was also attested by Adedayo (2018) who affirmed that there is a large gender gap that widens drastically at percentiles above those that can be examined using standard data sources. On the contrary Beekman, and Ober (2015) reported that there is no gender gap among 99th percentile Asian Americans in Minnesota. However, Le and Nguyen, (2018). noted that the gender gap in their result is very consistent across demographic groups and hence their basic conclusion is that there is variation in the gender gap across schools, but that the magnitude of the variation is not very large.

Whilst some of the above studies may justify the need to pay attention to female students and provide them with the necessary support to enhance their studies, Santiago et al. (2008) in Wrigley-Asante, Ackah, and Frimpong, (2023). opines that rather than focusing largely on performances at the high school levels, with little attention given to academic performance between male and female students at the university or tertiary levels, focus should be on the tertiary level because, at that stage, there is a clear path towards a career that one may want to pursue and therefore it is expected that students will make much effort to excel academically at this level. Taking cognizance of these gaps, this study seeks to compare the academic achievement of male and female university students. Relevant literatures have shown that the modes of admission and role of gender in the academic achievement of students have become a controversial issue. The question is, was this difference in academic achievement exists based on modes of admission into university in Nigeria? Hence this study attempted to determine the differences in academic achievement of male and female students admitted into full-time through direct entry, post-UTME and pre-degree programmes; to determine whether modes of admission contribute to gender disparities in academic achievement.

The Concept of Admission Policy

Policy is an action plan or a guide adopted to bring about changes in polity. In the view of Ogunsakin and Aina (2019), policy is the thinking at a high level of abstraction which expresses the goals and means of achieving them. It is the basis of day-to-day administration and serves as a guide to administrators when deciding the lines along which the system should be conducted. Policy can, therefore, be summarized as an established course of action or plan reflecting the general goals and

procedures intended to guide and determine meaningful decisions. Admission policy in Nigeria has assumed a puzzling dimension among the practitioners of education. However, Ogunsakin and Aina (2019) agree that admission policy is the statement of intentions of the government and the means of achieving those aspects of the national objectives that have to rely on the use of admission as a tool. In this regard, the National Policy on Education (2004) reveals the overall admission philosophy of the country. The implication of this is that the level of national development depends upon the quantity and quality of its human resources which, in turn, depend on the type of the admission system and policy that produced them. The admission policy for higher education in Nigeria is based on what the government of the day legislated within the overall goal of higher education admission.

The Following Research Questions were raised to guide the Study:

1. What is the difference between the academic achievement of male and female students admitted through UTME cum post-UTME in public universities in South-West Nigeria?
2. What is the difference between the academic achievement of male and female students admitted through direct entry in public universities in South-West Nigeria?
3. What is the difference between the academic achievement of male and female students admitted on merit in public universities in South-West Nigeria?
4. What is the difference in the academic achievement of male and female students admitted into the public universities based on educationally-less-developed States in South-West Nigeria?

The following Hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of Significance:

- H₀₁.** There is no significant difference in the academic achievement among male and female students admitted into public universities through UME cum post UME/UTME in South-West Nigeria
- H₀₂.** There is no significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students admitted into public universities through direct entry in South-West Nigeria

Ho₃. There is no significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students admitted into public universities on merit in South-West Nigeria.

Ho₄. There is no significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students admitted into the public universities based on educationally less advantaged States in South-West Nigeria.

Method

The study adopted a multivariate design which encompasses descriptive, *ex post facto* and correlational research types. It is descriptive in that it describes the current admission procedures into Nigerian universities, and their applicability in getting prospective candidates admitted into the universities. It is an *ex post facto* research because it investigated the extent to which already existing admission policies determined the students' academic achievement at the point of graduation. It also assessed the relationship between the admission policies as the independent variable, gender as moderating variable, and students' academic achievement as the dependent variable.

The sample consists of six universities selected from the 14 public universities in south-west Nigeria, 2007/08 session, three federal and three state universities, using convenient and purposive sampling method. The universities were selected to cut across the six states in South-West Nigeria; on the basis that they offer similar courses; and to ensure equal representation of both Federal and State universities in the sample. In each of the selected universities, five faculties were again purposively selected on the basis that they are all available in selected universities and they have four years duration for students to complete their courses. In each of the selected faculties, the matriculation lists of full-time students from 2004/05 to 2008/09 were collected from the Admissions Officer to get their admission details. A simple random sampling method was used to get the representative samples from each stratum (faculty).

The main admission criteria used to select names of students for this study was availability of complete set of information required for the study for each name randomly selected. That is, candidates' JAMB scores, UTME scores, gender, year of admission, admission quota, mode of entry and state of origin. The graduation lists from 2007/08 to 2011/12 were also collected from the Academic Officer in which case the names already selected through simple random sampling from the matriculation lists were

located in the graduation lists and their graduation details were recorded, that is, year of graduation and class on graduation. Hence, results of 6000 students from the six universities selected for this work were sampled.

The only instrument developed by the researcher to collect data for this study is a record observation format which was divided into three sections. Section A was used to collect information on the name and state of location of the universities, gender and employment status of the officers and their highest qualifications. Sections B was completed by the Admission Officers. It sought information on number of students admitted by gender through Direct Entry, Pre-Degree and UTME. Section C was completed by the Academic Officers of sampled universities. It sought information on number of male and female graduate students that had First Class (coded as 5 points), Second Class Upper (coded as 4 points), Second Class Lower (coded as 3 points), Third Class (coded as 2 points) and Pass (code as 1 point) from 2007/08 to 2011/12. Both the matriculation lists and graduation lists formed the secondary data used for the research. Data collected for the study were scored and converted using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and percentages for answering the research questions. In testing the hypotheses, t-test statistics was used to analyze the four hypotheses. These were done with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.

Table 1: Summary of Mode of Admission, Gender Difference and Academic Achievement from the research Questions

Gender	1 st	2 ¹	2 ²	3	P
Male(UTME)	0.70	25.30	45.40	21.70	6.90
Female(UTME)	0.50	25.50	45.50	23.00	5.50
Male(D/E)	0.80	25.30	43.50	20.50	9.90
Female(D/E)	0.48	21.70	40.04	26.20	11.58
Male (Merit)	0.72	23.95	46.50	23.30	5.53
Female (Merit)	0.90	23.70	47.00	23.10	5.30
Male(ELDS)	0.24	24.00	44.50	21.50	9.76
Female(ELDS)	0.19	23.60	47.00	22.90	6.31

Table 1 shows a preliminary analysis undertaken to arrive at the percentage academic achievement based on the classes of degree obtained by the male and female students admitted into the universities through UTME, Direct Entry, Merit and ELDS from 2004/05 to 2008/09 sessions, who graduated from 2007/2008 to 2011/2012 sessions in South West Nigeria. The analysis showed that 0.70% of male students had first class degree which is higher than that of the female students with 0.50% having first class degree. Also, 25.30% of the male students had second class upper division against 23.50% females. In the same vein, a percentage of 45.40% of male students and 45.50% females had second class lower division. The percentage of students with third and a pass class of degree slightly differed. Generally, there is a slight difference in the academic achievement of male and female students admitted through UTME cum post-UTME at the second class upper and lower division while the difference at the first class, third class and pass division is visibly indicated.

Similarly, the analysis of percentage academic achievement based on the classes of degree obtained by the male and female students admitted into the universities through Direct Entry reveals that 0.80% of male students had first class degree which is higher than that of the female students with 0.48% having first class degree. Also, 25.30% of the male students had second class upper division against 21.70% females. Similarly, a largest percentage of 43.50% of male students and 40.04% females had second class lower division. The percentage of students with third and with pass class of degrees is visibly indicated.

Also, the analysis of classes of degrees obtained by the male and female students admitted into the universities on Merit showed that 0.72% of male students had first class degree which is lower than that of the female students with 0.90%. Also, 23.95% of the male students had second class upper division against 23.70% females. Similarly, a largest percentage of 46.50% of male students and 47.00% females had second class lower division. The percentage of students with third class and with pass class of degrees slightly differed

Lastly, preliminary analysis of classes of male and female students admitted based on Educationally-Less-Developed States showed that 0.24% of male students and 0.19% of female students had first class degree. Also, 24.00% of the male students had second class upper division as against 23.60% females. However, a larger percentage of 47.00% of female students than 44.50% male students had second class lower division. The percentage of students with third class and with pass class of degrees is visibly indicated.

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Research Hypotheses

Table 2: Summary of t- test analysis of significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students through post-UME/UTME.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Tcal	Df	Sig
Male	1600	20.00	17.46			
				.000	3138	1.000
Female	1540	20.00	17.37			

*Result not

significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 shows the t-test analysis of significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students admitted through UME/UTME(also see Tables 28a-b in appendix IV).Male students admitted into the universities through UTME / post-UTME have academic achievement mean of 20.00 and standard deviation 17.46 while female students have academic achievement mean of 20.00 and standard deviation 17.37. The result shows that the difference in the academic achievement between male and female students admitted through UME/UTME cum post UME/ UTME admission policy into public universities students in South West Nigeria was not statistically significant. ($t_{(3138)} = .000$; $P > 0.05$). The null hypothesis is therefore upheld.

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Table 3: Summary of t- test analysis of significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students through direct entry.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	tcal	Df	Sig
Academic Achievement						

Male	1745	19.86	16.48			
				-.063	2698	.951
Female	955	20.50	15.97			

*Result not significant at 0.05 level

Table 3 shows the summary of t- test analysis of significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students admitted through direct entry (also see Tables 29a & b in appendix IV)). Female students have a higher academic achievement mean of 20.50 with standard deviation 15.97 while male students have academic achievement mean score of 19.86 and standard deviation 15.97. The result shows that the difference in academic achievement between male and female students admitted through direct entry into public universities in South West Nigeria was statistically not significant. ($t_{(2698)} = -.063$; $P > 0.05$).

Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students admitted into public universities through direct entry in South-West Nigeria is upheld.

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Table 4: Summary of t- test analysis of significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students on merit.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	tcal	Df	
Academic						Sig
Achievement						

Male	1950	20.04	18.09			
				.004	3718	.997
Female	1770	20.00	18.26			

*Result not significant at 0.05 level

As regards the difference in the academic achievement of male and female students admitted on merit, male students have a higher academic achievement mean score of 20.04 with standard deviation of 18.09 while female students have an academic achievement mean score of 20.00 and standard deviation 18.26.

The result shows that the difference in academic achievement between male and female students admitted on merit into public universities in South West Nigeria was not statistically significant ($t_{(3718)} = .004$; $P > 0.05$). (Table 17, also see Tables 30a & b in appendix IV)). Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students admitted into public universities on merit in South West Nigeria is upheld

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Table 5: Summary of t- test analysis of significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students based on educational less advantaged states (ELDS).

Gender	N	Mean	SD	tcal	Df	Sig
Academic						
Achievement						

Male	930	20.01	16.68			
				.000	1863	1.000
Female	935	20.01	18.25			

*Result not significant at 0.05 level

A t-test analysis was performed to ascertain the difference in the academic achievement of male and female students admitted into the public universities based on ELDS policy. It is observed that the male students have the same academic achievement mean score of 20.01 with female students but with different standard deviations of 16.68 and 18.25 respectively. The result shows that the difference between male and female admitted through ELDS policy in terms of academic achievement of public universities students in South-West Nigeria was statistically not significant. ($t_{(1863)} = .000$; $P > 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students admitted into public universities through ELDS admission policy in South-West Nigeria is upheld.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the inferential statistical analysis obtained in this study, shows that the calculated t-values were lower than the critical table values (that is $P > 0.05$) in all cases; hence the null hypotheses were accepted in each case. This shows that there was no statistically significant difference in the mean academic achievement between male and female students admitted through UTME cum post-UTME/UTME, between male and female students admitted through direct entry, between male and female students admitted through merit and between male and female students admitted through educationally less developed states (ELDS) policy. In other

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words, the academic achievement of male students was at same level with that of their female counterparts based on the four modes of admission mentioned above. This is supported by Adedayo (2018) who stated, that a no significant difference in CPGA score was found among male and female students admitted through post-UTME screening. He concluded that what universities need are tools for teaching and learning and conducive environment that will guarantee effective learning. The findings also agreed with the position held by Scott-Jones and Clark (2013) that there was no consistent research evidence on the

effects of sex difference on students' achievement. They maintained that it was unreasonable to explain differentials achievement on the basis of biological differences between sexes. This again agreed with Spencer (1996) in Patrick (2010) who found no gender difference in CGPA of students. In a different perspective, Fryer and Levitt (2009) noted that there was a variation in the gender gap across schools, but that the magnitude of the variation was not very large.

On the contrary, this study tends to invalidate earlier findings by Awofala, Lawani, & Adeyemi, (2020) on effects of sex on achievement, which showed that male students always perform better than the female students in Mathematics and Mohammed, Atagana & Edawoke (2014) who indicated that there was statistically significant difference between male and female students in self-efficacy and academic achievement. Sanni, (2024) and Hanawa, (2017) blamed the discrepancies between male and female academic achievement on socio-cultural factors. Also, the report of Aiken (2007) in Adedayo (2018) that male students are often superior to female students in academic achievement in schools.

Though, the issue of gender differences in achievement has been in existence for quite a long time, this study has shown that gender differences in academic achievement do not exist in the university courses. The difference in the findings of this work and those of other researchers who have done similar work but with different findings could probably be attributed to difference in the number of samples used for the study and areas of coverage of the study.

Conclusion

The study highlighted the strength of each gender based on different modes of admission. The results of this study showed that differences in modes of admission, to an extent, had relationship

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with academic achievements of students though negligible and with variations but the relationships were not statistically significant. The non-significant gender difference in students' academic achievement could be attributed to other factors beyond the scope of this study, such as the students' good secondary school background translating into a quality academic performance in their university courses work; the quality of teaching and learning and the quality of facilities available in the universities could probably have influenced the students' academic achievement; focused and goal-oriented students; improved

funding through scholarship scheme and provision of enabling environment for study could have influenced students' academic achievement thereby creating no significant difference in their academic achievement as they graduate out of the universities. For there to be satisfactory learning achievement for students and invariably high academic output in Nigerian universities, pragmatic and result-oriented admission strategies that are focused on students' quality should be put in place.

Recommendations

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

1. Attempt should still be made to motivate the female students to put in more effort so as to bridge the gaps in academic achievement between them and their male counterparts (though insignificant). Both male and female students should still be given equal opportunities to compete and the best among them is offered admission.
2. Efforts should be made by university authorities and admission handlers to ensure that none of the genders of students is discriminated against but treated the same way as others so as to produce good quality graduates, that is, a policy that allows leveling the playing field should be formulated.
3. Considering all the modes of admission together, less than 1% has first class degree, 14-25% has second class upper, 43-50% have second class lower, 20-32% have third class and 4-10% have ordinary pass. A policy review that will ensure better academic achievement is therefore, recommended.

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