



Means of Admission and Sex as Determinants of Students' Achievement in the use of English and Library (GST 101)

OSSAI, Peter Agbadobi Uloku
Department of Guidance and Counselling,
Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

There appears to be poor trends in the standard of use of English in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. The situation is worsened given that many undergraduates passed through secondary schools where examination grades seemed to have been obtained through fowl means. This led to the study of means of admission and gender as determinants of students' achievement in the use of English by fresh undergraduates in Delta State University, Abraka. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study with an ex-post facto correlational design. From a population of 349 education students, a sample of 186 students (Direct Entry, 31; UTME 155; Males, 73; Females 113) was drawn. Students' scores in GST 101 examination for 2018/2019 session were used. Data were analyzed using simple linear regression and multiple regression. Findings from the study showed that means of admission had a significant relationship with students' achievement in GST 101, unlike gender. A combination of means of admission and gender produced a significant relationship with students' achievement in GST 101 $F(2,185 = 5.279, p < .05)$. The conclusion was that students' achievement in GST 101 in Delta State University, Abraka can be attributed to their means of admission. It is hereby suggested that research on differential performance on this area be conducted to guide the University Management in decision-making.

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INTRODUCTION

English Language is the official language in Nigeria. It is used as a medium of instruction at all levels of Nigeria's educational institutions. From the primary school level to the secondary level, English Language is a core subject, although the language of the immediate environment is used as a medium of instruction in the primary school for the first three years, Federal Ministry of Education, FME (2004).

The importance attached to English Language must have informed the decision to make the subject appear every day in schools' time-tables. Added to this is that a student needs to pass English Language, at credit level, in addition to other relevant subjects, before making it to the University.

In line with the credence attached to the teaching and learning of English language in

Nigerian schools, government, at different levels, has done a great deal in ensuring that pupils and students do well in the subject. Government's efforts by way of provision of the enabling environment for the teaching and learning of English Language do not seem to yield the desired results as students' performances in the subject are below average (Samira & Ado, 2015).

The persistent failures of candidates in English language is a source of concern (Obiefina & Oruwari, 2015). The downward trend has been blamed on such factors as teachers' qualification, teachers' use of instructional materials and text messaging (Alufohai, 2010) as well as gender (Samira & Ado, 2015). Others are attitudinal, social, socio-economic and extracurricular activities (El-Omari, 2016).

Some researchers (Akabogu, 2006; Erten (2009), Fakaye, 2010; Obiefuna & Oruwari,

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2015; Fan, Umaru & Nseendi, 2016; Ossai, 2019) have conducted studies involving gender and/or location in relation to students' achievement in English Language. The findings have not been consistent. This present study is focused on students' sex and means of admission as determinants of undergraduate students' achievements in the use of English and Library, GST 101, in Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. GST 101 is a four-unit course that is taken in the first year by students undergoing a four-year or a three-year programme leading to the award of first degree. It is a core course. The course is meant to equip fresh undergraduates with linguistic skills that will enable them cope adequately with their academic work. In addition, it enables them to acquire the necessary skills concerning the use of library (Mowarin & Uwaifo, 2003).

Some researchers (Popoola & Olubunmi, 2013; Uguma & Timothy, 2015) have conducted researches concerning fresh undergraduates and achievement in the use of English as a course. Popoola's study showed that there was no relationship between SSCE grades and scores in the use of English. According to Uguma and Timothy, achievement in the SSCE English Language examination and use of English course at the University are correlates of students' academic performance in specific courses of study.

SEX AND STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Government at all levels provide equal opportunity for education to all Nigerians, irrespective of sex. Item 9(a) under the Philosophy and Goals of Education in Nigeria makes this clear:

Education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most important instrument of change; any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution; (FME, 2004, p.8).

Nigeria's philosophy of education is based on the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen, (p.7, FME, 2004). It

therefore, stands to reason that education is provided by the government without discrimination. This justifies the enormous material and human resources injected into Nigeria's educational sector.

In spite of the commendable efforts by the government to ensure that equal opportunity is given to everybody in the educational system, there appears to be inequality in the achievement of learners. This has given rise to studies concerning sex differentials in students' achievement. One of such studies has been on sex and students' achievement in English Language. In this study, gender and sex will be used interchangeably.

In the society people tend to believe that women are more fluent than men in language Babajide (2001), for instance, posited that women use English Language in their activities more than men. This view was supported by Babalola and Oyinloye (2012) who reported that women seem to acquire language skills at a faster rate compared to men. The finding of Olanipekun (2015) contradicts this position. This author held that better performance in English language was not related to gender.

Other studies supporting the position held Olanipekun (2015) were conducted by Obiefuna and Oruwari (2015), Fan, Umaru and Nseendi (2016) as well as Ossai (2019) appear to support this result. Obiefuna and Oruwari conducted a study involving secondary school students' learning styles and their performance in English Language in Nigeria. The study which adopted the quasi-experimental design had a sample of 300 students drawn through purposive sampling technique. English Achievement Test (EAT) was the instrument used in the pre-test and post-test exercises. While the research questions were answered using percentage and mean, ANCOVA was used in testing the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Among others, it was found that students' learning styles and performances did not differ significantly by gender.

Similarly, Fan, Umaru and Nseendi (2016) conducted a study on gender and students' achievements in English Language. An *ex-post facto* design was used in the study with a sample of 110 male and 110 female students

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drawn from a population of Junior Secondary Three (JSS III) from selected secondary schools from Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State. End-of-term examination results in English Language were used. Data analysis showed that achievement in English language does not differ significantly by gender, that is, there is no significant relationship between gender and students' achievement in English language.

The study carried out by Ossai (2019) involved undergraduate students' achievement in Transformational Generative Grammar (ELS 301) at Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. Fifty-three female students and thirty male students were drawn from a population of 300 level students who took ELS 301 in the Department of English and Literary Studies in the 2017/2018 session. Using an *ex-post-facto* design, the study had three research questions and one null hypothesis. Mean was used in answering the research questions while the independent samples t-test was used in testing the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance. Although the female students had a higher mean achievement, students' achievement in ELS 301 did not differ significantly by gender.

Different from the foregoing is the study of Fakaye (2010). Fakaye studied students' variables as correlates of achievement in English Language as a second language. The study had a population of 2000 second year (SS II) students in secondary schools within Ikorodu North and South Local Government Councils of Lagos State. A sample of 400 students was selected from the population. The instruments used were ability test and questionnaire. Data analysis showed that students' achievement in English Language differed significantly by gender. Achievement was in favour of male students.

Students' Means of Admission and Academic Issues

Students' admission into Delta State University is through preliminary exercise, Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination/Post Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME/PUTME) and Direct Entry.

The preliminary means of admission for students that have undergone pre-degree

programmes of the university. The UTME/PUTME category is for those who have taken the highly competitive Joint Admission Matriculation Examination (JAMB) test. The direct entry is for candidates who have qualifications that are above the senior school certificate examination conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) or the National Examinations Council (NECO).

It appears that a student's means of admission into a University may influence his or her academic performance. This view is shared by Adeyemi (2009) who reported that students' means of admission into a University significantly predict his/her success in the first degree examination. Odion (2019) also held the view that the variation in students' achievement in Use of English and Library (GST 101) was partly due to students' means of admission.

Results from researches on students' academic achievement with respect to means of admission have been inconsistent. Some of such studies were carried out by Uzoeshi and Asuru (2004), Ogunfuyi (2015), Project (n.d.) and Evroro (2009). Evroro (2009) studied the relationship between means of admission and students' performance in their degree examination in Delta State University, Abraka. Two research questions and one null hypothesis were generated with a sample of 300 students drawn from pre-degree, UTME and Direct Entry categories of undergraduates. Students' academic performances were collected from their data files. Using percentage frequency counts and chi-square test of significance to address the research questions and hypothesis, it was discovered that there was no significant relationship between means of admission into the University and students' academic performance in core courses. On their part, Uzoeshi and Asuru (2004) conducted a study involving Attitude of Rivers State College of Education Students towards Teaching Practice. The study which employed a descriptive survey design had a sample of 200 students (100 degree (B.Ed) students and 90 National Certificate in Education, NCE Students). Chi-square test was used in testing the null hypotheses. The result showed, among others, that students' attitude towards

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teaching practice did not differ on the basis of their programme.

A similar study conducted by Ogunfuyi (2015) focused on undergraduate education students of Delta State University, Abraka. The findings from the study showed that students' attitude towards teaching practice did not differ between direct entry students and UTME students. This result supports the findings of Uzoeshi and Asuru (2004).

The study conducted by Project (n.d.) involved a sample of 200 respondents drawn from education students at University of Lagos, Nigeria. Using the product moment correlation statistical tool and the independent samples t-test to address the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance, the findings showed that a significant difference existed in the academic performance of those who were admitted into the University through foundation programmes and those who obtained admission by means of direct entry; there is a significant relationship between means of admission and students' academic performance. The study also showed a significant difference in the academic performance of students who came in through UTME and those who gained admission through foundation programme. The study recommended the retention and strengthening of foundation programmes.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship among gender, means of admission and students' academic achievement in GST 101?
2. What is the relationship between gender and students' academic achievement in GST 101?
3. What is the relationship between means of admission and students' academic achievement in GST 101?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance

1. There is no significant relationship among gender means of admission and students' achievement in GST 101.
2. There is no significant relationship between gender and students' academic achievement in GST 101.
3. There is no significant relationship between means of admission and students' academic achievement in GST 101.

METHODOLOGY

The study examined sex and means of admission as factors of undergraduate students' achievement in Use of English and Library (GST 101) in Delta State University, Abraka. The *ex-post facto* design was used in the study. A sample of 186 students was drawn from a population of 349 students who took GST 101 examination in 2018/2019 session. The population consists mainly of Political Science Education Students, Economics Education Students and Guidance and Counselling Students, Delta State University, Abraka. The sample size was obtained using the stratified random sampling technique. Thus, the subjects were stratified as male and female for sex and Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) and Direct Entry (DE), for means of admission. Consequently, the simple random sampling technique of balloting was used to draw 113 female students from a total of number of 202 female students, 73 male students from a total of 147 male students and 155 UTME students from a total of 318 UTME students. The DE students were few. The researcher decided to take all the students totaling thirty-one. The scores from 2018/2019 session's examination on GST 101 were used. The research questions were answered using simple linear regression while multiple regressions was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Answers to the research questions and tests of hypotheses were presented as follows:

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between gender and students' academic achievement in GST 101?

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Table 1: Analysis of the relationship between gender and students' achievement in GST 101

Variable	n	r	r ²	r ² %	Remark
Gender Achievement	186	-.113	.013	1.3	small negative relationship

Table 1 shows that $r = -.113$; this is a negative relationship. Gender made a contribution of 1.3% to the variance in students' achievement in GST 101.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between means of admission and students' achievement in GST 101?

Table 2: Analysis of the relationship between means of admission and students' achievement in GST 101.

Variable	n	r	r ²	r ² %	Remark
Means of admission Achievement	186	-.214	.046	4.6	small negative Relationship

Table 2: showed $r = -.214$; this shows a negative relationship between means of admission and achievement in GST 101. Thus, means of admission contributed 4.6% to the variance in students' achievement in GST101?

Research Question 3: What is the relationship among gender, means of admission and students' achievement in GST 101?

Table 3: Relationship among gender, means of admission and students' achievement in GST 101.

Variable	n	R	r ²	r ² %	Remark
Gender, means of admission, achievement	186	0.214	.055	5.5	small negative Relationship

Table 3 showed that $R = 0.234$ while $R^2 = .055$; thus, the combination of gender and means of admission contributed 5.5% to the variance in students' achievement in GST 101.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between gender and students' achievement in GST 101.

Table 4: Linear regression analysis of the relationship between gender and students' achievement in GST 101.

Model	SS	df	MS	F	P
Regression	432.089	1	432.089		
Residual	33275.825	184	180.847	2.389	.124
Total	33707.914	185			

$\alpha = .05$, $n = 186$, $R = .113$, $R^2 = .013$

Table 4 shows the linear regression analysis of the relationship between gender and students' achievement in GST 101. The result showed that $R^2 = .013$, $F(1, 185) = 2.389$ $P > .05$ level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is hereby accepted. This implies that there is no

significant relationship between gender and students' achievement in GST 101.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between means of admission and students' achievement in GST 101.

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Table 5: Linear regression analysis of the relationship between means of admission and students' achievement in GST 101.

Model	SS	df	MS	F	P
Regression	1543.230	1	1543.230		
Residual	31869	184	174.808	8.828	.003
Total	33707.914	185			

$\alpha = .05, n = 186, R = .214, R^2 = .046$

Table 5 shows the linear regression analysis of the relationship between means of admission and students' achievement in GST 101. The result indicated that $R = .214, R^2 = .046, F(1,185) = 8.828, p < .05$ level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship is hereby rejected. The conclusion is

that there is a significant relationship between means of admission and students' achievement in GST 101.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship among gender, means of admission and students' achievement in GST 101.

Table 6: Multiple regression analysis of the relationship among gender, means of admission and students' achievement in GST 101.

Model	SS	df	MS	F	P
Regression	1838.620	2	919.310		
Residual	31869	183	174.149	5.279	.006
Total	33707.914	185			

$\alpha = .05, n = 186, R = .234, R^2 = .055$

a) Independent variable: Achievement in GST 101

b) Predictors (constant): Gender and means of admission

Table 6 shows the multiple regression to determine the relationship among gender, means of admission and students' achievement in GST 101. Result showed that a combination of the predictors (gender and means of admission) explains 5.5% variance in students' achievement in GST 101, $R^2 = .055, F(2, 185) = 5.279, p < 0.05$. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship among gender, means of admission and students' achievement in GST 101. Means of admission alone contributed more (5.6%) to the variance in students' achievement compared to gender that contributed only 1.3% to the variance students' achievement in GST 101.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The answer to research question one showed that gender had a small negative relationship with students' achievement in GST 101. A contribution of 1.3% in students' achievement in GST 101 was attributed to gender. The hypothesis test also showed that

there was no significant relationship between gender and students' achievement in GST 101. This led to the retention of the null hypothesis. This result corroborates the works of Obiefuna and Oruwari (2015) as well as Fan, Umaru and Nseendi (2018) and Ossai (2019), all of which indicated that students' achievement in English Language did not differ significantly by gender. The finding, however, contradicts the works of Fakaye (2010) as well as Samira and Ado (2015) who separately reported that students' achievement in English Language differed significantly by gender. It also disagrees with the positions of Bbajide (2001) as well as Babalola and Oyinloye (2012) that women acquire language skills at a faster rate than men.

Research question two showed that there was a negative relationship between means of admission and students' achievement in GST 101. This predictor variable accounted for 4.6% of the variation in GST 101 achievement. However, the corresponding null hypothesis was rejected, signifying that students' achievement in GST 101

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is significantly related to means of admission. This finding agrees with the works of Adeyemi (2009) and Odion (2019). Adeyemi (2009) reported a significant relationship between means of admission and success in first degree examinations while Odion (2019) submitted that students' achievement in GST 101 was partly due to their means of admission.

The present finding however, differed with the works of Uzoeshi and Asuru (2004), Evrora (2009) and Ogunfuyi (2015). While Uzoeshi as well as Ogunfuyi reported separately reported that students' teaching practice performance did not differ significantly by means of admission or programme, Evrora discovered that students' achievement in core courses did not relate to means of admission into the University.

The answer to research question 3 showed that the combination of gender and means of admission produced a small positive relationship with students' achievement in GST 101. The corresponding hypothesis was rejected. This implies that both predictor variables contributed to 5.5% of the variance in GST 101. This situation adds to the mixed reports concerning gender and means of admission as they separately relate to students' achievement in GST 101.

CONCLUSION

Students' achievement in GST 101 in Delta State University, Abraka can be attributed to means of admission; this is not the case with gender.

Attributing performance in GST 101 to means of admission is partly in line with what exists in literature; it also partly disagrees with the views of some scholars who believe means of admission does not impact on students' academic achievement.

The finding concerning gender and students' achievement in GST101 adds to the inconsistency surrounding gender and language. This calls for further research.

RECOMMENDATION

The researcher hereby recommends the conduct of researches on differential achievement in GST 101. This will guide the

university management in decision-making with respect to admission of students.

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