



## Effects of Gender and Source of Basic Education on Pre-Teachers' Achievement in English Language Prose Fiction

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### 1. Introduction

Poor academic achievement of students hinges on many factors. Adunola (2011) linked regular poor academic achievement to ineffective teaching methods by teachers to impact knowledge to learners. Among other factors, gender is a recurrent decimal in the currency of research engagements. In many ways, gender influences so many personal and corporate decisions in human existence which includes choice of profession, academic career, and membership of social, cultural, religious, and political groups or organisations. Severally, many research outcomes favour the influence of gender on academic achievement, while some are negative. To this, we must understand that when many factors interact in certain situations and conditions, there might be differences. Therefore, the high index level of gender influence on human endeavour generally and its effect on the strategies as treatment on the achievement of Nigeria Certificate in Education English Language students in Prose Fiction were considered.

Gender differences in all human empirical endeavours are important and many times becomes a determinant factor in crucial decision and policy matters. In education research, various views and discoveries have been made to establish the importance of gender. Goktas, Yildirim and Yildirim (2009) in their research on Turkish teachers' computer knowledge and competency reported that the computer software knowledge, skills, and level of usage of Turkish teachers were insufficient. This invariably submits that generally, gender difference in the competency level of the teachers could not be ascertained.

The study by Aurah (2017) evaluated the responses of 2,139 Kenyan students and found that academic achievements vary based on gender. The study found that female students performed better than male students. According to Reynolds et al. (2015), past studies have presented similarities between boys and girls in academic achievements. However, writing is one skill that may be termed as an exception. Based on a large national database of students aged between 7 and 19 years, the study found that girls possess better reading capabilities and can also score higher than male students on math computations. The study also found that women outperform men in writing tasks as well.

Education Alphabet (2018) evaluated the leaving certificates of enrolled students and found that girls had higher academic achievements than boys as it's been reported for many years in the UK, Canada, and the US. The findings argued that there are no differences in IQ test results for boys and girls. Therefore, there is no evidence that female students are naturally smarter than male students. However, several factors make them perform better academically than male peers. The requirements for higher academic achievements are far beyond intelligence alone. Other key requirements are - hardwork and adequate time to study. These are the areas where girls have an advantage. When the teachers were asked about the higher performance of girls as mentioned in the leaving certificates, they responded that girls were more attentive during classroom instructions, read more, spent adequate time on homework, took better notes, and showed a higher level of tolerance on frustrating and boring tasks. The teachers also highlighted the cultural factors in the higher academic achievement that parents regard the success of girls due to efforts,

whereas the success of boys is attributed to their abilities.

When students engage in academic discourse, and the time of evaluation and assessment approaches, many students feel a certain level of anxiety and stress. Razak et al. (2017) explored the gender differences in these anxiety levels. Based on the evaluation of 155 students using stratified random sampling, the study found that female students were more anxious than male students for the same time and study period. However, the study noted, that the anxiety level was still manageable and the academic achievements of the female students were not significantly affected by their anxiety levels. Hunt (2016) examined the higher exit rate of female students in science and engineering disciplines. The study found that women are not satisfied with the compensation package and promotion opportunities in these disciplines. The study also found other constraints in the higher academic achievements of female students in science and engineering disciplines. These included non-conducive working conditions and family pressure.

Based on the evaluation of 158 high-school students, Rahafar et al. (2016) reported that male and female students had variations in GPAs as well as test anxiety. The study found that when there is lower test anxiety, girls receive higher GPAs. However, this correlation was not observed in boys. The study recommended that gender preferences should be evaluated together with chronotype, and the categorical variable should define three categories of chronotype including morningness, intermediate, and eveningness. The study demonstrated that chronotype mediates the relationship between gender and GPA particularly for intermediate types and evening types.

Damour (2019) presented another perspective that girls demonstrate higher academic achievement than men, but they lose to them at the corporate level and office environment. According to this perspective, women find it challenging to continue their better performance at the office due to a shortage of confidence. The innate characteristics of men make them enter the job market even if they are underprepared and under-qualified. On the other hand, women prefer entering the job market when they are perfect. This perspective highlights that women can continue their excellence in professional life if they do not focus exclusively on their academic scores and intellectual abilities. They should also adjust their personality traits to the demands of the jobs and prepare themselves well for the challenges of powerful structural barriers, gender bias, and sexual harassment at the workplace.

Educational career is like a building construction which demands a foundation that is solid and strong enough. The foundation of the education system of any society dictates her developmental future and quality of her citizens. Hence, every country of the world takes it seriously and Nigeria is not an exception. Source of learner's Basic Education is very important because higher education is premised on the achievement level of the Basic Education. That is the essence of restricted and specified admission requirements into every programme of higher institutions.

Concerning this source of basic education, many believe that the quality of education in public schools is higher than is attainable in private schools while to some, reverse is the case. Nevertheless, we need to note that no conclusion should be made in haste because many factors come to play and interact with others before an achievement level is attained. Hence, the influence of one factor at a time might be stronger than another time on an issue due to many other things. Therefore, peculiarity has to do with the influence of any factor in the outcome of any research study. So, notwithstanding the existing position of any other research outcome on the influence of Source of Basic Education on achievement, this study along with other factors examined effect of gender on Nigeria Certificate in Education students' achievement in Prose Fiction.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Gender has been a controversial factor in learning. While many authors find gender to be a determining factor in achievement, a host others do not only perceive it to be. Hence, the argument is inconclusive. In the same way, the findings of Harker (2000) revealed that performance of girls in English Language was significantly higher than that of boys both in terms of mean curriculum coverage and examination's learning outcomes. The study of Karthigeyan and Nirmala (2012) agrees stating that the performance of girls is higher than that of boys in English Language. This female outperformance in English language is further confirmed by Olanipekun (2015) who found that female pre-service teachers did better in General English and in anything literature than their male counterparts. However, the issue of gender effect on academic achievement in English Language becomes an object of controversy as some other research contradict the earlier submissions that rather than the females, the males outperformed in English Language.

According to Ademokoya (2007) in his study, based on the passed group in English, male students

outclass their female counterparts. He stressed further that among physically challenged students, male students performed better than females. This notion is further supported by the study of Olanipekun (2013) that male students also outclassed their females in English Language based on students' entry qualification in English Language in colleges of education in Nigeria. These submissions therefore suggest that gender influence on academic achievement is relative and may not be a major standpoint of evaluation. This standpoint should be understood on the basis that many factors influencing learning experience are not static in nature. Hence, there is necessity that from time-to-time different outcomes may be experienced in studies that are similar in nature. Hence, this study seeks to determine the effects of gender and source of basic education of the students in Prose Fiction.

### 1.2 Research Questions

- What is the effect of gender on the achievement of NCE students in English Language Prose Fiction?
- What is the effect of source of basic education on the achievement of NCE students in English Language Prose Fiction?
- What is the interaction effect of gender and source of basic education on the achievement of NCE students in English Language Prose Fiction?

### 1.3 Research Hypotheses

Ho1. There is no significant effect of gender on Nigeria Certificate in Education English Language students' achievement in Prose Fiction.

Ho2. There is no significant effect of source of Basic education on Nigeria Certificate in Education English Language students' achievement in Prose Fiction.

Ho3. There is no significant interaction effect of gender and source of Basic education on Nigeria Certificate in Education English Language students' achievement in Prose Fiction.

## 2. Literature Review

Goni, Yagana-wali, Ali and Bularafa (2015) in their research on gender difference of pre-service teachers' academic performance in a college of education in Nigeria indicated that there was no significant difference between gender and academic performance. Birgin, Çatlolu, Cotlolu and Aydın (2009) also investigated pre-service teachers' perceptions on computer-assisted mathematics instruction and discovered that there was no

significant difference in views of both male and female pre-service teachers. Further proofs of this assertion are Achor and Duguryil (2014) investigation of effectiveness of a teacher mentoring programme in enhancing pre-service teacher's attitude towards the teaching profession. The study concluded that gender is not a significant factor in determining attitude towards the teaching profession. However, Adeniran and Kehinde (2014) in their research conducted on Internet Use Patterns among Student Teachers in a Nigerian College of Education concluded that gender is a major factor to be considered in the use of, as well as feeling about the internet. In support of this notion Kubiak (2010) in his study stated that male prospective science teachers had more positive attitude toward information and communication technologies than their female counterparts.

In the study of student performance in physics, gender is an important factor that has been considered. Dania and Daniel (2015) in their study revealed that there was no significant difference found between the achievement of male and female physics students across the levels (NCE I, NCE II, NCE III), though, the mean scores of male physics students across the levels were found to be slightly higher than their female counterpart. This finding agrees with the findings of the studies of Lorchugh (2006), Akinbobola and Afolabi (2009), and Dania (2014) who did not find any significant difference between the performance of male and female physics students. However, this conclusion contrasts with the findings of Adeoye and Sotayo (2008) and Okwo and Otuboh (2007), who found a significant difference in favour of male physics students.

Afuwape and Oludipe (2008) on the study of gender difference in integrated science achievement among pre-service teachers in Nigeria found that there was no significant difference in academic performance in integrated science between male and female students. Arigbadu and Mji (2006) also examined the influence of subject combinations on pre-service mathematics teachers' examination performance in Nigeria. Likewise, Arigbadu (2004) examined the influence of subject combination on the performance of students in mathematics in Nigeria colleges of education. The results revealed that male students in mathematics were a good fit in the physical sciences and technology. In another study, Ogundipe (1991), investigated the effects of gender on subject combinations as factors of students' performance in Economics and found no significant difference between the genders in performance in the subject. Ghazvini and Khajehpour (2011) state that regarding use of learning strategies, results do not show

differences in boys' and girls' use of study aids and test strategies but, in the test of achievement in Literature and Mathematics both differ significantly with Girls better in Literature and boys in Mathematics. Singh (2001) assert that in the United States and Australia, men and women use the internet in nearly equal measure, whereas in Japan, India and China, men continue to dominate internet use.

In a study on gender differences in the reading habit of senior secondary school students, Oladunjoye (2012) found that there was no significant difference in the reading habit of male and female students. This is corroborated by Voyles' (2011) investigation of student's academic success in relations to age and gender and the results indicated that students' gender did not impact achievement scores on either the mathematics or reading portion of the assessment. Meanwhile, in an Australian study conducted with a sample of over 880 prep (equivalent to first grade) students, Boardman (2006) found that student gender was a factor in overall academic success, particularly in the area of reading. In some other related studies while Ede (2004) studied reading and language acquisition skills of young children, Oshima and Domaleski (2006) investigated academic success in reading and mathematics domains. They both found gender to be significant for predicting success in reading and not in mathematics in elementary and middle school.

## 2.1 Academic Achievement and Sources of Basic Education

There have been different views and opinions on the effect of types of school either private or public on students' achievement. Some are of the opinion that students in private schools significantly outperform their public school counterparts while some view that there are other factors to be considered before any conclusion could be made. Nevertheless, most prominent of the views is that private school students perform much better than the public ones. Nevertheless, various researches have been carried out to ascertain what is obtainable in practice.

In the results of the study of Slew, Zakaria and Gary (2016), students from elite (private) schools achieve significantly higher CGPAs than students from standard (state or government funded) schools. Corroborating this finding is Kumwenda, Cleland, Walker, Lee, and Greatrix (2017) in their research on relationship between school type and academic performance at medical school that found students from independent schools had significantly higher mean UKCAT scores than students from state-funded schools. Similarly, students from independent schools came into the medical school with significantly

higher mean GAMSAT scores than students from state-funded schools. They found out that students from the state-funded schools performed weakly in the entry tests as against the students from independent schools who performed better. Contrarily in related study, Thiele, Singleton, Pope and Stanistreet (2016) examining associations between school grades, school type, school performance, socio-economic deprivation, neighbourhood participation, gender and academic achievement at a British university concluded that independent school students performed less than comprehensive school students at the final year despite entering with higher grades. This means that it was found that the students from the state-funded schools outperformed their counterpart from independent schools. It is a confirmation of Newhouse and Beegle (2006), who studied the effect of type of school on academic achievement in Indonesia, they revealed that the final test scores of public school students were relatively higher than those of the private schools. Ali et al. (2013) agreed and submitted that educational outcomes and academic performance was greatly influenced by the type of school a student attended, and that schools have an independent effect on a student's educational attainment.

## 3. Methodology

This study adopts a pre-test, post-test, control group quasi-experimental design. The participants for this study were one hundred and twenty (120), 200Level Nigeria Certificate in Education English Language students. Six instruments were used for the study. Three instruments were used, which include a Prose Text (*Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe), Participants Demographic Details Requisition Form (PDDRF) and Prose Fiction Achievement Test (PFAT). The instruments were validated as appropriate, and an index of correlated and result obtained gave a reliability coefficient of 0.82. The hypotheses were analysed using the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at 0.05 alpha levels.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### Research Questions:

What is the effect of gender on the achievement of NCE students in English Language Prose Fiction?

What is the effect of source of basic education on the achievement of NCE students in English Language Prose Fiction?

What is the interaction effect of gender and source of basic education on the achievement of NCE students in English Language Prose Fiction?

**Table 1:** Achievement in Prose Fiction Scores According to Gender and Source of Basic Education

VARIABLES			N	Mean	S. D	Minimum	Maximum	Range
Gender	Male	PRETEST	60	11.08	4.10	3.00	21.00	18.00
		POSTEST		36.6	10.33	6.00	55.00	49.00
	Female	PRETEST	60	11.38	4.29	2.00	20.00	18.00
		POSTEST		39.36	10.71	7.00	59.00	23.00
Source of Basic Education	Total	PRETEST	120	11.25	4.15	2.00	21.00	18.00
		POSTEST		38.00	10.71	6.00	30.00	24.00
	PrivPriv	PRETEST	33	12.30	4.81	4.00	21.00	12.00
		POSTEST	33	37.96	12.09	6.00	30.00	31.00
	PubPub	PRETEST	48	11.17	3.69	3.00	18.00	17.00
		POSTEST	48	37.60	10.57	8.00	28.00	26.00
Mixture	PRETEST	39	10.41	4.08	2.00	18.00	21.00	
	POSTEST	39	38.51	9.86	7.00	29.00	49.00	
Total	PRETEST	120	11.23	4.14	2.00	21.00	18.00	
	POSTEST		38.00	10.71	6.00	30.00	37.00	

From Table 1, the results showed that the highest mean gain on achievement in Prose Fiction was recorded by the female NCE English Language students though the mean gain compared with the male counterpart is less than 0.3. However, female NCE English Language students recorded the highest post-test achievement in Prose Fiction mean score of 39.36 (S.D=10.71), keenly followed by the male NCE English Language students with post-test mean score of 36.6 (S.D=10.33). In addition, the table also shows that a female NCE English Language student recorded the highest post-test score of 59 marks.

On the source of basic education roll of the table, the results showed that the highest mean gain on achievement in Prose Fiction was recorded by the participants that mixed their school attendance either at primary or secondary level. In addition, NCE English Language students who attended mixture of schools for either at primary or upper basic level of their education recorded the highest post-test achievement in Prose Fiction mean score of 38.51 (S.D=9.86), keenly followed by the private-private NCE English Language students with post-test mean score of 37.96 (S.D=12.09). In summary, the descriptive tables above show that the gender variable of the participants used for this

study was equally distributed. Each of the three groups used for the study have forty (40) participants with gender equality. The tables also show that participants that had source of basic education to be public both in primary and junior secondary take 40 percent. Those who had private source of basic education at both levels amounted to 27.5percent while the remaining 32.5 percent had both private and public source of basic education at either of the two levels.

In addition, the mean of the scores of the participant in the three (3) groups using their pre and post-test achievements were also presented.

**Testing Of Hypotheses**

Ho1. There is no significant effect of gender on Nigeria Certificate in Education English Language students’ achievement in Prose Fiction.

Ho2. There is no significant effect of source of Basic education on Nigeria Certificate in Education English Language students’ achievement in Prose Fiction.

Ho3. There is no significant interaction effect of gender and source of Basic education on Nigeria Certificate in Education English Language students’ achievement in Prose Fiction.

**Table 2:** Summary of Analysis of Covariance of Nigeria Certificate in Education students’ Achievement in Prose Fiction Scores according to Source of Basic Education and Gender

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: POSTEST

Source of Variations		Type III Squares	Sum of Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Covariates (Pre-test)	Hypothesis	278.568	1	278.568	28.141	.000
	Error	835.846	101	8.276		
Gender	Hypothesis	1.302	1	1.302	.609	.521
	Error	4.049	1.893	2.139		
Source of Basic Edu	Hypothesis	.602	2	.301	.041	.961
	Error	29.220	3.937	7.423		
2 Way Interactions						

Gender * SBE	Hypothesis	9.340	2	4.670	.320	.743
	Error	58.281	3.996	14.584		
Total		55973.000	120			
Corrected Total		5090.992	119			

\*Indicates significance F at 0.05 level

Hypothesis I

Ho1. There is no significant effect of gender on Nigeria Certificate in Education English Language students' achievement in Prose Fiction

**Table 3:** Effect of Gender on Achievement Scores

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	224.133	1	224.133	1.969	.163
Within Groups	13433.867	118	113.846		
Total	13658.000	119			

The table 3 shows the significant effect of gender on the achievement of NCE English Language Students. The result showed that gender had no significant effect on the learning of Prose Fiction,  $F(1, 119) = 1.969, p > 0.05$ . Thus, the null hypothesis is hereby not rejected. This means that the academic achievement of the NCE students has nothing to do with the gender of such NCE students.

Hypothesis II:

There is no significant effect of Source of Basic Education on NCE English Language students' achievement in Prose Fiction.

**Table 4:** Effect of Source of Basic Education on Achievement Scores

SOURCE	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	17.808	2	8.904	0.76	0.927
Within Groups	13640.92	117	116.583		
Total	13658.000	119			

The table 4 shows the significant effect of source of basic education on the achievement of NCE English Language Students. The result showed that source of basic education had no significant effect on the learning of Prose Fiction  $F(2,119) = 0.76, p > 0.05$ . Thus, we do not reject the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis III:

There is no significant interaction effect of source of basic education and gender on NCE English Language students' achievement in Prose Fiction.

**Table 4.5:** Effect of Source of Basic Education and Gender on Achievement Scores

SOURCE	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.340	2	4.670	0.320	.743
Within Groups	58.281	3.99	14.584		
Total	67.621	5.99			

**5. Discussion of Findings**

Finding on hypothesis one showed that gender had no significant effect on the achievement of NCE English Language students in Prose Fiction. This implies that achievement in Prose Fiction is not sensitive to biological make of learners whether male or female.

This gives attestation to Nuthanap's (2007) findings that boys and girls do not differ significantly on academic achievement in home science just as Fakeye (2010) found that there was no significant difference in male and female achievement in English Language. It is further corroborated by Ghazvini and Khajehpour (2011) that regarding use of learning

strategies, results do not show differences in boys' and girls' use of study aids and test strategies, but, in the test of achievement in Literature and Mathematics both differ significantly with girls better in Literature and boys in Mathematics. Boardman (2006) also found that student's gender was a factor in overall academic success, particularly in reading. These latter submissions are, however, contrary to the findings of this study which is Literature for there was no significant effect of gender in the achievement of the subjects in Prose Fiction.

Hypothesis three showed that source of basic education had no significant effect on NCE English Language students' achievement in Prose Fiction. This result implies that the type of school attended at the basic level whether private or public had no significant effect on achievement in Prose Fiction. It negates the findings of Okon and Archibong (2015) which indicates that students in private secondary schools performed better in Social Studies in junior secondary three institutionalized examination than their counterparts in public schools. In Australia, Ryan (2014) in his study of the entry score point of private and public high school students into the universities found out that the private school students outperformed their public counterparts based on their background. Furthermore, Tamara, Alexander, Daniel, and Debbi (2016) concluded in their research that performance of the students from private school was higher than that of public school.

Hypothesis III showed that gender and source of basic education had no significant interaction effect on the learning of Prose Fiction. This means that gender and source of basic education interacting together do not influence the level of achievement of NCE English Language students in Prose Fiction. This negates the results of the study of Slew, Zakaria, See and Gary (2016) that reported the descriptive data for the comparisons of means of CGPAs for groupings by gender, Form level and type of school. Given the system used to assign CGPAs, the lower the score the better the CGPA. Therefore, females had significantly higher CGPAs than males, Form Two (2) students had significantly higher CGPAs than Form Four (4) students and students at the elite school had significantly higher CGPAs than students at the standard school. Hooda and Devi (2017) also stated that interaction of type of school, locality and gender had great impact on achievement of students.

## 6. Conclusion

This study focused on the effects of interaction effect of source of basic education and gender on NCE

English Language students' achievement in Prose Fiction. The analysis indicated that gender and source of basic education as moderator variables were not significant in influencing the achievement in Prose Fiction. In addition, at the level of interaction, there was yet no significant effect of gender, and source of basic education of the Nigeria Certificate in Education English Language students in Prose Fiction.

It was also established that there was no difference in the achievement of both male and female Nigeria Certificate in Education English Language students irrespective of their Source of basic education at the exposure to the treatments. The findings of this study underscore the fact that teaching and learning of Prose Fiction in respect of Nigeria Certificate in Education English Language students should adopt the innovation strategies because of the proven potency. It implies that Nigeria Certificate in Education English Language students must be given some level of independence in searching for knowledge while the teacher takes the role of facilitator or guide in the lecture room.

## 7. Recommendations

Based on the findings and implications of this study as discussed, the following recommendations are offered:

- Students of both genders should be given equal attention in the teaching and learning processes.
- Male and female students should also be provided unrestricted access and opportunities in learning, knowing that there is no significant difference in the male and female.
- All students irrespective of the sources of basic education; private, public or mixture should be treated equally and provided adequate motivation for learning.
- Teachers and institutions' management are to ensure provisions of resources and facilities that will aid learning, and promote effective mutual interactions among students of all categories; male and female; from private and public schools.

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