

**ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE WITH RESPECT TO GENDER  
IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BORNO STATE.  
NIGERIA.**

**Presented by**

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**ABSTRACT**

*English language is used as a medium of communication and language of instructions in most part of the world in classroom teaching and learning process, especially in countries colonized by Britain. This paper addresses assessment as a domain of school subject meant to determine the English language level of proficiency of the students. The efficiency and command of English language will have a significant impact with regards to the students' academic achievement. It will definitely enhance the performance of students as all the subjects offered are delivered in English language. Among which are 100 male students and 100 female students drawn from six secondary schools across the state. The students' end of term promotion examination results in English language was used by the investigator to assess the achievement of English language proficiency of the students. The result indicates significant difference in English language achievement with respect to gender. The findings showed that the male students have higher English language level of proficiency over their female counterparts.*

**Keywords: Academic Achievement, Assessment, Gender, English Language, Secondary School.**



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

English language is predominantly spoken in most parts of the world and can be referred to as one of the most operative system of communication in global commercial transactions, diplomatic relations, and scientific research. English language is highly acknowledged in Nigeria. English language has been the official language in Science, Technology, the Social Science, the humanity and all other arts related subjects. Nigeria adopted English language as a *linguae franca* to facilitate cultural and linguistic unity in 1960 (Shaibu 2013). This coincide with the same year Nigeria becomes independent sovereign nation from British colonization. English language is the only recognized and official medium of communication use by the administrators, judiciary, legislators, international trades and commerce. Presently, Nigeria is one of the largest nations in Africa using English language as a second language. The system of education in Nigeria compresses of three segments, the primary, secondary and the tertiary. English language is officially the only medium of instruction at all the sectors. The curriculum is designed to capture the four domains of English language skills namely, reading, writing, listening and speaking. In Nigeria an individual is considered educated if that person can speak English fluently and can read and write. Vocational and technical education were offered at secondary and tertiary level and English language is the medium of instruction. The national curriculum for senior secondary schools outlines two basic objectives at the secondary levels. One of the objectives is to orient the students with communication language skills in English language and the second objective is to achieve high proficiency in all the subjects offered within the curriculum.

Students needs to be proficient in English language to enrich their knowledge for easy comprehension and grasps in understanding related subjects that complement the basics for successful attainment in their area of specialization. It is agreed by Educators that, for academic success to be achieve, the student's proficiency in English language is a prerequisite. If a person or a student has little or limited background knowledge in communication skills, it will be very difficult for such individual to have access to the current global scientific and technological innovations.

Most private schools make it mandatory and punishable by paying some token fee for students found speaking in any other vernacular rather than English language within the premises of the school. This compelled the students to adopt English language as the only medium of communication in the school for their social interactions and other activities. English language proficiency enhances student's educational performance. Students with poor English language background found it difficult to cope with academic attainment. According to (Adegboye,1993) lack of English language proficiency of the students is a

contributory factors in students law grades in subjects like mathematics. Likewise (Racca and Lasaten,2016) has attributed the existence of relationship between student's English language proficiency among male and female as significant.

The investigator found it relevant to assess academic achievements of English language with respect to gender in senior secondary schools of Borno state in Nigeria because of the effectiveness of English language proficiency in the academic performance of the students and the impact it has on the communication skills of the students

## **2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.**

English language proficiency contributes to student's academic performance. English language is the only official medium of instructions in classroom teaching and learning process in Nigeria. The investigator resort to find the students' academic achievement in English with respect to gender.

## **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Donehus, veolki, Campbell and mazzio (1999) some correlation exists between male and female and academic achievement. They notes that disaggregation of the 1998 national assessment of educational progress (NAED) reading results between male and female revealed that female have an edge over males in 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>,and 12<sup>th</sup> class , the same performance was recorded in 1992 and 1994: that at 4<sup>th</sup> class , the male performed significantly over their 1994 scores, the female remained in grade three to eight of the north Carolina state. Similar scenario was recorded in the North Carolina end-of grade test ran in classes 3 and 8 of the North Carolina state department of public instruction (2000). This clearly indicates that the correlation between the gender fluctuates.

Maccoby (1996) in his submission claimed that differences exist in some content areas. He gave example at the elementary stage in school age, there appears to be no significant difference in academic achievement among the gender but girls have little edge over the boys in some instances especially reading, verbal fluency, writing and vocabulary. On the other hand, boys perform better in sciences, mathematics and mechanical courses. At the higher level, adolescence period, there appears to be a significant difference between boys and girls in subject areas like, mathematics and sciences. At this stage, the girls excel in communication fluency, and in subjects like history.

According to Onekutu(2002) urges that male student put up a superior performance as compared to female student. Williams et al (1990) who documented that in early years there no gender differences

in achievement of boys and girls in early school. Gender differences become more apparent in the higher classes with boys performing better than girls in the areas involving calculations

Okoye (1987) attributed that initial achievement recorded by girls at the higher stage due to the over-attachment of the girls with mothers at home. The girls were day in and day out glued to their mothers at home busy with the various household activities to satisfy the members of the family with the food and water to drink with minimum chances of wastages and maximum satisfaction of the family members.

Vernon (1996) reports that many comparisons shows average scores of boys and girls were the same on general intelligence test. Maccorly (1996), assert that various personality attributes influence performance between male and female and these include anxiety, dependence, aggressiveness, attitude, interest and motivation.

Denga (1986) suggests that no indication is evident as to whether differences exist between males and females in achievement. This researcher still maintain that girls have a tendency to do better than boys in language arts and music while the boys lean towards outperforming the girls in sciences, technology and mathematics.

. Hetherington and Parker (1999) testified that the girls were greater than boys in verbal abilities at the infancy stage. The researchers further stress that there is obvious growth of dominance in high school years in verbal creativity, vocabulary, reading and comprehension.

Tannen (1990) has viewed the male and Female differ in language communication style in one of his books titled “You Just Don’t Understand that there is a tendency for men to use language to ‘reserve their freedom and uphold their status in the group’. Equally, female use language to ‘generate connections and identity’

Preston’s (1992) review of nations where sex differentials were found observed that proficiency in reading was greater among the girls than the boys in United States of America but in Nigeria, India, and Germany differences existed in favor of boys.

Gray (1992) affirms that ‘male and female are from Mars and Venue respectively. Because of that, they have different ways of communicating. Then, both of them meet in the Earth. The ways they use their language will be different. To maintain their life in the Earth, they need to adjust their language in order to maintain good relations.

Taylor and Mountfield (1994) and Koch (1994) found that girls attributed their failure in terms of personal factors whereas boys interpret their failures due to external factors. However, Taylor (1994),

Koch, (1994) goes further to explain that girls attributed their inability to succeed in terms of inherent inadequacies' where boys interpret their failures due to extraneous factors.

#### **4. OBJECTIVES**

1. To find out the difference in academic achievement between male and female students in English language of senior secondary school students in Borno state

#### **5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Is there any significant relationship between male and female in their English language level of proficiency in Borno state?

#### **6. NULL HYPOTHESIS**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is exist no significant relationship between male and female in their English language level of proficiency in senior secondary schools in Borno state.

#### **7. METHODS**

Descriptive survey method was used to assessed the English language proficiency of the students. The data was analyzed by using statistical techniques, mean, median and standard deviation, Pearson's product moment correlation technique. For comparison, t-test has been calculated. Graphical representation was done for students mean difference.

#### **8. POPULATION AND SAMPLES**

The research work is based on the population of Borno state in Nigeria, therefore all the secondary schools in Borno state constitute the population of this study. The questionnaire was administered on a sample of 200 students consisting of 100 males and 100 females. Random sample techniques have been employed for the collection of data from six secondary schools across the state.

#### **9. TOOLS**

To assess the academic achievement of the students in English language, the investigator used the end of term English language results of the students provided by the English language subject master of the various secondary schools under the study.



10. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE 1: Results Pertaining to Gender Difference on Academic Achievement in English Language

Table 1: Showing the mean difference of male and female in academic achievement.					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Academic Achievement	Male	100	55.21	9.315	.932
	Female	100	52.77	9.463	.946

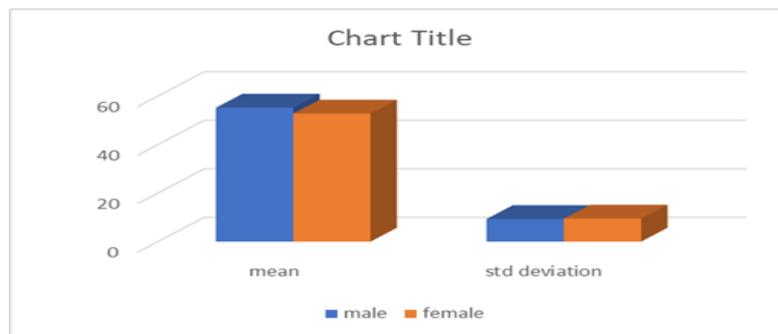
TABLE 2: Results Pertaining To T- Test for Academic Achievement in English Language.

Table 2: Summary of t- test for English language Achievement test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
English language achievement test	Equal variances assumed	0.614	0.434	1.838	198	0.068	2.44	1.328	-0.179	5.059
	Equal variances not assumed			1.838	197.951	0.068	2.44	1.328	-0.179	5.059



The mean score of academic achievement in English language for male and female is 55.21 and 55.77 respectively while the standard deviation for male is 9.315 and 9.463 for female. The t-value for gender difference on academic achievement in English language is found to be 0.068 which is less than 0.05. Hence, it can be interpreted that males and females do not differ in academic achievement test.

**Graph 1: Showing the mean and standard deviation between male and female on Academic achievement.**



### 11. CORRELATION ANALYSIS

H<sub>0</sub>: There exist no significant relationship between male and female in their English language level of proficiency in senior secondary schools in Borno state.

**TABLE 3: Results Pertaining To The Relationship Between Male And Female In Academic Achievement**

Table 3: Showing the result in respect of relationship between students' academic achievement			
		GENDER	ENGLISH LANGUAGE
GENDER	Pearson Correlation	1	-.120
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.089
	N	200	200
ENGLISH LANGUAGE	Pearson Correlation	-.120	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.089	
	N	200	200



A Pearson product moment correlation was run to determine the relationship of academic achievement between male and female. The results indicate that, there is a negative correlation between male and female students in their academic achievement, which is statistically not significant  $r = -.120$ ,  $n=200$ ,  $p = .089$ . The  $p$  value indicates no correlation between male and female students in academic achievement. This shows that the hypothesis "There exists no significant relationship between male and female students' in their English language level of proficiency in senior secondary schools in Borno state is not rejected.

## 12. CONCLUSION

In the study, the result clearly indicates that, there exist no significant difference in the mean score of the male and female students as well as no significant difference is found with respect to the male and female academic achievement in English language level of proficiency. The study therefore has concurred with similar research studies that proved the absents of significant difference in gender among the students in academic achievement in English language. (Vernon 1996, Akpama, 2007, Denga, 1996

In some traditions and customs, the female students were given less attention and chances to attend school alongside with their male counterpart. This intolerable exercise disrupts the constitutional rights of women. It is worthy to realize that no single factor could self-sufficiently describe the features that is fundamentally experimental to gender differences in performance but a host of variables interchange to bring out a true picture of gender differences in students' academic performance. This result invariably indicates barrier free opportunities for both the male and the female to explore their potentials without the anxiety of inferiority complex among them.

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