

## Public and Private University Students Performance in Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination in Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

*This study analyzed performance of public and private university students in Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination in Nigeria with a view to determining whether students' performance in UTME was dependent on the type of university attended. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated and tested. The study adopted the ex-post facto design. The population of the study comprised the students in all universities in Delta and Edo states that took the UTME in 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 academic sessions and a sample size of 6000 students from three universities was selected through stratified random sampling technique. Instrument used for this study was university students' records containing UTME scores. The data collected were analyzed using statistical mean and z – test. The findings from the analysis of data showed that a not significant difference of 0.39 was established between the average performance of students in public and private universities; and a not significant difference of 0.38 was established between the performance of students in federal and state universities. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the performance of university students in UTME is not dependent on the type of university attended by the students. On the basis of this conclusion, it was recommended that the current practice of taking the same matriculation examination (UTME) at the same time in federal, state and private universities should be maintained.*

**Keywords:** JAMB, UTME, university, students' performance

### INTRODUCTION

Higher education is the type of formal education given to those that have completed secondary education, in universities, colleges of education, monotechnics and polytechnics, to produce high and middle level manpower in the society. The course of study in higher education last for not less than three years, but more generally four to six years (Higher Education in the nineties and beyond (1993), Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004)). Higher education is at the apex of the stages of formal education and it is the most advanced in Nigerian Educational system (Oshemughen, 2009).

University education is one of the major subsectors of higher education and it is the most advanced subsector because Universities are the only institutions legally allowed to grant higher degrees, such as postgraduate Diplomas, Masters and Ph.Ds in various academic and professional fields (Muhammed, 1993:16). Because of the importance of university education, there is great yearning for it, and this has led to rapid expansion in the number of universities. According to Edoziem (1993), the increase in the number of institutions and the growth in students' population (enrolment) are very rapid. For instance, in 1948, when the university college Ibandan, was established, the number of student was 104. After about 12 years, in 1960, the enrolment rose to 1, 136. In 1960, university of Nigeria Nsukka was

established with an enrolment of 263. In 1962 University College Ibadan, formally known as Yaba higher college, became a full- fledged autonomous University. Other universities established in 1962 included Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Obafemi Awolowo University Ife, and University of Lagos. The total students population for the five universities- ABU, OAU, UI, UNN and UNILAG – existing as at 1962 was about 3,636. As at 1970, University of Benin was established and the total enrolment in the six universities has risen to 14,535.

In 1978, the number of universities rose to 13 and the total enrolment was 50,000 students. In 1982, the enrolment rose to about 80,000 and in 1983, it was about 120,000. In 1991 it has risen to over 200,000 (Edoziem, 1993). In 2005, the number of university in Nigeria have increase to 78; 35 federal, 32 state government owned and 11 are private university, with a total student population of 750, 000. (Uvah 1994, JAMB 2006)

In Nigeria, universities can be classified based on different criteria, among which is the ownership of the universities. Under the ownership classification criteria, universities are divided into public and private universities.

Public universities are those universities, established, managed and funded by the government. They are described as domesticated organizations. According to Peretomode (2005), public universities are owned, financed and controlled by either state or federal government. This implies that the level of government involved, could be Federal government or State government. If the level of government involved is the federal government such universities are called federal universities. But if the level of government involved is the state, then such universities are called state universities. Thus public universities could either be a federal government university or a state government university.

The visitor of public universities is the president in the case of the federal universities and the governor in the case of the state owned universities.

Private Universities are referred to as wild organizations, which must perform qualitatively to survive. Private Universities are those universities established, managed and funded by either private individuals or non- governmental organizations in the society. The private universities are established to complement the public universities to be able to meet the demand for higher education in Nigeria. These universities are established by private individuals, organizations or religious bodies in the society. Such individuals are referred to as the proprietor or visitors. However, some of the private universities have no clear-cut philosophy and there is no effective planning (Edoziem, 1993).

It should be noted that all universities, whether public or private, are placed under the supervision of the National Universities Commission (NUC), which is a quality control body.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In Nigeria, before a prospective student is granted admission, he/she is made to write matriculation examination, called Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), conducted by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). The Joint Admission and Matriculation Board handle the admission and matriculation matters of universities, colleges of education and the polytechnics in Nigeria. Every year, it conducts examinations for candidates seeking admission into all higher institutions in Nigeria. After the results of the examination are out, based on recommendation from the institutions, the board approves the placement of the recommended candidates into the various institutions. As a result, the board gets involved in university administration through its admissions and matriculation policies (Akinola, 1993). The purpose of such matriculation examination is to select the best

prospective student from among the pool of students that applied for admission. The student performance in the matriculation examinations, depend on several variables or factors. There was therefore the need to identify the variables on which students performance in UTME depend. In the light of this the researcher investigated whether university students' performance in UTME was dependent on the type of university attended by the students (public/ private universities).

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is to determine whether university students' performance in UTME depends on the type of university under the following variables:

1. Students performance in public university.
2. Students performance in private university.
3. Students performance in federal university.
4. Students performance in state university.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In order to investigate the above statement of problem, the following research questions were raised and answered:

1. What is the difference between the performance of students in public and private universities in UTME?
2. What is the difference between the performance of students in UTME in federal and state universities?

### **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

The following hypotheses were formulated and have been tested in this study.

1. There is no significant difference between the performance of students in public and private universities in UTME.
2. There is no significant difference between the performance of students in UTME in federal and state universities.

### **METHOD AND PROCEDURE**

The ex post facto design was adopted for this study. The expo facto design is a type of design that analyzed already existing variables, which cannot be manipulated. This design also tried to find out if the independent variables (type of university attended by students) were dependent on the students' performance in UTME.

The population of this study comprised the students in all public and private universities in Edo and Delta states in Nigeria, that took the UTME in 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 academic sessions.

The proportional stratified random sampling techniques were used to select 6000 students from three universities (two public and one private university) and four faculties. The sampled universities were: University of Benin, Benin City, Delta State University, Abraka and Igbenedion University, Okada. Also, the sample faculties were: Faculty of social sciences, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Science and Faculty of Law.

The instrument was university students' results on performances in UTME for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 academic sessions obtained from university students' records with the aid of trained research assistants. The validity and reliability of the research instruments (students scores on UTME) have been determined by specialists who designed them.

The statistical techniques used in analyzing the data included: statistical mean and z-test. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Research Question One:** What is the difference between the performance of students in public and private universities in UTME?

In order to answer research question one, the following null hypothesis was formulated and tested;

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference between the performance of students in public and private universities in UTME.

In testing hypothesis one, the z-test of significance was used. Data on the performance of students in UTME in private and public universities were collated and their mean performance computed and shown in table 1.

**Table 1. Z- test analysis of the significance of the difference between performance of students in public and private universities in UTME**

<i>Groups in UTME</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S.D</i>	<i>Z- cal</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>Z- crit</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>Remark</i>
Public Universities Students	55.65	5018	11.94	0.92	0.05	1.98	0.39	Not significant
Private Universities Students	55.26	982	12.96					

Source: computed from field work (2013)

As shown in table 1, the students mean performance in Public universities was 55.65, while those in private universities have a mean of 55.26. Therefore the mean difference was 0.39. The z-test between the two means was then computed to obtain an output of 0.92. The table value of Z at 95% level of confidence was 1.98. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the performance of students in public and private universities in UTME, was therefore not rejected, because the calculated Z value was less than critical Z value. The conclusion was drawn that there is no significant difference between the performance of students in UTME in public and private universities. This implies that the average performance of students in public universities was not significantly higher than those in private universities in UTME.

**Research Question Two:** What is the difference between the performance of Students in UTME in Federal and State Universities?

In order to answer research question two, the following null hypothesis was formulated and tested;

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference between the performance of students in UTME in Federal and State universities.

In order to test hypothesis two, the z- test of significance was used. Data on the performance of students in UTME in Federal and State universities were collated and their mean performance computed and presented in table 2.

**Table 2. Z- test analysis of the significance of the difference between performance of students in Federal and State universities in UTME**

<i>Groups in UTME</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S.D</i>	<i>Z- cal</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>Z- crit</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>Remark</i>
State University Students	57.63	3010	12.10	1.10	0.05	1.98	0.38	Not Significant
Federal University Students	57.25	2008	11.83					

Source: computed from field work (2013)

As shown in table 2, the students’ mean performance in state universities was 57.63 and that of federal universities was 57.25. A mean difference of 0.38 was therefore obtained. A z computed value of 1.10 was obtained, while the critical value of Z at 0.05 level of significance was 1.98. Comparing Z calculated and Z critical, it was observed that the Z calculated was less than that of Z critical. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the performance of students in UTME in Federal and State universities, was not rejected. This means that the hypothesis was retained. The conclusion that was drawn is that there is no significant difference between the performance of students in UTME in federal and state universities.

**DISCUSSION**

From the analysis of data in table 1, it was found that in UTME, a not significant difference of 0.39 was established between the average performance of students in public and private universities in Nigeria. This no significant difference could be due to the fact that the same UTME was taken by those who chose public or private universities. More so the UTME was taken at the same date at different venues. Thus since the UTME was the same for all candidates, no significant difference was expected. However the above finding was contrary to that of Bremmer (2007), which stated that the pass rate in private educational institutions was significantly higher than that in public educational institutions (universities inclusive). The difference between Bremmer’s finding and that of the researcher could be due to variance in samples used for the study. Performance of students in state–mandated competency examination in Indiana middle schools was used by Bemmer, while the researcher used students’ performance in UTME in Delta and Edo state, Nigeria.

From the analysis of data showed in table 2, it was established that in UTME there is no significant difference between the performance of students in Federal and State universities. This implies that performance in UTME was not dependent on the type of university attended by the students. This no significant difference in performance could be due to the fact that it was the same UTME that all candidates took irrespective of whether the choice of university was Federal or State. Thus a no significant difference in the performance of students in Federal and State universities was established. However the above finding was contrary to that of Adepoju (2002) and Bremmer (2007). According to Adepoju (2002), the performance of students in examinations varied from educational institutions to educational institutions and also dependent on the type of educational institutions.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the performance of university students in UTME is not dependent on the type of university (federal, state and private) attended by the students.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

In view of the findings and conclusion of the study, it was recommended that the current practice of taking the same matriculation examination (UTME) at the same time in federal, state and private universities should be maintained. Such practice would improve the administration of university education, through improved admission procedure or policy in Nigeria.

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