



Analyzing students performance in business studies examination conducted by basic education certificate examination (BECE) in selected schools: Keffi, Nasarawa state Nigeria in focus

Prof. Ezenwafor J. I.^{1*}, Nwaokwa E. O.² and Dr. Ikwuka O³

¹ Department of Vocational Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

² Department of Office Technology and Management, Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa, Nigeria

³ Department of Educational Foundations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

Correspondence Author: Prof. Ezenwafor J. I.

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to relate students' performance in Business Studies on the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in private and state junior secondary schools in Keffi, Nasarawa State. Three research questions were answered, as well as three null hypotheses. The study used an after-the-fact survey research design. The study's sample includes 10,622 students who took the BECE Business Studies test in 2017, 2018, or 2019. For the three years, a multi-stage sampling procedure was utilized to choose 2,522 pupils from 12 schools (six public and six private). The researchers used a proforma instrument to obtain the relevant data (examination grades of Business Studies students) from the BECE results broadsheet for the analysis. Face validity was tested on the instrument, and a logical reliability value of 0.91 was found. To address the research questions, the students' scores were transformed into numerical scores of A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, P = 1, and F = 0, with ANOVA and t-tests used to assess for significant differences between mean scores at the 955-confidence level. When students' accomplishment in BECE Business Studies tests is separated by years of examination, the study discovered that there is a considerable variation in their results. Furthermore, there is a huge accomplishment gap between students in private and public junior secondary schools, with private school students having better mean scores than their public-school peers. Equally, female pupils outperformed their male counterparts in terms of academic achievement. As a result, it was suggested, among other things, that Business Studies teachers in both public and private junior secondary schools use appropriate teaching methods and tactics to increase academic achievement of both male and female students in the subject. To equip students with basic employable skills, government agencies and policymakers should focus on enhancing funding to provide appropriate resources for successful teaching and learning, particularly in practical skill subject areas, at all levels of the nation's education system. The government should provide infrastructure for public schools so that they can compete with their private school competitors.

Keywords: comparative analysis, private, public, achievement, business studies

Introduction

Education is a type of learning in which a group of people's knowledge, abilities, and habits are passed down from generation to generation through teaching, training, or study. Education is as old as man, and it is important to every generation for the transmission of society's culture, knowledge, and values (Okolocha & Onyeneke, 2013) ^[22]. The Federal Republic of Nigeria said in its National Education Policy that education is the most important investment the country can make to achieve rapid economic, political, social, and human capital growth (FRN, 2013) ^[14]. In the world, there are two types of education: formal and informal. Informal education comprises indigenous and recreation-based education, while formal education includes curricula, pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools, alternative education (also known as non-traditional education), special education, and vocational education. This study will concentrate on junior secondary school. Education is on the concurrent list in the Nigerian constitution. This allows the government, as well as private individuals and agencies, to construct and administer schools at various levels. Private schools are those founded and run by

private individuals and organizations, whereas public schools are those founded and run by the government (federal and state).

Nigerian education policy has evolved over time in order to suit local educational criteria as well as international best practices in education (Okolocha & Onyeneke, 2013) ^[22]. The educational system was recently changed from 6-3-3-4 to 9-3-4, with six years of primary school divided into lower (1-3) and middle (4-6) basic; three years of junior secondary school (JSS 1-3), also known as upper basic; three years of senior secondary school (SSS 1-3), and four years of tertiary education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2008) ^[13]. According to FRN (2004) ^[12], the fundamental goal of secondary education (JSS 1 – SSS 3) is to educate students for a successful career in society and further education, but most importantly, to provide an advanced education for all primary school students. Secondary education also aims to provide a diverse curriculum to cater for all, including sub-professional labour in science, technology, and commerce, as well as technical knowledge and industrial abilities, as well as encouraging an aspiration for self-improvement and accomplishment in order to raise people who

can think critically and value other people's perspectives (Okolocha & Onyeneke, 2013) ^[22]. Secondary school students range in age from 12 to 18, and at this age, young people require guidance and supervision in order to make appropriate career decisions (Okwuanaso, 2004) ^[23]. This emphasizes the value of Business Studies for students at this level of school. In the same vein, Okolocha & Onyeneke (2013) ^[22] asserted that there is a need to provide useful life counseling to students at this level in order for them to fully achieve their potentials and abilities. Imeokparia (2018) ^[17] noted that Business Studies is among the pre-vocational choice disciplines given at the Nigerian Basic Education Programme's Upper Basic level. The basic purpose of Business Studies in Nigeria's Basic Education, according to National Open University Nigeria (2008), is to help school children gain the five constituents of the subject, which are Keyboarding, Shorthand, Office Practice, Commerce, and Book-Keeping, and to help them prepare for the business world.

Professionals have underlined the necessity of effective Business Studies instruction, believing that it will help youngsters learn about career options such as accounting, secretarial studies, and private and public office management (Adamu, 2009) ^[2]. This is why various stakeholders continue to stress the importance of providing adequate resources in schools to enable teachers to use appropriate current methods and techniques to improve students' academic progress in the subject.

According to Nwogu (2011) ^[21]'s study in Anambra State, students' achievement in Business Studies in BECE was quite low. Only 699 students, or about 49.7%, of the 1,530 students who completed Business studies exams in sampled schools received credits and above, according to the report, while the rest received pass, failed, or withheld results. Governments and private individuals have made various initiatives to improve students' performance in public examinations such as BECE, WAEC, and NECO. One of the most visible areas of such initiatives is the expansion of the workforce's capacity in terms of teacher recruitment in order to achieve the traditional teacher-to-student ratio in a classroom.

Despite policy formulations and investments in the education system by both public and private entities, no significant improvement in students' achievement in Business Studies in public examinations such as the BECE has been documented. The ongoing lack of achievement has piqued the interest of educational stakeholders. Parents and guardians appear to feel that the heinous trend is more prevalent in public schools than in private schools, and hence make significant sacrifices to enroll their children in private schools.

Igbinedion and Epumepu (2011) ^[16] conducted research in Ovia South West Local Government Council Area of Edo State, Nigeria, contrasting students' academic performance in business studies in public and private Junior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (JSSCE), and discovered a big variation in academic performance in business studies between public and private schools from 2008 to 2011. The trend of

performance proportion of private schools was greater than that of public schools for all gender, according to the findings. As a result, even in these difficult times, parents and guardians who can pay for it are registering their wards in private fee-paying elementary schools instead of public institutions. The goal of this research is to compare students' academic performance in business studies at private and public schools in Keffi.

Given the importance of Business Studies to students' futures, it was deemed necessary to relate students' performance in BECE Business Studies in Keffi, Nasarawa State, in order to provide better guidance to parents and guardians, as well as the government and other stakeholders in education. Furthermore, subject mastery indicated by high achievement and students' good attitude toward Business Studies are expected to be evenly divided across gender in order to completely realize the praiseworthy aims of Business education in the country.

Unfortunately, gender disparities in education have persisted as a global issue (UNESCO, 2003) ^[25]. It is also important to determine which gender performs better in Business Studies in BECE, but there is no empirical data on gender influence on students' achievement in the subject, so the study looked at both male and female students' achievements in the subject to provide guidance to both students and teachers.

Research Questions

Based on the forgoing, the study is guided by the questions below:

1. How much do the mean numerical scores of students in BECE Business Studies examinations in Keffi, Nasarawa State differ when separated by examination years?
2. How do the mean numerical scores of students in Business Studies examinations administered by BECE in Keffi, Nasarawa State differ when private and public schools are separated?
3. How do the mean numerical scores of students in BECE's Business Studies examinations in Keffi, Nasarawa State differ when gender is taken into account?

Literature Review

To support the study's importance, the review of literature included theoretical framework, school ownership, and gender as determinants in students' accomplishment in school subjects.

Theoretical Framework

This study focused on the Systems theory, which was developed by Hungarian biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1928. A system is made up of interrelated components that operate together to accomplish a common purpose. A system takes inputs from the outside world, modifies them, and then returns outputs to the outside world. Schoolchildren are accepted into institutions from the community and then changed into society's output (Abari and Odunaya, 2012) ^[1]. Inputs, a conversion process, outputs, feedback, and the environment are the five components of the fundamental systems theory of organizations (Daft, 2008) ^[10]. Figure 1 shows how this works.

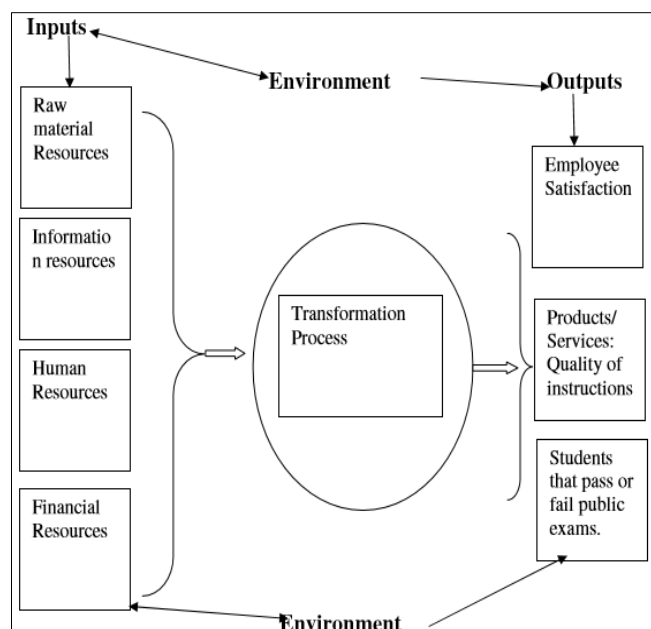


Fig 1: Systems Theory (Source: Abari & Odunayo, 2012) ^[1]

- Inputs are the resources utilized to create goods and services, such as human, financial, and information resources. In this example, the material inputs will be the school's physical facilities for teaching and learning, while the human inputs will be a mix of teaching and non-teaching personnel (Abari & Odunayo, 2012) ^[1].
- Management's utilization of productive technologies to shift inputs into outputs is referred to as the transformation process (Abari & Odunayo, 2012) ^[1].
- The organization's products and services are examples of outputs (Abari & Odunayo, 2012) ^[1]. The academic accomplishment of pupils in examinations, their level of discipline, and their activities in society are all output aspects in the secondary school system (Abari & Odunayo, 2012) ^[1].
- Feedback is information about the outcomes that influences the inputs chosen in the next cycle of the procedure (Abari & Odunayo, 2012) ^[1]. This is the minimum requirement for secondary school enrollment, and
- The social, political, and economic forces that surround the system.

However, as Abari and Odunayo (2012) ^[1] point out, incorporating systems theory into education would benefit school administrators in the following ways:

- It will reveal educational issues and how they affect student productivity; ii It will assist schools in achieving their mission of improving students' learning processes; iii. It will contribute to the future development of educational inputs; iv. It will provide the necessary framework to improve students' academic achievement.

System theory is deemed acceptable for this study because the disparities in accomplishment between public and private schools analyzed in this study are heavily reliant on the processes of systems theory.

School ownership as a factor in students' achievement in school subjects

There are few studies on comparative study of students' accomplishment in Business Studies depending on school ownership and gender because most comparative studies focus on other topics, while most studies on the subject focus on other purposes. The studies examined, on the other hand, clearly demonstrate the importance of this research. Several studies have found that school ownership influences students' academic performance and attitudes in various topics. According to Nwafor (2017) ^[20], students in private secondary institutes in both town and country side areas do better than students in public secondary schools. Imeokparia (2018) ^[17] agreed, stating that the role of school ownership in students' academic achievement is important.

Aransi (2018) ^[7] examined the impact of school types, class classification, and gender on high school students' economics academic achievement in Osun state. Three research questions were posed and addressed. The target population involved of all senior secondary students in both private and public schools throughout the 2017-2018 academic year. 227 respondents were chosen using simple random sampling, with 104 from private schools and 123 from public schools. At the 0.05 level of significance, T-statistics were utilized to test the hypotheses. The findings show no substantial variation in academic ability of students in economics based on school type, but there was a significant difference based on gender, with female students in private schools gaining an advantage. Aransi went on to say that the availability of more professionally qualified teachers in public schools compared to their counterparts in private schools could be a factor in kids' achievement.

Alimi, Ehinola, and Alabi (2012) ^[4] investigated the impact of school ownership and amenities on secondary school students' academic performance in Ondo State. The research was guided by two theories. To choose a sample of 50 schools for the research, the researchers used a descriptive survey and a proportionate random sampling technique. Two questionnaires, one for principals and the other for teachers in the studied schools, were utilized to collect data. The hypotheses were tested using the t-Test at a significance level of 0.05. According to the study, there is a substantial variation in accessible amenities between public and private schools in the state, but there is no substantial variation in academic performance among students based on school ownership. School ownership was not shown to be a determinant in students' educational accomplishment in secondary schools in Ondo State, according to the researchers. They proposed that the government offer more facilities in public schools for improved teaching and learning effectiveness based on the findings and conclusions.

In Taraba state, Amuche, Amuche, Bello, and Marwan (2014) ^[6] conducted a correlational study on academic achievement in Physics among students from private and government-owned secondary schools. For the years 2008 to 2012, the target population was all physics students. The study used an ex-post-fracto design and used a representative sample to obtain a

sample size of 1800 students. The study employed two assumptions, and data was gathered from student files for the years of interest. The hypotheses were validated at the 0.005 acceptance level using simple descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and the Fishers t-test. Pupils from private secondary schools outperformed students from public secondary schools in WAEC and NECO Physics examinations, according to the report. It was suggested that the Taraba State Education Board investigate the operations of private schools in order to learn about the tactics employed to ensure good performance of their pupils in physics exams and imitate these practices in the state's public secondary schools.

Gender as a factor in students' achievement in school subjects

Gender has a major influence on secondary school students' academic achievement, and gender configuration has a momentous association with students' academic achievement (Fabunmi, 2004) ^[11]. According to Block (2006) ^[9], gender is a powerful predictor of human behavior, and numerous variation in attitude and behavior that affect academic attainment have been shown between males and girls. According to Alkhadrawi (2015) ^[5], the achievement gap between male and female students has narrowed, and female students have even outperformed male students in numerous areas.

In Ebonyi State, Nigeria, Nwafor (2017) ^[20] conducted research on junior secondary school certificate basic science students' academic accomplishment in public and private secondary schools. The study used four research questions and three hypotheses. A sample of 23,000 pupils was chosen from a population of 394,065 students attending public and private secondary schools. The students' basic science results were used, and data was gathered with a check-list. The data was analyzed using the mean and t-test. According to the findings of the survey, male students in both public and private junior secondary schools outperformed their female counterparts. According to the report, students should be actively involved in their learning. Furthermore, the state government should provide opportunities for Basic Scientific educators to attend seminars and workshops in order to improve science instruction in their classrooms.

Godpower-Echie and Owo (2019) ^[15] looked on gender inequalities in Basic Science accomplishment in private

secondary schools in Rivers State's Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. The study used a stratified random sample approach to choose 15 private Junior Secondary Schools from which 800 Junior Secondary School III students (428 girls and 372 males) were recruited. Two research questions and one hypothesis were posed. The results of the Junior School Certificate Examination (JSCE) in Basic Science were used as a measure of achievement. Frequencies, percentages, and the t-test were used to examine the data. According to studies, gender had no significant impact on students' development in Basic Science at private secondary schools. Following the findings, education stakeholders were recommended to give male and female students similar opportunities and treatment when it comes to participating actively in science activities. Female scientific professors should also involve in pep talks and act as role models for female pupils in order to socially convince, persuade, and motivate them to acquire good attitudes about science.

Igbinedion and Epumepu (2011) ^[16] compared children' academic performance in business courses in public and private Junior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (JSSCE) in the Ovia South West Local Government Council Area of Edo State, Nigeria. Three research topics and three hypotheses guided the investigation. The research used a survey method with 5033 JSS students as the population and sample size. The students' results were collected using a checklist, and the data was analyzed using the chi-square method. Between 2008 and 2011, a considerable disparity in academic achievement in business courses was identified between public and private schools. The percentage production level of both males and females in public schools was also greater than in private schools, according to the findings.

Methodology

Ex-post facto survey study was utilised. The study included 10,622 students who took the BECE-Business Studies exam over the course of three years. As shown in Table 1, a multi-stage sampling approach was utilized to choose 2,522 pupils from 12 (six public and six private) schools for the study. For the three years under consideration, the instrument was the outcome grades of students in Business Studies examinations. ANOVA and t-test statistics were utilised to evaluate the data.

Table 1: Sample distribution of obtained data

| Year | Male Students (n = 1271) | | | Female Students (n = 1251) | | | Total |
|-----------------|--------------------------|------|------|----------------------------|------|------|-------|
| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | |
| School Type | | | | | | | |
| Public schools | 266 | 295 | 318 | 262 | 289 | 318 | 1748 |
| Private schools | 119 | 129 | 144 | 116 | 128 | 138 | 774 |
| Total | 385 | 424 | 462 | 378 | 417 | 456 | 2522 |

Source: BECE Results Broadsheet of sampled schools (2017, 2018 and 2019)

The study's instrument was the student's results, which were extracted using a check list from the BECE-Business studies examination results broadsheet for three academic years (2017,

2018 and 2019). The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test were utilised to examine whether there was a substantial change in mean score at the alpha (0.05) level.

Results

When students' mean numerical scores in Business studies examinations administered by BECE in Keffi, Nasarawa State, are divided by the years of examination, how do they differ?

Table 2: Mean numerical score of students in BECE-conducted Business studies for 2017 – 2019 based on grade points

| | | Grade Points | |
|---------|------|--------------|--------------------|
| | | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| Year | 2017 | 1.95 | .675 |
| | 2018 | 2.17 | .726 |
| | 2019 | 2.11 | .728 |
| Overall | | 2.08 | .717 |

Table 2 demonstrates that students' accomplishment in BECE Business Studies in Keffi, Nasarawa State, changes year by year, with 2018 having the greatest mean score of 2.17, then by 2019 with 2.11, and 2017 having the least mean score of 1.95 for the three years investigated. When separated by school ownership, the mean numerical scores of students in Business studies examinations administered by BECE in Keffi, Nasarawa State for the three years 2017–2019 vary?

Table 3: Mean numerical score of students in BECE-conducted Business studies for 2017 – 2019 as segregated by school ownership

| Year | Private schools | | Public schools | |
|---------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| 2017 | 1.99 | .719 | 1.94 | .655 |
| 2018 | 2.27 | .726 | 2.13 | .723 |
| 2019 | 2.11 | .765 | 2.11 | .712 |
| Overall | 2.13 | .746 | 2.06 | .703 |

Table 3 reveals that students in private schools outperformed their public-school counterparts in BECE Business Studies tests in 2017 and 2018, with an overall mean score of 2.13 compared to 2.06 for public school students. This means that the mean numerical scores of students in BECE Business Studies examinations in Keffi, Nasarawa State, for the years 2017 to 2019 differ when separated by school ownership, with a 0.07

Table 6: Independent samples t-test of numerical scores against school ownership

| | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------|
| | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances assumed | 2.155 | 2520 | .031 | .067 | .031 | .006 | .127 |
| Equal variances not assumed | 2.107 | 1404.899 | .035 | .067 | .032 | .005 | .129 |

Table 6 shows a t-test result of 2.155 and a p=0.031, both of which are significant at the 5% level of significance (p0.05). As a result, the null hypothesis that there is a substantial difference in the mean scores of students in BECE Business

difference in favor of private institutions.

When students take BECE's Business Studies tests in Keffi, Nasarawa State, do their mean numerical scores differ by gender?

Table 4: Mean numerical score of students in BECE-conducted Business studies for 2017-2019 as segregated by gender

| Year | Female | | Male | |
|---------|--------|--------------------|------|--------------------|
| | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| 2017 | 1.99 | .655 | 1.91 | .692 |
| 2018 | 2.19 | .749 | 2.15 | .704 |
| 2019 | 2.16 | .722 | 2.06 | .731 |
| Overall | 2.12 | .716 | 2.04 | .716 |

In all three sampled years, the results in Table 4 reveal that female students had a higher mean numerical score than their male counterparts, with a mean numerical score of 2.12 for female students against 2.04 for male students. As a result, the mean numerical scores of students in Business studies examinations administered by BECE in Keffi, Nasarawa State, differ by 0.08 in favor of female students when separated by gender.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 5: ANOVA result of the numerical scores based on years of examination

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|------|-------------|--------|------|
| Between Groups | 20.301 | 2 | 10.150 | 20.025 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 1276.873 | 2519 | .507 | | |
| Total | 1297.174 | 2521 | | | |

Table 5 demonstrates that for p-value = 0.000 and 2519 degrees of freedom, the F-value of 20.025 is less than the alpha level of 0.05 (F0.05). This means that when students' mean numerical scores in Business Studies examinations held by BECE in Keffi, Nasarawa State are separated by years of examination, there is a considerable variation in their mean numerical scores. As a result, the null hypothesis is ruled out.

studies tests in Keffi, Nasarawa State when separated by school ownership is rejected. As a result, it may be stated that private school students outperform public school students in business studies.

Table 7: Independent samples t-test of numerical scores based on gender

| | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------|
| | t | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances assumed | 2.770 | 2520 | .006 | .079 | .029 | .023 | .135 |
| Equal variances not assumed | 2.770 | 2519.360 | .006 | .079 | .029 | .023 | .135 |

Table 7 shows that the t-test result is 2.770 and the $p=0.006$ is significant at the 5% level of significance ($p<0.05$). As a result, the H_0 is rejected, stating that there is no substantial variation in mean scores of students in Business studies tests administered by BECE in Keffi, Nasarawa State, when separated by gender. As a result, female pupils outperformed their male counterparts dramatically.

Discussion

The research shows that when students' mean scores in Business studies tests administered by BECE in Keffi, Nasarawa State are separated by the years of examination, there is a substantial variation in their mean scores. This finding is consistent with that of Nwafor (2017) [20], who found that private schools outperform public schools in terms of student performance in Basic Science from 2009 to 2010. The findings also agree with Robert (2009) [24], who claims that because private schools have less bureaucracy in administration and more time for teaching and learning, they achieve better results over time than public schools.

In addition, the study discovered a considerable disparity in achievement between private and public junior secondary school pupils in Business studies tests administered by BECE in Keffi, Nasarawa State. In addition, the mean numerical ratings revealed that private schools outperformed their public counterparts. This is the same with the outcome of Nwafor (2017) [20] and Alhassane and Zuo (2016) [3] research, who found that private schools performed better in both urban and rural locations than government-run schools.

This contradicts the findings of Godpower-Echie and Owo (2019) [15], Abari and Odunayo (2012) [1], and Alimi *et al.* (2012) [4], who showed no substantial variation in students' academic achievement between the two types of school ownership. It also contradicts the findings of Igbiniedion and Epumepu (2011) [16], who concluded that public school performance was higher than private school performance. This research contrasts with that of Aransi (2018) [7], who found that when kids are separated by school ownership, their achievement does not alter.

In addition, the study found a substantial discrepancy in accomplishment between male and female secondary school students in Business studies tests administered by BECE in Keffi, Nasarawa State. The achievement of female students in the subject area is much higher than that of male pupils. This research supports the argument made by Sparks-Wallace (2007), who discovered evidence that adolescent girls outperform adolescent boys in a study. This research contradicts Nwafor's (2017) [20] findings, that male students in both public and private junior secondary schools in Ebonyi State outperformed their female counterparts, according to the

study. A total of 46.44 percent of male students and 44.82 percent of female students received credit passes. The findings of Godpower-Echie and Owo (2019) [15] that sex had no substantial impact on students' accomplishment in Basic science in private secondary schools are likewise contradicted by this study. The findings of Mijinyawa, Yeldu, Umar, and Hussaini (2017) [19] contradict the findings of Mijinyawa, Yeldu, Umar, and Hussaini (2017) [19], who discovered no substantial variation in educational performance by gender in both public and private schools, indicating that there is hope that male and female students can benefit from all subjects' teaching and learning.

Conclusion

According to results, private secondary schools' students scored higher on business studies exams. This discovery could explain why, despite their greater expenses, parents prefer private schools to government-run public schools. Female students' academic performance differs significantly from male students', which may indicate that female students' potential in business-related courses is currently gaining ground.

Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusion, the research makes the suggestions below:

1. Teachers in both public and private institutions, particularly those teaching Business Studies, must teach students more effectively in order to improve students' academic progress year after year.
2. Teachers of business subjects in both public and private junior secondary schools should use appropriate teaching methods and tactics to promote students' educational attainment.
3. Male students should be encouraged to pursue a higher level of interest in business subjects.
4. Teachers and parents should focus more on supporting and inspiring their male students/wards, as well as addressing problems that may add to the attainment the variance between male and female students in Business Studies.
5. Government agencies and policymakers should focus on increasing financing for effective teaching and learning, particularly in practical skill subject areas, at all levels of the nation's educational system in order to give students with basic employability skills.
6. The government and other stakeholders should provide facilities for public schools so that they can compete with private school counterparts, while also paying special attention to public school monitoring so that business studies teachers may enhance their teaching and learning processes.

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