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ASSESSMENT THE INFLUENCE OF MOTIVATION AND GENDER ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN ECONOMICS IN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION GINDIRI, PLATEAU STATE

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Abstract

This study assessed the influence of motivation and gender on students' performance in Economics in Economics in College of Education Gindiri Plateau State. The study formulated two specific objectives, two research questions and two hypotheses. The study employed descriptive survey design approach."Students Gender Academic Performance Test (SGAPT) and a self-designed questionnaire titled "Students' Academic Performance Motivation Questionnaire (SAPMQ), a 5-point rating scale instrument. The face and content validity of the SGAPT and the SAPMQ were validated by the experts. Test Re-test and Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Techniques were used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Reliability coefficients of 0.789 and 0.823 were obtained. The face-to-face method of instrument administration was used. Frequency tables, Mean and standard deviation, Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient and Independent t-test as tools of analysis. The findings revealed that motivated students are more likely of exhibit perseverance in tackling academic problems, they employ effective learning strategies, they manage their time effectively and can perform excellently well in examinations. The results showed that motivated students set realistic goals, students that received words of encouragement and praises perform better, intrinsically and extrinsic motivations by lecturers enhances students' performance. The results showed that male students had a higher mean score than their female counterparts and there is no significant difference between male and female students' academic performance in Economics in College of Education Gindiri Plateau State. The study concluded that motivation had significant influence on performance and an insignificant difference exists in the mean academic performance on students in College of Education, Gindiri, Plateau State with the following recommendations; economics lecturers should ensure they motivate their students in order to enhance their academic performance in economics, economics lecturers should always consider students gender when teaching so as to improve on their academic performance in economics in College of Education Gindiri.

Keywords: Performance, Students Performance, Gender, Motivation

Introduction

Education is a transformative tool for inculcating a relatively permanent change in behaviour, and every human behaviour is a product of motivation, either intrinsic or extrinsic, as motivation is the propelling force of action that results in achievement or underachievement. Academic performance is an integer of the behavioural objective a subject teacher seeks to achieve in instruction. The academic performance of students has long been a subject of concern for educators, policymakers, and parents worldwide. The performance of students in Economics has been a subject of concern for educators and researchers alike. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2020), Nigeria's education sector faces significant challenges, including low enrolment rates and poor academic performance. Various factors influence students' academic performance, including motivation and gender. One such factor is motivation, a complex and multifaceted construct that encompasses students' intrinsic and extrinsic drives to engage in and succeed at academic tasks.

Motivation is widely recognized as a critical determinant of educational outcomes, influencing not only the amount of effort students put into their studies but also their perseverance in the face of challenges. The significance of motivation in educational settings is underscored by numerous studies suggesting that motivated students are more likely to set challenging goals, employ effective learning strategies, and exhibit higher levels of academic performance (Sangode, Adeniyi & Longe, 2019). Motivation is the impelling force of action that rouses and sustains behaviour or the performance of an action, resulting to achieving a particular feat or even otherwise. This averment is seemingly unarguable, because human behaviour is enthused by events from outside them or spurred by motives from within them (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Motivation is a crucial factor, plays a significant role in determining students' interest, engagement and ultimately their performance.

The importance of economics in any educational system especially in academic performance cannot be over emphasized. It charged its recipients to make wise choice that will satisfy their needs in the presence of unlimited wants and resources. According to Amuda, Ali and Durkwa (2016), economics as a subject has various values to the learners, it connects learners to the essentials of everyday life and it widens the mental horizon of learner because it increases mental capacity to understand various problems of life and to analyze a situation and then draws conclusions which provides a guideline for successful life. That is, economics is not primarily a body of knowledge, it is a method rather than a doctrine, an apparatus of mind, a technique of thinking, which helps its possessors to draw correct conclusion, and at the end to acquire cultural values, intellectual training and vocational training. Fehintola and Yahya (2019) stated that Economics as a subject provides training for students on how to make rational use of scarce resources to satisfy their unlimited wants, to build up theories and tools for economic analysis, provide rationale guide to firms and governments in allocating scarce resources, to understand and appreciate economic problems facing the society and suggest ways of rectifying them.

Economics also help the planners to plan for economic development, helps to solve the fundamental problem of what to produce, how to produce and for whom to produce and to appreciate Government's economic policies among others. Despite the crucial role of economics education in shaping the future of individuals and society, students' performance in economics remains a concern in Nigeria Colleges of Education, particularly in Gindiri Plateau State. Research has shown that motivation and gender are significant factors influencing student academic performance, however. It has been observed that many students exhibit low motivation towards learning economics, a situation that may lead to poor academic performance. Another perceived problem that is of concern to the education stakeholders is the gender gap in academic performance of students in schools as there exist conflicting evidences on gender differences and students' performance in Economics and most subjects of studies in schools. In some of the studies, male students have been found to be more intellectually superior to the female while others found female to have performed better.

Hence, the interplay between motivation and gender on students' performance in economic seems not to be well understood. Saygili (2018) conducted a study among school students according to two motivation types, namely, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, in regard to gender and found that there are no significant differences. Asif et'al. (2018) directed a study on college students and showed that they had moderate level of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and low motivation; but that male had significantly lower intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation than females, and had significantly higher a motivation than females.Among the few studies conducted on effect of motivation and gender differences in academic performance, none of the researchers gave a conclusive answer to the problem and it appears that not much research focusing on gender difference in academic performance in Economics have been conducted especially in College of Education Gindiri, Plateau State. This motivated the present research.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of motivation and gender on students' performance in economics in the College of Education Gindiri Plateau State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. examine the relationship between motivation and students' performance in Economics in the College of Education Gindiri Plateau State.
2. investigate the influence of gender on students' academic performance in Economics in the College of Education Gindiri Plateau State.

Research Questions

The following were the research questions developed based on the specific objectives of the study:

1. What is the relationship between motivation and students' performance in Economics in the College of Education Gindiri Plateau State?

2. What is the extent of the influence of gender on students' performance in Economics in the College of Education Gindiri Plateau State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between motivation and students' performance in Economics in the College of Education Gindiri Plateau State.
2. There is no significant influence of gender on students' performance in Economics in the College of Education Gindiri Plateau State.

Conceptual Review

Motivation and Students Performance

Motivation is seen as the person's effort to accomplish his/her duties, dedicating the needed effort and continuing it. Motivation is an inner feeling that made people act in a particular way to achieve a given goal and purposes. Motivation is conceptualized as an inner construct that leads, changes, or maintains goals, actions, and preferences, and it allows students to achieve their goals, engaging them in learning activities. It is the force that encourages them to cope with all difficulties and challenging circumstances. Motivation reflects in learners' choices of academic tasks, the time and effort they allocate to each task, their perseverance in academic tasks.

Motivation enables them correctly handle obstacles they come across in the learning process. Omhali (2016) observed that learners who have high level of achievement motivation aspire high and perform better in their educational endeavours than those with low achievement motivation. When the drive ensues from within an individual rather than from the outside or environment, motivation is said to be intrinsic. It is a kind of impelling force which originates from within a person (Okoro, 2021a). Therefore, a student is intrinsically motivated to study when their goals for studying do not depend on external reasons for engaging in the study but rather on the sole glee or delight and satisfaction emitting from the inherent pleasure of the study. While the propelling force to engage in a study consequent upon the external conditionalities is the extrinsic aspect of motivation. It is the motivation that ensues from outside an individual (Ghaonta, 2017) or maneuvered by reinforcement possibilities. It is that drive that exerts from the outside to do something irrespective of whether the activity is inherently enjoyable/interesting or otherwise (Okoro, 2021a).

Dickson (2018) argued that teachers should always make effort to use the accessible means of extrinsic motivation during instruction to boost up students' achievement; that was the view from the study on effect of motivation on secondary school students' academic performance. Students' Academic Performance is vital for assessing a student's standing in tertiary institutions like colleges of education. It makes it possible for academic staff, educational administrators, and decision-makers to precisely evaluate students taking various courses

throughout a semester. Additionally, it served as a cautionary tale for the students to assess their performance level and make subsequent improvements (Al-Husaini & Shukor, 2023).

Student Gender and Academic Performance

Gender is the most important factor to consider when evaluating a student's performance. Some scholars they found that there is a significant relationship between student low academic performance and dropout with the gender. Males are more prone to drop out than females. As per this study, the findings revealed that gender has a strong relationship with student dropout. In recent years, debates about the impact of gender on academic performance have dominated research. Studies have discovered that male and female study styles differ, with females preferring to study in a more systematic manner and males preferring to study at the last minute. In fact, the majority of female students have more positive behavior than male students (Yassein, Helali & Mohomad, 2017). In comparison to men, women are clearly capable of completing their tasks efficiently within the time allotted.

The main reason why women work better than men is that women have better self-discipline and are more focused in their studies or work. Additionally, female students are more likely to graduate on time than male students, with the number of female students predicted to graduate on time being 56 percent higher than male students. Gender is important factor because it has a significant impact on students' performance because male and female learners have different learning rates and behaviours. Aside from that, many articles analyzed student performance using age as a factor. Al-Husaini and Shukor (2023) opined that as we age, brains undergo physical changes that make it more difficult to remember or learn effectively. As lively as this debate on the effect on gender on students' academic performance is, the concern is that there is paucity of literature on the situation in College of Education Gindiri, because most of the studies focused on secondary schools.

The relationship between motivation, gender and academic performance of students have been widely studied in available literature, but they findings tend to differ probably due to factors that may include design, variable, setting or methodological issues among others. For instance, Okoro, Ike and Ologe (2023) examined the impact of motivation and gender on students' academic achievement and interest in government: a study of some selected secondary schools in Enugu State. It employed a quasi-experimental design and two sets of research instruments tagged Government Academic Achievement Tests Questionnaire (GAATQ) and Interest Inventory Scale on Government (IISG). Two hypotheses were developed to guide the study and were tested for significance at a 0.05 margin of error using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). It was found that gender is not the foremost pre-determinant of students' achievement and interest in government. The study concluded that motivation and interest are the major determiners of students' achievement in government and not gender and recommended that motivation strategies be robustly enforced in government instructional delivery. The strength of this work stems from the fact that it captures motivation and gender as variables, but while the scholars

focused on achievement, this research is on performance of students in Economics in College of Education Gindiri in Plateau State.

Muhammad, Bakar, Mijinyawa and Halabi (2023) examined impact of motivation on students' academic performance: A case study of university sultan Zainal Abidin students. A structured questionnaire on motivation was administered on 218 University Sultan Zainal Abidin students. Data was analyzed using correlation analysis and a simple linear regression. The findings revealed that a strong positive relationship exist between motivation and students' academic performance. The result from the regression analysis indicated that motivation serves as a good predictor of students" performance. The study found a strong relationship exists between motivation and Students academic performance. The study concluded that students' motivation serves as a yardstick in predicting their performance. The relevance of this study stem from the fact that the study concentrated on motivation and students' performance, but its major weakness is that the scholars failed to examined the role of students' gender on students' academic performance.

Fehintola and Yahya (2019) investigated the effect of gender on Economics students' academic performance in secondary schools in Oyo West Local Government Area. The study adopted a non-equivalent pretest-posttest control group research design. The population for the study consisted of Economics students in senior secondary schools in Oyo town. The sample for the study comprised 77students selected using simple random sampling technique and one intact class was randomly selected from each of the sampled schools. Economics Performance Test (EPT) was used and the data collected were analyzed using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that, there was no significant difference in the performance and retention of male and female students. The study concluded that gender has no significant influence on secondary school students' performance and retention in Economics and recommended that both male and female students should be given equal educational opportunities in an Economics class and teachers should always adopt teaching strategies capable of enhancing male and female Economics students' performance. The strength of this study lies on the fact that it used gender and performance in Economics as variables, but its major weakness is that while the researchers used experimental design, this study adopted descriptive survey design as its guide.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because the study sought to describe and examine the relationship between motivation, gender and students' academic performance in Economics among NCE students of the College of Education Gindiri, Plateau State. The population of the study comprised 367 Economics students of the College of Education Gindiri who were pursuing the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) programme. The population consisted of 197 male students and 170 female students from NCE I to NCE III. A sample of 191 students was selected for the study using stratified proportional random sampling. The students were stratified according to relevant sub-groups, after which respondents were proportionately selected from the strata through simple

random sampling. This procedure ensured that the different categories of Economics students were adequately represented in the sample.

Two research instruments were used for data collection, namely the Students' Gender Academic Performance Test (SGAPT) and a self-designed questionnaire titled Students' Academic Performance Motivation Questionnaire (SAMPQ). The SAMPQ was a 4-point rating scale instrument designed to obtain information on students' motivation. The SGAPT was used to obtain students' actual academic performance scores in Economics. Thus, motivation was measured using the 4-point SAMPQ, while academic performance was measured using the scores obtained by students in the SGAPT.

The face and content validity of the SGAPT were established by experts in Economics and English Language, while the face and construct validity of the SAMPQ were determined by experts in the relevant field. A test blueprint and table of specification were used in developing the SGAPT items to ensure adequate coverage of the content areas. The reliability of the SGAPT was determined using the test-retest method, while the internal consistency reliability of the SAMPQ was established using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Reliability coefficients of 0.789 and 0.823 were obtained for the SGAPT and SAMPQ respectively. The instruments were administered through a face-to-face method by the researcher with the assistance of a lecturer in the Department of Economics.

The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The SAMPQ items were interpreted using a criterion mean of 2.50, which is the midpoint of the 4-point rating scale. However, students' academic performance was measured using their actual scores on the SGAPT and was therefore reported using test-score means and standard deviations rather than Likert-scale ratings.

The hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Correlation and independent samples t-test. Spearman Rank Correlation was used to determine the relationship between motivation and students' academic performance because motivation was measured using ordinal Likert-scale responses and the relationship was examined with the students' SGAPT scores. The independent samples t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the academic performance scores of male and female students. The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance, and the statistical analyses were conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 27.

Results

Research Question One: What is the relationship between motivation and students' performance in Economics in the College of Education Gindiri, Plateau State?

Table 1: Mean Rating of Items Relating to Motivation and Students' Academic Performance in Economics

S/N	Statement of Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	I feel intrinsically motivated students can perform better.	3.324	1.547	Agree
2	Motivated students set realistic goals.	3.542	1.488	Agree
3	Motivated students are more likely to exhibit perseverance in tackling academic problems.	3.665	1.356	Agree
4	I feel extrinsic motivation by lecturers enhances performance.	3.281	1.254	Agree
5	Motivated students employ effective learning strategies.	3.558	1.434	Agree
6	Motivated students manage their time effectively.	3.475	1.622	Agree
7	Motivated students perform excellently well in examinations.	3.453	1.435	Agree
8	Students that receive words of encouragement and praise perform better.	3.337	1.543	Agree

The findings in Table 1 revealed that respondents agreed that motivated students are more likely to exhibit perseverance in tackling academic problems ($\bar{X}$ = 3.665), employ effective learning strategies ($\bar{X}$ = 3.558), manage their time effectively ($\bar{X}$ = 3.475), and perform excellently well in examinations ($\bar{X}$ = 3.453). The respondents also agreed that motivated students set realistic goals ($\bar{X}$ = 3.542), students who receive words of encouragement and praise perform better ($\bar{X}$ = 3.337), intrinsically motivated students can perform better ($\bar{X}$ = 3.324), and extrinsic motivation by lecturers enhances students' performance ($\bar{X}$ = 3.281). Overall, the findings indicate that respondents perceived motivation as positively related to students' academic performance in Economics.

Research Question Two: What is the extent of the influence of gender on students' academic performance in Economics in the College of Education Gindiri, Plateau State?

Table 2: Mean Academic Performance Scores of Male and Female Economics Students

Gender	Mean SGAPT Score	Std. Dev.	Mean Difference
Male	13.455	1.572	0.255
Female	13.200	1.163	
Difference			**0.255**

The findings in Table 2 revealed that male students obtained a mean SGAPT score of 13.455 with a standard deviation of 1.572, while female students obtained a mean SGAPT score of 13.200 with a standard deviation of 1.163. The mean difference between the two groups was 0.255. This indicates that male students had a slightly higher mean academic performance score than their female counterparts. However, the difference in mean scores alone does not establish whether the difference is statistically significant; this was subsequently determined using the independent samples t-test.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between motivation and students' academic performance in Economics in the College of Education Gindiri, Plateau State.

Table 3: Spearman Rank Correlation between Motivation and Students' Academic Performance in Economics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	r-cal.	p-value	Decision
Motivation	3.567	1.423				
			191	0.678	.000	Reject H_O
Academic Performance	3.776	1.334				

The result in Table 3 indicates a strong positive relationship between motivation and students' academic performance in Economics ($r = 0.678$, $p < .001$, $N = 191$). Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a statistically significant positive relationship between motivation and students' academic performance in Economics in the College of Education Gindiri, Plateau State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant influence of gender on students' academic performance in Economics in the College of Education Gindiri, Plateau State.

Table 4: Independent Samples t-test of Difference in Academic Performance between Male and Female Economics Students

Gender	Mean SGAPT Score	Std. Dev.	df	t-cal.	p-value	Decision
Male	13.455	1.572	189	1.264	0.208	Fail to Reject H_0
Female	13.200	1.163				

$p > 0.05$

The findings in Table 4 revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between the academic performance scores of male and female Economics students, $t(189) = 1.264$, $p = .208$. Since the p-value of .208 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, the study failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female students' academic performance in Economics in the College of Education Gindiri, Plateau State. Although male students recorded a slightly higher mean SGAPT score (13.455) than their female counterparts (13.200), the observed difference was not statistically significant.

Discussion

The findings on the relationship between motivation and students' academic performance in Economics revealed that respondents agreed that motivated students are more likely to exhibit perseverance in tackling academic problems, employ effective learning strategies, manage their time effectively and perform excellently well in examinations. The respondents also agreed that motivated students set realistic goals, students who receive words of encouragement and praise perform better, intrinsically motivated students can perform better, and extrinsic motivation from

lecturers enhances students' performance. These findings suggest that motivation is an important factor associated with students' academic engagement and performance. Lawrence and Ezegbe (2021) similarly emphasized the importance of academic motivation in students' pursuit of academic goals, noting that inadequate motivation may weaken students' drive towards academic achievement.

The inferential analysis further revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between motivation and students' academic performance in Economics ($r = 0.678$, $p < .001$). This indicates that higher levels of motivation were associated with higher academic performance among the students. The finding is consistent with Muhammad, Bakar, Mijinyawa and Halabi (2021), who reported a positive relationship between students' motivation and academic performance. The agreement between the present finding and the previous study reinforces the view that students' motivation can play an important role in supporting effective learning and academic achievement.

With respect to gender, the findings revealed that male students recorded a slightly higher mean academic performance score (13.455) than their female counterparts (13.200). However, the independent samples t-test showed that the difference was not statistically significant, $t(189) = 1.264$, $p = .208$. This implies that although male students performed marginally better in terms of mean score, gender did not produce a statistically significant difference in the academic performance of the students in the study.

The finding agrees with Fehintola and Yahya (2019), who found no significant gender difference in students' performance and retention in Economics. It also supports Okoro, Ike and Ologe (2023), who reported that factors such as motivation and interest may be more important determinants of students' academic achievement than gender. However, the finding differs from Al-Husaini and Shukor (2023), who identified gender among several factors associated with students' academic performance. Similarly, Jensen and Owen (2013) discussed possible explanations for gender differences in Economics, including differences in mathematical preparation, interests and the nature of Economics education. The differences between these findings may be attributed to variations in study populations, educational contexts, research designs and other contextual factors.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that motivation has a significant positive relationship with students' academic performance in Economics in the College of Education Gindiri, Plateau State. The students generally agreed that motivated students are more likely to exhibit perseverance, set realistic academic goals, employ effective learning strategies, manage their time effectively and perform better in examinations. The significant positive relationship obtained from the Spearman Rank Correlation further indicates that higher levels of motivation are associated with better academic performance among Economics students.

The study also concluded that male students recorded a slightly higher mean academic performance score than their female counterparts. However, the difference was not statistically

significant. This implies that gender does not significantly differentiate the academic performance of Economics students in the study area. Therefore, students' academic performance appears to be more closely associated with motivational factors than with their gender.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Lecturers should strengthen students' motivation by using appropriate encouragement, constructive feedback, praise and other supportive classroom practices that can stimulate students' interest in Economics.

2. The College should organize academic motivation programmes such as seminars, mentoring sessions and academic counselling to help students develop realistic academic goals, perseverance and effective study habits.

3. Economics lecturers should employ teaching strategies that promote active participation, including group discussions, problem-solving activities, peer learning and practical examples, in order to sustain students' interest and motivation in Economics.

4. Students should be encouraged to develop effective learning and time-management strategies. They should set realistic academic goals, maintain regular study schedules and actively participate in classroom and other academic activities.

5. The College should strengthen academic counselling and support services to identify students with low levels of motivation and provide appropriate guidance and support before their academic performance is adversely affected.

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