

# COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FEDERAL AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES' LEARNING ENVIRONMENT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN ISLAMIC STUDIES IN ILORIN, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

Learning environment plays major role in the life of every individual whether undergraduate students, lecturers, employers or employees. The undergraduate students' academic performance plays an important role in producing the best quality graduates who will become great leader and manpower for the country thus responsible for the country's economic and social development. It is on the basis of this background, this study examined the comparative analysis of federal and private universities' learning environment on academic performance of undergraduate students in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria. Causal-comparative research type known as "ex post facto" research method was used for this study. All undergraduate students of federal and private universities in Ilorin, Nigeria constituted the population. Meanwhile, purposive sampling techniques was used to select University of Ilorin and Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria. Simple random sampling techniques was used to select 160 undergraduate Islamic Studies students from University of Ilorin and Al-Hikmah University respectively. The data for the study was gathered through the use of questionnaire which consisted of 25 items to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument was validated through face and content validity and reliability index yielded 0.78. Three hypotheses were postulated and tested using Independent t-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that a significant difference existed between federal university male and female undergraduate students, private university male and female undergraduate students and federal and private university undergraduate students' learning environment on undergraduate students' academic performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria. Based on the finding, it was recommended among others that government and private organizations /bodies should intensify efforts to employ more trained and qualified Islamic Studies lecturers at various universities to improve the performance of undergraduate students at all level of education. It was also recommended that government and private organizations /bodies should exposed their undergraduate students to conducive learning environment in order to facilitate better academic performance in students.

**Keywords:** Learning Environment, Academic Performance, Undergraduate Islamic Studies Students

## **INTRODUCTION**

Learning environment plays major role in the life of every individual whether undergraduate students, lecturers, employers or employees. Though, some people are yet to believe that learning environment brings about better academic performance. Udoh (2016) identifies some unhealthy practices in some tertiary institutions like universities in terms of citing of the schools, inadequate facilities, poor ventilation among others. Under these conditions, the health of undergraduate students and lecturers may be adversely affected, which will in turn reflect on undergraduate students' academic performance. Therefore, for the undergraduate students to carry his/ her learning effectively and efficiently, it is necessary that learning takes place in a conducive environment. Studies have shown that environmental factors to a large extent affect both the physical and psychological potentials of individuals. This has led to the contention that many students fail to develop their potentials due to poor or inadequate environmental stimulation. However, there are some learning environmental factors which may contribute to this poor performance of students such as home background, inadequate school facilities, misuse of technology like school internet and school climate and so on.

The school learning environment includes the accommodation, school location, transport facilities, library, accessibility of learning facilities in the school, prices of items in school laboratories, lecturers' quality, school management, teaching methods, peers influence among others are variables that affect students' academic performance. The issue of poor academic performance of undergraduate students in Nigeria universities has been of much concern to the government, parents, teachers and even students themselves. The quality of education not only depends on the lecturers as reflected in the performance of their duties, but also in the effective coordination of the school learning environment.

Philips (2017) asserts that one of the most critical physical characteristics of lecture room is lighting. The importance of an appropriate visual environment for learning task deserves careful consideration. The visual environment affects a learner's ability to perceive visual stimuli and affects his/her mental attitude and thus, performance. Dunn (2019) insists that the lighting of the school should be considered on active element of the total educational environment. He found that good lighting contributes significantly to the aesthetics and psychological character of the teaching space and thus students perform well than in a dark lecture room.

Moreso, physical structure of a school building and the interactions between learners and lecturers are two main diverse factors that both affect and help to define the broad concept of school climate. School climate has been researched for many years and continued to be examined and redefined as a result of its significant influences on educational outcomes. Generally speaking, school learning climates are multidimensional and influences many individuals including undergraduate students, parents, school personnel and the community. Additionally, school learning climate can be of positive influence on the health of the learning environments as Freiberg (2018) notes that school climate can be a positive influence on the health of the learning environment or a significant barrier to learning. For instance, a positive school learning climate has been associated with fewer behavioural and emotional problems for learners.

Better still, Muola (2019), states that family background refers to all the conditions and circumstances in the family which influence the child physically, intellectually and emotionally. Learners coming from different family backgrounds are affected differently by such family condition that is why some children have good family background while some have poor background. Fleege and Eke (2016) noted that with some families, the background may vary from time to time for the same individuals. The author further stated that because it is the parents who are primarily responsible for establishing the family and exercise control over it,

they are responsible for the type of family background that exists. This means that parental positive attitudes are very important in promoting their children academic performances.

In addition, technology is of significant importance to the academic performance of undergraduate students. Most researchers concur that the incidence of academic misconduct in the middle schools and high schools has increased significantly in recent years (Underwood and Szaba, 2016). Although, educators and academics disagree on the root causes of this alarming behaviour. There is little disagreement that the accessibility of computers, the internet and other electronic resources such as CD-ROM, encyclopedias has made cheating quicker and easier for our current generation of Technology-Savvy teen. The use of technology tools in inappropriate ways for academic work known as cyber cheating. Because of this cheating on students, Futton (2017) persuasively argues that schools must change traditional approaches to learning in order to help today's undergraduate students acquire the skill set required for succeeding in the work place of the future. These advanced skills will be achieved "through the learner's interactions with the content" in the digital ages and not through "the transmission of facts" (Futton, 2017). Therefore, assessment tools should be designed in a way that knowledge and information are used in the adult world.

In relation to educational research, academic performance of students can be regarded as the observable and measurable behaviour of students in a particular situation. (Drever, 2015). In other words, academic performance of a student in Islamic Studies includes observable and measurable behaviour of students at any point in time during a course. In Islamic Studies, students' academic performance consists of his/ her scores at any particular time obtained from a lecturer- made test. Therefore, academic performance could be equated with the observed behaviour or expectation of achieving a specific statement or statement of educational intention in a research. Academic performance of students consists of scores obtained from lecturer-made test, mid-semester test and so on (Drever, 2015).

In another development, academic performance is the extent to which a student, teacher/ lecturer or institution has achieved accomplishment in their short or long-term educational objectives. Hasan (2017), observes that academic performance is the capacity of students to attain the courses' expectations in which they are enrolled and is usually evaluated by grade point. As reported by Badiger and Aiholli (2019), academic performance can be described as competence in all academic disciplines, in class as well as in co-curricular activities. It includes excellence in sporting activities, confidence level, communication skills, timely delivery, arts, culture and the like which can be achieved only when an individual is well adjusted.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Undergraduate students are most essential asset for any educational institution. The undergraduate students' academic performance plays an important role in producing the best quality graduates who will become great leader and manpower for the country thus responsible for the country's economic and social development (Ali, 2019). Students' academic performance measurement has received considerable attention in previous research and it is pertinent to mention that Islamic Studies undergraduate students' academic performance at the university level are affected due to learning environment, social, psychological, economic and personal factors.

Many researchers have carried out studies on learning environment and academic performance in Nigerian tertiary institutions at different times, locations, subjects and areas of interest. Researchers such as Muhammad, A. (2016), investigated the relationship between environmental factors, self-management and learning style toward academic performance of students in Ondo State, Nigeria. Similarly, Chukwuemeka, O. (2018) examined the

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environmental influence on academic performance of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

It is pertinent to mention that the above studies are carried out in different subjects and at different levels of education. The gap observed by the researcher is that, none of the earlier researches focused on federal and private universities in Ilorin, Nigeria. Therefore, the researcher focused on comparative analysis of federal and private universities' learning environment on academic performance of undergraduate students in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria. This was the gap in knowledge this study filled.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Generally, the purpose of this study is to examine the comparative analysis of federal and private universities' learning environment on academic performance of undergraduate students in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria. Specifically, the study:

1. compare the difference between federal university male and female undergraduate students' learning environment on academic performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria.
2. identify the difference between private university male and female undergraduate students' learning environment on academic performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria.
3. investigate the difference between federal and private universities' learning environment on academic performance of undergraduate students in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised in the context of this study:

1. Is there is any significant difference between federal university male and female undergraduate students' learning environment on academic performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria?
2. Is there is any significant difference between private university male and female undergraduate students' learning environment on academic performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria?
3. Is there is any significant difference between federal and private universities' learning environment on academic performance of undergraduate students in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide this study and tested:

- H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between federal university male and female undergraduate students' learning environment on academic performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria.
- H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between private university male and female undergraduate students' learning environment on academic performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria.
- H0<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference between federal and private universities' learning environment on academic performance of undergraduate students in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria.

## METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is causal- Comparative research type. This is also known as “ex post facto” research (Latin for “after the fact”). Fraenka (2016) describes causal Comparative research as a type of research in which the investigators/ researchers attempt to determine the cause or consequences of offences that already exist between or among group of individual. Sondergeld (2015) suggests that, the purpose of causal comparative research is to understand the relationship between a group membership and outcomes. The population of this study consisted of all undergraduate students of federal and private universities in Ilorin, Nigeria. Meanwhile, purposive sampling techniques was used to select University of Ilorin and Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin respectively. Simple random sampling techniques was used to select 160 undergraduate Islamic Studies students from University of Ilorin and Al-Hikmah University. The data for the study was gathered through the use of questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 25 items to elicit information from the respondents. In order to ascertain the validity of the instrument, the drafted questionnaire titled “LEAPUISSQ” was given to experts in educational research in the Faculty of Education, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria for content validity in which corrections were done. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by administering the questionnaire to 10 undergraduate Islamic Studies students who are not part of the main sample. The test-retest method was employed within an interval of three weeks. The two set of scores were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics with correlation figure of 0.781 obtained. The result indicated that the instrument was reliable enough for the study.

## RESULTS

### Hypotheses Testing

**Table 1:** Distribution of Respondents Based on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	100	62.5
Female	60	37.5
Total	160	100

Table 1 shows that 160 respondents participated in the study. 100 (62.5) of the respondents were male undergraduate Islamic Studies students, while 60 (37.5%) of the respondents were female undergraduate Islamic Studies students.

**Table 2:** Distribution of Respondents Based on Institution Type

Institution Type	Frequency	Percentage
Private University	80	50.0
Federal University	80	50.0
Total	160	100.0

Table 2 indicates that 80 (50%) of the respondents were from private university while the remaining 80 (50%) were from federal university.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference between federal university male and female undergraduate students’ learning environment on academic performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria.

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**Table 3:** Difference between Federal University Male and Female Undergraduate Students' Learning Environment on Academic Performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria

School Type	Gender	N	Mean Score	SD	Df	Cal.t	Crit.t
Federal 80	Male	48	56.72	12.22	158	2.03*	1.96
	Female	32	51.86	9.67			

\*Significant,  $p < 0.05$

The result in Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value is 2.03 while the critical t-value is 1.96. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, this means, there is a significant difference between federal university male and female undergraduate students' learning environment on academic performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria. Hence, the hypothesis that state that there is no significant difference between federal university male and female undergraduate students' learning environment on academic performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria is rejected.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference between private university male and female undergraduate students' learning environment on academic performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria

**Table 4:** Difference Between Private University Male and Female Undergraduate Students' Learning Environment on Academic Performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria

School Type	Gender	N	Mean Score	SD	Df	Cal.t	Crit.t
Private 80	Male	52	60.76	7.21	158	2.17*	1.96
	Female	28	51.88	5.99			

\*Significant,  $p < 0.05$

The result in Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value is 2.17 while the critical t-value is 1.96. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, this means, there is a significant difference between private university male and female undergraduate students' learning environment on academic performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria. Hence, the hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference between private university male and female undergraduate students' learning environment on academic performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria is rejected.

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant difference between federal and private universities' learning environment on academic performance of undergraduate students in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria

**Table 5:** Difference between Federal and Private Universities' Learning Environment on Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria

School Type	N	Mean Score	SD	df	Cal.t	Crit.t
Private University	80	58.80	12.70	158	2.25*	1.96
Federal University	80	53.25	10.66			

\*Significant,  $p < 0.05$

The result in Table 5 shows that the calculated t-value is 2.25 while the critical t-value is 1.96. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, this means, there is a significant difference between academic performance of federal and private universities' learning

environment on undergraduate students in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria. Hence, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between federal and private universities' learning environment on academic performance of undergraduate students in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria is rejected.

## **DISCUSSION**

The first finding of this study revealed that a significant difference exists between federal university male and female undergraduate students' learning environment on academic performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria. This means, male undergraduate Islamic Studies students scored higher marks than female undergraduate Islamic Studies students. This finding supported the finding of Murpy (2018) in his study of sex differences in objectives text performance. He discovered that male perform better than female in objectives tests than they did in any other type of assessment. Similarly, Parnelisu (2016) observed that at high institution level, boys score higher than girls in Mathematics, Science, Social Science and Citizenship Education.

The second finding of this study revealed that a significant difference exists between private university male and female undergraduate students' learning environment on academic performance in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria. This also indicates that male undergraduate Islamic Studies students performed excellently than female undergraduate Islamic Studies students in many occasions.

The third finding on table five revealed that a significant difference exists between academic performance of federal and private universities' learning environment on undergraduate students in Islamic Studies in Ilorin, Nigeria. In other words, undergraduate Islamic Studies students in private university learning environment perform better academically than undergraduate Islamic Studies students in federal university learning environment. The finding of this study corroborated the finding of Olutola (2019) who observes that private university learning environment offer better and more qualitative facilities, quality staff, teaching and non- teaching and availability of equipment. In a similar view, Tara (2018) asserts that higher incidents of violence arising from a large class size, lack of facilities for teachers, unaddressed complaints in federal university learning environment have generally make students in private university learning environment perform better academically than their counterpart in federal universities.

## **CONCLUSION**

The institution types predict undergraduate students' academic performance in Islamic Studies. In general, undergraduate students in private universities learning environment tend to perform better in Islamic Studies than their counterparts in federal universities learning environment. In the same vein, gender also predicts undergraduate students' academic performance in Islamic Studies. It was revealed that male undergraduate students tend to perform academically better than their female undergraduate counterparts in learning environment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In view on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- (1) Male and female undergraduate Islamic Studies students regardless of their academic performance need to be enlightened on the fact that, gender and institution type predict academic performance so that they should make necessary adjustment in their personal deficiency.
- (2) Government and private organizations /bodies should intensify efforts to employ more trained and qualified Islamic Studies lecturers at various universities to improve the performance of undergraduate Islamic Studies students at all level of education.
- (3) It was recommended that, government and private organizations /bodies should exposed their undergraduate Islamic Studies' students to conducive learning environment in teaching in order to facilitate better academic performance in them.

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