Female student contestants: Exploring undergraduate students talent competition experiences

(A Case Study on female students extracurricular activities)

Khairil Razali
Adalah Dosen Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry

Abstract
This study explored qualitatively pictures of students experiences in developing extra activities regarding the talents and skills development. By implementing the qualitative design and interviews, the selected female students were questioned to share their experiences. The research participants were mixed alumni and current English Department students of Universitas Islam Negery Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. The sampling technique was purposive. The conclusion shows that most students expressed their great thought on benefits of participating in extracurricular and talent competition activities for most of the reasons. Indeed, the attaining of competition is greater opportunities among female students in skills and experiences.

Keywords: Gaps, number versus quality, achievement, personality, and performance.

A. Introduction
Standard human capital theory proscribes that the ability of college students to perform well and persist through school is determined by a variety of costs and incentives (LoGerfo, Nichols, and Chaplin 2006; Long, Iatarola, and Conger 2009; Rothstein 2004). At the same time, females are less likely to major in subjects with strict grading standards, such as mathematics and engineering (Turner and Bowen 1999). Females also attend colleges that have looser admissions requirements and higher admissions rates (Jacobs 1999). This partly reflects the fact that selective universities often have larger male-dominated engineering programs, and are less likely to accept part-time students who are disproportionately female (Jacobs 1999). The higher high school achievement scores of male entrants should lower the psychic costs of schooling relative to females, yet the less selective institutions and majors chosen by females should lower their psychic and direct costs (through lower tuition), rendering the net effect of these two forces indeterminate.

Education is central to development and to the improvement of the lives of young people globally, and as such has been identified as a priority area in internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals and the World Programme of Action for Youth. Education is important in eradicating poverty and hunger and in promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable
Khairil Razali

development. Increased efforts towards education accessibility, quality and affordability are central to global development efforts.

The handful of studies that have explored female advantages in college completion rates tend to find that incentives due to shifting female premiums on college degrees may also be at work. Yet the incentives are not due to an increase in the wage premium on a college degree for women relative to men; in fact, with the decline of the manufacturing sector, the wage premium associated with completing more years of education and with attending a higher quality college have been rising faster for men than for women (Charles and Luoh 2003; Long forthcoming). Instead, Charles and Luoh (2003) suggest that greater variation in the returns to a college degree among men relative to women leads to greater uncertainty for men, which in turn lowers their educational attainment levels.

Taking a slightly more social perspective, DiPrete and Buchmann (2006) suggest that the female advantage in college completion is more likely due to the male-female differential in what they refer to as "personal" returns to education, including a higher probability of marriage, a higher standard of living, and a lower probability of being poor.

Neither the Charles and Luoh (2003) or the DiPrete and Buchmann (2006) papers examine college completion among college enrollees. Therefore, the importance of expected labor market returns relative to costs (direct, psychic, or opportunity) may be overstated because the gender gaps in labor market incentives should be relatively small among college entrants. To elaborate, gender differences in knowledge of the labor market should be smaller among college entrants (all of whom have made an initial decision to obtain a college degree) than among middle school or high school students. Differences in the rates at which males and females complete college may be due to changes in these perceptions of the labor market (e.g. male expectations of the returns to a college degree become more uncertain as they progress through college) or, more likely, to the unanticipated costs of college, both direct and psychic. By restricting an analysis of college completion to those who have decided to enroll, we can better isolate the contribution of the costs of college to gender gaps.

Given the shortage of research on the reversal in the gender post-secondary education gap, we have much to contribute. First, by examining several measures of college performance, GPAs, credits earned, and college completion rates, we shed light on whether gender gaps are constant, growing, or diminishing during the students' years of college enrollment. Second, we control for many important determinants of college achievement that prior studies have omitted, including demographic background, educational needs, high school quality, performance on high school achievement exams, high school grades, college
quality, and college major. Finally, we analyze two complementary, administrative datasets that track the census of college students in two large states throughout their college careers. Lao (1980) found that the female students achieved higher Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) as compared to male, during observing the academic performance before college level. While examining SAT-M scores of high school seniors, Young and Fisler (2000) observed that male students obtained better scores than females. Observing success in terms of course grades, Bridgeman and Wendler (1991) found that women had identical or higher grades in math classes.

The average levels of participation in sports of male and female students are 2.45 and 1.8 with standard deviations 1.28 and 1.10, respectively. The average level of female students’ participation in sports is less as compared to the male students. The only factor in which the performance of male students is better than the female students but this factor also causes the reduction in the average percentage of the marks due to the wastage of time and remains absent from classes.

Past academic performance, age, gender, work done at home, time spent reading in the library, and students’ behaviour toward school were found to be the significant factors for the determination of students’ performance (Sithole and Dlamini, 1997). Hence, it may be expected that the time spent in cafeteria and studies other than class hours may affect the academic performance. The studies other than class hours were found to be inversely significant with the students’ academic performance (Hijazi and Naqvi, 2006).

B. Structural differences

Neuroscience has examined sex differences and investigated specifically whether there are structural differences in the brain between females and males. It has been established that even after accounting for body size, males tend to have larger brains (Burgaleta, Head Alvarez-Linera, Martinez, Escorial, Haier, & Coom, 2012). Two centuries ago this was thought to be the factor contributing to males’ higher intelligence (Fine, 2012). This theory has been disproven and research is unclear as to the role of this increased brain volume (Burgaleta et al., 2012).

Newer research techniques, like functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), have provided alternative methods for neuroscientists to investigate sex differences in the brain (Fine, 2013). This technology allows researchers to investigate more precisely whether there are differences in structure, connections and function between female and male brains. Some research suggests that there is evidence of this type of architectural variation between the sexes. A recent study with a sample of more than 900 participants, aged 9 to 22 years, found that male brains showed more connectivity within lobes of the brain and within each
hemisphere and female brains showed more connectivity between the hemispheres (Ingalhalikar et al., 2014).

A reviewer of this work proposed that these findings demonstrated different wiring patterns between the sexes—male brains are more modular and function in a more localized manner while female brains are structured for interconnectedness—and that sex must then be an important consideration when trying to understand brain function (Cahill, 2014). On the other hand, other reviewers have questioned the study’s findings and advised that the analysis was limited and does not truly support the authors’ assertion of conclusive sex differences (Joel & Tarrasch, 2014).

Studies have long noted differences in the achievement of girls and boys in reading and math. Historically, females have tended to perform better on reading tests while males have performed better on math tests, particularly at the high school level (Willingham & Cole, 1997). Although tests of general intelligence suggest no overall difference between males and females, large differences by gender are apparent in scores on specific cognitive tasks: males tend to do better at certain spatial and visual tasks while females tend to excel verbally (Dee, 2005). On the reading tests of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the female subgroup has consistently scored higher than the male subgroup at all grades tested (4, 8, and 12) since 1992, when the current trend lines began. In math, males have slightly outperformed females on NAEP at grades 4 and 12 and, with few exceptions, at grade 8.2.

C. Transforming and Expanding Skills Acquisition for the World of Work

Programmes to equip young people with the skills for the world of work must provide technical and vocational education and training (TVET), combining classroom education with workplace training, and technical training with communication, problem solving and entrepreneurship awareness. Otherwise, young people will find it difficult to find a job, to stay in employment, to move on in the workplace, and, more broadly, to succeed in lifelong learning.

Obtaining universal education is a priority for the United Nations system. In 1995 governments committed to the World Programme of Action for Youth and identified education among its 15 priorities. In doing so, they highlighted the need for ‘improving the level of basic education, skill training and literacy among all youth, including young women and youth in distressed circumstances.’ In addition, at the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, 2000), 164 governments pledged to achieve “Education for All” (EFA) by launching a world movement to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and
Gender Equality: International Journal of Child and Gender Studies

Female student contestants: Exploring undergraduate students talent competition experiences

adults. Participants at the Forum identified six goals to be met by 2015, with young people being the focus of Goal 3: ‘Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults’.

Andrew Hacker ~2003! argued that, in general, females earn higher grades than males, outnumber males in advanced placement classes, and are more likely than males to attend college. There is some evidence that these differences may be due, in part, to stereotype threat. They have also argued that this internalization causes male students to disidentify with school which leads them to study less. Males are also more likely to experience performance burden which increases test anxiety and lowers academic. Has not interrogated the interaction between race-gender differences, but he has investigated the role of class.

The goal commits countries to ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. However, the realization of all six goals provides the best opportunity and environment for youth to benefit from education.

Some researchers argue that achievement gaps in math between girls and boys have lessened over time. One recent study that appeared in Science and received a good deal of media attention concluded that there are no longer gender differences in math performance (Hyde et al., 2008). That study sifted through large amounts of data, including SAT results and state math test scores from 7 million students. Whether the researchers looked at average performance, the scores of the most gifted children, or students’ ability to solve complex math problems, the achievement of girls and boys was roughly equal. Janet Hyde, the lead researcher, concluded that “parents and teachers need to revise their thoughts” about gender gaps (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2008). Some observers have also pointed out that gender gaps on NAEP are far smaller than gaps between racial/ethnic or income groups (Mead, 2006).

As one of the world’s few inexhaustible natural resources, creativity is a source of considerable potential in promoting sustainable socio-economic development for people of all ages. The creative industries can serve as a springboard for new ideas and innovation, which can open up new opportunities for employment and learning, while at the same time promoting well-being and self-esteem and empowering entire communities. Young women and men are increasingly engaged in proposing creative solutions to local challenges. This creative energy needs to be harnessed so as to maximize the positive impact it can have on society.

The average percentages of the graduation marks of the male and female students are 55.60 and 57.82 with corresponding standard deviations 8.22 and 8.79, respectively. It is evident
that the average of the graduation marks of female students is higher as compared to the males. Aleamoni (1977) found that the past behavior is considered the best predictor of the future behavior. Dlamini (1995) also investigated the good performance of students in past remains continue in future during studying the best predictors of Swaziland secondary school students' performance in agriculture from the home and school related variables. The samples of the study were 5 female alumni and current students of English Department of Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. Limiting the sample to alumni of extracurricular activities and talents competitions, the researcher would interview 5 female students. The researcher would explain the purposes of the study and asked them to consent to participate. If they refused to so, another participants would be selected. After obtaining consent, there would be an open-ended, in-depth qualitative interview. The interviews would be recorded for the transcription purpose. In case, the participant would not agree to be recorded, there would be detailed notes.

The study would be qualitative. I conducted the analysis of the interview data using open-coding methods to develop, using the interviewees' words to develop themes (Chamaz, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). After the coding process, the writing process was started each themes.

**D. Conclusion**

It is investigated that the performance of the female students is significantly meaningful on several aspects. Extra knowledge development is gained during students involvement on campus or out of campus activities. Respondents expressed that most of extracurricular and competitions activities build their better knowledge. Most of them believed that several important knowledge on life are learned by involving in both activities. Then talent competitions contributed on basic communication skills enlightenment. Both personal and interpersonal communications experiences were improved. Students stated that they could learn on how to build and bridge important interaction. This is due to opportunities and activities both in competitions and extracurricular activities.
References


