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 studens 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 ther 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 though school is determined by a variety of costs and incentives(LoGerfo, Nichols, and Chaplin2006; Long, Iatarola, and Conger 2009; Rothstein 2004). At the same time, females are less likely tomajor in subjects with strict grading standards, such as mathematics and engineering (Turner andBowen 1999). Females also attend colleges that have looser admissions requirements and higheradmissions rates (Jacobs 1999). This partly reflects the fact that selective universities often havelarger male-dominated engineering programs, and are less likely to accept part-time students who aredisproportionately female (Jacobs 1999). The higher high school achievement scores of maleentrants should lower the psychic costs of schooling relative to females, yet the less selectiveinstitutions and majors chosen by females should lower their psychic and direct costs (through lowertuition), 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

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 tofind that incentives due to shifting female premiums on college degrees may also be at work. Yetthe incentives are not due to an increase in the wage premium on a college degree for womenrelative to men; in fact, with the decline of the manufacturing sector, the wage premium associatedwith completing more years of education and with attending a higher quality college have been risingfaster for men than for women (Charles and Luoh 2003; Long forthcoming). Instead, Charles andLuoh (2003) suggest that greater variation in the returns to a college degree among men relative towomen 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 femaleadvantage in college completion is more likely due to the male-female differential in what they referto as "personal" returns to education, including a higher probability of marriage, a higher standard ofliving, and a lower probability of being poor.

Neither the Charles and Luoh (2003) or the DiPreteand Buchmann (2006) papers examine college completion among college enrollees. Therefore, theimportance of expected labor market returns relative to costs (direct, psychic, or opportunity) maybe overstated because the gender gaps in labor market incentives should be relatively small amongcollege entrants. To elaborate, gender differences in knowledge of the labor market should besmaller 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 andfemales complete college may be due to changes in these perceptions of the labor market (e.g. malesexpectations of the returns to a college degree become more uncertain as they progress throughcollege) or, more likely, to the unanticipated costs of college, both direct and psychic. By restrictingan analysis of college completion to those who have decided to enroll, we can better isolate thecontribution of the costs of college to gender gaps.

Given the shortage of research on the reversal in the gender post-secondary education gap, wehave 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 formany important determinants of college achievement that prior studies have omitted, includingdemographic background, educational needs, high school quality, performance on high schoolachievement exams, high school grades, college

quality, and college major. Finally, we analyze twocomplementary, administrative datasets that track the census of college students in two large statesthroughout 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 hadidentical 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 spend 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

hemisphereand female brains showed more connectivitybetween 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 localised manner while female brains are structured forinterconnectedness – and that sex must then be an important consideration when trying to understand brainfunction (Cahill, 2014). On the other hand, other reviewers have questioned the study's findings and advisedthat 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 performbetter on reading tests whilemales have performedbetter onmath tests, particularly at the high school level (Willingham&Cole, 1997). Althoughtests of general intelligence suggest no overall difference between males and females, large differencesby gender are apparent in scores on specific cognitive tasks: males tend to do better atcertain spatial and visual tasks while females tend to excel verbally (Dee, 2005). On the readingtests of theNational Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the female subgroup has consistentlyscored 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 onNAEP 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 governmentscommitted to the World Programme of Action for Youth and identified education among its 15priorities. In doing so, they highlighted the need for 'improving the level of basic education, skilltraining and literacy among all youth, including young women and youth in distressedcircumstances.'In addition, at the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, 2000), 164 governments pledged toachieve "Education for All" (EFA) by launching a world movement to meet the basic learning needsof all children, youth and

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 andadults'.

Andrew Hacker ~2003! argued that, in general, females earn higher grades thanmales, outnumber males in advanced placement classes, and are more likely thanmales to attend college. There is some evidence that these differences may be due, inpart, to stereotype threat. Theyhave also argued that this internalization causes male students to disidentify withschool which leads them to study less. Males are also more likely to experienceperformance burden which increases text anxiety and lowers academic has not interrogated the interactionbetween 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 metthrough equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. However, therealization of all six goals provides the best opportunity and environment for youth to benefit fromeducation.

Some researchers argue that achievement gaps in math between girls and boys have lessenedover time. One recent study that appeared in *Science* and received a good deal of media attentionconcluded 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 mathtest 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, concludedthat "parents and teachers need to revise their thoughts" about gender gaps (Universityof Wisconsin-Madison, 2008). Some observers have also pointed out that gender gaps onNAEP 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 considerablepotential in promoting sustainable socio-economic development for people of all ages. The creativeindustries can serve as a springboard for new ideas and innovation, which can open up newopportunities for employment and learning, while at the same time promoting well-being and selfesteemand empowering entire communities. Young women and men are increasingly engaged inproposing creative solutions to local challenges. This creative energy needs to be harnessed so as tomaximize 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 askedthem 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 recordedfor the transcription purposee.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 enlightment. Both personal and interpersonal communications experienceswere 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.

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