

Who Scores Higher: Male or Female Students?

Ibri College as a Model

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Abstract

The issue: “Who Scores Higher: Male or Female Students” is still a matter of controversy. There is still a gap between male and female achievement, mainly in mathematics and intelligence quotient (IQ). This paper fathoms, uncovers and unfolds the reason(s) behind this controversy to see whether it is true or just a rumor. To get a clear and transparent view of this issue, the researchers have conducted a questionnaire and sought the cooperation of Heads of Departments (HoDs), teachers, and the Registration and Admission Department at Ibri College in the Sultanate of Oman for checking students’ records and achievement in the previous and present results. What has been reached is that girls do score higher than boys in the exams conducted. Explanations, discussions, implications, and recommendations will be highlighted in depth throughout this paper.

Keywords: candidacy, education, evidence, female, grade, math, score

Introduction

Generally speaking, male and female students undergo the same educational environment almost all around the world. They learn in the same classrooms by the same teachers, study the same syllabi, have the same activities or competitions, etc. It is still an issue worth being studied in depth to see the reasons behind this matter which has ignited numerous questions to answer. Do financial, family, and societal circumstances play a crucial role in this field, or do teachers have a particular effect that has both sides—encouraging or discouraging? This paper highlights all possible reasons that may have a direct or indirect role regarding the above issue.

Literature Review

Highlighting the issue of gender differences regarding who scores higher or lower, is still a matter of debate, though some scholars consider it not so important as it should be. Up to this point, there have not been any formal, professional, or international conferences or seminars held to discuss this issue objectively. What has been said, to some extent, is personal experiences depending on observations. From an academic viewpoint, there is no use concentrating on this issue, as some scholars admit that it is “outdated” and should be treated as an ordinary point, not a phenomenon. “From an educational point of view, paying attention to gender differences in developed countries, and in particular to the situation of girls, may seem outdated” (Bay & Monseur, 2016, Para. 3).

Away from the academic domain, in politics, for example, gender seems to have an effect on political parties. The percentage of women as presidential nominees in the United States of America has increased. Critics and old hands in America ask whether, someday, there will be a woman as president.

For the first time in history, a major political party in the United States has several women who have declared their candidacy to be their party’s presidential nominee. But TV pundits have been questioning whether, despite the progress indicated by the huge influx of women elected into Congress last fall, the U.S. is ever going to elect a woman to the country’s highest leadership position (Folkman & Zenger, 2019, Para. 2)

In some researches, there is a difference between male and female students regarding studying and understanding. Female students’ main purpose is to comprehend the material at hand and absorb every item in it, whereas male students’ concentration is on the final exam result. It is an indirect competition between comprehension and performance. “Previous research has shown girls tend to study in order to understand the materials, whereas boys emphasize performance, which indicates a focus on the final grades” (Voyer & Voyer, 2014, Para.6). Moreover, gender differences mainly exist in mathematics—girls are accused of being less efficient in scientific fields. Whether this is a rumor or fact, that needs an objective study to trust and believe in. “However, girls are less likely to be called on in math classes than boys, even when they raise their hands as much as boys do. Moreover, some teachers unconsciously grade girls’ math tests more harshly than boys’”. (MacArthur & Santo, 2022. Para. 8).

Teachers, undoubtedly, play a significant role in the classroom. Sometimes females’ attitudes keep improving over time, which might be the reason why they score better than boys. Could teachers be more flexible and understanding during teaching or conducting tests? Could this be due to the high spirit and confidence they-girls- gain as they learn?

... why did the attitudes of the women in our study improve over time? Was it based on their confidence in their abilities as their grades improved, or did their statistics teachers

influence their perception of their own abilities over time? (MacArthur & Santo, 2022. Para. 8).

In some societies, parents have a very encouraging role in their daughters' performance and achievement alike. They encourage them to work harder and might reward them for their hard work and success. In some eastern societies, many parents are not concerned with their daughters' education; they think whether girls pass or fail that does not matter—they will marry and have families. “Some possible reasons for girls performing better could be that because parents assume boys will be better at math and science, they may encourage girls to try harder” (Hilburn, 2014. Para. 9). Gender differences in performance might occur randomly and all expectations might not be real. Contrary to the fact that boys may score higher in mathematics, girls can outperform boys easily. Not only this, but in Reading, as well. “In some cases, girls did better in both math and reading. In others, boys had the advantage in math and almost matched girls on English-related subjects” (Crawford, 2018, Para. 3). Does socioeconomic status have an effect on the gap gender in mathematics, in particular?

Socioeconomic differences can have a crucial role in male-favoring events. That also needs a deep study to reach precise results. How could socioeconomic factors affect students' performance in a particular subject? “We find that math gaps tend to favor males more in socioeconomically advantaged school districts and districts with larger gender disparities in adult socioeconomic status.” (Crawford, 2018, Para. 4). Are there biased teachers who favor one sex over the other, and give marks extravagantly? Let us see.

The leakage of information regarding girls outperforming boys and getting higher marks seems clear in some data. This data show that a number of teachers favor girls uniformly—grant marks to girls, while boys get lower results. “The data show, for the first time, that gender disparities in teacher grades start early and uniformly favor girls. In every subject area, boys are represented in grade distributions below where their test scores would predict”. (Weeks, 2013, Para. 4).

This gender imbalance may steer men away from the profession. This could theoretically impact the quality of male teachers, which, in turn, could be the source of why female students do better when taught by more qualified, female teachers. But if this were true, male students would also experience a similar rise in test scores when taught by a woman.... (Fisher, 2015, Para. 9).

There is a disastrous action regarding steering men away from the teaching profession. Teachers, in general, are fair and clear in doing their job; personally and professionally. When a certain teacher teaches a certain group of students, he/she treats and teaches all students according to the code of ethics and academic instructions. Is it true that students taught by female teachers score

higher than boys and be always in a good shape? Students' behavior in class plays an important role in teachers' beliefs and judging, as well. A number of teachers at some prestigious universities might give female students higher marks, which, if true, is odd. "Research from the University of Georgia and Columbia University suggests that classroom behavior of girls may lead teachers to assign them higher grades than their male counterparts". (Businessline, 2013, Para. 2). Is there a legitimate way through which the gender gap in mathematics could be uncovered and unfolded? A public exam throughout the country might unfold the secret behind that gender gap. "A new study suggests the format of state tests may partially explain why boys tend to earn higher scores in math and girls generally do better on the reading and language arts sections" (Ordway, 2018, Para. 1). Who reads more, boys or girls? Does reading help in getting high marks at school?

Why are girls performing better at school than their male classmates? First, girls read more than boys. Reading proficiency is the basis upon which all other learning is built. When boys don't do well at reading, their performance in other school subjects suffers too. (Economist, 2015, Para. 2).

From kindergarten to primary school, boys and girls share classrooms with the same teachers. The teachers usually consider no discrimination in teaching and explaining the materials, especially mathematics. They are exposed to the same syllabus and treated fairly. Normally, in this stage, both boys and girls get similar grades. As they grow up, some differences occur. The difference appears as they enter university; disparities become apparent. "In preschool and elementary school boys and girls generally perform similarly on math tests. Later at school, in high school and college, more consistent differences start to emerge" (Ganley, 2018, Para. 2). What about teachers' praise and compliment in class?

"The fact that teachers praise female students' behavior and interact with them more frequently may be important contributors to why female students report more interest in learning than males". (Sukoco & Arsendy, 2020, Para. 7). Does female students' behavior play a distinct role in class? "Researchers suggest girls are better behaved in class and this influences how teachers perceive their work" (Coughlan, 2015, Para. 4). What about teachers being more flexible and easily approached by girls? "Teachers are more lenient in their marking of girls' schoolwork, according to an international study". (Coughlan, 2015, Para. 2).

In order to get some real and authentic information about who scores higher, the researchers have referred to heads of departments(HoDs), and instructors concerned, who all admit that girls do better than boys in exams. Moreover, the Registration and Admission Department was consulted about the same matter, and after referring to previous records, they assured us that all distinguished students were girls. Aisha Al Zidi, Head of the Department of Admission and

Academic Follow-up mentioned that the official records witness that almost all students on the List of Honor are girls.

Questionnaire Analysis

To get more information about the issue of who scores higher; male or female students, a survey was distributed among (35) male and female Foundation Program students, level 4, at Ibrri College of Applied Sciences- the Sultanate of Oman. The questionnaire consists of (10) questions: (5 agree/disagree), (5 yes/ no) questions.

Questionnaire

Yes/No Questions

Figure 1:

1.As a student, I notice that girls score higher than boys.

(A) Yes

(B) No

Q.1 As a student, I notice that girls score higher than boys.

● Yes
● No

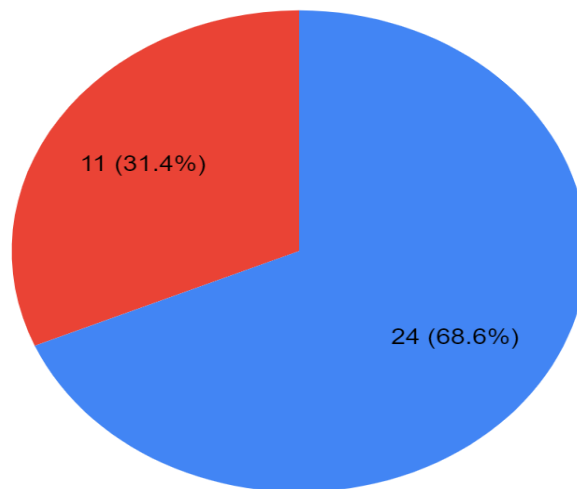


Figure 2:

2.Relatively speaking, girls have more time dedicated to studying at home.

(A) Yes

(B) No

Q2 Relatively speaking, girls have more time dedicated to studying at home.

● Yes

● No

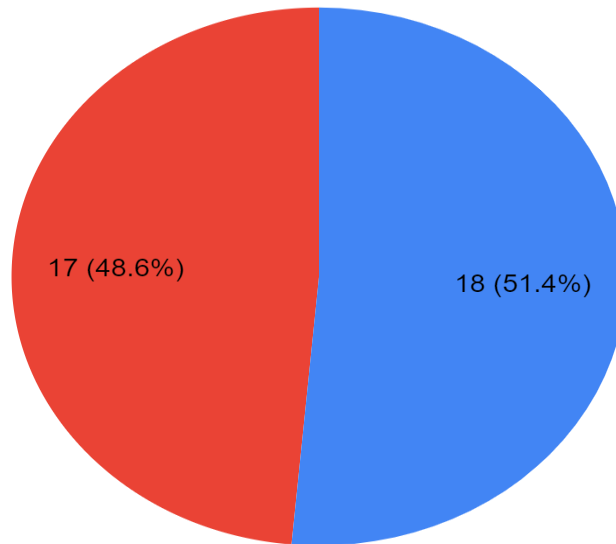


Figure 3:

3. Some male teachers might be more lenient with girls.

(A) Yes

(B) No

Q3 Some male teachers might be more lenient with girls.

● Yes

● No

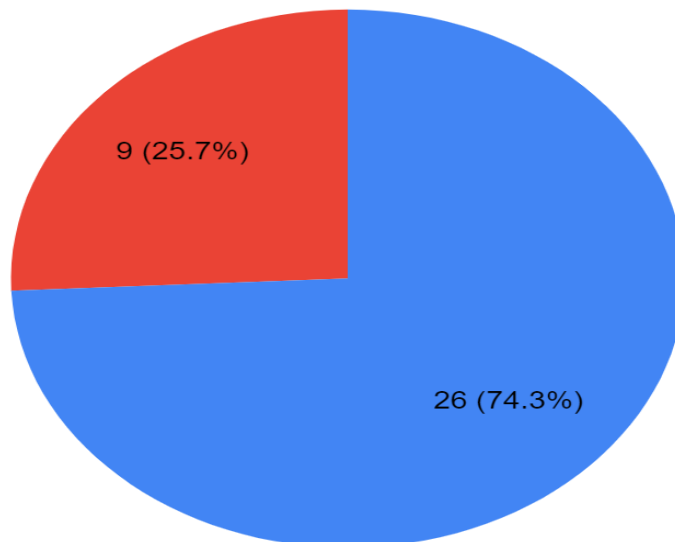


Figure 4:

4. Teachers should treat students fairly, no matter whether they are boys or girls.

(A) Yes

(B) No

Q4 Teachers should treat students fairly, no matter whether they are boys or girls.

● Yes

● No

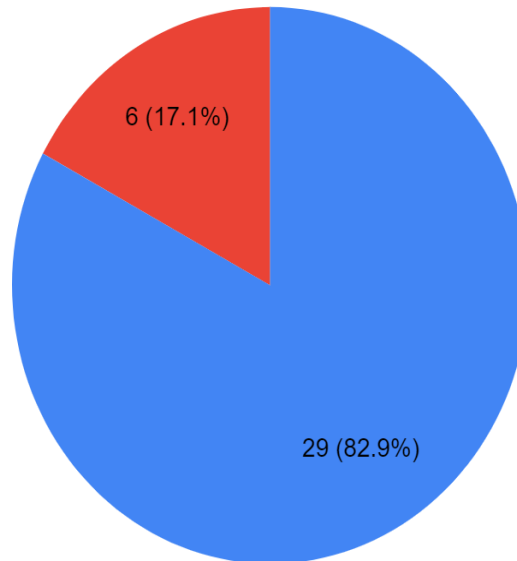


Figure 5:

5. Girls are more confident in classrooms.

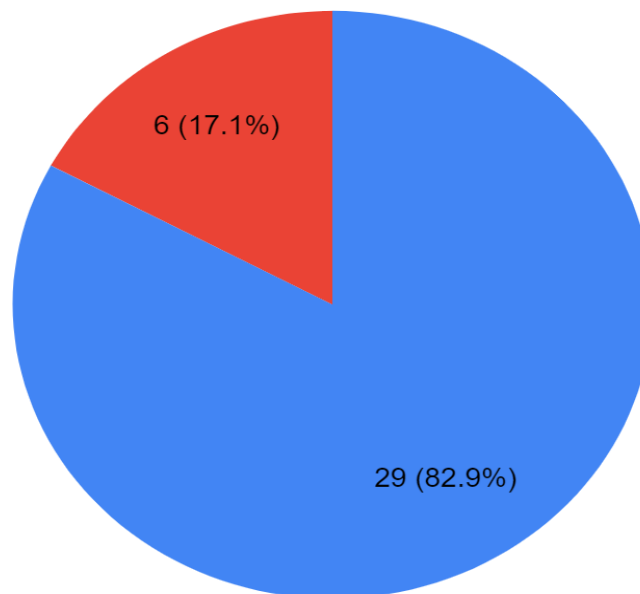
(A) Yes

(B) No

Q.5 Girls are more confident in classrooms.

● Yes

● No



Agree/ Disagree

Figure 6:

6. Parents play a major role in encouraging their daughters to study hard by offering them some awards, or gifts.

(A) Agree

(B) Disagree

Q6 Parents' play a major role in encouraging their daughters to study hard by offering them some awards, or gifts.

● Agree
● Disagree

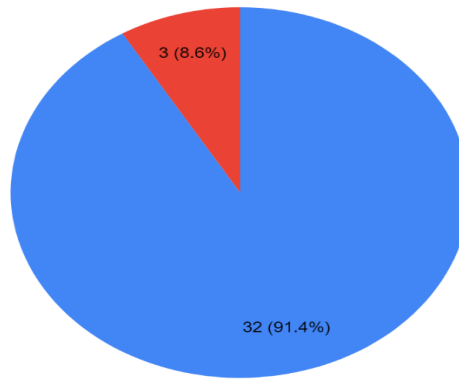


Figure 7:

7. If girls are taught by female teachers, they excel more.

(A) Agree

(B) Disagree

Q7 If girls are taught by female teachers, they excel more.

● Agree
● Disagree

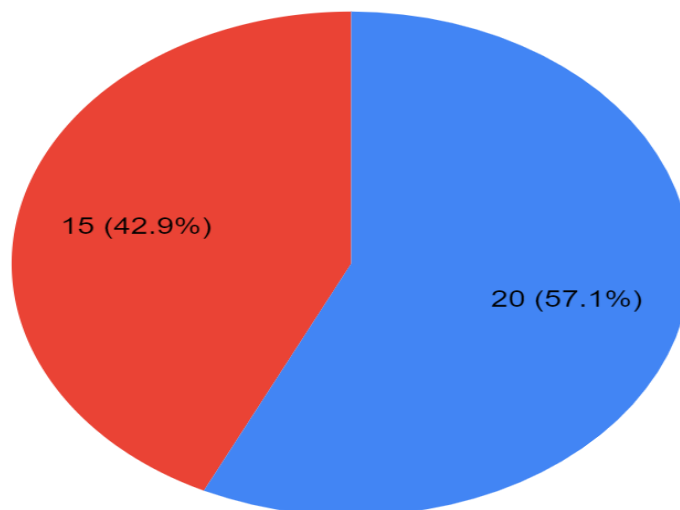


Figure 8:

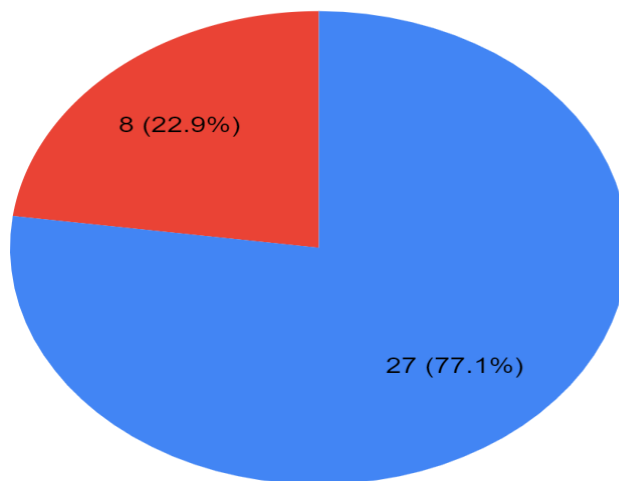
8. Economic, financial, and environmental conditions of students affect academic achievement.

(A) Agree

(B) Disagree

Q8. Economic, financial, and environmental conditions of students affect academic achievement.

● Agree
● Disagree

**Figure 9:**

9. International conferences should be conducted to prove or disprove this case between boys and girls.

(A) Agree

(B) Disagree

Q9 International conferences should be conducted to prove or disprove this case between boys and girls.

● Agree
● Disagree

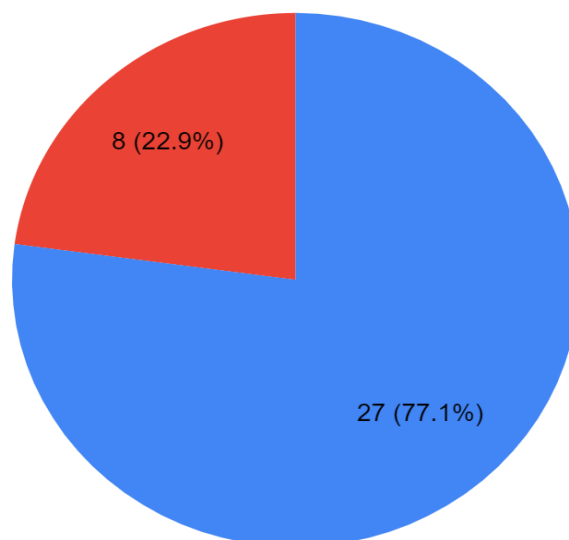


Figure 10:

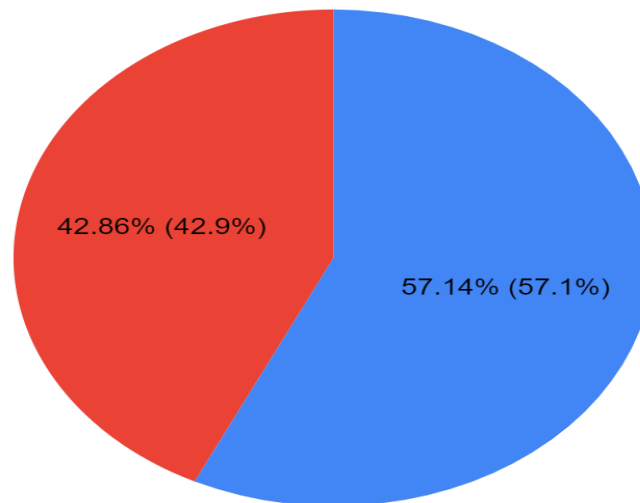
10. Generally speaking, girls are not good at math.

(A) Agree

(B) Disagree

Q10 Generally speaking, girls are not good at math.

● Agree
● Disagree



Recommendations

-this issue should be discussed globally.

-teachers have to work harder and exert efforts to treat all students equally and justly, especially in coeducational classrooms.

-rumors, sometimes, spread rapidly in low-educated societies accusing teachers of being more lenient with girls.

-teachers may keep records of some students' cases regarding social and economic attitudes, and the environment where they live to see whether these have direct signs of good/ bad performance of students.

-parents should treat their sons and daughters fairly, and encourage them to accept the challenge to do different exercises, even sports.

-confidence should be given to boys and girls to express themselves frankly and openly in class and ask about any vague issues.

-teachers should encourage students to work hard and the mark they receive is what they deserve, with no bias.

Conclusion

The majority of studies conducted at schools focus on gender gaps that cover different perspectives; academic achievement, conduct, hard work, discipline, etc. There are some endeavors and experiments done locally- most of them are informally conducted- that show there is a gender gap to be bridged. Some humble studies show that boys excel in mathematics and scientific subjects such as engineering, medicine, and space studies, while girls outperform boys in humanities and liberal arts.

What the researchers have reached in this study, in collaboration with the Registration and Admission Department, and referring to previous semesters' results, girls outperform boys in almost all subjects. Moreover, approximately all those on the List of Honor are girls. No matter what local studies show, it is recommended that universal conferences should be conducted regarding this matter.

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