

**GENDER BIAS IN WAEC'S EXAMINATION QUESTIONS AND STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN STM SUBJECTS AT THE JSSCE (1999-2001) IN THE GAMBIA**  
(RPB/1/2002)

**ABSTRACT**

The objective of the study was to compare male and female candidates' performance in the STM subjects (1999-2001); to assess the extent to which JSSCE past questions have been gender biased; elicit information from Examiners, Teachers, Heads of School and WAEC senior staff vis-à-vis the gender neutrality of WAEC's examination questions. A content analysis of WAEC's past questions in the STM subjects was therefore conducted to ascertain to what extent past questions have been gender biased.

Candidates' grades in JSSCE were also reversed and analyzed to test whether there exists any significant differences in performance between the male and the female candidates. It was found that in Mathematics and Science, there are few cases of items which were gender biased. However, in the Technical Subjects there was no case of gender biased item. In addition male candidates generally performed better than female candidates in Mathematics, Science and Technical Drawing.

On the other hand, female candidates performed better than male candidates in Woodwork and Metalwork. The study finally looked at the perception of Examiners, Teachers, Heads of School and WAEC's senior staff with regard to the gender neutrality of JSSCE questions. The majority of the respondents did agree that the items were gender neutral. The findings were discussed and it was recommended among others that Mathematics questions should be carefully developed to ensure gender neutrality.