

The Influence of School Types, Class Classifications and Gender on Academic Achievement in Economics among High School Students: A Comparative Analysis.

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Abstract - The objective of this study was to examine empirically the influence of school types, class classifications and gender on students' academic achievement in Economics among high school students in Irewole Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. Due to this, three research questions were formulated and answered. All Grade II (Senior Secondary School Two) students who offered Economics in both private and public schools within the study area during 2017/2018 academic session formed the target population. However, simple random sampling technique which was stratified in nature and operation was used to select two-hundred and twenty seven (227) respondents. One-hundred and four (104) participants were from private schools while one-hundred and twenty three (123) participants were chosen from public schools. The empirical findings obtained with the aid of t-statistics indicated insignificant difference in the academic achievement of students in Economics on the basis of types of school. Beside, students in Science streams in both schools exhibited slightly better academic achievement in Economics than their counterparts in Arts and Commercial classes. There was a significant difference in the students' academic achievement on the basis of gender which was in favour of female students in private-funded schools. The study suggested that the teachers of both schools should endeavour to adopt varieties of teaching methods that aim at assisting the students to benefit from teaching not minding the class streams and gender, among others.

Keyword - School Types; Class Classifications; Gender; Academic Achievement.

I. INTRODUCTION

The prevailing economic system of a country could be used in determining the appropriate segment to answer the questions associated with the basic economic problems of that society which are; what to produce, how to produce, for whom to produce, and efficient use of resources. This is because, an economic system can be regarded as an organized way in which a country allocates resources and distributes goods and services across the whole nation or a given geographical area. It includes the combination of several institutions, entities, agencies, and decision-making bodies that make up the economic structure of a specific community.

In a mixed economy like Nigeria where the attributes of both capitalist and planned economic system are present, the mean of production and distribution are in the hands of both private individuals and public sectors. This system encourages simultaneous participation of government and private bodies in the economic activities most especially in the key sectors like education. This is feasible because of the intention not only to improve the standard and quality of school and student outcomes, to stimulate greater variety of choice of school for both parents and students, but also to build creative and innovative skills among students in the schools

In the light of this, educational industry in Nigeria gives room for two types of school which are government and private schools. Government schools are types of schools

which are funded by the government of the country with low fee structure or without fee which can be at national, state and local levels. Whereas, private school is a type of school funded by a private organization or a Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and with high fee structure designed to meet necessary conditions in terms of teaching and learning facilities, and in addition to profit maximisation motive both in the short and long- run phases of the business.

However, various reasons have been highlighted in relation to both benefits and demerits which may be attributed to the existence of the types of school. It could be deduced that the advocates of private schools argued that private involvement in school management leads to more efficiency and responsiveness to parents' demands; more autonomous to manage than the public schools in terms of hiring and compensating teaching and non-teaching staff, and introduction of incentives for performance; application and adoption of personal discretion to curricula and instructional methods, in a manner that suits the interests and abilities of their students; meeting parents demands concerning curricula, teaching methods, facilities, discipline, and responsiveness to students' needs; healthy competition that can improve the productive efficiency of public schools, and benefit the entire system in such a way that the families, non-profit organisations or enterprises that fund private schools are more likely to demand better student outcomes and hold the school accountable for students' performance, and even parents of children in public schools – and staff in these schools – may then begin comparing the quality of education available in other schools and start demanding higher standards in public schools (OECD, 2012).

Therefore, the advocates of public schools argued that private schools seem to threaten equity and social cohesion and possibly subject to market failures in terms of providing incomplete information about the schools which may in turn lead to discrimination during admissions procedures. It is further argued that private schools have no incentives to look at the broader picture of education. Meanwhile, by granting greater discretion over curricula can mean that schools could opt out of teaching certain core social values. In many countries, private schools have been created with the explicit intent to be taken care of specific groups of students, identified by religion, ethnicity, academic ability or socio-economic status. While the prevalence of these kinds of schools offers parents greater choice, it undermines social cohesion and erodes a sense of community among

different social groups (OECD, 2012). In spite of these arguments put forward by the advocates of the two schools of thought, it was observed that academic achievement of students was not explicitly taken into consideration.

Okon and Archibong (2015) revealed that students in private secondary schools performed better in Social Studies than those in public schools. David and Beegle (2005) reported that students who attended public junior secondary schools have higher test scores in their result than those who attended private schools.

Alimi, Ehinola and Alabi (2012) agreed that there is significant difference in facilities available in public and private schools. In spite of this, no significant difference in academic performance of students existed in the two types of secondary schools. Harry (2016) argued that private schools are not only better resourced but also have parents whose socio-economic status is higher and are more involved in their children's education. But, it was agreed upon that public schools have more professionally qualified teachers than the private schools.

Akinloye, Adu, and Adu (2015) submitted that the students in private schools did better than their counterparts in public schools academically in Economics. This is attributed to the factors like school location, socio-economic status of parents and the availability of instructional materials in private secondary schools. Igbinedion and Epumepu (2011) reported that there was significant difference in academic performance of students in business studies between public and private schools which was in favour of both male and female students of public schools.

Sunday (2014) concluded that pupils in the private primary schools performed better than their counterparts in the public schools. This is due to certain factors on the part of private schools which include; efficient instructional encounter in the classroom as a result of frequent and thorough supervision, dynamic school administration, frequent class assignments, prompt payment of teachers' salaries and allowances, mutual parent-school relationship, positive pupil-teacher interactions, absence of teachers industrial actions, provision of adequate furniture and the maintenance of the standard teacher-pupil ratio. The author observed that most of the structures in public schools are dominated by dilapidated buildings, while majority of the private ones are housed in uncompleted buildings which in turn may not be conducive for teaching-learning processes.

Marc and Ping (2015) confirmed that private high school students scores were significantly higher than public high

school students on reading culture, Mathematics, and science assessments. This is because, according to the authors, students who attend private high schools are more likely to have socio-economic characteristics which may have positive and direct association with academic success and to have school peers with university-educated parents.

Bukari¹ and Abra (2017) reiterated that students in public schools performed better in Economics than their private counterparts. This was attributed to difference in the teachers' motivation, teaching and learning resources as well as academic facilities in the schools. Olatoye and Olasehinde (2014) found that there was a significant difference in the students' science achievement between public and private secondary schools, such that private schools students performed significantly better than their public school counterparts. Roya and Murthy (2016) lamented that students of private schools had better critical thinking ability and good study habits than those in government schools.

However, school types may appear not only a single factor correlate of academic achievement but the class stream such as Science, Arts and Commercial streams, a student belongs to seem to play an essential role irrespective of the school types. As a consequence, Aransi (2017) corroborated that there was no significant difference in the academic performance of high school students in Mathematics between students in Science and Arts stream, Science and Commercial streams as well as Arts and Commercial streams while significant difference existed in the academic performance of students in English Language between Science and Commercial stream and Arts and Commercial streams respectively but in favour of the students in Science and Arts classes. In addition, student's gender could as well determine the academic achievement aside from the class stream.

MeenuDev (2016) argued that the academic achievement of girls in elementary schools was higher than their boys counterparts which was attributed to factors like general mental ability, home environment and interest of the students. Cecilia and Anthony (2017) reported that majority of males had low and moderate academic achievement, while more females had higher academic achievement than males. In the same vein, using Mastery Learning Strategy and Conventional Methods for teaching Geography, Jacob and Linus (2017) submitted that the female students performed excellently than their male counterparts when Mastery Learning Strategy method was used to teach Geography. Also, male students had slightly higher

academic achievement in Conventional Method than the academic achievement of their female counterparts. Godpower-Echie and Sopuruchi (2017) opined that gender quality of the learners was insignificant to academic achievement but would have great effect on the interest to be developed for a school subject.

Aransi (2018) posited that the interactive influence of students' gender and age had an insignificant effect on academics performance in Economics, while the existence of significant difference in the academic performance of the High School students in Economics was attributed to gender but in favour of female students. Olatoye and Olasehinde (2014) opined that there is no significant difference in science achievement among students of both public and private schools on the basis of gender attribute.

Muhammad (2017) advocated that the anxiety attributed to school subject such as feeling of tension, apprehension, or fear that vitiates the ability to manipulate numbers and solve mathematical-related problems had indifference outcomes in the academic performance of students irrespective of the gender quality. This indicated that both gender might be equally affected by the anxiety which associated with any of the school subjects like mathematics.

Therefore, it could be inferred from the literature that students' academic achievement in the school subjects is a function of varieties of factors which include school types, class classifications and gender among others. Whereas, there was no consensus in the literature as per the effect of school types and gender on students' academic achievement, while attention has not been fully tailored towards examining the students' achievement between private and public schools not only on the basis of gender but also on the basis of class classifications at High School levels. Hence, the study stands to fill the identified gap in the literature and at the same time make empirical contributions to ongoing debate.

A. Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study was to examine the influence of school types, class classifications and gender on students' academic achievement in Economics among high school in Irewole Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. While, the specific objectives were to;

- i. Determine the impact of school types on academic achievement in Economics among High School students.

- ii. Reveal the effect of class classifications on students’ academic achievement in Economics among High Schools.
- iii. Find out the influence of gender-cum-school types on academic achievement in Economics among High School students.

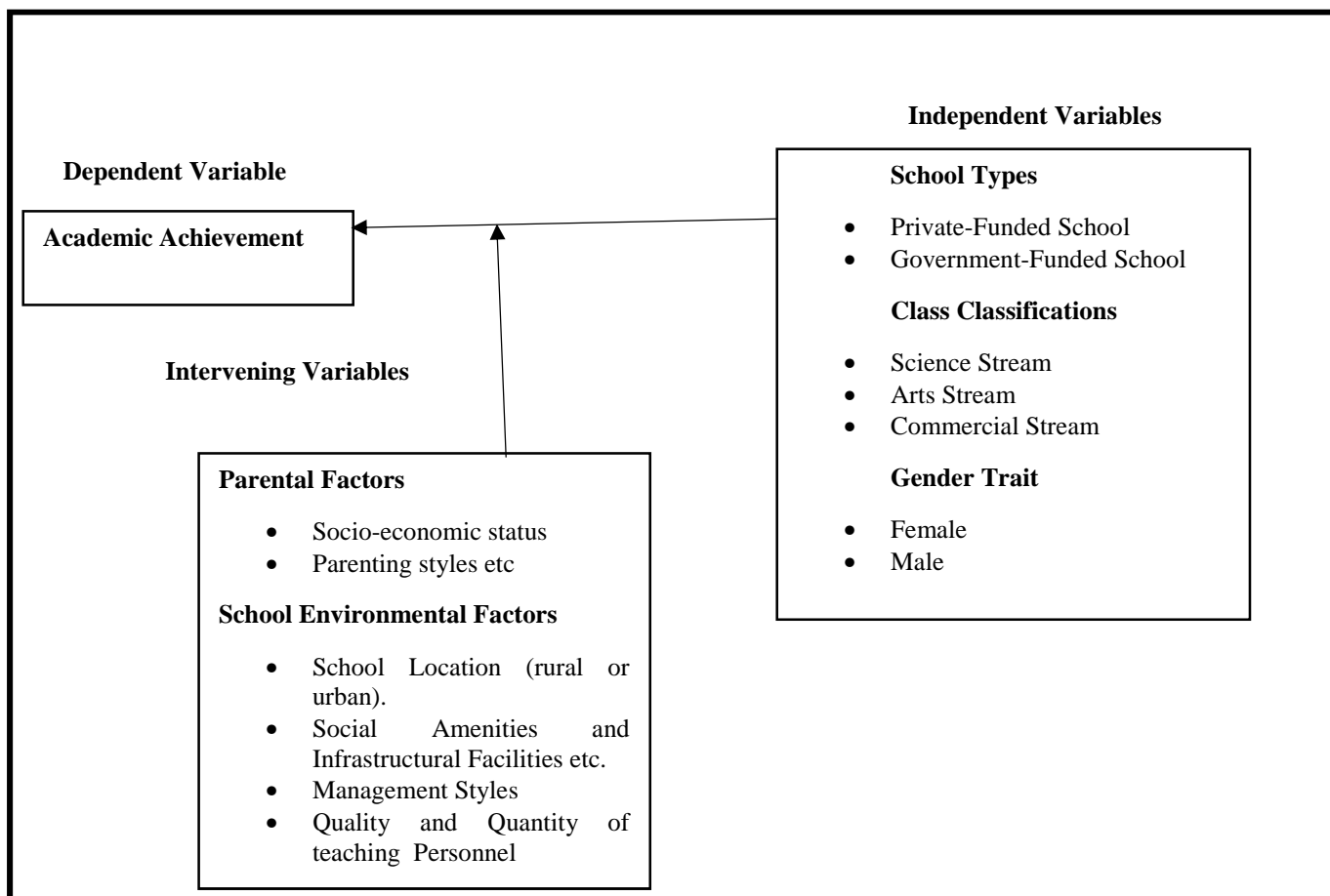
B. Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated and answered:

- i. Is there any significant difference in Economics achievement among high school students on the basis of school types?
- ii. Is there any significant difference in Economics achievement among high school students on the basis of class classifications?
- iii. Is there any significant difference in Economics achievement among high school students on the basis of gender?

C. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework designed for this study postulated that there are key factors that is teacher, parent and government factors upon which academic achievement of students could be predicated. However, the types of school a child is going might not be an only determinant of academic achievement but the class stream such a child is placed in addition to the endowed personal quality of being male or female could be other correlates of academic achievement. It should be noted that students’ interest towards school subjects differs with respect to gender quality. Similarly, the type of school a child would attend depends on the socio-economic status of the parents which in turn dictates the kind of school environment. This relationship between the academic achievement and explanatory variables used in the study are shown in the diagram below;



II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The study employed descriptive survey research design which is also known as ex post facto research design. The design was considered appropriate for this research work due to its unique and in-built features such that the researcher can only report what has happened or what is happening without having substantive control over the variables used in the study. In this study, however, the researcher was not interested in controlling the school type a student is attending; a class stream is being placed; or gender quality of the student. The researcher's intention was to ascertain the influence of these variables on academic achievement.

B. Target Population

All Grade II (Senior Secondary School Two) students who offered Economics in both private and public schools in Irewole Local Government Area of Osun State during 2017/2018 academic session formed the target population for the study.

C. Sample and Sampling Technique

Two private and one public schools from High schools were used as sample for the study. Besides, simple random sampling technique which was stratified in operation was adopted to select two-hundred and twenty seven (227) respondents altogether. Out of this figure, one-hundred and four (104) participants were from private schools while the remaining one-hundred and twenty three (123) participants were chosen from a public school. However, three strata were designed per school type in order to account for the class classifications variables and two for gender.

Thus, thirty-seven (37), twenty-seven (27) and forty (40) participants were sampled from Science, Commercial and Arts stream of the two private schools respectively, while, forty-six (46), thirty-six (36) and forty-one (41) respondents were also selected from the Science, Commercial and Arts classes in the public school sampled for the study. Similarly, fifty-one (51) of the participants from private schools were female and sixty-eight (68) of the respondents from public school were male.

D. Instrumentation

Achievement test tagged Economics Achievement Test (EAT) was used for the study. The instrument which consisted of two sections that is section A and B was designed by the researcher. Section A focused on the

respondents' personal and school attributes while section B was based on test items. Section B comprised 50 items each accompanied with four options lettered A to D.

In order to ensure that the instrument was appropriate for the study, the researcher developed the instrument from eleven (11) topics extracted from Economics Scheme of Work adapted in Osun State in which all SSS II (Senior Secondary School II) students had been exposed to before the administration of the instrument. The breakdown of the items across the topics is shown on the table below:

Table 1: Distribution of Test Items Across the Topics

S/N	Topics	Items	Total
1	Meaning and Concepts of Economics	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 43	6
2.	Basic Economic Problems	15, 31, 40	3
3.	Basic Tools for Economics Analysis	3, 9, 23, 32, 44	5
4.	Theory of Demand and Supply	10, 8, 11, 18, 21, 37	6
5.	The Production Possibility Curve (PPC)	19,41	2
6.	Theory of Cost and Revenue	24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 33	6
7.	Economic System	14, 16, 17, 22, 34	5
8.	Labour Market	36, 39, 42	3
9.	Theory of Utility	35, 45, 46, 48, 50	5
10	Price Determination	7, 26, 30, 47	4
11.	Market Structure	12, 13, 20, 38, 49	5
Total			50

Source: Author Compilation (2018)

Besides, the reliability of the instrument (EAT) was conducted on a set of students from another school (one private and one public schools) which were not part of the sampled schools scheduled for the study. The test of reliability was established with the aid of Kuder Richardson (KR- 20) which produced moderate reliability coefficient of 0.70.

E. Data Collection

Before the administration of the instrument, an initial visit was made to the sampled schools where the purpose of visitation was made known to the school management and

permission was solicited from the principal of each of the selected secondary schools in Irewole Local Government Area of Osun State. After this, the researcher personally commenced the administration of the instrument the following week which lasted for exactly six days.

F. Data Analysis Procedure

A component of inferential statistics, that is, independent t-test statistics was used at 5% level of significant to analyse the data collected for the study and provided answer to the stated research questions.

III. RESULTS

Research Question I: Is there any significant difference in Economics achievement among high school students on the basis of school types?

Table 2: T-test result showing the difference in Economics achievement between students of private and Public School

School Types	N	Mean	St. Dev	Df	T _{cal}	T _{tab}	Remark
Private	104	19.00	5.089	225	1.246	1.960	NS
Public	123	18.17	4.917				

Source: Author Computation (2018). Two-Tailed Test at 5% level of Significant

Table 2 revealed that out of 50 marks obtainable from the test per respondent, the mean scores of students in private schools stood at 19 marks while students in public school obtained the mean scores of approximately 18 marks. However, in comparing the academic achievement between the students of the two categories of schools, the t-calculated value of 1.246 emanated from the test with corresponding t-

tabulated value of 1.960 at 5% level of significant. This indicated that there was no significant difference in Economics achievement between private and public schools students. This is because, the critical value of 1.960 was higher than the calculated value of 1.246. The outcome was premised on 95% level of confidence interval.

Research Question II: Is there any significant difference in Economics achievement among high school students on the basis of class classifications?

Table 3: T-test result showing the difference in Economics achievement between students of Private and Public Schools on the basis of Class Classifications.

School Types	Class Stream	N	Mean	St. Dev	Df	T _{cal}	T _{tab}	Remark
Private	Science	37	20.57	5.989	76	2.202	1.980	Sig.
Public	Arts	41	17.83	5.079				
Private	Science	37	20.57	5.989	71	2.150	1.980	Sig.
Public	Commercial	36	17.72	5.306				
Private	Commercial	27	16.26	4.320	71	-2.399	1.980	Sig.
Public	Science	46	18.83	4.474				
Private	Commercial	27	16.26	4.320	66	-1.321	1.980	Not Sig.
Public	Arts	41	17.83	5.079				
Private	Arts	40	19.40	3.895	84	0.626	1.980	Not Sig.
Public	Science	46	18.83	4.474				
Private	Arts	40	19.40	3.895	74	1.584	1.980	Not Sig.
Public	Commercial	36	17.72	5.306				

Source: Author Computation (2018). Two-Tailed Test at 5% level of Significant.

Table 3 contained empirical outcomes with respect to class classifications in the private and public schools. Out of 50 marks obtainable, the mean scores of private school

students from the existed class streams was approximately 21 marks, 16 marks and 19 marks for Science, Commercial and Arts classes respectively. Similarly, the students in the

Science, Commercial and Arts streams of the public school used in the study obtained the average scores of approximately 19 marks, 18 marks and 18 marks respectively.

However, the t-tabulated values obtained from the academic achievement scores between Science-private and Arts-public; Science-private and Commercial-public; and Commercial-private and Science -public produced 2.202, 2.150 and -2.399 while t-critical value stood at 1.980 which was noticed to be less than the associated t-calculated values. It was observed from this fact that there was significant difference in the academic achievement of students between Science-private and Arts-public, Science-private and Commercial-public; and Commercial-private

Research Question III: Is there any significant difference in Economics achievement among high school students on the basis of gender?

Table 4: T-test result showing the difference in Economics achievement between students of Private and Public Schools on the basis of Gender.

School Types	Gender	N	Mean	St. Dev	Df	T _{cal}	T _{tab}	Remark
Private	Male	53	18.15	5.326	106	1.297	1.980	Not Sig.
Public	Female	55	19.44	5.010				
Private	Female	51	19.76	4.844	117	2.804	1.980	Sig
Public	Male	68	17.28	4.722				

Source: Author Computation (2018). Two-Tailed Test at 5% level of Significant

Table 4 indicated empirical outcomes emanated from both types of school on the basis of gender trait. The mean scores of approximately 18 marks, 20 marks 19 marks, and 17 marks were obtained by male and female students from the private schools and female and male students from the public school respectively. However, t-test result produced the t-calculated value of 1.297 with corresponding t-critical value of 1.980 at 5% level of significant between male and female students in private and public schools. It is revealed that the t-critical value of 1.980 was greater than the t-calculated value of 1.297. Hence, there was no significant difference between the academic achievements of male students from private schools and female students from public schools. Besides, the t-calculated value of 2.804 which was greater than the t-critical value of 1.980 at 5% level of significant originated from female students in private schools and male students in public schools. This buttressed that there was significant difference between the academic achievement of female students in private schools and male students in public schools which was in favour of female students in private schools.

and Science-public but in favour of students in Science stream of both private and public schools.

In the same vein, the t-tabulated values obtained from the academic achievement scores between Commercial-private and Arts-public; Arts-private and Science-public; and Arts-private and Commercial-public stood -1.321, 0.626 and 1.584 with corresponding t-critical value of 1.980 which was observed to be greater than the computed values from the t-test statistics. It was revealed from this findings that there was no significant difference in the academic achievement of students between Commercial-private and Arts-public; Arts-private and Science-public; and Arts-private and Commercial-public schools students.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

On the aggregate, the empirical findings revealed that there was no significant difference in Economics achievement between students in private and public high schools. This may be attributed to the effects of availability of qualified Economics teachers in public high schools in Irewole Local Government Area of Osun State which occurred as a result of the re-deployment of all graduates teaching staff from middle schools to high schools by Osun State Government in the year 2013. These teachers were able to prepare students in public high schools in a way that made them able to compete keenly with their counterparts in private high schools.

However, the outcome of this work is in tandem with the research findings reported by Alimi, Ehinola and Alabi (2012) in which no significant difference in academic performance of students existed in the two types of secondary schools irrespective of the favourable state of infrastructural facilities in the private schools. This is in contrary to recent empirical finding conducted on primary school pupils by Samuel (2017) where favourable academic

performance was reported in favour of private school pupils in spite of the moderate pupil-teacher ratio that prevailed in the studied public school irrespective of the school location. At the same time, Kumwenda, Cleland, Walker, Lee, and Greatrix (2018) found that Students from private schools had significantly higher mean scores in UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT) than students from government-funded schools. Similarly, these set of students also came into medical school with significantly higher mean scores obtained from Graduate Medical School Admissions Test (GAMSAT)) than their counterparts from public schools.

The findings from the class classifications point of view indicated that there was significant difference in the academic achievement of the students in both types of school which was in favour of Science students in private schools over Arts and Commercial counterparts in public schools and as well as Science students in public over Commercial students in private schools. This concurred with research findings conducted by Aransi (2017) where significant difference in students' academic performance in English Language was reported in favour of Science stream. Therefore, it is clear to conclude that the students in Science stream of the high school usually exhibit and maintain high level of cognitive and logical reasoning and at the same time engage their personal efforts in academic rigour as compare to their counterparts in the other two streams irrespective of the school types.

The outcomes from the disaggregated levels indicated that there was significant difference in the academic achievement of students on the basis of gender such that female students in private schools did slightly better than their male counterparts in public schools. This concurred with the recent research work conducted by Aransi (2018) in which the existence of significant difference in the academic performance of the High School students in Economics was attributed to gender but in favour of female students. The feasibility of the outcome that emanate from the current study may be attributed to harsh economic condition among the majority of people in the state in particular and in the country as a whole. This harsh economic condition exposed majority of students of public schools as at the time of investigation most especially, female ones to learning of one trade or the other after official closing time which might deny them of having enough time to revise their school work. Besides, the parents of students in private schools have high socio-economic status and they are more involved in the education of their children compare to the parents of the students in public schools.

V. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that there was no significant difference in the academic achievement of students in Economics on the basis of school types. However, from the disaggregated phases, significant difference existed which was in favour of students in Science stream in private schools over Arts and Commercial counterparts in public schools, and Science students in public over Commercial students in private schools. Also, there was significant difference in the academic achievement of students in Economics on the basis of gender such that female students in private schools did slightly better than their male counterparts in public schools.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the empirical outcomes of this research work, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

- i. The management and authority of private schools should emulate the policy thrust of the state government by engaging graduate teachers to teach Economics at high school segment.
- ii. The teachers in both schools should endeavour to employ different teaching methods in order to take care of the prevalent of individual differences among the learners irrespective of the class stream and gender trait.
- iii. The teachers in both schools should also give special attention to students in both Arts and Commercial streams but not at the detriment of students in Science class in the course of their teaching.

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