# Female and Male Students' Educational Performance in Tertiary Education in the Punjab Pakistan

Muhammad Shoaib*, Hazir Ullah**

## ABSTRACT

*The recent decades have observed a variation in the females and males educational performance across Pakistan. There is a trend of females' outperformance and males' underperformance in tertiary education. Females tend to outperform males in several important level of examinations from matric to university education. The current study, thus, focuses on female students' outperformance and male students' underperformance in tertiary education in the Punjab, Pakistan. The study universe is the University of the Punjab, Lahore. Content analysis was carried out on the ten years results of master level examinations conducted from 2004-06 to 2013-15. Out of 83, 61 master level programmes were selected through lottery method. The data were collected through Data Sheet from the concerned departments and examination sections. It is noteworthy mentioned that the research simply highlights the trends of data in terms of gender and geographical location of top position holders and do not explore causes of female outperformance and male underperformance. The study findings reveal that female students have outperformed male students in tertiary education in University of the Punjab-Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** Content analysis, Educational performance, geographical location, Position holder, tertiary education,

## Introduction

The recent decades have shown a variation in the females and males educational performance across Pakistan. The change shows females' outperformance and males' underperformance in education. Educational results on every level (secondary, higher secondary, graduate and post-graduate levels), shows vivid females' outperformance. Unlike the developed world (Johnson, 2017; Legewie & DiPrete, 2012; Lortie, Castrogiovanni, & Cox, 2017; Mead, 2006; Saa, 2016; Skelton, 2012). This phenomenon/issue has not received serious academic attention in Pakistan. Thus, this study focuses on young female and male students' academic performance in tertiary education in the Punjab, Pakistan. Generally, in the Punjab, female as compared to males have less opportunities and access to education in general and higher education in particular. There are multiple and diverse factors discouraging girls access to tertiary education (Azhar, 2008; Batool, Sajid, & Shaheen, 2013). Males, on the other hand, have greater and easy access to education (Batool et al., 2013; Malik & Courtney, 2011; Niazi & Mace, 2006; Rehman et al., 2013). Despite limited opportunities and access to education, females' outperformance in tertiary education needs to be discussed and highlighted as positive trend (S. Ali, 2012; Batool et al., 2013; Niazi & Mace, 2006). This is an important trend to have to know in Pakistani context how well young females are performing and doing well than young males in education.

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## The Study Context

One of the striking features of education in Pakistan is the prominence of gender inequality in education. Since its inception in 1947, Pakistan is trying to bridge the gap between male and female literacy. Free and compulsory education for all, irrespective of sex, race and ethic discrimination has been outlined in all education policies in the country (Siddiqui, 2016). The government of Pakistan has a firm commitment to the cause of education for all without any discrimination. Article 25-A of the 1973 constitution of Pakistan states that "The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children [irrespective of male and female) of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by the law." In addition to the constitutional commitment, Pakistan has committed to achievement of equality of access to education by signing international declarations and agreements, including the World Declaration on Education For All (1990) and the Dakar Framework for Action for EFA-2000 (Ullah, 2013). Despite these commitments at the national and international levels, the literacy rate in the country is 62.3 percent (72.5 % for male and 52.8 percent for female). There is a great regional variation in literacy rate of male and female and their access to education in the country. The issue of females' and males' unequal access to education in general and higher education in particular is historically rooted (Vieira, Vieira, & Raposo, 2018).

The geographical territory constituting Pakistan remained backward during British colonial rule. The regions comprising Pakistan were backward in all respects, including in education. At the time of independence, 85 percent of the population was illiterate and the literacy rate for women in general and rural women in particular was virtually zero (Bengali, 1999). There were only 189 Madaris (dominantly for males), very few numbers of modern secular schools and only one higher education institutions-The University of Punjab. The Madaris as well as secular educational institutions were providing education to males. In the University of Punjab, there were only 644 enrolled students who were dominantly males (Azhar, 2008; Batool et al., 2013). Education for men was/is believed instrumental whereas it is consider ornament for women (Ullah, Ali, & Ahmad, 2018). It was this approach that females, at the age of eleven and twelve, either discontinued or continued their education from homes. Most of the females were supposed to get marry as early as possible, usually at the age of fourteen or fifteen. In the upper classes, females were educated in order to attract a husband that had a higher position in society.

Over the past seventy two years females have made substantial educational progress. The wide gap between male and female literacy has narrowed down (*Economic Survey of Pakistan*, 2018). The difference between female and male literacy that was evident throughout from 1947 to 2000 has almost disappeared. It is argued that today there are more females than males students in the higher education institutions of Pakistan, Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) Vision 2025 (Batool et al., 2013). Female students not only outnumber male students in university but are also performing better than males over the past one decade. The phenomena is not limited to Pakistan but prevail across the world as evident from the following brief review.

## Review of Literature

Males' underperformance and females' outperformance in education has received sociologists attention the world over for the last three decades (Johnson, 2017; Legewie & DiPrete, 2012; Lortie et al., 2017; Mead, 2006; Saa, 2016; Skelton, 2012). In early 1990s, a serious concern was raised

in a number of countries about boys/males under achievements and girls/females' higher achievements in education (Downey & Vogt Yuan, 2005; Martin, 2004). Since then it has been observed across societies that female students are outperforming male students on every educational level.

In the United State of America (USA), girls demonstrated vivid outperformance in education on different yardsticks (Warrington & Younger, 2000). Similarly, studies in Australia and United Kingdom persistently revealed females' outperformance in education (Crawford, Wang, & Andrews, 2016). The cases of Netherland and France are not different from USA, UK and Australia. Research studies in the Netherland and France have pointed out boys'/males' failure and underachievement in education (Maqableh et al., 2015; Martino & Lingard, 2004; Matthews, Ponitz, & Morrison, 2009; Mendolicchio & Rhein, 2014). There are number of studies on gender reversal change in the context of Germany in higher education (Matthews et al., 2009). In Germany, female students has shown good performance at all levels as compared to male students (García-Aracil, 2009). Hicks, Johnson, Iacono, and McGue (2008) in Netherlands context, asserts that female students are outperforming male students not only in schools and colleges but also at university level. Similarly, in Sweden, research findings also support the argument that female students outperform and male students underperform in tertiary education (Drudy, Martin, O'Flynn, & Woods, 2005). In the same way, as mentioned by Randolph (2019), female students are continuously outperforming male students since last three decades in Denmark. Moreover, a number of researches also provide evidence that female students outperform male students in Hong Kong (Kuo, Casillas, & Allen, 2019), Japan (Hung, Yoong, & Brown, 2012), New Zealand (Frijters, Brown, & Greenberg, 2019) and Canada (Sammut, Kuruppu, Hegarty, & Bradbury-Jones, 2019).

Females' outperformance and males' underachievement and failure in education, like developed countries, have also been noticed in the developing countries (Adigun, Onihunwa, Irunokhai, Sada, & Adesina, 2015; Bezzina, 2010; Cheruvalath, 2018; Gebrehiwot, Teklay, & Kebede, 2016; Mamo, Gosa, & Hailu, 2017; Morley, 2011; Yang, 2017). In Magnolia, like other Asian countries, a number of researches reveal that female students outshined male students in higher education (Davaa, Batrinchin, Altangerel, Dungerdorj, & Bayartsetseg, 2005; Magno & Silova, 2008; Weidman & Bat-Erdene, 2002). In this regards, Adiya (2010) argues that 62 percent of Mongolian undergraduates were females in 2004-05 and they perform well as compared to male students. Similarly, the sense of competition has arisen among the female students and they outclassed male students with better grades at all levels in Magnolia (Davaa et al., 2005). In Kenyan higher education, outperformance of female students has also been observed (Okul, Sika, & Olel, 2019). The argument of female students outnumbering and male students' underachievement is also supported by a number of studies (Carrier, 2009; Mateju & Smith, 2015; Meelissen & Luyten, 2008). In the case of Tanzania, female students progressing than males in tertiary education (Meena, 2018). Female students outshined the male students even in male dominant spheres of education including engineering and technology in Tanzanian higher education (Morley, 2011). Similar trends of female outperformance and male underperformance in higher education have also been observed in Sri-Lanka (Chiu & McBride-Chang, 2006), Philippine (Dacuycuy & Dacuycuy, 2019), India (Cheruvalath, 2018; Joshi & Ahir, 2019), Ghana (Oketch, 2019), Cambodia (Rogers & Ruth, 2019) and Vietnam (Huong, Tien, Hung, & Loc, 2019).

A similar trend has been noticed in the Muslim counties (Alanzi & Research, 2018; Azhar, 2008; Batool et al., 2013; Chiu & McBride-Chang, 2006; El Massah & Fadly, 2017; Ullah, 2007). In Bangladesh, female students have been outshining male students in tertiary education (Rahman, 2005). Most of the top positions are scored by female students not only in school but also at colleges and university level in Bangladeshi society (Chiu & McBride-Chang, 2006). Similar trends of female students outshine male students in tertiary level of education has been observed in Iran (Jebreil, Azizifar, & Gowhary, 2015). The case of Indonesia and Malaysia is not different from Bangladesh and Iran (Suryadarma, Suryahadi, Sumarto, & Rogers, 2006). A number of studies in Indonesia and Malaysia indicate that female students outdo male students in tertiary education (Marshman, Kalender, Nokes-Malach, Schunn, & Singh, 2018; Rahman, 2005; Suryadarma et al., 2006). In a nut shell, it can be argued that a number of studies confirm female students' outperformance and male students' underachievement in higher education in Pakistan (Batool et al., 2013; Malik & Courtney, 2011; Noureen, 2011), Jordan (Khwaileh & Zaza, 2011), Yamen (Khair, Khairani, & Elrofai, 2012), Egypt (El-Missiry, Soltan, Hadi, & Sabry, 2012) and UAE (Abdulla & Ridge, 2011) as well.

In fact, many of the factors are similar in relation to affecting females' outperformance and males' underachievement. This may not be understood that we are essentializing females' outperformance and males' underachievement. We, in fact, are trying to highlight the changing trend in the direction of educational achievements along the axis of gender.
In the developed world, 'absent father' is believed to have negative impact on males' performance in education (Amato & Keith, 1991; Pong, Dronkers, & Hampden, 2003). Similarly, the changing attitude towards female education- female need education to fully participate in the socio-economic development and progress of their societies (Francis et al., 2008)- has brought a serious transformation in the educational performance of females students. (Hopkins, 2009) argues that education for female is important because it is prerequisite for their self-confidence and personal growth in society (Hopkins, 2009). A considerable number of studies have concluded that male students are less motivated than female students and have indifferent attitudes towards education (Francis, 2002; Warrington & Younger, 2000). It is argued that females spend more time doing homework than boys. Female students have high expectation of themselves as compared to male students. Females are less distracted than males during their classroom time as well as at home (Borg, 2015; Drudy et al., 2005; Warrington & Younger, 2000). According to Francis (2002), male students do not consider educational achievement as 'cool'. They (males) believe that educational achievements do not make them popular with peers. This should be understood that educational achievement is not important for males but males give less priority to educational achievements when it comes to making their image in their peers (Larson, 1994).
While it is acknowledged that females outperform males in almost all levels of examination. Nevertheless, characteristics such as curriculum, quality of teaching, gender, socio-economic resources, social status and geographical location are factors that need to be considered which boys and which girls are outperforming.

## Materials and Methods

The data for the present study comes from the top three position holders of MA/MSc level programmes in the University of the Punjab, Pakistan. Master level examinations play a

fundamental role in determining students' entry to postgraduate studies and job opportunities in reputed organizations. We employed content analysis technique on the examination results books of the above-mentioned university from 2006-2015. Using content analysis approach, we analyzed female and male students' performance in MA/MSc examinations. Top three positions in master level examinations have been taken as indicators of outperformance. The analysis of results books of ten years depicts female students' outperformance and male students' underperformance in education. It is noteworthy to mention here that these females dominantly belong to urban areas of Pakistan. In addition to their residential positions, these females have been schooled and educated in urban collages. They were doing well in their schools and collages examinations. The analysis enable us to draw conclusion that there is vivid trend of young female's outdoing males in education at tertiary level, especially in the social sciences and humanities discipline. The forthcoming discussion present detail analysis of the issue in hand.

## Results and Discussion

The focus of the content analysis is to give an overview of gender differences in educational achievements in master level examinations in the University of the Punjab, Pakistan. The statistics in table 1 unpack differences between females and males' performance at master level examinations conducted by examination department of the University of the Punjab. The data in the table show top three positions during the last 10 years in a total of sixty-one departments.

**Analysis of top three position along the axes of gender in session 2004-06**

In the University of the Punjab, 73.8 percent female students and 21.3 percent male students secured first position in the master level examinations in 2004-06. Similarly, data show that 77.0 percent first position holders belonged to urban areas and 18.0 percent were from rural areas. Females in the University of the Punjab demonstrated 73.8 percent and 21.3 percent males' student secured second positions in the master level examinations. Data reported that 77.0 percent belonged to urban backgrounds and 18.0 percent had rural backgrounds. Furthermore, 68.9 percent females and 26.2 percent males secured third position in the master level examinations in 2004-06. Data show that 73.8 percent first position holders were from urban areas and 21.3 percent were from rural backgrounds. The nub of discussion here is that female outperformed males in top three positions of examinations held in the session 2004-06 and the position holder females belonged to urban areas.

**Session 2005-07**

The statistics in the table reveals that female outperformed male students in master level examinations of the University of the Punjab. Females outshined males by clinching 75.4 percent first positions and 21.3 percent male students first in master level examinations in 2005-07. Data reported that 88.5 percent first position holders belonged to urban areas and 08.2 percent to rural backgrounds. Here, 65.6 percent female and 31.1 percent male student secured second positions in the master level examinations. Moreover, 77.0 percent second position holders belonged to urban areas and 19.7 percent were from rural areas. Similarly, 70.0 male students and 26.2 percent female students got third position. The analysis revealed that 78.7 percent of third position holders belonged to urban areas and 18.0 percent had rural backgrounds. In a nut shell, 75.4 percent females and 21.3 percent males had the top three positions in master level examinations in 2005-07. It is also concluded that 86.9 percent of the outperformers belonged to urban areas.

**Table 1: Top three position holders at Master level examinations (session 2004-06 to 2013-15)**

| Position | Gender/Area | | Years | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 2006* | 2007* | 2008 | 2009** | 2010** | 2011 | 2012** | 2013** | 2014** | 2015** |
| First | Gender | F [*f* (%)] | 45 (73.8) | 46 (75.4) | 47 (77.0) | 43 (70.5) | 47 (77.0) | 47 (77.0) | 42 (68.9) | 49 (80.3) | 47 (77.0) | 44 (72.1) |
| | | M [*f* (%)] | 13 (21.3) | 13 (21.3) | 14 (23.0) | 17 (27.9) | 13 (21.3) | 14 (23.0) | 16 (26.2) | 11 (18.0) | 11 (18.0) | 15 (24.6) |
| | Area | R [*f* (%)] | 11 (18.0) | 05 (08.2) | 15 (24.6) | 23 (37.7) | 17 (27.9) | 18 (29.5) | 13 (21.3) | 14 (23.0) | 16 (26.2) | 20 (32.8) |
| | | U [*f* (%)] | 47 (77.0) | 54 (88.5) | 46 (75.4) | 37 (60.7) | 43 (70.5) | 43 (70.5) | 45 (73.8) | 46 (75.4) | 42 (68.9) | 39 (63.9) |
| Second | Gender | F [*f* (%)] | 45 (73.8) | 40 (65.6) | 28 (45.9) | 46 (75.4) | 47 (77.0) | 48 (78.7) | 48 (78.7) | 48 (78.7) | 47 (77.0) | 44 (72.1) |
| | | M [*f* (%)] | 13 (21.3) | 19 (31.1) | 33 (54.1) | 14 (23.0) | 13 (21.3) | 13 (21.3) | 10 (16.4) | 11 (18.0) | 11 (18.0) | 13 (21.3) |
| | Area | R [*f* (%)] | 11 (18.0) | 12 (19.7) | 34 (55.7) | 18 (29.5) | 13 (21.3) | 21 (34.4) | 16 (26.2) | 09 (14.8) | 11 (18.0) | 13 (21.3) |
| | | U [*f* (%)] | 47 (77.0) | 47 (77.0) | 27 (44.3) | 43 (68.9) | 47 (77.0) | 40 (65.6) | 42 (68.9) | 50 (82.0) | 47 (77.0) | 44 (72.1) |
| Third | Gender | F [*f* (%)] | 42 (68.9) | 43 (70.5) | 28 (45.9) | 44 (72.1) | 46 (75.4) | 48 (78.7) | 42 (68.9) | 52 (85.2) | 44 (72.1) | 44 (72.1) |
| | | M [*f* (%)] | 16 (26.2) | 16 (26.2) | 33 (54.1) | 16 (26.2) | 14 (23.0) | 13 (21.3) | 16 (26.2) | 06 (09.8) | 14 (23.0) | 12 (19.7) |
| | Area | R [*f* (%)] | 13 (21.3) | 11 (18.0) | 36 (59.0) | 16 (26.2) | 11 (18.0) | 20 (32.8) | 14 (23.0) | 10 (16.4) | 16 (26.2) | 19 (31.1) |
| | | U [*f* (%)] | 45 (73.8) | 48 (78.7) | 25 (41.0) | 44 (72.1) | 49 (80.3) | 41 (67.2) | 44 (72.1) | 48 (78.7) | 42 (68.9) | 37 (60.7) |
| Out-performed | Gender | F [*f* (%)] | 48 (78.7) | 46 (75.4) | 36 (59.0) | 49 (80.3) | 52 (85.2) | 52 (85.2) | 51 (83.6) | 54 (88.5) | 49 (80.3) | 50 (82.0) |
| | | M [*f* (%)] | 10 (16.4) | 13 (21.3) | 25 (41.0) | 11 (18.0) | 08 (13.1) | 09 (14.8) | 07 (11.5) | 06 (09.8) | 09 (14.8) | 09 (14.8) |
| | Area | R [*f* (%)] | 08 (13.1) | 06 (09.8) | 28 (45.9) | 13 (21.3) | 10 (16.4) | 16 (26.2) | 08 (13.1) | 05 (08.2) | 08 (13.1) | 15 (24.6) |
| | | U [*f* (%)] | 50 (82.0) | 53 (86.9) | 33 (54.1) | 47 (77.0) | 50 (82.0) | 45 (73.8) | 50 (82.0) | 55 (90.2) | 50 (82.0) | 44 (72.1) |

Total number of departments = 61, *Data not available, **No student

Code/s of Gender/Area; F=Female, M=Male, R=Rural, U=Urban

*Source: Office of the Controller of Examination, University of the Punjab*

**Session 2006-08**

The analysis reveals that 77.0 percent female students and 23.0 percent male students secured first position in the master level examinations in 2006-08. Similarly, these trends are also observed in their residential are, i.e. 75.4 percent top position holders belonged to urban areas and 24.6 percent were from rural backgrounds. Here, 45.9 percent female and 54.1 percent male students secured second positions in the master level examinations. Data reported that 55.7 percent belong to rural backgrounds and 44.3 percent were from urban backgrounds. Similarly, 45.9 percent males and 54.1 percent females got third position. In the third position holders, 41.0 were from urban areas and 59.0 percent from rural residential backgrounds. Field data show that 59.0 percent female students and 41.0 percent male students outperformed in master level examinations in the session 2006-08. The data show that 54.1 percent were from urban areas and 45.9 percent were from rural residential backgrounds of the outperformers. The findings here buttress J. Ali, Ullah, and Sanauddin (2019) argument that academic competition in contemporary universities are dominantly between urban girls and rural boys.

**Session 2007-09**

The examination results of 2007-09 session shows 70.5 percent female and 27.9 percent male students got first position in the master level examinations. Data show that 60.7 percent first position holders belonged to urban areas where 37.7 percent were from rural residential backgrounds. Similarly, 75.4 and 23.0 percent females and males respectively got second position. Moreover, 68.9 were from urban areas and 29.5 percent from rural residential backgrounds. Further, 72.1 percent females and 26.2 percent males secured third position in the master level examinations in 2007-09. Data show that 72.1 percent third position holders belonged to urban areas and 26.2 percent were from rural backgrounds. Females in the university of the Punjab outperformed males in top three positions of examinations held in the session 2007-09 and the position holder females belonged to urban areas.

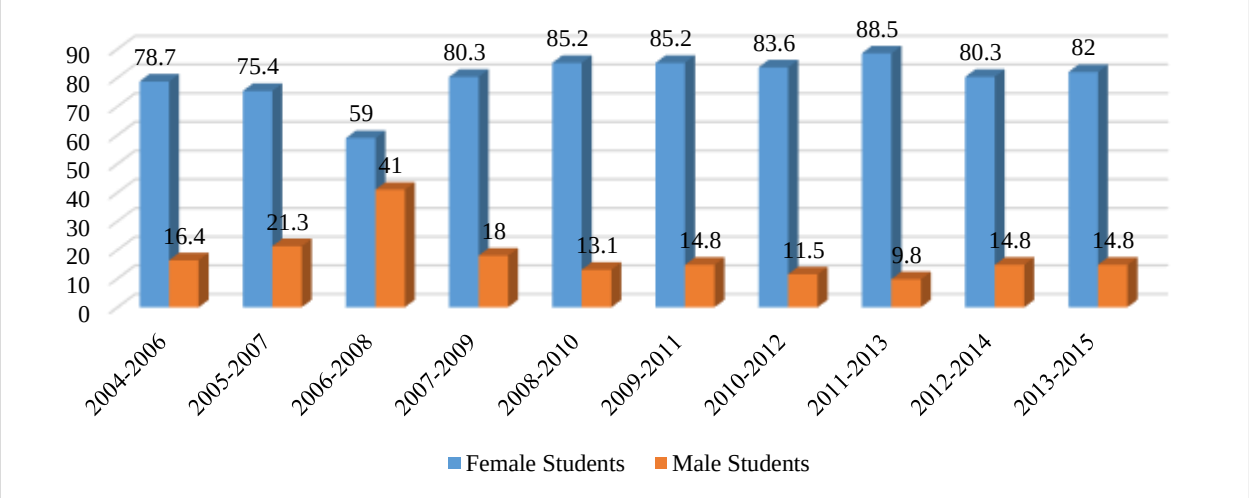


*Figure 1: Showing gender-wise top three position from session 2004-06 to 2013-15*

**Session 2008-10**

The analysis of 2008-10 session result data depict that 77.0 percent female and 21.3 percent male students secured first position in the master level examinations. Furthermore, analysis of this category revealed that 70.5 percent students belonged to urban areas and 27.9 percent were from rural backgrounds. Moreover, 77.0 percent female students and 21.3 percent male students secured second positions in the master level examinations. In this category, 77.0 percent were from urban backgrounds and 21.3 percent were from rural areas. Similarly, 75.4 percent female and 23.0 percent male students got third position. In the third position holders, 80.3 were from urban areas and 18.0 percent were from rural areas. It can be concluded here that 85.2 percent female and 13.1 male students outperform in master level examinations in the session 2008-10. It can also be summarized here that 82 percent of the outperformers belonged to urban areas.

**Session 2009-11**

Like previous sessions, female students outperformed in master level in 2009-11 session. Females outshined males by clinching 77.0 percent first positions and 23.0 percent males' student stood first in master level examinations in 2009-11. These all first position holder belong to 70.5 percent urban areas and 29.5 percent rural backgrounds. Similarly, out of 61 departments' second position, 78.7 percent positions were secured by females and 21.3 percent were received by male students. Moreover, 65.6 percent second position holders belonged to urban areas and 34.4 percent were from rural areas. Furthermore, 78.7 percent of the third position holders were females and 21.3 percent were males. Further analysis of the third positions holder reveals that 67.2 percent were from urban areas and only 32.8 percent had rural residential backgrounds. In summary, 85.2 percent female and 14.8 percent male students outperformed in master level examinations in 2009-11. It is important to mention here that majority (73.8 %) of the position holders were from urban areas.

**Session 2010-12**

The examination results shows that 68.9 percent females and 26.2 percent males secured first position in the master level examinations in 2010-12. Data reported that 73.8 percent belonged to urban areas and 21.3 percent rural backgrounds. Furthermore, 78.7 percent female students and 16.4 percent male students secured second positions in the master level examinations and 68.9 percent were from urban backgrounds. Similarly, 68.9 percent females and 26.2 percent males got third position. In the third position holders, 72.1 were from urban areas and only 23.0 percent from rural residential backgrounds. However, data reported that out preform by gender and residential areas, 83.6 percent female students and 11.5 percent male students outperform in master level examinations in the session 2010-12. It is also concluded that 82.0 percent of the outperformer belonged to urban areas.

**Session 2011-13**

The results reveals that 80.3 percent females and 18.0 percent males secured first position in the master level examinations in 2011-13. Furthermore, 75.4 percent of them belonged to urban areas and only 23.0 percent rural backgrounds. However, 78.7 percent females and 18.0 percent students secured second positions in the master level examinations and 82.0 percent were from urban backgrounds. Similarly, 85.2 percent female students and 09.8 percent male students got third position. In the third position holders, 78.7 were from urban areas. Field, data show that outperform by gender and residential area, 88.5 percent female students outperform in master level examinations in the session 2011-13 and these females belonged to urban areas.

**Session 2012-14**

Examination data describe that 77.0 percent female students and 18.0 percent male students secured first position in the master level examinations in 2012-14. Data also reported that 68.9 percent belonged to urban areas and 26.2 percent rural backgrounds. As well as, 77.0 percent females and 18.0 percent male students secured second positions in the master level examinations and 77.0 percent were from urban backgrounds. Similarly, 72.1 percent females and 23.0 percent males got third position. In the third position holders, 68.9 were from urban areas and 26.2 percent from rural residential backgrounds. Data reported that out preform by gender and residential area, 80.3 percent females and 14.8 percent males' student outperform in master level examinations in the session 2012-14 and 82.0 percent of the students belonged to urban areas.

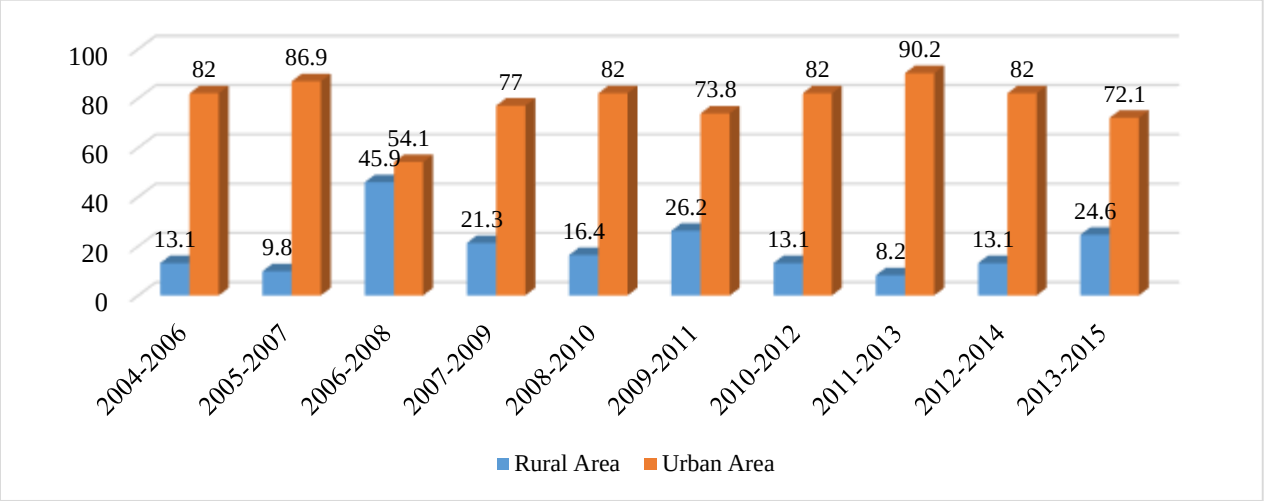


*Figure 2: Showing area-wise top three positions from session 2004-6 to 2013-15*

**Session 2013-15**

The statistics in the table indicate the outperformance of female students in master level examinations held in session 2013-2015. Result presents 72.1 percent female students and 24.6 percent male students secured first position in the master level examinations. Data also reported that 63.9 percent of them belonged to urban areas. However, 72.1 percent female students and 21.3 percent male students secured 2nd positions in the master level examinations and 72.1 percent belonged to urban areas and 21.3 percent rural backgrounds. Similarly, 72.1 percent females and 19.7 percent males got third position. In the third position holders, 60.7 were from urban areas and 31.1 percent from rural residential backgrounds. Data reported that outperform by gender and residential areas, 82.0 percent females and 14.8 percent males' student outperform in master level examinations. It is conclude that 72.1 percent outperformers were from urban areas.

**First Position Holders' Matriculation Passing Boards in Session 2013-2015**

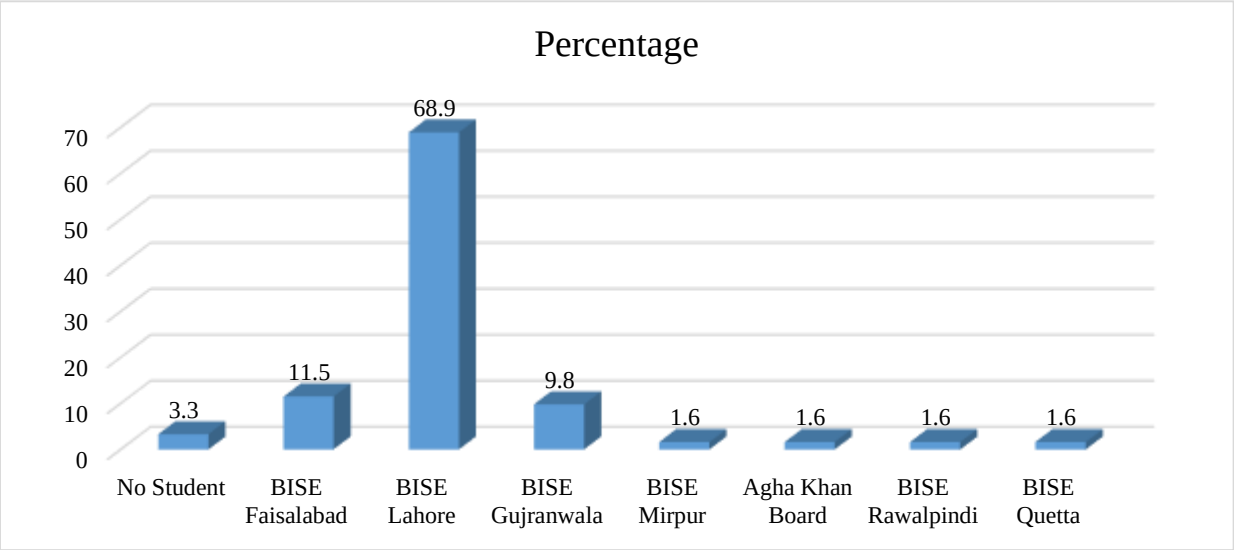


*Figure 3; Matriculation passing board of first position holders in session 2013-2015*

The statistics in table 3 describe first position (session 2013-2015) holder's matriculation passing board. The data in the table show that 68.9 percent of the first position holders do their matriculation from Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education Lahore. Similarly, 11.5 percent completed their matriculation from Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education Faisalabad. Here, similar proportion (1.6 %) of first position holder is observed that they do their matriculation from Rawalpindi, Quetta, Agha Khan and Mirpur board. Data reflected that more than half of first position holders in session 2013-2015 do their matriculation from Lahore board.

**Table 3: Matriculation passing board of first position holder in session 2013-2015**

| Sr. No. | Board Name | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | No Student | 02 | 03.3 |
| 2 | BISE Faisalabad | 07 | 11.5 |
| 3 | BISE Lahore | 42 | 68.9 |
| 4 | BISE Gujranwala | 06 | 09.8 |
| 5 | BISE Mirpur | 01 | 01.6 |
| 6 | Agha Khan Board | 01 | 01.6 |
| 7 | BISE Rawalpindi | 01 | 01.6 |
| 8 | BISE Quetta | 01 | 01.6 |
| Total | | 61 | 100.0 |

**First Position Holders' Intermediate Passing Boards in Session 2013-2015**

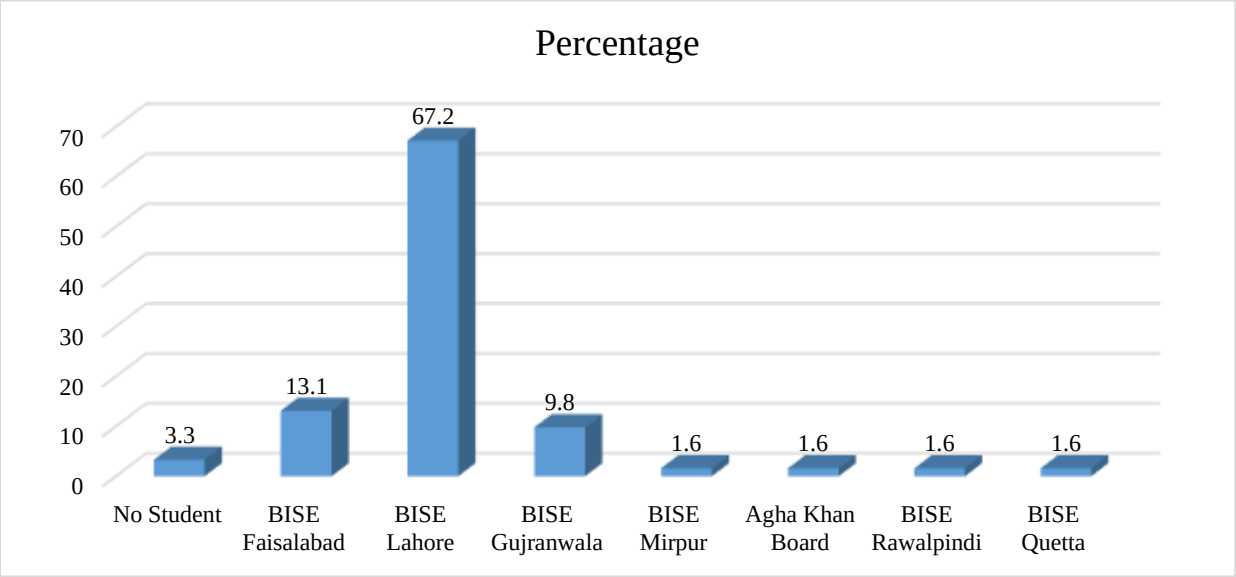


*Figure 4; Intermediate passing board of first position holder in session 2013-2015*

Table 4 shows first position (session 2013-2015) holder's intermediate passing board. The tabulated data depict that 67.2 percent of the first position holders do their intermediate from Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education Lahore. However, 13.1 percent completed their intermediate from Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education Faisalabad. Similar proportion (1.6%) same as matriculation passing of first position holder is observed that they do their intermediate from Rawalpindi, Quetta, Agha Khan and Mirpur board. Data reflected that more than half of first position holders in session 2013-2015 do their intermediate from Lahore board. The trend of data show that first position holders in session 2013-2015 do their matriculation and intermediate from the same board i.e. Lahore.

**Table 4: Intermediate passing board of first position holder in session 2013-2015**

| Sr. No. | Board Name | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | No Student | 02 | 03.3 |
| 2 | BISE Faisalabad | 08 | 13.1 |
| 3 | BISE Lahore | 41 | 67.2 |
| 4 | BISE Gujranwala | 06 | 09.8 |
| 5 | BISE Mirpur | 01 | 01.6 |
| 6 | Agha Khan Board | 01 | 01.6 |
| 7 | BISE Rawalpindi | 01 | 01.6 |
| 8 | BISE Quetta | 01 | 01.6 |
| Total | | 61 | 100.0 |

**First Position Holders' Bachelor Passing University in Session 2013-2015**

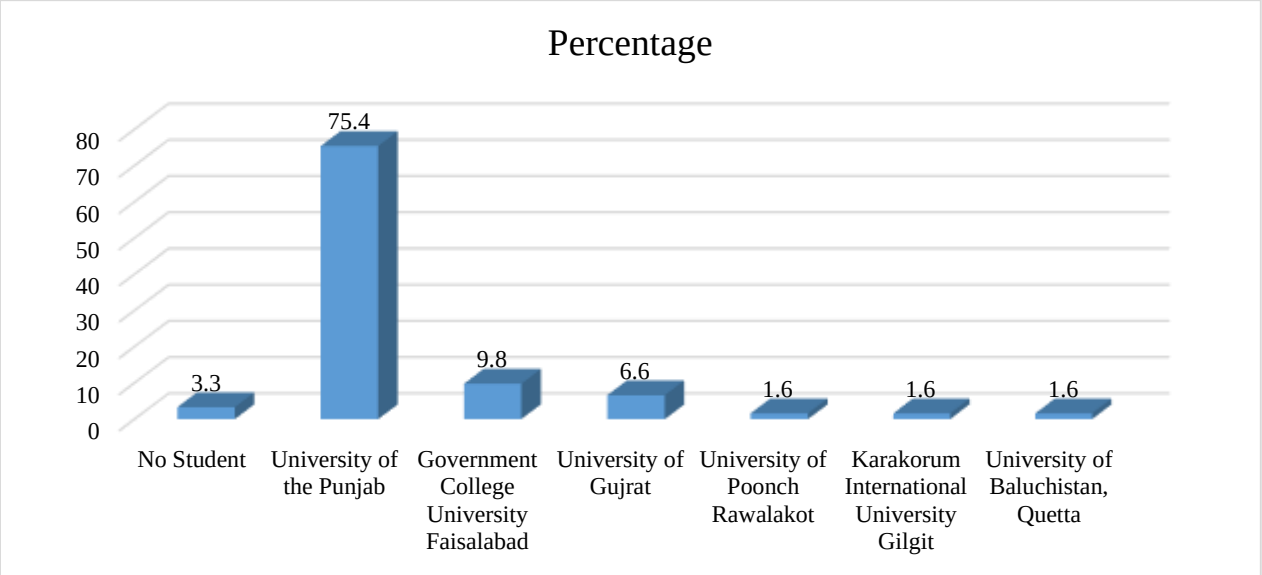


*Figure 5; Bachelor passing university of first position holder in session 2013-2015*

The statistics in table 5 describe first position in Bachelor degree session 2013-2015 holders. The data show that 75.4 percent of the first position holders did their bachelor degree from the University of the Punjab. Similarly, 9.8 percent completed their bachelor degree from Government College University Faisalabad. Here, similar proportion (1.6%) of the first position holders were having their bachelor degree from the University of Ponch, Rawalakot; Karakorum International University Gilgit and University of Baluchistan Quetta. Data reflected that more than half of the first position holders in session 2013-2015 had their bachelor degree from Punjab University.

**Table 5: Bachelor passing university of first position holder in session 2013-2015**

| Sr. No. | University Name | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | No Student | 02 | 03.3 |
| 2 | University of the Punjab | 46 | 75.4 |
| 3 | Government College University Faisalabad | 06 | 09.8 |
| 4 | University of Gujrat | 04 | 06.6 |
| 5 | University of Poonch Rawalakot | 01 | 01.6 |
| 6 | Karakorum International University Gilgit | 01 | 01.6 |
| 7 | University of Baluchistan, Quetta | 01 | 01.6 |
| Total | | 61 | 100.0 |

## Conclusion

This study finding revealed that girls are outperforming boys in tertiary education. The top three position (1st, 2nd and 3rd) are dominantly secured by female students. The analysis also reveal that the majority of the position holders belong to urban areas of the province. The recent decades have seen a change in the gender geography of education in Pakistan. Many studies demonstrated that female students are doing better than male students in education (Carrier, 2009; Gbollie & Keamu, 2017; Hicks et al., 2008; Karioris & Allan, 2019; Muller, 2018; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016; Shahiri & Husain, 2015; Zimmerman, Schunk, & DiBenedetto, 2017). Initially, it is argued that girls at school level are performing better than boys (Carrier, 2009; Hicks et al., 2008; Matthews et al., 2009; Spinath, Spinath, & Plomin, 2008). It is pertinent to mention here that boys underperformance and girls outperformance are not limited to school level but prevail in higher education as well (Azhar, 2008; Batool et al., 2013; Durrani, 2013).

In Pakistan, basic education was not given importance since the inception of the state (S. Ali, 2012). The educational policies were although made but not implemented as per the spirit of the policies had been concerned (Carrier, 2009; Meelissen & Luyten, 2008). There were several impediments in getting education of the females. The cultural and religious barriers put the female education in danger for long. With the passage of time, female education prevailed gradually. In spite of barriers, females were always encouraged to get education (Duffy, Warren, & Walsh, 2001). Presently, females in Pakistan at secondary and higher secondary level are found contributing towards the education through active participation. Female and male ratio of education has wider gap but now the increasing number of females may shrink this in the future (Buzhigeeva, 2004). Females are getting education at school and college level by competing the males. Most of the positions at school and college level are scored by the females. Females are found progressive towards the higher education.

Gender differences are also exited in Pakistan at large scale because most of the population live in rural areas with typical patriarchal structure of the society (Rehman et al., 2013). Performance of female and male is to be debated because there is always low performance of the boys and girls at school level whether in science or arts and in higher educations as well (Mateju & Smith, 2015). A larger number of females have joined higher education and they are performing well (Buzhigeeva, 2004; Carrier, 2009; Meelissen & Luyten, 2008). They are achieving higher positions in the exams than males. The enrolment of the student in higher education students reveals that more females are getting admission, which is a proof of females' outperformance (Carrington & Skelton, 2003; Duffy et al., 2001; Hutchings et al., 2008). With the passage of time, the gap between the performance of male and female students is widening, and the male students seem to be lagging behind.

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