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### Effects of gender on participation in different sized groups.

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#### **Abstract -**

**Background:** Universities incorporate the use of small and large group teaching. Assessing how comfortable different genders feel participating in both can give an insight into differences in participation and student experience.

This project assessed if there is a relationship between student gender and comfort participating in different sized groups.

**Method:** Responses from the BAME Attainment Gap Survey distributed in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences in a UK University were used. Nonparametric and multiple comparisons tests compared how comfortable different groups of students were participating in different sized groups. This included between males and females, groups of courses with different gender proportions, and students in different gender stereotyped courses such as medicine and nursing. Further questions from the questionnaire were also compared within these groups.

**Findings:** Findings suggest all males feel significantly more comfortable than females participating in both sized groups, particularly large groups. Being in a gender stereotyped course only affected female comfort in participation. There were some correlations between increasing the proportion of females and comfort in participating. Finally, there were limited correlations between student experience and comfort in participating.

**Conclusions:** This study provides evidence suggesting that gender does have an impact on how comfortable students are participating in class. Large group teaching may cause a greater inequality of engagement between students than small groups, however this may be affected by the nature of the course, and proportions of females. These results may have implications on how institutions use different sized teaching groups, and admissions.

**Keywords -** Gender, Participation, Group Work

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