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### THE PROBLEMS OF DETECTING GENDER AND LOCATION BIASED TEST ITEMS IN JUNIOR SECONDARY CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS IN RIVERS STATE: ADOPTING THE ITEM RESPONSE THEORY APPROACH

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#### ABSTRACT

This study identified gender and location biased test items in the Rivers state JSSCE Business Studies conducted in 2009 using Item Response Theory Approach. The Sample comprises 4000 male and female JSS III students that sat for the JSSCE Business Studies Examination in 2009 drawn from schools in the urban and rural locations in Rivers state which were selected through stratified proportionate random sampling. The instruments for data collection were the test items in JSSCE Business Studies conducted in 2009 and a result collection sheet. Three null hypotheses drawn from three research questions were tested at 0.50 probability of correct response. The assumptions of unidimensionality and local independence were tested using factor analysis. The students' responses to the test items were calibrated with an IRT statistical software named Ex-calibre 4.2.2 developed by Assessment Systems Corporation. The results revealed that the test items met the assumptions of unidimensionality and local independence and there is gender and location bias in the Rivers state JSSCE Business Studies test items for 2009. Based on the findings, recommendations were made which includes restructuring of the business studies curriculum to accommodate the new technological advances which may be one of the reasons for the presence of gender and location bias in the Business Studies test conducted in 2009 in Rivers State.

*Keywords:* Evaluation, Measurement, Education, Item Bias, Nigeria.