

Gender Dimension of Use of Library: The Case of Federal University, Lokoja

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Abstract

This study critically examines gender disparity in the use of library services - a case study of students of Federal University Lokoja. It comparatively measures how both male and female students utilize the available information resources of the library under study. The questionnaire was used as data collection instrument. The results showed that there is no significant difference amongst the male and female users in the use of library. The result explicitly shows that the gender difference in accessing information materials in the library is not significant because both males and females actively use the library, only that both genders happen to get higher preference in certain specific variables, but in the end, the difference observed is not significant.

Key word: gender disparity, information materials, accessibility, use

Introduction

Gender is a very sensitive issue in every aspect of human endeavor. Library as a repository of knowledge that receives various clients which include males and females with a purpose of acquiring information is considered a custodian of attitudes of various people in the utilization of such information resources. It is a fact that there are differences in how males and females perform their activities either in education or otherwise. Costa, Ferracciano and McCrae (2001) observed that certain specific 'personality traits' related to Gender influence how children learn. They argue that "contrary to predictions from the social role model gender differences were most pronounced in European and American cultures in which traditional sex roles are minimized.

University Library as an academic Library is equipped with various information Resources which include print and non-print. However, it is very imperative to measure how library is patronized and the modalities adopted in its patronization by both males and females. McGinty and Moore (2008) assert that issues related to gender are the vogue of public concern associated to tertiary education. In order to develop our educational standard in Nigeria, both males and females should be given an equal opportunity to obtain information for the attainment of their goals. Kochen and Donohue (1976) outline that for any group to prosper in this contemporary world, information is very crucial. In studying how gender is perceived, Library has to work out proper way on the preferences giving to its collections in order to draw a statistical data.

A lot of researchers in various areas have undertaken various studies on gender differences on different aspects of

life. Some bring to limelight basic features that add value to research in this area of study. Use of library lies upon the user and how he uses it to achieve his desired information. Some researchers maintain that males are the most predominant in terms of acquisition of knowledge. Ernst (1995) outlined that even though there has been systematic deflection in gender imbalance in the area of fiction, females continued to be shown as non- active and dependent whereas the males are considered as robust, efficient, agile and creative. Hall and Coles (1999) assert that males attach preference to graphic media so as comic, computers and Newspapers.

There is also discrepancy in how males and females view and consider research and how to carry out research. Manda and Mulkanga (2007) describe that boys consider that the most crucial task conducting research is accumulating information resources and conducting the project, while girls adopt investigating and formulating. Various researches show that due to biological nature of females, it becomes tedious and cumbersome to trace information. Ford et'al (2001) highlights that females find it perturbing and stressful to find information on the internet more than males.

Many researchers went ahead to analyze gender disparities or differences in relation to Information Communication (ICT). Munda and Mulkanga (2007) assert that gender is related with the utilization of electronic resources ,hence males post-graduate students were more susceptible to the application of electronic resources higher than females. As cited by Perry and Greber (1990), technology is dominated by males either in whole aspect of life or specifically in the library area. Tella and Mutula (2008) describe that there is difference in terms of computer literacy between male and female students at Botswana University. According to a

research by Applegate (2005) women are more patrons and they are understood to use large number of library resources' associated services .Funmilayo (2013) considers that there is no actual data on the differences in gender in the accessibility of FUT Minna library. Abillock (1997) states that female tends to read more than male. When it comes to general research both males and females want to see that they put in their best to achieve a desired result. Kuhlthau (2007) confirms that it is possible for all students to strive with the main task of making a focus research.

Gender is a very important aspect in the issue of learning especially at the tertiary level including university which attracts different people of different gender background - males and females with different behavior traits. Our tertiary education is coeducational in nature which gives room for greater competitiveness between males and females. It is in UNESCO report that females are far left behind in the attainment of education especially in the developing world, hence its effort to bridge the gap of gender inequality. This makes it persuasive to know the extent through which gender plays a role in the quest for education in our Nigerian universities. Libraries as the repositories of knowledge and as a place where students rely in undertaking their research, has to meet the demands of both males and females. Males dominate the university enrollment in Nigeria; therefore, females' participation in various academic activities in our tertiary institution is less compared to their males' counterpart. Therefore, our university Libraries collection departments are less determined in creating a good framework to evaluate whether resources available can motivate females to develop more reading habit and library visitation. The above reason influenced the researcher to undertake this study.

Objectives of the study

1. To know the frequency of use of the library by gender
2. To understand the reasons for using the library by the students in line with gender
3. To examine the types of information resources mostly consulted by the students in respect of gender
4. To discover the level of ICT skills of the students by gender.
5. To know the sources of information of students by gender
6. To evaluate the students' level of satisfaction with the library information resources by gender.
7. To analyze the factors that affects the students' accessibility of Library information resources by gender.

Research Questions

1. How frequent do the students use the library in terms of gender?
2. What are the reasons for the students' use of the library gender wise?
3. What are the types of information resources the students mostly consulted by gender?
4. What is the level of students' ICT skills by gender?
5. What are the sources of information of respondents?
6. What is the students' level of satisfaction with the information resources of the library by gender?
7. What are factors that affect the students' accessibility of library information resources by gender?

Research hypothesis: There is no significant difference between males and females students in accessing library

information resources at federal university, Lokoja library

federal University, Lokoja. The population of the study consists of only 200 level students because they have completed one full academic session at the time of conducting this study. A total of 160 questionnaires were distributed to the sampled respondents out of 445 students while 113 (70%) copies of questionnaire were successfully filled and returned.

Methodology

In conducting this study, a survey method is used in order to analyze the gender disparities in the accessibility of library information resources by the students of

Table 1: population and sample of the study

DEPARTMENTS	POPULATION freq./perc.	SAMPLE freq./perc.	RETURNED Freq./perc.
Chemistry	37 (8.3%)	10(6.2%)	8 (70%)
Computer science	42 (9.4%)	20 (12.5%)	12 (10.6%)
Biology	35 (7.8%)	10 (6.2%)	9 (7.9%)
Political science	72 (16.1%)	25 (15.6%)	15 (13.2%)
Geology	13 (2.9%)	5 (3.1%)	4 (3.5%)
Economics	57 (12.8%)	20 (12.5%)	10 (10.6%)
History	48 (10.7%)	20 (12.5%)	14 (12.3%)
Geography	44 (9.8%)	20 (12.5%)	18 (15.9%)
English	36 (8.0%)	10 (6.2%)	6 (5.3%)
Mathematics	30 (6.7%)	10 (6.2%)	8 (7.0%)
Physics	31 (6.9%)	10 (6.2%)	7 (6.1%)
TOTAL	445(100%)	160(100%)	113(100%)

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents according to gender

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Males	63	61.9%
Females	50	38.0%
TOTAL	113	100%

Findings and Discussion

Research question 1: how frequent do the students use the library?

Table 3: frequency of library use by gender.

VARIABLE S	MALES FREQUENC Y	PERCENTAG E	FEMALES FREQUENC Y	PERCENTAG E
Everyday	30	47.6%	23	46%
Once in a week	10	15.8%	3	6%

Once in 2 weeks	3	4.7%	3	6%
Occasionally	20	31.7%	19	38%
I don't visit at all	Nil	NIL	2	4%
TOTAL	63	100%	50	100%

Tcalculated value=0.5814,df=9, and tcritical value at $p>0.05=2.306$

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents visit the library everyday in which the males take the highest with 30(47.6%).The females take the highest in terms of visiting the library once in a month with 19(38%),males with 20(31.7%).In terms of visiting once in a week, males have the highest percentage of 10(15.8%),females with 3(6%).Females have the highest percentage as regard to visiting the library once in a week 3(6%),males with 3(4.7%) .In line with respondents

answers we can conclude that males are more regular than females, because none of the male respondents indicates that he did not visit the library at all. But 2(4%) of the female respondents do not visit the library. Therefore, the null hypothesis on this table shows that the critical t value of 2.306 is higher than the tcalculated value of 0.5814.Therefore,the null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference in the frequency of library use in respect of gender because both gender visit the library.

Table 4: Number of hours spent by the respondents in the library according to gender.

VARIABLES	MALES FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FEMALES FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1 hour	10	15.8%	20	40%
2-4 hours	32	50.7%	19	38%
5-7 hours	10	15.8%	6	12%
8-10 hours	2	3.1%	NIL	NIL
10 hours to above	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
Never spend an hour	3	4.7%	2	4%
Undecided	6	9.5%	3	6%
TOTAL	63	100%	50	100%

T calculated value=0.038, DF=12.t critical value=2.176

Table 4 shows that 32(50.7%) of males, 19(38%) of females in terms of spending 2-4 hours. Females have the

highest frequency in terms of spending 1 hour in the library with 20(40%), while males with

10(15.8%).Males stay from 5-7 hours more than females with 10(15.8%),females with 6(12%).As regard to spending 8-10 hours, only males with 2(3.1%),while no female respondent stays up to that time. None of the respondents both male and female indicates that he stays from 10 hours to above. Also, 6(9.5%) of

males are undecided, 3(6%) of females .The null hypothesis on this table indicates that the t calculated value of 0.038 is less than the t critical value of 2.176 on 0.05 scale. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference in the number of hours spent in the library gender wise.

Research question 2: What are the students’ reasons for using the library?

Table 5: Reasons for using the library by the respondents, gender wise

VARIABLES	MALE FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FEMALES FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
For writing assignment	14	22.2%	10	20%
For reading lecture note	10	15.8%	6	12%
For leisure	-	-	2	4%
For socializing	20	31.7%	13	26%
For borrowing books	1	1.5%	2	4%
For research	18	28.5%	17	34%
TOTAL	63	100%	50	100%

tcalculated value =0.525 df=11,tcritical value=2.228

Table 5 shows that for reason of using the library, 14(22.2%) of males use it for writing assignment, 10(20%) of females. For reading lecture note, 10(15.8%) of males and 6(12%) of females. No male respondent indicates that he uses the library for leisure, 2(4%) of females use it for leisure.As regard to using the library for socializing, 20(31.7%) of males and 13 (26%) of females. For borrowing of books, 1 (1.5%) of males and 2 (4%) of females. For research

purpose, 18(28.5%) of males and 17(34%) of females .The null hypothesis shows that the t critical value of 2.228 is higher on 0.05 scale is higher than the t calculated value of 0.525,therefore the hypothesis is accepted that the difference is not significant.

Research question 3: What are the types of information resources mostly consulted by the students in respect of gender?

Table 6: The types of information resources mostly consulted by the respondents, gender wise

VARIABLES	MALE FREQUENCY	%	FEMALE FREQUENCY	%
Books	30	47.6%	36	72%
Reference materials	10	15.8%	12	24%
Newspapers	18	28.5%	2	4%
Journals	-	-	-	-
Electronic resources	5	7.9	-	-
TOTAL	63	100%	50	100%

tcalculated value=0.2272 df=9,tcritical value=2.306

Table 6 shows that the information resources consulted mostly by the respondents shows that 30(47.6%) of males and 36(72%) of females consult books mostly. For reference materials, 10 (15.8%) of males and 12(24%) of females .As regard to newspapers, 18(28.5%) of males and 2(4%) of females. No respondent indicates that he consults journals mostly in the library. 5(7.9%) of male respondents

consult electronic resources most in the library and none of the females respondent consult electronic resources in the library. The null hypothesis the tcalculated value of 0.2272 is less than the t critical value of 2.306 on 0.05 scale. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the types of information materials mostly consulted by the respondents, gender wise.

Research question 4: What is the students' level of ICT skills?

Table 7: students' level of ICT skills gender wise

VARIABLES	MALE FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FEMALE FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Excellent	6	9.5%	2	4%
Very good	10	15.8%	4	8%
Good	21	33.3%	14	28%
Fair	15	23.8%	4	8%
Poor	3	4.7%	13	26%
Don't have	8	12.6%	13	26%
TOTAL	63	100	50	100

tcalculated value=0.3971 df=11,t critical value=2.228.

Table 7 shows the level of ICT skills of the respondent which they use in accessing the Library information resources. The male respondents have 6(9.5) excellent, and

2(4%) of females. Interms of very good, 10(15.8%) of males and 4(8%) of females. 21 (33.3%) of males and 14(28%) of females indicate having good ICT skills.

Also 15(23.8%) of males and 4(8%) of females have fair ICT skills. The females take the highest percentage of poor ICT skills with 13(26%) and 3(4.7%) of males. Only 8(12.6%) of males and 13(36%) of females respondents do not have any ICT

skills. The null hypothesis as regard to students' level of ICT skills indicates that the t critical value of 2.228 is higher than the t calculated value of 0.3971. Therefore; the null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference.

Research question 5: What are the sources of information of respondents' information resources in the library?

Table 8: sources of information

VARIABLES	MALE FREQ.	PERCENTAGE	FEMALE FREQ.	PERCENTAGE
Assistance from a librarian	21	33.3%	30	60%
Through friends	15	23.8%	8	16%
Through trial and error	14	22.2%	2	4%
Through use of library GST(105)	3	4.7%	10	20%
TOTAL	63	100	50	100

Tcalculated value =0.038 df=7,t critical value =2.306

Table 8 shows the main way through which the respondents find their information resources in the library.21 (33.3%) of males and 30 (60%) of females through assistance from a librarian.15 ((23.8%) of males and 8(16%) of females through friends.14 (22.2%) of males and 2(4%) of females through trial and error.3 (4.7%) of males and 10(20%) of females through the use of library course GST

(105).None of the respondents show that he did not get any information resources in the library. The null hypothesis shows that the t critical value of 2.306 is higher than the t calculated value of 0.038.Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference in the main way through which the students find their information resources.

Research question 6: What is the level of satisfaction in the accessibility of the library information resources by gender?

Table 9: Level of respondents' satisfaction in the accessibility of the library information resources.

VARIABLE S	MALE FREQUENC Y	PERCENTAG E	FEMALES FREQUENC Y	PERCENTAG E
Satisfied	44	69.8%	40	80%
Not satisfied	15	23.8%	10	20%
undecided	4	6.3%	-	-
TOTAL	63	100	50	100

Tcalculated value is =0.2544 df= 5, t critical value=2.776

Table 9 shows that 44(69.8%) of males and 40(80%) of females are satisfied. 15(23.8%) of males and 10 (20%) of females are not satisfied, and (6.3%) of are undecided. The null hypothesis shows that the t critical value of 2.776 on 0.05 scale,

is higher than the t calculated value of 0.2544.therefore, the hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference in the students' level of satisfaction base on gender.

Research question 7: What are the factors affecting the respondents access to information resources by gender

Table 10: factors affecting the respondents' access to information resources in the library by gender

Variables	Male				Male			
	Yes	%	No	%	yes	%	No	%
Lack of enough information facilities	50	79.3%	13	20.6%	33	66%	17	34%
Lack of cooperation by the Librarians	16	25.3%	47	74.6%	11	22%	39	78%
Poor reading conditions	18	28.5%	45	71.4%	2	4%	48	96%
Inappropriate timing in the library.	21	33.3%	42	66.6%	10	20%	40	80%
Lack of respondent's library search skills	8	12.6%	55	87.3%	12	24%	38	76%
Lack of access to internet in the library	41	65.0%	22	34.9%	46	92%	4	%

Table 10 in multiple choices, shows the position of the respondents on the factors that affect the accessibility of the library information resources by gender. Lack of enough information facilities in the library, males 50(79.3%) yes, 13(20.6%) no, and females 33(66%) yes, 17(34%) no. On lack of cooperation by the librarians of the library, males with 16 (25.3%) yes 47(24.6%) no, and for females is 11(22%) yes, 39(78%) no. As regard to poor reading condition, 18(28.5%) yes, 45(71.4%) and females 2(4%) yes, 48(96%) no. Inappropriate timing in the library, 21(33.3%) of males with yes, 42(66.6%) no, and females 10 (20%) yes, 40 (80%) no. Base on lack of library search skills, 18(12.6%) of males say yes, 55(87.3%) no, while females 12(24%) yes and 38 (76%) no. Lack of access to library internet, males 41(65.0%) indicate yes, 22(34.9%) no, females 46(92%) yes and 4(8%) no.

Conclusion

In the university system, students rely exclusively on library to obtain their vital information resources. Both males and females of university maximize their search skills and study skills the moment they are admitted to the university. Gender as a crucial phenomenon in learning is applied in the library services in order to ascertain how library resources are patronized and accessed. In this study, there is greater involvement of both males and females in accessing the vast library resources from different perspective. Both gender use the available resources in the library because the library is meant to serve all irrespective of sex.

This result explicitly shows that the gender difference in the accessibility of library information resources is not significant because both males and

females participate in the accessibility of the information resources, only that both gender happen to get higher preference in certain specific variables, but in the end, the difference observed is not significant.

Recommendations

1. To provide appropriate library policies.
2. To boost concrete user education program that will accommodate all the gender
3. To provide appropriate timing in the library by increasing the library hours to 24 /7
4. To provide un-interrupted internet connectivity in the library.
5. To provide adequate and relevant information resources to the library

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