

GENDER INFLUENCE ON THE USAGE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY BY LIBRARIANS IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTH SOUTH AND SOUTH WEST NIGERIA

By

Achugbue Iroroezwo Edwin Ph.D, CLN and Azih Adaeze Chioma

Department of Library and Information Science Delta State University Abraka, Nigeria

Abstract

This study is carried out to investigate gender influence on the usage of information and communication technology by librarians in university libraries in South-south and South-west Nigeria. The population for this is 512 librarians from 41 university libraries in 12 states across South-south and South-west Nigeria. The study employed descriptive survey design of correlational type and Sample percentages were used to analyse the demographic information of the respondents, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used for research question respectively. Based on the analysis analyses of date, it was found that gender of librarians does not influence the usage of ICT in university libraries in South-south and South-west, Nigeria. The study recommends that university and librarians should create gender balance in the assigning of duties in the university libraries, as there is no gender difference in the use of ICT among Librarians in university libraries.

Keywords: University, Librarian, Library, ICT, Gender, South-South, South-West

Introduction

Traditionally, the tendency has been to view technologies introduced into the academic institutions, University libraries, marketplace and even homes as gender neutral, having equal potential to be used by either men or women is an issue of concern and bearing in mind that emergence of ICTs has made the world a global community. Accordingly, Oyedokun, Oyewumi, Akanbi and Dolapo (2018) posits that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one of the utmost inventions of our time which played extraordinary parts in changing the background of human and organization accomplishments around the world from which libraries are not exempt. The study of ICT usage in academic library is very important, because of the place of ICT in academic libraries, engineers in technology development gave no consideration to the symbolic value. As is already well documented, fewer women than men specialize in the sciences or engineering. However, the fear of women to use technology or interact with the new ICT can be seen as a problem of women rather than as a reflection of the inappropriate design of the technologies or the aura of male dominance surrounding their use (Rathgeber, 2000). Information and communication technology (ICT) has transformed the entire academic library such that activities that been carried out physically before

are now been automated and digitized (Oyedokun, Oyewumi, Akanbi and Dolapo, 2018). The work of library staff are now being characterized by information and communication technologies. Academic libraries were observed to be more fortified with information infrastructures more than any other type of libraries, but no library no matter how well fortified that doesn't require the service of a workforce that is highly competent and proficient in the use of ICT tools, as such information infrastructure will remain unused or under-utilized digitized (Oyedokun, Oyewumi, Akanbi and Dolapo, 2018).

Consequently, gender differences is a current issue globally it has taking a center stage in academic institutions, economy, politics, science and technology and even in religious circles (Olawale, & Olubukola, 2019). According to McGiugan, (2008) cited in Olawale and Olubukola, (2019), gender issues have been in the vanguard of impassioned public discussion regarding higher institutions globally and had acknowledged also that gender is a relevant factor in the use of electronic databases (Waldman, 2003) cited in (Olawale, & Olubukola, 2019). To a large extent, this traditional pattern of male and female posture towards technologies is replicating itself in the effective use of these technologies for effective services delivery. In Europe and North America for example, some anecdotal evidence indicates that women who do involve themselves in information technologies tend to bring with them interest with expectation different from their male colleagues. Research has shown that women and girls in information technology tend to be more interested in the social applications of technologies.

The first operational activities associating gender and Information and Communication Technology appeared in 1995 in Africa (Adeya, 2001). Adeya noted that women have often been marginalized in their access to and use of ICTs. Many projects have been implemented over the past years to try to improve the situation. Spacey, Goulding and Murray (2003) stated that the influence of an individual's gender, a variable frequently explored in relation to ICT usage, is of consequence when a majority of public library staff in the UK are women.

Adeyinka (2009) explained that there has been much debate across disciplines as to whether women's use of computer is more problematic than men's. Women are frequently portrayed as being afraid of technology, computers and the internet and also alienated by the masculine culture surrounding them. Arend and Steiner (2003) reported the 2001 Eurobarometer study that in all European countries except Luxembourg, Northern Ireland and Finland, computers are used more frequently by men than women. Harris and Davison (1999) focused on the impact of technological change on library work in both public and academic libraries in the USA and Canada and found that women felt more threatened by technological changes than men.

Arend and Steiner (2003) in a recent study on the use of the internet by gender reported that more men use the internet than women. Rosenthal and Spiegelmen (1986) however studied the use of internet among academic reference librarians, and reported that gender had no real influence on use. But that there was a significant difference between men's and women's median scores relating to usefulness of the internet. This suggests that men rated the internet more highly than women

because women were less confident about their computer skills than men when asked to rate their abilities. Adeyinka (2009) argued that men are often more overconfident than women, alluding to example of research into job applications where it was observed that men apply for jobs they aspire to whilst women will apply for jobs they know they can do. Fontaine (2000) studied women and ICT and reported that lack of training and guidance about usage, communication and techniques had affected women's use of ICT, and concluded that women felt more frightened by the new Information and Communication Technologies and resist learning and using them.

The impact of gender on the use of Information Technology is still a matter of debate. Although results are inconsistent across studies yet prior research has suggested that women are likely to report higher computer apprehension (Igberia, Pavri & Huff, 1989). Previously, studies in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have considered gender differences which were examined outside the specific context of ICT. Although some studies reported that female are more apprehensive in the use of IT, Lowe & Krahn (1989) have found a striking gender difference in computer skills and usage in Canada. Gofen and Straub (1997) reported a genuine gender difference in various aspects of ICT diffusion. Beserupe (1970) stressed that new technologies introduced in Africa, as well as in other developing areas, have been generally displacing the labour of women. Her research, according to Hafkin (2000), marked the beginning of the intellectual examination of the effects of new technologies on women jobs and the opening of debates about gender gaps in technology.

In an attempt to expand the view that ICT to date had generated negative consequences for women, Rathgeber (1995) asserted that for most women in the developing world ICT has failed. Even though the new ICT can marginalize both men and women, women are likely to be slower in adopting the new technologies. Furthermore, Jacobs and Lim (1995) noted that it is widely acknowledged that men tend to be the first to use new technologies. They use them more both at work and home, and to gain significant benefits from doing so. The long standing male predominance according to them in the use of technologies at work is associated with extensive job segregation by gender. However, men protect their technological advantage in employment in ways which make it difficult for women to break into male technology strongholds (Cockburn, 1997). Consequently, Gaskell (1992) adduced the gender disparity in the use of ICT to traditional demarcations and culture. He noted that the result of a cultural response to technology which continues to be positive for men and negative for women could be attributed to the fact that most females did not take technical courses in schools.

The mobile phone is one of the popular among the ICTs products women and men use the mobile phone more than any other ICT device. One of the reasons is that it is easy to operate and supplies an immediate need for communication with no limit on time and space. Boneva, Kraut and Frohlich (2001) reported that the ownership of mobile phones among the genders is higher compared to computer and internet use. They also examined issues found on the usage of mobile phone and reported that men spend more time using mobile phones than women.

Accordingly, SIGIS (1999) and SIGIS (2002) noted that a similar gap exists between men and women in PC use. Studies of internet use show that users are again more likely to be men. However, recent statistical surveys show that there has been a strong growth in the use of the internet among girls, reducing the gender gap among the adolescents age group (Berg, Gansmo, Hestflatt, Lie, Nordi and Sovensen, 2002). Raban, Braynin and Soffer (2006) found in their study that gender gap still exists among men and women in the use of internet in Italy and the lowest is in Israel and Bulgaria. Fortunato and Managenalli (2002) showed that Italy has a larger gender internet usage gap than any other European country. He also noted that Italian men are more interested in internet while women showed more interest in mobile phones.

Boneva, Kraut and Frohlich (2001) claimed that the gender gap in internet use has been narrowing, but different gender usage patterns and application preferences persist. Other studies in the area of ICT usage indicated that women's interest and usage of computers and internet are very different from those of men. For example, women tend to search the web mostly for health information and educational purposes, while men are more likely to seek news and entertainment online (Boneva, Kraut & Frohlich, 2001). For example women in Norway and Germany spend more time than women in Israel. They also found that men and women have varied interests in using the internet.

Furthermore, there are also gender variations in terms of intensity of usage where women tend to spend less time using computers as well as internet at home compared to men (SIGIS, 2002). Research on diffusion of innovation uses the time and range of usage as a measure for intensity of use of Information and Communication Technology. According to Raban and Soffer (2000), Mihner and Ganer (2002), men tend to spend more time in the use of computer or internet than women and this has created ICT gap between men and women. The gap appears in the length of time of using the internet as well. In general, they found that women spend less time in the use ICT infrastructure.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate gender and ICT usage by Librarians in University Libraries in South South and South West, Nigeria. The Specific objective of the study is:

1. To ascertain the extent to which gender influences the use of ICT usage in University libraries in South South and South West, Nigeria.

Research Question

The study will provide answer to the research question below:

1. To what extent does gender influence the use of ICT by librarians?

Research Design

This research adopted the descriptive survey design of correlational type. Descriptive research is a type of research that describes a population, situation, or phenomenon that is being studied. It focuses on answering the how, what, when. Descriptive survey research uses surveys to gather data about varying subjects. This data aims to know the extent to which different conditions can be obtained among these subjects.

Population of the Study

The population of the study is 512. This number consisted of the total population of librarians in 41 university libraries at federal, state and private universities located in 12 states of South South and South West of Nigeria.

Research Instrument

The instrument used for data collection is the questionnaire. This is because the questionnaire is one of the most reliable instrument for collecting data, especially when the research want to collect obtain answers to some set of questions from several people (Yomere and Agbonifoh, 1999).

Method of Data Analysis

Sample percentages were used to analyse the demographic information of the respondents, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used for research question respectively.

Presentation of Results and Discussion of Findings

The results from the study are presented below:

Questionnaire Response Rate

The questionnaire response rate of the respondents shown in table 1.

Table 1. The Questionnaire Response Rate

Number of questionnaire administered	Number of questionnaire returned	Percentage of returned
580	512	88%

Table 1, shows the response rate of the respondents, a total of 580 copies of the questionnaire was administered and 512 (ie. 88%) of them was returned. The response rate is considered adequate because the standard and acceptable response rate for most research studies is 60%.

Analysis of Demographic Data of the Respondents

The Gender Distributions of the Male and Female Respondents is shown in table2.

Table 2: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	281	54.9
Female	231	45.1
Total	512	100

Table 2, shows that there are more male librarians 281(54.9%) than their female counterparts 231(45.1%). In the South- South and South- West of Nigeria, the marginal difference of about 9.8% shows that the gender gap among librarians in Nigeria is not very pronounced.

Research Question

To what extent does gender influence the use of ICT hardware by librarians?

To ascertain the extent of the gender of librarians and the use of ICT hardware, the scores of the gender of Librarians were cross tabulated with the level of ICT hardware usage by the librarians and the result is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Result Between the Gender of Librarians and the Usage of ICT.

		Gender	Level of ICT Hardware Usage by the Librarians
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	-.030
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.497
	N	512	512
Level of ICT Hardware Usage by the Librarians	Pearson Correlation	-.030	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.497	
	N	512	512

From Table 3, since the significant value is 0.497 (which is higher than 0.05), it can be concluded that there is no significant correlation between the gender of librarians and the level of ICT hardware usage by the librarians. This implies that no matter the gender of the librarian, it does not influence the use of ICT hardware. Finding from this study agree with that one of Cockburn (1997), Jacobs and Lim (1995), Gaskell (1992), Fontaine (2000) Arend and Steiner (2003), Adeyinka (2009) and Rathgeber (1995) who asserted that for most women in the developing world ICT, has failed. Even though the new ICT can marginalize both men and women, women are likely to be slower in adopting the new technologies. Furthermore, Jacobs and Lim (1995) noted that it is widely acknowledged that men tend to be the first to use new technologies. They use them more both at work and home, and to gain significant benefits from doing so. The long standing male predominance, according to them, in the use of technologies at work is associated with extensive job

segregation by gender. However, men protect their technological advantage in employment in ways which make it difficult for women to break into male technology strongholds (Cockburn, 1997). Consequently, Gaskell (1992) adduced the gender disparity in the use of ICT to traditional demarcations and culture. He noted that the result of a cultural response to technology which continues to be positive for men and negative for women. Arend and Steiner (2003) in a recent study on the use of the internet by gender reported that more men use the Internet than women. Rosenthal and Spiegelmen (1986) however studied the use of Internet among academic reference librarians, and reported that gender had no real influence on use, but that there was a significant difference between men's and women's median scores relating to usefulness of the internet. This suggests that men rated the internet more highly than women because women were less confident about their computer skills than men when asked to rate their abilities. Adeyinka (2009) argued that men are often more overconfident than women, alluding to example of research into job applications where it was observed that men apply for jobs they aspire to whilst women will apply for jobs they know they can do. Fontaine (2000) studied women and ICT and reported that lack of training and guidance about usage, communication and techniques had affected women's use of ICT, and concluded that women felt more frightened by the new information and communication technologies and resist learning and using them.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study was carried out to explore Gender and ICT Usage by Librarians in University Libraries in South South and South West Nigeria. Based on the analysis of data, it was found that gender of librarians does not influence the usage of ICT in university libraries in South South and South West Nigeria. Even though, it was found that gender of librarians does not influence the usage of ICT in university libraries in South South and South West. It was recommended that university and librarians should create gender balance in the assigning of duties in the university libraries, as there is no gender difference in the use of ICT among Librarians in university libraries.

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