



DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS IN THE ATTITUDE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS TOWARDS THE USE OF INFORMATION RESOURCES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the demographic characteristics in the attitude of postgraduate students towards the use of information resources in university libraries in south-south Nigeria. The specific purpose was to examine the differences in the attitude of male and female postgraduate students towards the use of information resources, explore the disciplinary differences in the attitude of postgraduate students towards the use of information resources, in university libraries located in Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Akwa-Ibom, Cross River, and Rivers States. Four research questions and four hypotheses were raised to guide this study. The survey method was adopted. A sample of 1,744 was drawn out of the population of 17,449 from which 1,412 was found usable for the study. The reliability of the instrument used for the survey was tested using Cronbach Alpha which yielded an index of (0.87). The data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentage, mean, standard deviation, z-test and ANOVA. The results of analysis revealed that Sex difference and disparate academic discipline influence Postgraduate students' attitude



towards the use of information resources in university libraries in South-South Nigeria. It was recommended that the libraries should be well funded in order to acquire current and relevant information materials, organize symposium on available information resources as part of orientation programme for postgraduate students. Assignments that compel postgraduate students to use library information resources should be encouraged by the academia. Finally the Reference librarians should be accessible for information resources consultation.

Keywords: Sex, Academic Discipline, Attitude, Libraries, ANOVA

I NTRODUCTION

The use of library and information resources for information gathering and sharing is very important in generating new ideas and knowledge which can be used for problem solving and socio-economic development. Information resources is used for communication, professional development and professionally related tasks, personal use, supporting teaching and administrative tasks, research activities as well as recreation (Renwick, 2005) and for preparing lecture notes by lecturers (Bhukuvhani, Chiparausha and Zuvalinyenga, 2012). These information resources have positive impact on the teaching-learning process (Wulystan, Frankwell, Andrew & Angella, 2014).

According to Tella, Ayeni and Omoba (2007:4), electronic information resources in recent years, have become prominent in the drive for making information and data transfer available to users, especially students. Ray and Day (1998) asserted that electronic information resources serve as a motivating factor to students as it provides them opportunities to transmit, acquire or download, process and disseminate information on a subject of interest. However, electronic information resources for of research and learning purposes have posed challenges in relation to system connection, working ability and access.

The library resources (inclusive of electronic resources) in universities are open to use by students in general and postgraduate students in particular, and it is expected that these students make optimal use of them especially for their academic excellence. Accordingly, Amatea



and Clark (2005) noted that experience has shown that the attitude of these postgraduate students towards the use of information resources in universities in Nigeria is not encouraging, and so postgraduate students' positive attitude is needed if library information resources are to be used. Their attitude could however be influenced by certain demographic characteristics which include sex, academic discipline,

Attitude according to Nyaegah (2011) refers to certain regularities of an individual's feelings, thoughts and predispositions to act towards some aspects of the environment. He further emphasized the evaluative aspect of attitude. Anastasi (1990 p.88) defined attitude as "a tendency to react favourably or unfavourably towards a designed class of stimuli. It is evident that attitude cannot be directly observed, but must be inferred from overt behaviour, both verbal and non verbal". Amatea and Clark (2005) explained attitude as a condition of readiness for a certain type of activity. Attitudes held by individuals may be simple or complex, stable or unstable, temporary or permanent and superficial or fundamental. Judgments based upon insufficient facts are likely to yield wrong results and, thereby, develop biased

attitudes (Eyo, Joshua & Esuong, 2010).

In terms of demographics influence of library usage, Bassi and Camble (2011) posited that the issue of sex gap in library usage is gaining ground and attracting the attention of academic researchers. . In the same vein, Waldman (2003) is of the opinion that sex is a relevant factor in use of information resources. This corroborates Adibe (2002) who succinctly noted that a sex difference towards library information resources affects an individual's interest and attitude towards its use. In terms of level of study as a demographic, Sharma (1988) observed that at the postgraduate level, students are mindful of acquiring qualifications and would like to work on prescribed courses of study.

Demographics often yield important clues as to postgraduate students' attitude towards the use of information resources in universities. Whitmire (2001) found that there was a correlation between background characteristics such as sex, economic status, age scores and information use. In Nigeria, research findings on sex and socio-economic status, differences in library usage have been very limited, most especially in an



academic library setting, hence the need for this study.

In line with this, the following research questions are raised:

- i. What is the influence of sex on the attitude of postgraduate students towards the use of information resources in university libraries in South-south Nigeria?
- ii. What is the influence of academic discipline on the attitude of postgraduate students towards the use of information resources in university libraries in South-south Nigeria?

The following null hypotheses which guided the study were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho 1: There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female postgraduate students towards the use of information resources in university libraries in South-south Nigeria;

Ho 2: There is no significant difference in the attitude of postgraduate students from various

academic discipline towards the use of information resources in university libraries in South-south Nigeria;

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Library is an information house that is responsible for the provision and dissemination of information to her users in any form, whether print and non-print. However, despite the availability of these information resources to postgraduate students, the researcher observed (as a student in Delta State University, Abraka, an industrial trainee in Benson Idahosa University, Benin, and a worker in John Harris Library, (uniben) that the usage of these resources is in a dwindling progression. Could it be that their attitudes towards the use of these resources are influenced by some demographic characteristics such as; sex and academic discipline? Therefore, this study sought to explore the demographic characteristics in the attitude of postgraduate students towards the use of information resources in university libraries.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature was reviewed for the study based on the conceptual model that was designed to guide the study. The conceptual model is as seen in Figure 1 below:

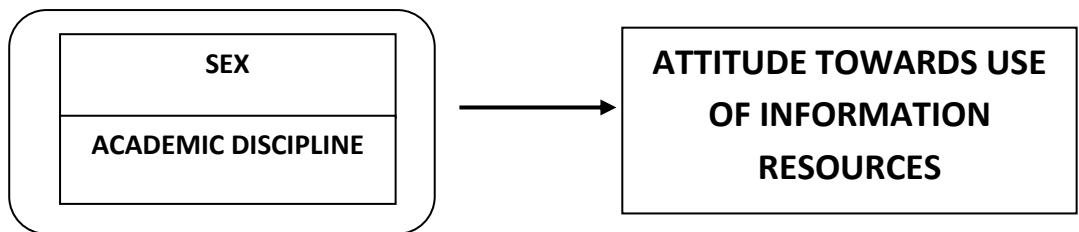


Fig 1: *Showing the conceptual model of the demographic characteristics in the attitude of postgraduate students towards the use of information resources. Self designed by the Researcher (2017).*

Influence of Sex on the Attitude of Postgraduate Students towards the Use of Information Resources in University Libraries

Sex differences are being discussed in the academia, economy, politics, science and technology, and even religious circles. On how sex influences the attitude towards the use of information resources in libraries, Utulu (2006) observed that the issue of the sex gap in the information resources use and the impact of new technologies on sex in particular on the economic and political spheres of women lives are of major importance. Many scholars have discussed the issue of sex difference among students towards the use of library resources. Manda

and Mulkangara (2007) reported that sex is associated with the use of electronic information resources, and that male postgraduate students were more likely to use e-resources than female postgraduate students. They further reported that even when there was control for attitude towards the use of e-resources or training in the use of e-resources, the relationship between sex and e-resources is maintained. Similarly, Amkpa (2007) found that male and female students differ significantly in attitudes towards computer applications which later affect their job opportunities after graduation. From the foregoing, Obuh (2009) reported a high frequency of use of information resources by both male



and female postgraduate students, but noted that sex gap in information resources usage appears negligible. Researches into different studies have identified how students acquire their search skills for the use of e-resources. Klatt (2001) reported that majority of students obtained their knowledge by trial and error or with the help of fellow students. Similarly, According to Manda and Mulkangara (2007), sex is associated with the use of information resources. Amkpa (2007) observed that male and female students differ significantly in their attitudes towards computer applications which definitely have adverse effects on their job opportunities after graduation. Also, Ernst (1995) reported that women find it more difficult to get information online than men. On the contrary, Obuh (2009) reported that both male and female postgraduate students have high frequency use of electronic information resources. However, Block (2001) argued for a greater focus on male-oriented magazines and books. He further presented no data on male preferences within the library context, on area for which there is comparatively little information. Applegate (2008) revealed that several major studies of library users on the use of library resources conducted in the past on library use did not give significant report on

sex differences. There is also no data on sex differences in the use of Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA) academic library. Hence, the main objective of the study is to assess sex dimension of information and reading preference in FUTA library.

Onovughe and Ogbah (2013) examined sex difference in the use of library among students of colleges of education in Warri, Agbor and Mosogar in Delta State of Nigeria, and found that the female students make use of the library than the males; both sexes have similar reasons for the use of the library, both sexes acquired their search skills/knowledge through the user education, library guide/handbook and being taught by friends. Non-familiarity with different parts of the library and frequent interruption of electricity supply posed greater problems to their use of the library. It was recommended in the study that students should visit the library more often as that will help them to familiarize with the library; government should also wake up to its responsibility to its citizens as regards electricity and ensure a steady power supply.

Indeed, effective information use by postgraduate students in an academic environment could be as a result of the student's acquisition of the requisite social, emotional,



cognitive skills and behaviour for successful social adaptation. Sex dimensions of these variables could be crucial to providing explanation on how female postgraduate had fared against her male counterparts in terms of social competence and information utilization (Momodu, 2014).

The Influence of Academic Discipline on the Attitude of Postgraduate Students towards the use of Information Resources in University Libraries

The most relevant study to our research regarding faculty attitudes toward library use was conducted by Cannon (1994), at York University in Toronto which served as a foundation for several subsequent articles. She developed a twenty-item survey sent to full-time faculty in the social sciences and humanities. The aim of the survey was to better understand faculty perceptions regarding students' research skills, preferred methods of library instructions to meet students' needs, and faculty-librarian collaboration. Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents indicated that a librarian had taught a research session for their classes, with the English and History departments as the two most frequent requestors. Cannon's results also indicated that a significant majority of the

respondents reported being very open to partnering more closely with librarians (Cannon, 1994).

Singh (2005) published the results of a large-scale research study involving mass communication and journalism faculties from schools across the United States. The faculties responded to a survey about their use of library instruction, their students' information literacy (IL) skills, and the impact of the instruction on students' performance. Interestingly, this study brought to light the increasing trend of IL and research skills being tied into academic programme, college, and university accreditation. That same year, Manuel, Beck, and Molloy (2005) reported on researches that differed from other studies in that they focused on college faculties who were heavy users of library instructions. Their method was distinctive because they used face-to-face interviews, rather than a survey, to gauge faculty opinions on such items as the importance of library instructions, best and worst experiences, and the effects of the instructions on their students. The top reasons why faculties appreciated library instructions are the need to develop students' research skills, a need to combat the overreliance on the free Internet,⁵⁷



and the value of library instruction for fostering college success.

Another study based on Cannon's work was conducted by Hrycaj and Russo (2007) at Louisiana State University. Like Gonzales, they targeted the entire faculties at their institution. When asked to specify what information their students needed the most help with, the faculties responded that the top two needs were finding periodical articles (85%) and evaluating resources (79%). As in other surveys, there appears to be great

faculty interest in online tutorials as a delivery method for library instruction.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research type of descriptive research was employed in this study with a population consisting of 17,449 postgraduate (Masters Degree) students in universities in the South-south, Nigeria. To arrive at a sample size for the study, 10% was considered from each of the institutions to form a sample size of 1,744 as seen in Table 4.1 below:

Table 1: Population and sample size distribution

University	Postgraduate Students Population	Sample size
Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma.	1,800	180
University of Calabar, Calabar.	1,900	190
University of Benin, Benin City.	2,943	294
Delta State University, Abraka.	1,751	175
Niger Delta University, Bayelsa.	550	55
Rivers University of Science and Technology.	1,650	165
University of Port-Harcourt, Port-Harcourt.	2,730	273
University of Uyo, Uyo.	1,545	154
AkwaIbom State University, Ikot Akpaden	1,050	105
Cross River State University, Calabar.	1,530	153
Total	17,449	1,744



The study employed a self-developed questionnaire to elicit data for the study. The questionnaire uses a five likert scale format of SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), D (Disagree), SD (Strongly Disagree) and U (Undecided). It is made up of section A (demographic data of the respondents, such as sex, academic discipline, socio-economic status and age) and section B (attitude towards the use of information resources). The questionnaire was given face validity by experts while the instrument's reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha which yielded an index of 0.87.

The researchers with the help of trained research assistants helped in the distribution and collection of the questionnaire within a period of three weeks by 9am-4pm on daily basis within the three weeks allocated for the data collection process. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and statistical mean were used to analyze data on demographic variables of the respondents and to answer the research questions. Hypotheses one and three were tested using z-test while Hypotheses two and four were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The researcher used z-test because it is used to measure the differences that exist

between two variables while ANOVA helps to measure the difference among three or more variables.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 1,744 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 1,412 (81%) copies were returned. The response rate of 81% is considered adequate for the study because the standard and acceptable response rate for most studies is 60%.

Analysis of the Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Sex of the Respondents

This section is devoted to analyzing the sex distribution of the respondents, putting into cognizance the frequency and the percentage of the sex.

Table 2: Sex Distribution of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	685	48.5
Female	727	51.5
Total	1,412	100.0



As can be seen from Table 5.1, the sex distribution of the postgraduate students in university libraries in South-South Nigeria showed that there are more females 727(51.5%) than the males 685(48.5%).

Academic Disciplines of the Respondents

This section shows the distribution of the various academic discipline under discuss and the response of the respondents.

Table 3: Distribution of Academic Disciplines of the Respondents

Academic Disciplines/ Faculties	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Arts	477	33.8
Education	356	25.2
Social Sciences	267	18.9
Sciences	312	22.1
Total	1412	100.0

As can be seen from Table 5.2, there are more postgraduate students in the Faculty of Arts 477(33.8%). This is closely followed by Faculty of Education 356(25.2%). This implies that majority of the postgraduate students are in the faculties of Arts and Education.

Answering of the Research Questions and Testing of the Research Hypotheses

This section is devoted to answering of the research questions, and testing of the hypotheses.

Research Question 1

What is the influence of sex on the attitude of postgraduate students towards the use of information resources in university libraries in South-south Nigeria? The data in Table 4.6.provide answer to this question.

**Table 4: Influence of Sex on Attitude Towards the use of Information Resources. Cross tabulation**

		Attitude towards the use of information resources					Total	
		UND	SD	D	A	SA		
Sex	Male	Count	2	3	47	472	161	685
		% of Total	0.1%	0.2%	3.3%	33.4%	11.4%	48.5%
	Female	Count	3	7	38	406	273	727
Total	Female	% of Total	0.2%	0.5%	2.7%	28.8%	19.3%	51.5%
	Total	Count	5	10	85	878	434	1412
		% of Total	0.4%	0.7%	6.0%	62.2%	30.7%	100.0%

The influence of sex on the attitude of postgraduate students towards information resources' use on the table above, revealed that both male 472 (33.4%) and

female 406 (28.8%) postgraduate students respectively agreed that their sex have influence on their attitude



towards the use of information resources in university libraries in South-south Nigeria.

This indicates that the sex of the respondents influences their attitude towards the use of information resources in university libraries.

Research Question 2

What is the influence of academic discipline on the attitude of postgraduate students towards the use of information resources in university libraries in South-south Nigeria? The data in Tables 5.6a and 5.6b.provide answer to this question.

Table 5: Influence of Academic Discipline on Attitude Towards the Use of Information Resources Cross tabulation

		Attitude towards the use of information resources			
		UND	SD	D	A
Academic discipline	Arts	Count	3	3	28
		% of Total	0.2%	0.2%	18.9%
	Education	Count	1	5	18
		% of Total	0.1%	0.4%	13.5%
	Social Sciences	Count	0	1	10
		% of Total	0.0%	0.1%	13.7%
	Sciences	Count	1	1	29
		% of Total	0.1%	0.1%	16.1%
	Total	Count	5	10	85
		% of Total	0.4%	0.7%	62.2%



Table 6: Influence of Academic Discipline on the Attitude towards the use of Information Resources. Crosstabulation

		Attitude towards the use of information resources		Total
		SA	Other	
Academic discipline	Arts	Count	176	477
		% of Total	12.5%	33.8%
	Education	Count	142	356
		% of Total	10.1%	25.2%
	Social Sciences	Count	62	267
		% of Total	4.4%	18.9%
Total	Sciences	Count	54	312
		% of Total	3.8%	22.1%
		Count	434	1412
		% of Total	30.7%	100.0%



Postgraduate students of the various faculties: Arts 267 (18.9%), Education 190 (13.5%), Social Sciences 194 (13.7%), and Sciences 227 (16.1%) agreed that their academic discipline have an influence on their attitude towards the use of information resources in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. This means that academic discipline of the postgraduate students influence their attitude

towards the use of information resources in university libraries.

Hypothesis 1

The null hypothesis 1 drawn to provide tentative answer to the question states that there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female postgraduate students towards the use of information resources in university libraries in South-south Nigeria. The data in Table 5.9 describes the hypothesis.

Table 7: Z-test Analysis of Male and Female Postgraduate Students and Use of Information Resources

Sex	N	Mean	SD	α	Df	z-cal.	p-value	Decision
Male	685	4.24	0.48	0.05	1406.376	2.502	0.012	Highly Significant
Female	727	4.17	0.54					

The result of Levene's test for equality of variances (0.014) is less than 0.05, hence, "Equal variances not assumed" is used for the result. There is a difference in the scores for the statistical mean of the use of information resources by male and female postgraduate students, Male ($M=4.24$, $SD=0.48$) and Female ($M=4.17$, $SD=0.54$; $z(df=1406.376)=2.502$, $p=0.012$).

The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This means that there is a significant difference in the attitude of male and female postgraduate students towards the use of information resources in university libraries in South-south Nigeria.

This implies that the sex of the postgraduate students may influence their use of information resources. The magnitude of the differences in the statistical means was very small ($\eta^2 = .004$), meaning that only 0.4% of the variance in the use of information resources is explained by sex.

Hypothesis 2

The null hypothesis 2 drawn to provide a tentative answer to the question states that there is no significant difference in the attitude of postgraduate students from various academic disciplines towards the use of information



resources in university libraries in South-south Nigeria. Data in Table 5.10 provides explains the hypothesis.

Table 8: ANOVA Analysis of Academic Disciplines of Postgraduate Students and Use of Information Resources

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.436	3	3.479	13.680	.000
Within Groups	358.016	1408	.254		
Total	368.451	1411			

Table 5.10 shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the groups (Arts, Education, Sciences and Social Sciences) as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(3,1408) = 13.680$, $p = 0.000$). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in the attitude of postgraduate students from various academic disciplines towards the use of information

resources in university libraries in South-south Nigeria. A Schefee post-hoc test revealed that the difference lies in the Faculty of Sciences. It may be deduced from the analysis that postgraduate students from the faculty of Sciences use information resources more than those in other faculties. The result is presented in Table 5.11.

Table 9: Schefee Post-Hoc Analysis of Academic Disciplines of Postgraduate Students and Use of Information Resources

Academic Disciplines	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Social Sciences	267	4.0955		
Education	356	4.1439	4.1439	
Arts	477		4.2294	
Sciences	312			4.3393
Sig.		.669	.184	1.000

Discussion of the Findings

This section is devoted to the discussion of the findings.

It can be deduced from the research findings in research question 1 and hypothesis 1 that there is a



significant difference in the scores for the statistical mean of the use of information resources by male and female postgraduate students. This means that the sex of the postgraduate students may influence their use of information resources. This finding is in contrast with that of Obuh (2009) which stated that both male and female postgraduate students have high frequency of use with regard to the usage of information resources. This is because from the findings, there exists a significant difference in the attitude of male and female postgraduate students towards the use of information resources in university libraries, in South-south, Nigeria.

The research findings in research question 2 and hypothesis 2 show that there is a statistically significant difference between the various academic discipline (Arts, Education, Sciences and Social Sciences). This result was found to be in agreement with Heterick's (2002) which explained that students' academic discipline will continue to affect their use of library and information resources. From the analysis, postgraduate students from the faculty of Sciences use information resource more than those in other faculties (under discuss).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From this study, it can be concluded that there is a significant influence of demographic features which includes sex and academic discipline on postgraduate students' attitude towards the use of information resources in university libraries in South-south Nigeria. This is due to the fact that sex and academic discipline which are the variables under discuss can influence postgraduate students' attitude towards the use of information resources in university libraries in South-south Nigeria. Based on the conclusion above, it is recommended that:

1. The libraries of the universities in South-south Nigeria should have in it stock, current and relevant information materials (journals, books, Electronic based information materials etc), as this will stem the notion that the library is an archive of old, irrelevant and obsolete books.
2. As part of orientation for postgraduate students, the library in conjunction with the academia should organize



- symposiums on available information resource materials and how these materials can be used by the postgraduate students to achieve their academic goals.
3. Research methods and assignments including seminar papers that involve researches should be given to postgraduate students by the lecturers, such that they are compelled to consult the university library information material which becomes indispensable to them.
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