

## Use of Library and Gender as Determinants of Students' Attitudes towards Learning

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### Abstract

*The study investigated the use of library and gender as determinants of students' attitude towards learning in Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria. The aim was to determine the close relationship between use of library, gender and students' attitude towards learning. Two hypotheses were formulated to serve as guide to the study. Three hundred (300) Delta State University students were randomly selected for the study. A questionnaire titled use of library scale and students' attitude towards learning questionnaire was administered and used for data collection. The hypotheses were tested using multiple regression tested at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that the criterion variable (students' attitude towards learning correlated positively and low towards use of library. Also, gender was not a determinant of both students' attitude towards learning and their use of library ability. The results also showed that only students that use the library with the regressional coefficient (b) of .258, and a beta weight of .592 significantly contributed to students' attitude towards learning, while the contributions of gender was not significant in predicting students' attitude towards learning. Based on these findings the following recommendations were made: that students should be encouraged to use library facilities irrespective of gender, the university should make use of library more interesting, materials and resources available in the library should be relevant to available courses offered in the university, library services should be friendly, the university's library should be made more conducive and be available at all times, digitalization of the university's library should be priority and facilitated and so on. It is also important to note that use of library and gender have no influence on each other. All students irrespective of gender can use library facilities without restrictions or bias.*

**Keywords:** *Use of Library, Gender, Students' Attitude and Learning.*

### Introduction

The use of library by students of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Nigeria has gradually declined due to several factors ranging from unavailability of current reading materials to unconducive nature of the library. It is important going forward to advocate for students to use the library(ies) at all times for research, reading, discoveries and so on. In a bid to put the writer(s) and the reader(s) on the same frame of mind and understanding, it has become expedient to discuss the major keywords and concepts that make up this write-up. Mezieobi, Njoku and Uzoeto (2016:90) averred that "clarifying concepts is very important for the readers of every writing. This brings to the understanding of the readers the most essential concepts that make up a write-up". Mezieobi and Nnadozie (2019:132) on their own part noted that "in academics, no scholar, author, writer, teacher, presenter and so on can do without the clarification of concepts in his or her write-ups, be it articles, books, monologues, epilogues, and so on". These are the main reasons for discussions on attitude, learning, gender and use of library. Attitude can be perceived as an individual's feelings, opinion, ideologies and perception about particular thing, subject matter, experience, exposure and so on.

Agulanna and Onukogu (2002) stated that attitude is learned tendency to evaluate some object, person or issue in a particular way. For Petty, Wegener and Fabrigan (2017), attitude means a relatively stable evaluation of persons, objects, situations or issues along a continuum ranging from positive to negative. On the same note, Cetin (2016) posited that attitude means a tendency attributed to individuals and creates ideas, feelings and behaviours about a psychological object in orderly manner. According to Kara (2010), attitude is perceived as that which can cause individuals to always behave in the same way to people, objects, events and foundations which are constant and unchangeable beliefs, feelings and tendencies. Attitude informs an individual's behavior and disposition towards a particular thing, event, occasion, presentation, experience and so on. Agulanna and Onukogu (2012) pinpointed that attitudes are usually formed to serve a purpose for the person who holds them. For instance, attitudes guide people's behavior towards set goals. They also help individuals to interpret whatever new information they get based on already formed attitudes. They further noted that "attitudes are formed through learning and experience. According to the learning theories, attitudes are learnt through classical conditioning, operant conditioning and modeling (Agulanna & Onukogu, 2012). All these are important information on attitude that needed to be mentioned.

Furthermore, learning as an important concept in this paper, needs emphasis. Learning for this paper will be perceived as the acquisition of knowledge for the development of the right attitude. According to Mezieobi and Anugom (2017:21), learning means "an activity, experience or exposure which an individual partakes in that can bring exposure to change in behavioral pattern... learning can affect an individual's character, value orientation, cultural and traditional beliefs and so on". For Agulanna and Nwachukwu (2014:2), "a standard and universally accepted definition of learning is that it is a relatively enduring change in behavior or knowledge, which results from one's experiences. Learning can also be defined as the act, process or experience of gaining knowledge or skills". They further averred that "from the above definition, it can be inferred that

- (1) Learning always brings about a new or different behaviour.
- (2) Learned behavior is more, or less enduring and long lasting.
- (3) To qualify as learning, the change must be brought about by experience. The learner must have consciously or unconsciously interacted with his or her environment".

Piaget (2001) noted that learning is a mental process that depends on perception and awareness, on how additional stimuli and new ideas get integrated into the old knowledge database (a process piaget called assimilation and on how, through reasoning (a previously acquired mental mechanism), the entire database gets reorganized which results in alterations of the mental structures and the creation of new ones (a process called accommodation). Learning as a concept is excessively elusive. This is the reason why Agulanna and Nwachukwu (2014:3) stated that "learning is an elusive concept, which is not directly observable. Sometimes, the learner may not even know that he or she has learnt something". This is the most interesting part of learning.

The interest of this study includes gender. As a variable in the study, gender needs to be discussed. In education, gender plays a vital role. An individual's gender can influence his or her attitude towards learning. Gender according to Nzewi (2017:1) "is the social construction of female and male identity which is more than biological differences between men and women. It includes the way in which those differences have been valued, used and relied upon to classify women and men and to assign roles and expectations to them.

For Aydon (2015), gender means the social phenomenon of distinguishing males and females based on a set of identity traits, it is social, not psychological or biological construction. On the same note, Ametefe and Ametefe (2017) referred to gender as a social construct that establishes and differentiates status and roles between men and women particularly in the way they contribute and participate in and are rewarded by the economy and most social institutions. It has been noted that gender is contextual issue in research generally. Oluwagbohunmi (2014) has disclosed that male students are better than their female counterparts and the results were statistically significant. Also, Voyer and Voyer (2014) found out that females perform better in academics than their male counterparts and results were statistically significant. The two perceptions, contradict each other.

Use of library is another important variable that cannot be ignored in this paper. The utilization of institutional libraries is very essential for the growth and development of students, teachers and even the general public. Iwhiwhu and Akporhonor (2019) have stated that library is a social institution charged with the duty of providing perceptual self-education of individual in the society. For Aguolu and Aguolu (2012), library is a social institution created to conserve knowledge, preserve cultural heritage and provide information and also to serve as fountains of recreation. That means that the use of library will entail unraveling conserved knowledge and preserved cultural heritage. Use of library therefore will be the process or act for exploring preserved and conserved knowledge for the sake of getting adequate information. Furthermore, a library is seen as a centre that houses the collection of resources in a variety of patterns that are:

- (1) Organized by information professionals or other experts who
- (2) Provide convenient physical, digital, bibliographic or intellectual access and
- (3) Offer targeted services and programmes,
- (4) With the mission of educating, informing or entertaining a variety of audiences
- (5) And the goal of stimulating individual learning and advancing society as a whole.  
(Eberhawl, 2010)

Also, there are several studies on different variables that serve as determinants of attitudes to learn among students of higher learning. Examples are:

- (1) Ludwig, Burton, Weingartan, Milan and Myers (2015) examined the health of students.
- (2) Sharma (2014) studies classroom environment
- (3) Mosteller (2015) investigated location of the institution (urban or rural) to be a significant factor that contributes to students' attitude towards learning.
- (4) Gbore (2013) examined relative contributions of teachers' variables and students' attitudes

- (5) Oloyede (2010) carried out a research on self-concept
- (6) Sharma and Jha (2014) investigated parents' educational achievement. However, not many of these pieces of research combined use of library and gender as correlates of students' attitudes towards learning in higher institution. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine use of library and gender as determinants of students' attitudes towards learning in Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria using the Faculty of Education as case study.

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were raised to guide the study

- (1) There is no significant composite effect of use of library and gender on students' attitude towards learning.
- (2) There is no relative significant effect of use of library and gender on students' attitude towards learning.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The research design used for the study was correlation. Correlation design was used in order to understand the relationship and differences exist between two variables. The sampling technique adopted in selection of the sample size is the simple random sampling technique which was used in selecting three hundred (300) Dela State University, Abraka students for the study.

#### **Setting of the Study**

The setting of the study was in Delta State University (DELSU) Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria. The institution is the one of the state owned university in Delta State. Delta State University, Abraka was established in 1992 by the then Executive Governor, Olorogun Felix Ibru. Therefore the total population for the study comprised the entire students of Delta State University (DELSU), Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria totaling 22,000 (Statistics Unit, Students' Affairs, DELSU, 2023).

#### **Participants**

The participants for the study comprised three hundred (300) students of the Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria. The three hundred (300) samples (150 males and 150 females) were selected through simple random sampling technique from first degree/regular/full time students of the institution's Faculty of Education.

### **Instrument**

The instrument used for this study was questionnaire titled “use of library scale and students’ attitude towards learning inventory”. The questionnaire comprised of section A, B and C. Section A comprised the bio-data of the respondents such as age, course of study, department, gender and so on; section B comprised fifteen (15) items drawn on use of library while section C comprised fifteen (15) items on students’ attitude towards learning. The items were structured in a 4-likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was given face validity by three experts, two from Library and Information Science and one from Measurement and Evaluation, from the Faculties of Education, University of Delta, Agbor, Delta State and Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State. In order to test for internal consistency, of the instrument, test retest was adopted and using Pearson moment correlation coefficient, a coefficient of 0.72 was obtained. The scoring of the items was as follows: SA = 4 marks, A = 3 marks, D = 2 marks, SD = 1 mark for positive items while reversed scores were allocated to negative items.

### **Procedure**

The researcher with the assistance of two research assistants visited the Delta State University, Abraka campus. The researcher is an academic staff while the research assistants are doctoral students respectively of Delta State University Abraka. This is the reason why administration of the questionnaire was made easy. The three hundred (300) questionnaires administered were retrieved same day on the spot.

### **Data Analysis**

Data generated from the questionnaires administered were analyzed using multiple regression. The SPSS 15.0 statistical package was utilized in the computation.

### **Presentation and Interpretation of Results**

H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant composite effect of use of library and gender on students’ attitude towards learning.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and correlation matrix for the relationship between the predictor variables and criterion variable**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Students’ attitude towards learning</b>	<b>Use of library</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Students’ attitude towards learning	300	29.7466	4.44684	2.000	0.598	-0.152

Use of library	300	29.2134	5.10242	0.598	2.000	-0.102
Gender	300	2.9	0.998	-0.152	-0.102	2.000

The result from the table shows the mean and standard deviation of the respondents. The participants' value for students' attitudes was  $M=29.7466$ ,  $SD = 4.4684$ , use of library was  $M = 29.2134$ ,  $SD = 0.998$ . Meanwhile, the matrix correlation between the two variables (use of library and gender) and the criterion variable (students' attitude towards learning) showed that students' attitude towards learning correlate positively and low towards use of library. Also, gender was not a determinant of both students' attitude towards learning and their use of library.

H0<sub>2</sub>: There is no relative significant effect of use of library and gender on students' attitude towards learning.

Variables	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
(constant)	23	2.316		19.518	.000
Use of library	0.516	0.138	0.592	7.518	.000
Gender	-0.54	0.702	-0.122	-1.542	0.884

Dependent variable: students' attitude towards learning.

The regression analysis results indicate that the only students use of library with the regression coefficient (0) of 0.516 and a beta weight of 0.592 significantly contributed to students' attitude towards learning while the contribution of gender was not significant. The prediction equation is therefore as follows:

$$\text{Students attitude towards learning} = 23 + 0.516 (\text{UL}) - 0.54G$$

On the basis of the result the null hypothesis which proposed a no significant contribution of the individual variable to the prediction of students' attitude towards learning was accepted for use of library and rejected for gender.

**Table 3: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis between the predictor variable and criterion variable**

<b>Multiple R (adjusted) = 0.61<sup>^</sup>, multiple R<sup>2</sup> (ADJUSTED) = 0.186</b>					
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.162, Std. Error of the estimate = 4.26386</b>					
Mode	Sum of squares	DF	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	136.922	4	64.462	15.062	0.736 <sup>b</sup>
Resident	1336.264	294	9.09		
Total	1473.186	298			

- (a) Dependent variable: students; Attitude towards learning
- (b) Predictors: (constant), gender, use of library.

From table 3, it was observed that the independent variables gave a co-efficient of multiple regression  $R$  of 0.61, multiple  $R^2$  (0.186), and adjusted  $R^3 = (0.162)$ , which indicate that 93% of the two variables accounted for the students' attitude towards learning. This therefore shows that the analysis of the independent variables as a block did not contribute to the students' attitude towards learning. The table from the analysis of variable is also indicated, it produced an F-ratio 15.062 and was found to be insignificant at 0.05 levels.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

Hypothesis one states that there is no significant composite effect of use of library and gender on students' attitude towards learning. The result from the study indicates that the matrix correlation between the two variables (use of library and gender) and the criterion variable (students' attitude towards learning) shows that students' attitude towards learning correlate positively and low towards use of library.

Also, gender was not a determinant of both students' attitude towards learning and their use of library. This result is in agreement with Almamum, Rahman, Rahman and Hossaim (2012) when they found out that respondents have positive attitudes towards learning irrespective of their gender.

Hypothesis two states that there is no relative significant effect of use of library and gender on students' attitude towards learning. Results of the regression analysis showed that only students' use of library with the regression coefficient (b) of 0.516 and a beta weight of 0.592 significantly contributed to students' attitude towards learning, while the contribution of gender was not significant in predicting students' attitude towards learning. Therefore, the result of the null hypothesis which proposed a no significant contribution of the individual variable to the prediction of students' attitudes towards learning as accepted for use of library and rejected for gender. This is in correlation with the study carried out by Aryana (2010) who found a positive correlation between students' self-esteem and attitude towards learning. Furthermore, Roman, Cuestas and Fenollar (2018) revealed that use of library has the strongest impact on learning and that improving use of library as important. It also ranks as high as self-esteem on influence on students' attitude towards learning.

### **Conclusion**

There are several literatures that have in a subtle way related use of library, gender and students' attitude towards learning. This study showed that use of library is a very important act in students' learning and can influence their attitudes towards learning. It is also important to state that gender according to this research did not affect students' attitude towards learning. Nigerian schools are therefore encouraged to reposition schools' libraries and promote the use of library amongst their students irrespective of educational level even starting from lower basic education level schools (primary 1-3) through tertiary institutions (Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics).

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers should encourage their students to utilize schools' libraries at all times.
2. Resources/teaching materials in the library should be recommended for students' use.
3. Improved rapport between teachers and students should be promoted by the school's leadership.
4. The school's library should be students-friendly
5. Teaching and learning in contemporary times should be student-centred
6. Triangulation of teaching methods should be encouraged.

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