Feminization and Image of Librarianship in Academic Environment: The Nigerian Perspective

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ABSTRACT: *The objective of the study is to examine the effect of feminization of librarianship on the professional image of the profession in Nigeria.Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. Due to the COVID-19 that was ravaging the globe at the time of the study, the questionnaire was administered online via an online survey service, www.surveycrest.com. The data generated were analyzed using SPSS Version 21 and presented in Tables.It was found that Nigerian women librarians are adequately prepared for leadership positions in librarianship, though lack of creativity, low level of confidence, and inability to coordinate accounted for low level of women librarians in leadership positions in librarianship. The finding also revealed that feminization of librarianship in Nigeria determined the low image of the profession. Also, the study showed that continuous feminization of librarianship may consequently decrease the image of librarianship. The study is novel as it investigated how feminization affects the professional image of librarianship in Nigeria. Librarians from only few selected public university libraries in South-west, Nigeria were used for the study. This could limit the generalization of the opinions gathered by the study. Perceiving librarianship as 'women's profession' may erode the image and prestige the profession once had when the field was dominated by men. Feminizing librarianship may reduce the image of the profession*

KEYWORDS: feminization, librarianship, librarians, academic libraries, image of librarianship, gender

INTRODUCTION

We are in an age in which nothing concerning women, sexuality, and gender appears definite. Gender is a grouping that subsists in nearly all cultures and professions, including librarianship. Gender is a fundamental component of identity since it is the main means by which society categorizes people. Masculinity and femininity, based on perceptible distinctiveness, determines

individual's behavior, image and recognition. Gender plays significant role in getting to leadership positions. Crawford and Unger (2000) claimed that the level of discriminating against women in groups depends to a vast extent on the proportion of women and men present. More so, anything feminized is usually considered weak and of lower level and quality (Groeneveld and Schmidt, 2019). Since librarianship as a profession has feminist outlook as the vast proportion of librarians in countries across the world are female (Adekoya, 2020; Mars, 2018), feminization may determine the status and image of the profession and librarians.

The story of librarianship and library development in Nigeria is quite recent except for the Arabic manuscripts in various collections which date back to the 18th and 19th centuries (Okiy, 2016). The establishment of various types of libraries in Nigeria saw the influx of both male and female into the profession. Lagos was the nucleus of the main libraries of importance in Nigeria before 1946. The state structure in Nigeria greatly influenced the spread of public and private libraries. On the 16th December, 1962, Nigeria Library Association was inaugurated to establish and maintain standards for the education and certification of librarians. In 1995, the professionalism of librarianship was attained as Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria was established and was inaugurated in May 2002. Many universities are offering programmes in librarianship in Nigeria these days.

Today, librarianship is identified as women 's profession as women are numerically more than men in the profession (American Library Association, 2020; Thomas, Trucks and Kouns, 2019; Johnson, 2017). Librarianship is conceptualized as a 'feminist profession' because the determination of the functions of librarianship was based on 'feminist value system (Mars, 2018). The numerical strength of women in librarianship is as a result of the fact that in the nineteenth century, female librarians were extensively hired on the account of the low financial remuneration given to them (2018). In his 2016 article, Rubin (2016) explicitly claimed that the acknowledgement of libraries as enlightening and fostering development accounted for their acceptable as places for women to work.

The argument in favor of women librarians has always been that most of the early female librarians were hardworking and devoted to the library operation and growth (Mars, 2018). It was the male library managers and the persistent gender bigotry in the profession that limited their talents. By this, women librarians are usually acknowledged as 'active partners, not equal partners' (Adekoya, 2020). More so, men venturing into librarianship have eyes for leadership roles (Udofia and Agboke, 2014) without respect for similarly competent and flourishing woman librarians. Due to this, the representation in leadership positions in libraries favors male librarians.

The demographic configuration of librarianship in the modern era shows that women dominate the profession, though still facing under-representation in management roles (Nwose, Olise and Idoko, 2019). Today, librarianship has not only become female intensive, but also library routine activities

have been characterized as 'feminine' (Higgins, 2016). Adekoya (2020) argued that feminization of librarianship determines the low reputation of the profession and librarians. Rubin (2016) believed that had librarianship remained in the domain of male scholars, the inferior image associated with the profession in the 19th century by feminizing the profession would not have occurred. Mars (2018) claimed that perceiving librarianship as 'women's profession' may erode the image and prestige the profession once had when the field was dominated by men. While these claims may be the reality, it is not very clear whether they actually represent the situation in librarianship in Nigeria in the 21st century or not. Nonetheless, if the response is in the affirmative, why do women not dominate the leadership positions in librarianship in Nigeria even though the profession has been feminized? What is the effect of feminization of librarianship on the image of the profession in Nigeria? It is on this ground that this study investigates the Nigerian perspective on feminization and image of librarianship in academic environment.

Objectives of the Study
The objectives of the study are to:
1.   Determine the level of job performance of women librarians in libraries in Nigeria;
2.   investigate how women librarians prepare for leadership positions in librarianship in Nigeria;
3.   Investigate the reason for low number of women in leadership positions in librarianship despite the feminization of the profession in Nigeria;
4.   examine the attitudinal factors inhibiting women librarians to top positions in librarianship in Nigeria;
5.   know the indicators of feminization of librarianship in Nigeria; and
6.   find out the effect of feminization of librarianship on the professional image of the profession in Nigeria.

Hypothesis
The following hypothesis is tested at 0.05 level of significance:
There is no significant relationship between feminization and the professional image of librarianship.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Perspectives about Feminism
The emergence of feminist theories reflects how feminism affects occupations and the society (Thompson, 2017). Feminism is a movement for the rights of women against gender discrimination. The theories claim that women should not have less political, economic, and civil rights merely because they are women (Soriola, 2018). The general concept of feminism is about the conviction that men and women merit egalitarianism in all opportunities, conduct, admiration, and social right (Ruxton, 2020). In general, feminists are those who attempt to recognize social

disparity based on gender and discontinue it. Feminism conveys the experiences of women in different perspectives. The American most prominent feminist perspectives include womanist, radical, liberal, socialist, and cultural feminism perspectives (Crawford and Unger, 2000). These diverse perspectives of feminism have been described, dependably deliberated, and revealed to foresee people's behavior and notions about women (Malespin, 2015). While the thrust of this paper is not to exhaustively discuss these perspectives, it is still germane to stress how these perspectives affect the image of librarianship.

Womanism (women of color feminism) started with disparagement of the exclusion of women of color in the white women's movement and matters vital to them: poverty, racism, and needs such as jobs, health care, good schools, and safe neighborhoods for all people (Crawford and Unger, 2000). The perspective downplays non-recognition of the role of women in the society, mostly the women of color. Closely related to womanism perspective is radical feminism which is concerned about the male control and dominance of women all through record. Radical feminist is of the view that sexism is intensely rooted in society and the only antidote is complete elimination of the concept of gender. The perspective sees the control of women by men as the earliest and primary form of suppression (Gill and Singh, 2019). Despite the acknowledgement of the oppression of women, the society was reluctant to effect change (Hesford, 2013).

Liberal feminism is analogous to the majority of people as it depends and intensely embraces American principle about impartiality in an orientation that associates it to political liberalism (Crawford and Unger, 2000). Socialist feminism clamors for elimination of capitalism through socialist reformation of the economy. Essentially, socialist feminism espoused that capitalism reinforces and embraces the sexist status quo as men are those who at present have power and money. Cultural feminism on the other hand emphasizes how modern society is injured by promoting masculine behavior (Gill and Singh, 2019). Cultural feminism believes that the society would benefit by stimulating feminine behavior as an alternative. Feminist critiques of the literature of professionalism are modeled on preexisting masculinized institutional structures. This is contained in conservative feminist analysis which is predicated on the assumptions that male have aggressive desire for power and control over standardization as they dominate a profession thus subjugating women to economic oppression. However, the legality of the masculine dominance is challenged by radical feminism on the basis of discounting "women's work". This typifies that some professions are basically inclined towards women, though a proportion of men may be there. Mars (2018) was passionate as he was eloquent when he identified profession such nursing as feminine profession, and librarianship as feminized profession.

In Nigerian context, feminism takes a diverse face from what obtains in America, Europe and other Western countries. The cultural disparities that exist in Nigeria make it hard for men and women to share equivalent rights and also be treated as equals in the social, political and economic spheres (Okafor, Fagbemi and Hassan, 2011; Okafor and Akokuwebe, 2015), even though women's

liberation – the main objective of feminism – has constantly been component of the narrative of Nigeria (MSAFROPOLITAN, 2018). The feminist movement in Nigeria finds its roots in WIN (Women in Nigeria), an organisation established in 1983 with a comprehensible intention to launch an "ideologically feminist movement" in the country. In 2008, WIN was replaced by the Nigerian Feminist Forum (NFF). Today, different organisations are emerging as clear feminist platforms. These include Stand to End Rape, Afri-Dev Info, The Nigerian Women's Trust Fund, Coloured Africa and As Equals Africa (MSAFROPOLITAN, 2018).

In librarianship, the rise of feminism began with feminist movement in 1960s (Mars, 2018). This emanated from the acknowledgement of the gender gap in librarianship as well as its role in the determination of the status of the profession. The feminization of librarianship as explained by Higgins (2016) is as a result of the perceived fall in 'masculine scholarly prestige' which abated the influx of the profession by men. By this, women unrestrictedly penetrated into the field, whereas men were not disposed to do likewise. The outcome is the relegation of the profession compared to other academic disciplines. Despite the fact that the requirements for professional librarians in Nigerian universities today is masters degree, librarianship has not commanded equal respect as other disciplines that are dominated by men (Adekoya, 2020).

The perception that women are frail, passive and cannot withstand the rigours of administration persistently influences the gender consideration in library leadership positions to this day (Mars, 2018; Rubin, 2016). Crawford and Unger (2000) argued that women are usually not chosen to headship positions because they do not possess the required attitude, knowledge and dexterity. Deora (2021) perceived that women face discrimination and bias in social and economic life as they are subjugated because they are viewed as incongruous for managerial job as a result of their emotional disposition and insufficient experience and agility.

Other related issues concerning Feminism on Image of Librarianship
Gender dominance is a crucial factor in the determination of the image of a profession. Since the second half of last century till date, women have perpetually and numerically constituted the larger proportion of librarians globally to the extent that librarianship is broadly considered as a female profession (Arinola and Oyewusi, 2009). In North America, librarianship has been a largely white, female workforce, starting from the late 19th Century (Higgins, 2016). Even at that, no single woman headed the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) in 1970s (DeLong, 2013). But around 2002 and 2003, women came to occupy 51 out of 111 ARL director positions (Gulob, 2009). According to the 2015-16 ARL Salary Survey, 64 out of 109 ARL directors are women, and among the ranks of associate and assistant directors, women outnumber men - 401 to 223 (Association of Research Libraries, 2018).

Ahiauzu and Echem (2019) noted that over the years, female librarians have gained recognition in their tremendous roles and contributions to nation building through the provision of access to all

forms of relevant information to patrons in today's knowledge society. Paradoxically, the profession has also witnessed the emergence of what Golub (2009) described as "minority-dominated male management force", regardless of the vast majority of female librarians. This has created 'gender divide' between male and female librarians as the female librarians that constitute the majority occupy lower positions and the male librarians who are demographically minority dominate higher-level (Adekoya, 2020). In spite of the fact that Stauffer (2016) described librarianship as men in feminized professions, Arinola and Oyewusi (2009) noted that in all Anglophone countries and all over Europe and other parts of the world, men are more than women in senior library positions.

Also, the professional changes that occurred in the early 20th century characterized male librarians as minority but with leadership positions in librarianship (Golub, 2009). Narratives regarding women leaders are sparse, and barely spotlight on how women assist one another. There are instances of the constructive impact women leaders have on the development of their professions compared to men. This disproportion supports pessimistic prejudice about the capability of women to pilot and contribute to the insufficiency of women at the top (Anderson, 2020). This is evident in librarianship even though the profession has been grossly feminized (American Library Association, 2011). By this, feminization of librarianship may escalate to sex-role socialization that may lead to women controlling the foundational positions but with insignificant number in high managerial or headship positions. For example, Arinola and Oyewusi (2009) claimed that just two female librarians were at the national administrative organ of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) of which a female librarian became the president for the first time since its inauguration. Consequent upon the notion of gender insufficiency, several studies that noted gender disparities often have the corollary speculation that men preponderate in managerial positions, irrespective of the figure of women in the field (Stauffer, 2016; Udofia and Agboke, 2014; Higgins, 2016). As such, they experience high level of gender advantage all through their work life, in relation to educational and career prospects (Adekoya, 2020; Mars, 2018). Owing to the fact that librarianship is seen as feminine, there are tendencies that men would not want to venture into the profession. By this, women enjoying the vast proportion in the profession would create a recurring stereotype concerning librarianship as a feminine profession. This may create the tendency for women librarians to assume more leadership positions in the profession in the nearest future.

The dominance of library profession by women continues till date, which results to the continuation of attributing feminism tendencies to the profession (Bladek, 2019). The Continuous association of feminine tendencies to librarianship devalues the profession (Mars, 2018). Feminization limits gender diversity in librarianship as more women are engrossed to library job which gives them a larger proportion in the profession (Rubin, 2016). Yousaf, Tariq and Soroya (2013) asserted that in Pakistan, women are always seen as derelict elements in the society. Librarians are usually beleaguered by gender which results to spurious views and "feminization" of library profession (Mars, 2018).

Feminization of a profession encourages a higher number of women in the labour force resulting to depressed salaries, limited professional development, and low-status and non-administrative positions (Mars, 2018). Hickey (2006) espoused that male librarians are 'particularly stigmatized because librarianship has been stereotyped as women's profession occasioning 'traditional negative image of librarians'. More so, women are more likely to move up to the top administrative level within an institution as internal candidates (DeLong, 2013). Rubin (2016) noted that most male librarians are reluctant to venture into librarianship because they despise being identified as ineffectual.

The insurgence of gender divides and the perpetual little rank bestowed to the vast number of librarians vastly affect the professional status of librarianship. This may warrant the consideration of the profession as semi-profession. Gulob (2009) referred to female-dominated professions such as teaching, social work and librarianship as semi-professional careers not because women occupy the most attractive and influential positions but because female predominantly constitute the majority. The conspicuous gender divide and the recognition of librarianship as a lower status work resulting from the female dominance of the workforce may account for the sustained failure to accord it full-fledge professional status. The outcomes of this may be witnessed in terms of perpetual problems of staffing and employment, importunate low salaries, and the poor picture of the profession (Gulob, 2009).

It is on record that some women librarians have distinguished themselves in librarianship and won accolades for themselves. The 2020 ACRL award for recipients for achievement and distinguished service, publications and research in United States saw both male and female librarians winning accolades for themselves (Ollis, 2020). John E. Ulmschneider (Male) won 2020 ACRL Academic/Research librarian award for his leadership role in academic library while the scholarly work of Amanda L. Folk (Female) titled "Reframing information literacy as academic cultural capital: A critical and equity-based foundation for practice, assessment and scholarship" won her IS Ilene F. Rochman Instruction Publication of the year award (Ohio State University, 2020). The foundation emphasised that Folk's work was "highlighting an important need in our field for scholarship that explores the relationship between information literacy and racial and social-class achievement gaps in higher education".

In Nigeria, the scholarly work of Okiy (2016) titled "History of Libraries" is an erudite work of knowledge that explores librarianship from global perspective as well as emphasizing on the development of librarianship in Nigeria. Professor Adetoun Ogunsheye who was appointed as a professor of LIS in 1973 was the first female professor of Library and Information Science in Nigeria. She founded Abadina Media Resource Centre at the University of Ibadan after which she was appointed the pioneer female dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Ibadan (Woman.Ng, 2017). The honour made her the first female dean in Nigerian university.

In spite of the eminence of women on the national landscape of leadership in librarianship, the number of women occupying management positions as university librarians in Nigerian universities is still awfully low and never reflects proportionally the number of women librarians in Nigerian universities (Adekoya, 2020). Consequently, the image of librarianship is relatively low compared to other academic professions. As at the year 2020, out of the 16 public universities in South-west Nigeria, only 6(37.5%) are headed by female librarians, and only 9(20.9%) out of 43 federal universities in Nigeria have female university librarians despite the fact that women are principal stakeholders in educational advancement and the development project of prosperous society (Adekoya, 2020). Though some women are now better organized than ever, seeking empowerment and equal rights with their male counterparts, their conditions are yet to be decolourised as the greater proportion of them are still riddled with inferiority complex that is reinforced by a patriarchal system (Fayankinnu, 2003) which confers on women librarians the status of second class librarians.

METHODOLOGY

Research design
Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. This is because of the quantitative nature of the study. More so, descriptive research correctly and methodically describes a population, situation or phenomenon (McCombes, 2020).

Population
The population of the study was 198 librarians in 13 selected public university libraries in South-west, Nigeria.

Sampling and sample size
Total enumeration sampling technique was used for the study. The entire population was considered as the sample size. Egbule and Okobia (2001) stated that when the population is manageable, the entire population can be considered for the study.

Data collection instrument and procedure
The survey instrument was questionnaire. The questionnaire was built based on the literature reviewed. The questions were of 4-Likert Scale form. Due to the COVID-19 that was ravaging the globe at the time of the study, the questionnaire was administered online via an online survey service, www.surveycrest.com. The link to the survey was sent to the Nigeria Library Association (NLA) Online Forum, the platform on which Nigerian librarians fete and discuss issues relating to the profession. Social media tools such as WhatsApps and Telegram belongings to groups of Academic Librarians in Nigeria were also employed. Three weeks after the first survey was sent, follow up survey was sent to those that never responded to the first survey. Reminder messages were also sent three week after each of the two online questionnaires was sent. Those that failed

to answer the survey within 5 weeks after receiving the questionnaire were contacted through the telephone and social media. One hundred and twenty one (121) librarians participated in the survey, yielding 61.1% response rate. The response rate of 61.1% is adequate as the standard and acceptable response rate for most studies is 60% (Dulle et al., 2010). The data generated were analyzed using the statistical tool, SPSS, and presented in Tables.

RESULTS
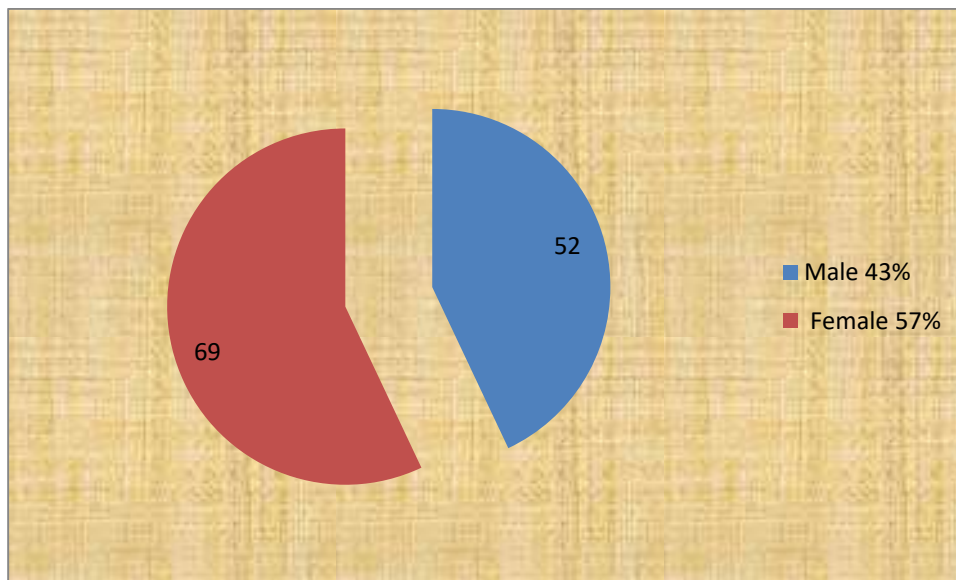
Figure 1: Gender of the Respondents

Figure 1 reveals that the gender composition of the respondents was 52(43%) male and 69(57%) female. This means that the larger proportion of the librarians in academic libraries in Nigeria is female.
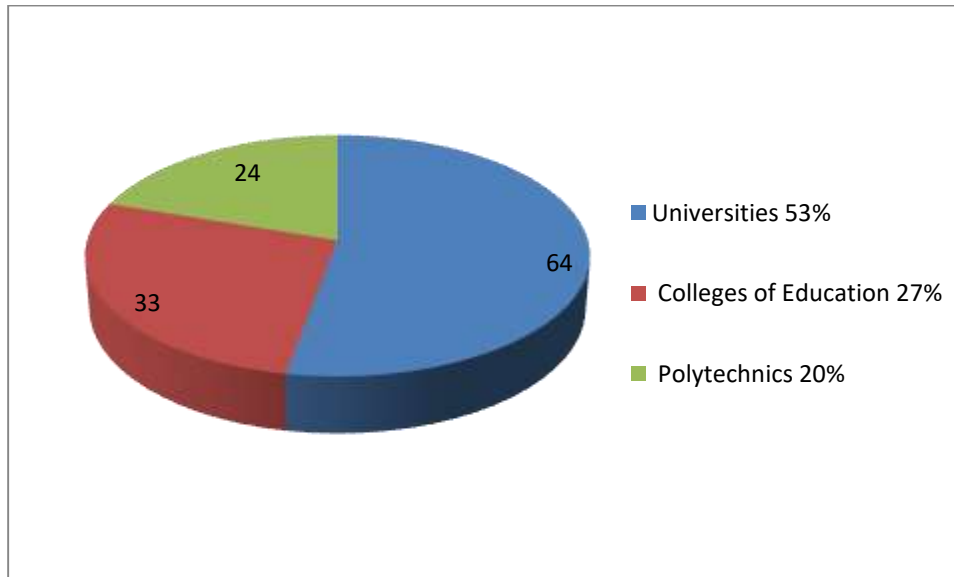
Figure 2: Institutions of the Respondents

As revealed in Figure 2, majority of the respondents 64(53%) are from universities. 33(27%) and 24(20%) are from colleges of education and polytechnics respectively.

Table 1: Level of Job Performance of Women Librarians in Nigeria

Job Performance	Mean
Cataloguing of information materials	3.22
Classification of information materials	3.16
User education	3.04
Supervision of work done by subordinates	2.95
Management of electronic resources	2.89
Answering library users' reference queries	2.80
Performance of collection development activities	2.73
Charging and discharging of information materials	2.66
Newspapers indexing	2.63
Suggestion on how to improve library jobs	2.57
Attention to duty	2.51
Average Mean	2.83
Criterion Mean	2.50

Table 1 shows that the average mean (2.83) is higher than the criterion mean (2.50). This means that the level of job performance of women in librarianship in Nigeria is high.

Table 2: Preparation of Women Librarians for Leadership Positions in Librarianship in Nigeria

Women Preparation	Mean
Acquisition of higher certificates	3.18
Development of personal interest in the field	3.13
Attendance of professional leadership programmes	3.02
Improved inter-personal relation	2.95
Displaying high integrity and honest	2.79
Practice self-development	2.79
Intensification of job performance	2.76
Technical and professional expertise	2.72
Development of leadership skills	2.67
Collaboration and teamwork	2.61
Development of ICT skills	2.46
Inspire and motivate others	2.43
Drive for results	2.39
Development of strategic perspective	2.01
Solving problems and analyzing issues	1.99
Take initiative	1.95
Champions change	1.91
Developing others	1.83
Average Mean	2.53
Criterion Mean	2.50

As revealed in Table 2, the average mean (2.53) is higher than the criterion mean (2.50). This signifies that Nigerian women librarians are adequately prepared for leadership positions in librarianship. However, their level of preparation is still low in the areas of drive for results (2.39), development of strategic perspective (2.01), taking initiative (1.95), championing change (1.91), and developing others (1.83).

Table 3: Reason for Low Number of Women in Leadership Positions in Librarianship despite the Feminization of Librarianship

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of creativity	82	67.8
Low level of confidence of the women librarians	79	63.3
Inability to coordinate	78	64.5
Inability to control	71	58.7
Lack of global perspective	67	55.4
Inability to direct	66	54.5
Inflexibility	63	52.1
Inability to embrace change	60	49.6
Inability to plan	60	49.6
Inability to organize	57	47.1
Lack of energy	52	43
Lack of vision	46	38
Inability to lead	41	33.9

The reasons for the low number of women in leadership positions in librarianship are revealed in Table 3. The major reason which is lack of creativity has 82 (67.8%) respondents. This is followed by low level of confidence of the women librarians with 79(65.3%), and inability to coordinate recording 78 (64.5%) respondents. The least is inability to lead with 41 (33.9%).

Table 4: Attitudinal factors inhibiting women librarians to top position attainment in

Attitude	Mean (X)
Perceptual defence	3.01
Bossy	2.92
Dedication to duties	2.83
Good relation and competence	2.75
High handedness	2.72
Lack of competitiveness	2.61
Hardwork	2.53
Giving indulgence when necessary	2.52
Self-centeredness	2.49
Dependency	2.41
Honesty	2.33
Aggressiveness	2.32
Average Mean	2.59
Criterion Mean	2.50

Table 4 reveals the attitudinal factors inhibiting women librarians to top position attainment in librarianship in Nigeria. Relating to the average mean of these factors, they include perceptual defense (3.01), being bossy (x=2.92), dedication to duties (x=2.83), and high handedness (x=2.75). Attitude does not affect women in areas of dependency (x=2.41), honesty (x=2.33), and aggressiveness (x=2.32). Nonetheless, based on the average mean of 2.59 (which falls within the criterion mean of =2.5 or <3.5), it may be generally inferred that the respondents are undecided in their opinions that attitude factors inhibit women librarians to top position attainment in librarianship.

Table 5: Indicators of Feminization of Librarianship in Nigeria

Indicators	Mean(X)
High number of female librarians	3.54
Increasing interest of women in library work	3.33
High number of women librarians in library routine tasks	3.25
High number of women librarians in administrative positions	1.98
Few number of women in leadership position in librarianship	1.63

All the factors in Table 5 are indicators of feminization of librarianship in Nigeria except high number of women librarians in administrative positions (1.98) and few number of women in leadership position in librarianship (1.63)

Table 6: Effect of Feminization of Librarianship on Professional image of Librarianship in Nigeria

Effects	Mean (X)
Low image of the profession	2.70
Reluctance to pursue librarianship by men	2.69
Nobody to perform male-oriented tasks	2.65
Sex-role marginalization	2.59
Low level of technical specialists	2.58
Erosion of future relevance of the profession	2.57
Categorization of librarianship as quasi academic	2.55
Low level of gender diversity in librarianship	2.43
Limited professional development	2.03

Concerning the effect of the librarianship on image of the profession in Nigeria, Table 6 shows the responses of the librarians on the subject. Majority of the respondents with a mean of 2.70 claimed that feminization of librarianship leads to low image of the profession. This is followed by those who affirmed that feminization of librarianship results to reluctance to pursue librarianship by men (x=2.69). The least effect is categorization of librarianship as quasi academic (x=2.55). Findings show that feminization of librarianship has negative effect on the image of the profession.

Testing of the Hypothesis
Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between feminization of librarianship and the image of librarianship.
Table 7: Relationship between Feminization of Librarianship and the Image of Librarianship.

		Feminization of Librarianship	Image of Librarianship
Feminization of Librarianship	Pearson Correlation	1	.162
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.039
	N	121	121
Image of Librarianship	Pearson Correlation	.162	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.039	
	N	121	121

As reflected in Table 7, Pearson correlation coefficient r (=0.162). The significant value (Sig.2-tailed) is 0.39 which is less than the critical value (0.05). It can therefore be concluded that there is a significant relationship between feminization of librarianship and the image of librarianship in Southern Nigeria. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected indicating that continuous feminization of librarianship may consequently decrease the image of librarianship.

DISCUSSION

Job performance is one of the major factors determining the success of an organization. This study reveals that the level of job performance of women librarians is generally high. Previous studies by various researchers indicated the same (Udofia and Agboke, 2014; Mars, 2018). Cabonero and Dolendo (2013) investigated the cataloguing and classification skills of librarians in workplaces and found that the five librarians studied (two male and three females) displayed exceptional dexterity in cataloguing. Nwose, Olise and Idoko (2019) assessed the perception of librarians on gender stereotype as correlate of job performance in academic libraries in Delta State and found that women librarians' performance in library activities was high. Ahiauzu and Echem (2019) emphasized that the proficiency and skills acquired in performing library routine activities in a new manner to blend with the digital era of information explosion is what has offered women librarians the opportunity to make significant impact in librarianship not only in Nigeria but also in the developed countries.

This study reveals that on average, the level of preparation of Nigerian women librarians for leadership positions in librarianship is high, though low in some areas. The study further found that acquisition of higher degrees in librarianship is one of the factors for improved job performance of women librarians. This is in agreement with the finding of Adekoya (2020) that Nigerian women librarians possess the needed education and have contributed to the growth of librarianship as a profession. Udofia and Agboke (2014) investigated "Women Librarians in Nigeria: Status, Characteristics and Contribution to Development" and found that the number of women in senior leadership positions in librarianship in Nigeria has increased over the years because of the acquisition of postgraduate education by the women librarians. On the contrary, the findings of Adjah and Van Der Walt (2017) on career progression of female librarians in public university libraries in Ghana reveal that the level of preparation of women librarians for leadership position in librarianship is low as they cannot meet the requisites for promotion in their respective libraries.

Some of the reasons for the small number of women in leadership positions in librarianship as found in this study include lack of creativity, low level of confidence of the women librarians, inability to coordinate, inability to control, lack of global perspective, inability to direct, inflexibility, and inability to embrace change. The findings of this study relate to the findings of some earlier writers on this subject matter. A study by Swaramarinda, Eryanto, Dianta and

Sebayang (2020) revealed that 75.8% of men and 24.2% of women are in leadership positions in Indonesia in 2016-2018. Arionla and Oyewusi (2007) found that lack of ambition, confidence and professional qualifications obstruct women librarians from moving up in librarianship. Golub (2009) related the little constructive impact women leaders have on the development of librarianship as lack of creativity and confidence. Anderson (2020) emphasized the negative bigotry about the capability of women to pilot and add to the insufficiency of women at the top. Though studies (Nwose, Olise, and Idoko, 2019; Ugwu and Ugwu, 2018) have shown that there are more women in librarianship than their male counterparts in Nigeria, men still hold more leadership positions and titles than their female counterparts in academic libraries (Adekoya, 2020; Nwezeh, 2009). Male librarians ascend more swiftly into and progress much more quickly to administrative positions within the library structure in spite of being the minority in libraries (Nwose, Olise, and Idoko, 2019; Lawton, 2018). Zenger and Folkman (2019) attributed the factors that account for the small of women at senior level positions to stereotypes and broad cultural biases against women. More so, male librarians usually avoid areas of librarianship that are perceived as feminine such reference and children librarianship, and rather seek leadership positions which are tagged as 'masculine' (Nwose, Olise and Idoko, 2019; Mars, 2018; Ugwu, 2018). However, in the last few years, a number of women librarians have emerged as prominent leaders in librarianship in Nigerian universities – Evelyn Omoluabi-idiodi, Komolafe-Opadeji, Fehintola Onifade, Modupe Aboyade, Adesola Oyesiku, Victoria Okojie, and Okiy, R.B. – to name a few. These women librarians have enriched librarianship and conveyed a number of intellectual interests that might not be eloquently represented. Women librarians are now becoming more successful at achieving leadership positions (Lawton, 2018) as librarianship has simply come to favor the "feminine" model (Nwose, Olise and Idoko, 2019).

Attitude is a primary determinant of the image of any profession. More so that librarianship has been feminized (Mars, 2018; Nwezeh, 2009), some attitudinal factors are fundamental in the determination of the image of the profession. The major attitudinal factor affecting women librarians from reaching leadership positions in librarianship in Nigeria as found in this study is perceptual defense. That women librarians have high level of perceptual defense is traceable to the fact that women library leaders usually feel threatened when junior brilliant male librarians bring brilliant suggestions or ideas. Others include: being bossy, dedication to duties, good relation and competence, high handedness, and lack of competitiveness. This agrees with findings of Arinola and Oyewusi (2009) which identified attitude factors such as aggressiveness, lack of competitiveness, and dependency as the determinants of the level women librarians can reach in librarianships

The indicators of feminization of librarianship in Nigeria found in this study include high number of female librarians, increasing interest of women in library work, and high number of women librarians in library routine tasks. Olin and Lillet (2015) observed that the increasing number of women librarians globally is a factor for feminizing librarianship. The statistics released by

American Library Association (2011) indicated that in 2010, majority of masters in library and information science students in American universities were women and majority of the librarians working in the states were as well women. Haggins (2016) opined that librarianship has become, and has remained, female intensive, because of the increasing interest of women in library work. The image of professions has always focused on expected competencies and personal attributes, personalities and characteristics of the staff (Udofia and Agboke, 2014). This study found that feminization of librarianship leads to low image of the profession, reluctance to pursue librarianship by men, nobody to perform male-oriented tasks, sex-role marginalization, low level of technical specialists, erosion of future relevance of the profession, categorization of librarianship as quasi academic, and inadequate gender diversity in librarianship in Nigeria. Meanwhile, writers such as Eno (2000) and Omogbai (2002) have associated women in leadership positions to sex-role marginalisation. Though Arinola and Oyewusi (2009) claimed that sex-role marginalization has no place in librarianship, they pointed out in their study that up till the year 2007, only two female librarians had ever occupied the position of president and 2nd vice president of the Nigerian Library Association. In relation to the finding that the feminization of librarianship may lead to reluctance to pursue librarianship by men, Hickey (2006) opined there are tendencies that men would not want to venture into librarianship because librarianship is seen as feminine.

CONCLUSION

The feminization of librarianship is the primary underlying factor for the low image of librarianship. The society has been bias to anything wrapped with feminine tendencies. Despite the acknowledgement of this, the influx of women into librarianship is on the increase. The consequence of this is that the professional image of librarianship has been incompatible in both rights and responsibilities with other academics in the faculties and departments. The weakness observed in feminine tendencies of librarianship has caused the male minority to dominate the leadership positions in the profession in Nigeria. More so, women librarians are affected by attitude factors which are dangerous in the determination of career image of a profession as well as assumption of leadership roles. Even though women keep on making momentous progress in the workforce, there is still progress to be made to let the world know that their gender dominance add value to librarianship and contribute to the success story of the profession in Nigeria and beyond.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made.
1.   Women librarians should improve their creative ability, level of confidence and leadership skills required for them to function effectively in the discharge of their professional duties.
2.   Women librarians should exhibit positive attitude in the performance of their professional duties and also prepare themselves for leadership positions in librarianship.

3.   Women librarians should see their numerical dominance of librarianship as an avenue to maximally use their gender factor to earn positive image for the profession.

4.   The society should jettison the stereotypical bias that makes them attach low quality image to anything feminine.

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