

## **GENDER INFLUENCE ON THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY BY LECTURERS IN LIBRARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH-EAST AND SOUTH-SOUTH ZONES OF NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The general purpose of the study is to determine the gender influence on the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by lecturers in library schools in South-East and South-South Zones of Nigeria. The study covers the entire population of 162 lecturers in library schools in South-East and South-South zones of Nigeria. 145 copies of the questionnaire were completed and returned for analysis representing 89.5%. The result of the finding shows that both male and female lecturers use ICT. This is evident to the fact that lecturers whose gender makes them appreciate the use of ICT had mean value of 3.0. The study recommends that seminars and workshops on ICT should be organized for lecturers. This will help to expose them to the potentials which ICT offers in the field of academic, and through this way arouse their interest more towards the use of ICT. Again lecturers with negative attitudes to ICT because of gender barrier should be encouraged through ICT training programme. This will make such lecturers to develop positive attitudes towards ICT and use it for their academic activities.*

**KEYWORDS:** gender influence information and communication technology, lecturers' library schools, South-East, South-South, zones, Nigeria

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## **INTRODUCTION**

ICT is a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, create, disseminate, store and manage information. These technologies are computers, the internet, and even broadcasting technologies (Radio and Television). Veen (2014) lists several fears in his findings

to explain the reluctance of university lecturers to the use of ICT as fear of change; fear of time commitment, fear of appearing incompetent, fear of ‘techno-lingo’ and fear of failure. Green (2015) states that with the computer, more options are open to both lecturers and students to make teaching and learning more realistic and productive especially in the following areas: it allows student to have an active role in the teaching and learning process; it provides lecturer-centered to student-centered education; it changes from process-oriented to outcome-oriented teaching and learning; it helps to be more ready for the tough global economy; it helps to be more effective members of the information society and economy; and it provides opportunities for virtual universities.

Nowadays, with the use of information and communication technology, vital information could be stored in digital form and retrieved at any convenient time using ICT facilities such as CD-ROM, microfilm, microfiche and diskettes (Oguntuase and Akinbode, 2014). The authors assert that various ICT resources which include telephone, teleprinters, fax machine, microfiche and microfilm, magnetic tape, the Internet, e-mail, mobile cellular phone and computers are used for collecting, processing, storing, transforming and disseminating information at credible speed. The university libraries are expected to provide relevant information that will satisfy the lecturers' information needs. In other words, adequate information materials both in print and non-point forms should be provided to lecturers and other users of the library. Influence is the effect that somebody or something has on the way a person thinks or behaves or on the way that something works or develops without using direct force or order (Hornby, 2006). *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (2003) sees ICT as the capacity or power of persons or things to be a compelling force on or produce effects on the actions, behaviours, opinions etc of others. It is also the capacity to have an effect on the character development or behaviour of someone or something or the effect itself in the power to shape policy or ensure favourable treatment from someone, especially through status contacts or wealth.

Use, in library parlance, is to utilize. To utilize means the ability to make use of something. Uhegbu (2007) posits that utilization is the actual putting into appropriate use of something. It is the process of making use of something available. To Uhegbu (2007:68) utilization is governed by several principles which are goal identification, availability and utilization (in which utilization is governed by “thing” provided and its accessibility). Availability is meaningless if it is not put to use; others are communication channel, which is a critical requisite for utilization because the way information is passed to people to a large extent determines its way of use by seekers and user satisfaction which is the ultimate purpose of utilizing information.

A lecturer in the institutions of higher learning holds a position that involves carrying out both teaching and learning. Many lecturers are experienced researchers with many publications. In universities, professors are those who lead a group of other academics thus everyone is a lecturer. Lecturers always have at least a master's degree and quite often a doctorate. A lecturer may be part-time or a full-time. Full-time lecturers now incorporate the role quite formally with performance reviews, promotional tracks, administrative service responsibilities and many faculty privileges. Hornby (2006) defines a lecturer as a person who gives a lecture or teaches at a university or college. This means that they are those persons whose responsibility is to give lectures

to the students in the university for which they are employed. A lecturer in this context means a faculty member. Their characteristics considered in this study are age, gender, academic ranks, academic discipline, computer skill and attitudes. Lecturers need the ICT library for their teaching, research and community services. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (2003) defines characteristics as indicating a special quality or identity. It therefore applies to something that distinguishes, identifies or categorizes a person or thing or class. Individual characteristics of lecturers are different qualities that distinguish one lecturer from all other lecturers of the same kind, class or category.

The development of Library and Information Science (LIS) education and training in Nigeria has become a main topic of discussion among LIS educators in the country, and has been extensively discussed by scholars such as Aina (2007), Ibrahim (2007), and Mohammed (2008). LIS education and training dates back to 1960 when the first LIS School was established at the University College Ibadan with the assistance of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, following Harold Lancour's recommendation. Prior to that period, training for the profession was mostly done abroad. However, the UNESCO seminar on the development of Public Libraries in Africa held at Ibadan in 1953 which recommended the establishment of a limited number of library schools was considered as the foundation stone for library education in Nigeria (Abubakar, 2009).

The earliest LIS training(s) were meant to prepare the students for the British Library Association examinations. However, with the passage of time the need for more LIS training became desirable. According to Fayose (1997) , due to increased demand for library and information professionals in the 1960s and throughout the 1970s, five other university-based library schools were established at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1978; Bayero University, Kano 1977; University of Maiduguri in 1978; Imo State University in 1981 (now Abia State University), University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1983. Also the earliest LIS educators were either foreigners or locals who had received their education abroad. The beginning of the 1990s witnessed an expansion in the number of LIS schools in Nigeria. According to Diso and Njoku (2007), the subsequent establishment of federal, state and private universities have now brought the number of such library schools to more than a dozen which continue to grow with the growth of federal state and private universities. Presently, LIS education in Nigeria is also provided in Polytechnics and Colleges, as well as in some major libraries.

In the light of the above background, this study therefore, seeks to determine gender influence on the use of information and communication technology by lecturers in library schools in South-East and South-South zones of Nigeria.

### **Research Question**

To what extent does gender influence lecturers' on the use of ICT in library schools in South-East and South-South zones of Nigeria?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In a study carried out by Koohang (2016) on a study of attitude towards computers: anxiety, confidence, liking and perception of usefulness found that neither age nor gender was strongly correlated to computer anxiety, computer confidence or liking, but that computer experience was. While the gender gap relating to computer use seems to be shrinking, several studies have found that there is a gender gap when considering use of ICT, and that gender is a major predictor of ICT and attitude.

However, they matriculate with a diversity of computer and web-searching skills and experience. Valentine (2015) observes that the fastest way that would lead to satisfactory results when doing research, going for electronic information first the gender issues. Edem (2014) in his studies gender factor in publication output of librarians in Nigeria found that males were found to be more productive in academic publications using ICT, females however, were more productive in work related research and publication than their male colleagues in Nigerian universities. Personal variables such as gender and age, as reported by Wilson (2014) may constitute barriers to the search and utilization of information. Lecturers deal primarily with teaching, learning and research activities, the need for relevant improve on their teaching and research activities is necessary. Such variables as gender should not be seen to constitute impediments to the use of ICT resources. More so, their literacy level, status and specialty, all conspire to hold them guilty if they fail to embrace ICT resources relevant to their needs. Afolabi, Adedapo and Adeyanju(2015) report a correlation between gender and level of computer anxiety. The results showed that there is no significant difference between males and females in their use of ICT. This shows that both male and female lecturers have equal and same opportunity in their use of ICT for their academic and private functions.

Walamba (2015) reports that information searching of para-medics in Trinidad and Tobago, showed that women excelled more than men in the profession and this was attributed to their zeal in searching and utilizing information resources via ICT. Ray, Sormunen and Harris (2013) found that female had more positive attitude to computer than male counterpart. The information need of rural women in small business in Botswana was investigated by Mchombu (2016), who reports that some of the rural women were not aware that they need information for improved productivity in the library. This, he attributed to their low level of literacy, and inability to understand and utilize library resources via ICT. This observation may not hold in the case of lecturers. They are literates by any standard. Hafkin and Taggart (2012) stress that it is imperative for women in developing countries to understand and use ICT, in order to avoid being marginalized from the mainstream of their societies; and that gender issues should be considered early in the process of introducing ICT in developing countries, so that gender concerns can be incorporated from the beginning and not as a corrective after thought. Poopola (2012) adds that if female should excel above their male counterparts and wield power in an organization, they must shun the culture of guess work in their decision making process. The best way to do this is to cultivate the habit of making use of ICT resource. Venkatesh and Morris (2014) and Drup (2015) found that males had more positive attitudes towards the use of computers than females. Factors that have been cited as affecting female enrolment in ICT courses and their use of computers include socialization and

cultural practices, importance of role models, access to computers, experience with computers, and attitude towards computers (Olurunda and Oyelude, 2016).

Fabry and Higgs (2016) point out human resources, vendor and maintenance, culture, funding, education and training as key factors for ICT use in developing countries. They further state that unskilled and untrained human resources lead to the employment of expatriation and African governments cannot pay or sustain expatriates. Vendor's main concern is also making money without maintenance plan. Without adequate training, Organizations may not be able to effectively use them. Yusuf (2015) carried out a study on library staffing considerations in the age of technology in Kansas State University. The study found out human resources is essential to the success of any technology-based service. It means that any library that ignores the human factors is likely to appreciate ignorance which may lead to under use. Experienced libraries can be a significant resource in managing libraries with technology. The level of use and awareness of ICT in Nigeria appears to be very minimal. Organization, environmental and cultural factors stand against the good and perceived will of the use of ICTs. Schunk (2012) points out three strong reasons that stand against the effective use of ICTs in Nigerian university libraries. Each of the factors she mentioned has a resultant effect on availability and use of ICT. The factors are: low level of computer culture, poor telecommunications infrastructure, and general lack of awareness.

Another constraint that affects the use of ICTs in Nigeria university libraries is low level of computer culture. When librarians are not computer literate, utilizing the facility would be a problem. In other words, having a good background in computer skill makes the use of computers very practicable. Lack of awareness on the other makes utilization impossible. Librarian must be aware of the advantages of using of using ICTs by lecturers. Training workers in the use of computer and other related technologies for services in any organization including university libraries is very important. A well trained worker can perform effectively and efficiently than who is not trained at all. Other factors that contribute to the under-use of ICT are culture. System designers need to understand or undertake a systematic study of the organization and country within which the systemic will be used (implemented). Supporting this, Van (2011) opines that culture is a strong factor that dictates of technology be accepted or not accepted.

The challenge goes to system planners and programme writers to consider the local way of thinking, cultural setting, level of education and awareness. Schmelzer (2011) states that the environment where one grows up can determine one's ability to fully use modern technologies; German Youth Institute conducted an empirical research from 1998 to 2001. Quantitative survey of 4,500 young people between ages 15 and 26 was used. The findings revealed that young people are interested in the name "technology" and make absolute use of the technology without any hindrance. The same study also revealed that these young people started using computers right from their childhood and this has a positive influence towards their level of the older generation who schooled and obtained their academic qualifications without sighting a personal computer (PC). Some of these do occupy key positions in administration and find it very difficult to think even an innovative way of doing things.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was used for this study using questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was titled Gender Influence on the Use of Information and Communication Technology by Lecturers Questionnaire (GIUICLQ). The population of the study is 162. No sample size was drawn from the population. This is because the population of the study is small and accessible. The census method was used to ensure that opinions of all the lecturers were captured for the study.

### Analysis

A total of one hundred and sixty two (162) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to lecturers. Out of these, one hundred and forty five (145) copies representing (89.5%) were duly completed and returned for analysis.

**Research Question:** To what extent does gender influence lecturers and their use of ICT in library schools in South-East and South-South zones of Nigeria? **Responses on influence of gender of lecturers and their use of ICT**

S/N	Gender of Lecturers and Use of ICT	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Result
A	My gender makes me appreciate the use of ICT	67	34	32	12	3.0	Significant
B	My gender gives me courage to use ICT	24	58	40	23	2.6	Not Significant
C	My gender gives me opportunity to seek resources in ICT	42	34	36	33	2.6	Not Significant
D	I avoid using ICT because of my behavioural culture and religious	36	33	44	32	2.5	Not Significant
E	It helps me to know library rules and regulations	44	23	52	26	2.6	Not Significant
	<b>Significant mean value</b>					<b>2.7</b>	

Based on the significant mean value of 2.7 as shown on the Table, my gender makes me appreciate the use of ICT ( $x=3.0$ ). However, my gender gives me courage to use ICT; my gender gives me opportunity to seek resources in ICT; I avoid using ICT because of my behavioural culture and religious and my gender gives me opportunity to secure space in the ICT library. All these have mean value less than the significant value of 2.7. Evidence from the table indicates that gender is a determinant factor on the use of ICT by lecturers.

## FINDINGS

The findings are in lines with earlier studies by Koohang(2016) that there is no significant difference between gender of lecturers and their use of ICT. This is supported by Poopola (2012)

who also reported a correlation between gender and level of computer anxiety. The result of this empirical study clearly showed that there is no significant difference between males and females in their use of ICT. The significance of the result is in agreement with the response as indicated on Table that both male and female lecturers are more anxious, and do not avoid using ICT. The Table also showed that both males and females are easily excited, motivated and enjoy using ICT. This may be for their teaching, learning and research activities. The result contradicts Edem (2014) that males were found to be more productive using ICT than females counterparts in academic publications. This result also contradicts Drup(2015) who found that males used ICT more than females. To him the factors that affect females' use of ICT include cultural practices and socialization.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusively, this study obtained that in considering ICT use by lectures, gender is a factor. Female lecturers in the institutions of higher learning should be encouraged to embrace the use of ICT like their male counterparts. Seminars and workshops on ICT should be organized for both male and female lecturers. This will help to expose them more to the potentials which ICT offers in the field of academics and through this way arouse their interest more towards the use of ICT.

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