



Students' Gender and Their Satisfaction with Service Delivery in Federal Universities in South-South Nigeria

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Abstract

An investigation into the gender determination of students' satisfaction with service delivery in federal Universities in south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria was the subject of this study. To execute the study, the hypothesis was formulated and literature reviewed. Using the stratified random sampling technique 1,700 students out of a population of 70,808 formed the study's sample. They were Years One, Two, Three, and Four regular undergraduate students of the 2008/2009 to 2011/2012 academic years in federal universities in south-south Nigeria. Data collected for this study was obtained through a face-validated, 35-item Students' Satisfaction with Service Delivery Questionnaire (SSSDQ) with test-retest reliability estimate of .71 to .83. The instrument was administered to the 1,700 respondents, but only 1,450 copies were properly filled and used to assess students' satisfaction with service delivery in their universities based on their gender. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics and independent t-test analysis. The major findings of the study pointed to the significant difference between male and female students in their satisfaction with the delivery of educational, library, medical, transport, security, hostel, and ICT services. Based on the findings, the conclusion was drawn. It was recommended that gender sensitivity to service delivery to university students should be observed.

Key words: Sex, male, female, service delivery, students' satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of a university is to provide tertiary level education to students irrespective of gender. The place of education in the political and socio-economic development of any nation cannot be over emphasized. Theoretical and empirical evidence based on the study by Hannum and Buchman (2005) has acknowledged that it is only when men and women of any country are well educated and appropriately trained will the attainment of rapid national economic and social development be ensured. This could apply to federal university students in the south south geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

It is, however, to be noted that the issue of the men and women of a given country undergoing university education for the purpose of self-act-actualization is hinged on the availability and quality of the various services that are "inputted" into shaping, training, and modeling the type of students who could become the graduates "outputted" to the society. These services are highlighted in this study to include educational, library, medical, transport, security, hostel, and information and communication technology (ICT) services.

Given that "...high standards in the quality of ...services" should characterize the Nigerian university system, as articulated by the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013:27), this paper intends to investigate gender of students and their satisfaction with service delivery in federal universities in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria. In order words, the study is on the difference that exists between male and female university studentship.

Numerous studies have been conducted to examine the influence of gender or students' satisfaction. Researchers like Umbach and Porter (2002); Perry, Sekelsy and Skarsten (2003), Sax and Harvey (2003), and LPC (2009) found that gender has significant influence on students' satisfaction levels. Others like Dirkin, Mishra and Altermatt (2005), Mupinga, Nora and Yaw (2006), Witowski (2008), Ilias, Abu Hasan, Rahman and Yosoa (2008), and Strayhorn and Saddler (2009) found no significant difference between male and female students regarding satisfaction.

Askar, Atun and Ilgaz (2008) in their study on blended learning, reported that no significant differences were found between females and males with respect to their satisfaction. However, female scores were statistically higher than the males for face to face environment. Similar findings were reported by Adas and Abushmais (2011) with no significant differences in terms of gender even though the highest means were in favour of the females. On the other hand, AbouNnaji, Nachouhi and Ankit (2012), in their study on blended learning in a gender-segregated environment focusing on undergraduate students, found that there was a significant difference between male and females students in their satisfaction. Male students were more satisfied with blended learning than female students.

Tessema, Ready and Malone (2012) carried out a study on the effect of gender on college students' satisfaction and achievement. Their goal was to empirically test the effect of gender on some college outcomes, namely students' Academic Competencies test (ACT) scores, satisfaction with major curriculum and GPA. Their findings showed that gender has a statistically significant effect on the above three variables. Male students were found to have slightly higher ACT scores than female students; female students were found to rate their satisfaction with major curriculum higher than male students; and female students tended to have high GPAs than male students.

Alshurideh (2012) conducted a study to identify the most important factors that predicted students' level of satisfaction with the hostels they were living in. he found out that out of eight factors that were studied, boys were satisfied in five factors such as mess, cleanliness and hygiene, infrastructure, sports facility and supporting services, while girls were more satisfied in interaction seniors and wardens, electricity and miscellaneous services. From the overall satisfaction results, it was observed that boys were more satisfied than girls. Therefore, it was concluded that there is significant differences of satisfaction of all factors between males students and female students residing in the hostel.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The attribution theory by Fritz Heider (1958) appears germane to this study. The theory has it that behavior can be accounted for by two classes of factors – personal or demographic and environmental or external forces. The attribution theory by Heider (1958) is based on the proposition that a consumer who attributes the cause of a good purchase to internal factors (for example his/her gender) will exhibit higher satisfaction than a consumer who attributes a good purchase to external causes (for example a sales persons recommendation). As maybe applied to this study, a students who attributes his/her satisfaction with services delivery by a

given university to his/her gender expresses a higher level of satisfaction than a student who attributes his/her satisfaction to external causes.

THE PROBLEM

Quality service delivery in Nigeria's south south federal universities has generated concern from the government, employers of labour, and the general public particularly in the face of decline in the quality of graduates of public tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria. Allegations of poor quality of graduates churned out of from south south federal universities (as part of the Nigerian University System), has been rife. Pointers are to poor infrastructural facilities for teaching and learning, proliferation of programmes in universities, and inadequate manpower has perennially affected the reputation of Nigerian universities over the years (Saint, Harnett, Strassner, 2004).

Another interesting details which buttresses male and female students' dissatisfaction with service delivery in federal universities in the south south geopolitical zone of Nigeria was the riots witness in 2011 in the University of Calabar; in 2012 in University of Port Harcourt; and in 2013 in University of Uyo all of which are in south south, Nigeria. The three riots, respectively had to do with increase in school charges to take care of services; insecurity on campus; and, dissatisfaction with linked inter-campus transportation charges by the university.

Poor service delivery, in the long run, could lead to anomalies including poor academic performance, examination malpractice, "sorting" for marks, and the production of half-booked graduates who cannot cope with contemporary world of work. An examination of the foregoing tends to attract the question, "could there be a difference between male and female students in their satisfaction with the delivery of educational, library, medical, transport, security, hostel, and ICT services, in federal universities in south-south Nigeria?"

Research question

How does gender influence students' satisfaction with the delivery of educational, library, medical, transport, security, hostel, and ICT services in south-south Nigeria universities?

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference between male and female students' in their satisfaction with the delivery of educational services, library services; medical services; transport services; security services; hostel services; in information and communication technology service (ICT) services.

METHODOLOGY

The Ex-post factors design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted originally of 70,808 regular undergraduate students in 238 departments in 46 faculties in the 2008/2009 to 2011/2012 academic years in the six federal universities in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria. But this was further limited to 12 faculties in the Universities of Calabar, Port Harcourt, and Uyo after using the random sampling technique. The sample of the study was 1,700 students. Owing to attrition, 1,450 questionnaire copies were returned filled. A four point likert-type scale (questionnaire) was used for data collection for the study. It was known as Students Satisfaction with Service Delivery Questionnaire (SSSDQ). It had parts 1 and 2. While part 1 concentrated on respondents' demographics which took care of the independent variables, part 2 elicited responses on the dependent variables. The positively worded items were scored on a scale of Strongly Agreed = 20 points; Agreed = 15 points;

Disagree = 10 points; Strongly Disagree = 5 points. This was reversed for negatively worded items. The 35-item instrument was face-validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation in the University of Calabar.

The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through the conduct of a trial test on 50 students sampled from the University of Calabar. The 50 students were from a faculty exempted from the main study. The instrument was administered twice to this sample at two weeks interval. Data from the responses were obtained and used in preparing an item-person matrix with which text-retest reliability estimate was done. Test-retest reliability estimates ranging from .71 to .83 were obtained for the subsets of the questionnaire. This made the instrument to be good enough for the study.

RESULTS

Research Question

How does gender influence students' satisfaction with the delivery of educational, library, medical, transport, security, hostel, and ICT services in south-south Nigerian universities?

The analysis of the research question is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of descriptive statistics showing the delivery of student-related services in the study (n=1450)

S/N	Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD
1	Educational services	1450	12.84	2.72
2	Library services	1450	11.83	2.38
3	Medical services	1450	12.05	2.75
4	Transport services	1450	12.46	2.54
5	Security services	1450	11.77	2.92
6	Hostel services	1450	12.94	2.58
7	ICT services	1450	12.87	2.75

Source: Statistical package for Social Sciences

The descriptive statistic was used as a basis for computing the independent t-test of the influence of gender on students' satisfaction with service delivery.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference between male and female students in the satisfaction with the delivery of educational services, library services, medical services, transport services, security services, hostel services, and ICT services

The hypothesis was analyzed in Table 2.

Table 2: Independent t-test of the influence of gender on students' satisfaction with service delivery

S/N	Variables	Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	T
1	Educational Service	Male	674	13.49	2.85	8.596*
		Female	776	12.28	2.47	
2	Library Services	Male	674	12.47	2.42	9.894*
		Female	776	11.27	2.19	
3	Hostel Services	Male	674	12.23	2.96	2.405*
		Female	776	11.88	2.52	
4	Transport Services	Male	674	12.17	2.48	2.628*
		Female	776	12.62	2.74	
5	ICT Services	Male	674	12.50	2.17	4.826*
		Female	776	11.43	3.22	
6	Security Services	Male	674	12.50	2.17	6.292*
		Female	776	13.34	2.84	
7	Medical Services	Male	674	12.46	2.32	5.337*
		Female	776	13.23	3.05S	

Source: Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

Results of the analysis in Table 2 show that the calculated t-value for all the sub-variables of students' satisfaction with service delivery were each higher than the initial t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significance with 1448 degrees of freedom. This means that there is a significant difference between male and female students in their satisfaction with the delivery of educational, library medical, transport, security, hostel, and ICT services. The group means show that it was male students who were more satisfied with service delivery than the female counterparts with regards to educational library, hostel, and ICT services while the female students were more satisfied with transport, security, and medical services than their male colleague. Based on these results, the null hypothesis was rejected.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study that there is a significant difference between male and female students in their satisfaction with the delivery of educational, library, medical, transport, security, hostel and ICT services is in agreement with the study of Tessema, Ready and Malone (2012) who found that gender had a significant effect on ACT scores, major curriculum and GPA. Again, it corroborates Alshurideh (2012) study which noted that out of eight hostel-related factors studied, male students were more satisfied with five while female students were more satisfied with three.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that in universities in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria, there is a significant difference in students' satisfaction with educational, library, medical, transport, security, hostel, and ICT services based on the gender of the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion of this study it is recommended as follows:

1. Federal Universities in south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria should take cognizance of gender differences in the provision of services by taking the feelings of students (based on gender) into account

2. University authorities should, from time to time review its service delivery modes, modalities and functionality by enquiring from male and female students what would best serve their satisfaction in terms of service delivery in line with global best practices adjusted to suit local conditions of south-south federal universities.

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