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Attitudinal Differences Among Male and Female Library Students Towards the Teaching of Information Literacy Skills in Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku, Delta State.

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Abstract

Based on Vellaichamy (2017) stipulations on the aspects of information literacy skills, it was adduced that information literacy skills aspects are embedded in most library and information science courses offered in polytechnics. Again, gender matters everywhere as has been considered an important variable for the determination of attitudes. Hence, this study sought to determine the attitudinal differences between male and female library students towards the teaching of information literacy skills in Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-uku. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to gather data from 75 students in the department of Library and information science. 71 questionnaires were considered valid, thus were analysed using mean scores, standard deviations, Pearson chi-square and one way ANOVA with the aid of SPSS version 20. Findings revealed that attitudinal differences exist with male students having a more positive attitude towards the teaching of information literacy skills. The study concluded information literacy that modalities need to be put in place to spark female students' interest in information literacy skills.

Keywords: *Gender Information literacy skills, Library students, Library and information science courses, Attitudes, Delta state Polytechnic*

1.1 Introduction

There is no gainsaying the fact that information literacy can play a vital role in educating library users on how and where to search and find the various information resources regardless of their format. The availability and use of information resources of various types and formats are important in every educational institution to sustain teaching and learning activities. With more information in circulation, information literacy becomes vital for both educators and students. Hence, students as well as their educators must have the requisite information literacy skills in this era of information explosion.

Information literacy skills are sets of abilities that enable individuals to "recognise when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information. An information literate individual is able to: determine the information needed; access the needed information effectively and efficiently; evaluate information and its sources critically; incorporate selected information into ones knowledge base and use information effectively to accomplish a special purpose

(ALA, 2008). Information literacy skills therefore, include the ability to distinguish between popular magazines, journals, and information found on websites; to differentiate between primary and secondary sources; and to determine whether the information presented is relevant and evidence-based.

Notably, teaching information literacy skills in higher institutions of learning cannot be over emphasized. Library Educators are tasked with the responsibility of teaching students virtually all aspects of information literacy skills. Vellaichamy (2017) highlighted certain aspects of information literacy skills such as: (i.) Tool literacy which is students' ability to understand and use the practical and conceptual tools of current information technology relevant to education and the areas of work and professional life that the individual expects to inhabit, (ii.) Resource literacy which is the ability to understand the form, format, location and access methods of information resources, especially daily expanding networked information resources; (iii) Social-structural literacy that is knowing how information is socially situated and produced, (iv) Research literacy that deals on the ability to understand and use the IT-based tools relevant to the work of today's researcher and scholar; (v) Publishing literacy which is the ability to format and publish research and ideas electronically, in textual and multimedia forms (including via World Wide Web, electronic mail and distribution lists, and CDROMs); (vi) Emerging technology literacy, or the ability to adapt to, understand, evaluate and make use of the continually emerging innovations in information technology so as not to be a prisoner of prior tools and resources, and to make intelligent decisions about the adoption of new ones; and (vii) Critical literacy that is the ability to evaluate critically the intellectual, human and social strengths and weaknesses, potentials and limits, benefits and costs of information technologies.

Thankfully, virtually all Library and information science courses cover these aspects of information literacy skills. For instance, courses such as Basic Reference Tools and Services, Basics of Computer and Operating Systems, cataloguing and classification, AV Equipment Operation and Materials Production, Introduction to Internet and Virtual Library, Compilation of Bibliography, Indexes and Abstract and even Research methods carefully address all the aspects of information literacy skills given by Vellaichamy (2017). Hence appropriate and effective methods must be adopted by library educators for the effective teaching of these courses with a view to enhancing students' information literacy skills.

However, it is important to note that individual differences of students exist and may affect the learning outcomes of information literacy skills. It therefore becomes imperative for library educators to know variables such as gender, physical characteristics, intelligence, perception, ability, which are individual differences of the learners that can affect the teaching of information literacy skills (Kubat, 2018). An effective and productive learning-teaching process can be planned by considering these individual differences of the students. Hence, this research would help discover certain individual variable that can affect learning outcomes of information literacy skills. It is against this background that this study examines the attitudinal differences among library educators and students towards the teaching of information literacy skills in Delta state Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

A number of studies which assess the level of information literacy skills among students abound. Many of the studies like those of Probert (2009) have revealed that the

information literacy skills of students are relatively low. Recently published work, while lamenting students' lack of information literacy skills, including working with online resources, provides little research which investigate students attitudes towards teaching methods adopted for information literacy skills learning as well as their related pedagogical practice which may be responsible for the lack of information literacy skills among students. Unarguably, how an educator teaches is as important as what he/ she teaches. Thus, for information literacy skills to be taught effectively, both male and female students should have considerations for the method adopted. Hence, determining the attitudinal differences between male and female library students towards the teaching of information literacy skills in Delta state Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku becomes imperative.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are students perceptions on the methods adopted for teaching information literacy skills in the department of library and information science, Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku?
2. What are the differences between male and female students' attitudes towards the teaching of information literacy skills in Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku?

1.4 Research Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant difference between male and female students' attitudes towards the teaching of information literacy skills.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

Information Literacy, was defined by American Library Association (ALA) (2008) as knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, how to evaluate, use and communicate in an ethical manner. Information literacy has also been defined by Case (2007) as the ability to make efficient and effective use of information sources. It is the ability to recognize the need for information, locate relevant information, evaluate information, and use information in an ethical way (Thompson&Blankinship, 2015). Similarly, Cobus (2008) has defined information literacy as the ability to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. Frazier and Selleck (2009) provided a deeper definition of information literacy. They wrote that Information literacy involves defining a need for information, determining the type and amount of information needed, and then accessing, critically evaluating, and using information in an ethical way. As the amount of information available to us expands, the ability to search, find, access and evaluate it is a key component of lifelong learning.

Information literacy skills are essential for the effective teaching and for research in this information age. This is because in this age of information explosion, while information is easily reachable, the abundance of information makes it so difficult to make sound decisions of what information to use and what not to use. Evaluating information becomes difficult more than ever before. Enhancing research, teaching quality and growth of teaching staff becomes almost impossible without information literacy skills. More so, teaching staff face a daily challenge of using a vast range of information resources effectively, efficiently and responsibly and they can't overcome this challenge without information literacy skills (Onyia&Olise, 2018).

Invariably, in this age of information explosion and technological advancement, issues of information storing, organizing, accessing, and evaluating, have become necessarily important in our societies (Li, 2007). In view of this, Andretta (2015) wrote that information literacy is an enabling agent

whose impact of empowerment and emancipation should not be underestimated, if information storing, organizing, accessing and evaluating should be made possible. Its benefits should be viewed in response to a complex global economy where continuous learning, and not the static accumulation of knowledge, is the main driving force. More so, the contemporary information world offers abundant information choices print, electronic, image, spatial, sound, visual and numeric. The challenges posed to the users of information include too much of information in various format and all not of equal value. Explosion of information on Internet with billions of websites and pages and millions of print items both are complicating access and retrieval of information by teaching staff (Sasikala&Dhanraju, 2011).

Hence teaching information literacy skills would enable students to have skills for recognizing a need for information, identifying what information is needed, finding the information, evaluating the information, organizing the information and skills for using the information. This is because, as noted by Rafique (2014), with information literacy skills teaching staff can approach to the required information accurately and timely. They can evaluate information competently and use information precisely and productively. Issa, Amusan and Daura (2009), however advised that to be successful, information literacy depends on collaboration between teaching staff, classroom faculty, academic administrators, librarians and other information professionals.

Furthermore, Information literacy skills are increasingly important. Information literacy skills would lead to independent information search and retrieval rather than dependence on the librarians and others to provide information for them. Adding to this, Rafique (2014) highlighted the importance of information literacy for teaching staff in higher institution. Rafique stated that the core mission of higher education is to develop a course of learning to produce life-long learners and to ensure the development of their abilities of critical thinking. Information literacy is a key element of long life learning which provides the fabrication of well-informed community. Hence, information literacy skills expand and enhance the competencies of individuals beyond the formal class room environment and gives self-directions to the individuals in their practical life. Information literacy also inculcates competencies of individuals working in any discipline, learning environment and any level of education to think critically with content and extends their self-directed investigations and prepared for organized learning (Bundy, 2004).

3.1 Research Methodology

This study is quantitative in nature and employs the survey research design. Data were collected from the 75 library and information science students in ND1 and ND 2 in Delta state Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku, which consisted the target population of the study. No Inclusion and exclusion criteria were determined as all students of the department of library and information science consisted the sample of this study. However, the researchers who are also lecturers in the department briefly educated the students on information literacy skills and how to fill the questionnaire. This was done under the confines of research ethics. Evidently, the main research instrument of this study was the questionnaire. The information collected included basic socio-demographic data which was just gender and level of study. Specific information regarding methods adopted for teaching information literacy skills in the department of library and information science, Delta state Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku as well as respondents attitude towards the teaching of information literacy skills. To

ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, copies of the questionnaire were administered to 15 student from UNIBEN. Items were testes using Cronbach Alpha in SPSS and a reliability coefficient of 0.76 was yielded. This shows that the questionnaire is internally consistent. Thus, 75 questionnaire were distributed but only 71 questionnaires were considered fit for analysis. All data collected after field work were analysed with SPSS version 20 using simple percentages, means, standard deviations, Pearson Chi-squares, and One- way analysis of variance (ANOVA). All data are presented with the aid of tables designed using Microsoft Excel.

4.1 Results and Discussions

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by gender(n=71)

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Male	21	29.6
Female	50	70.4
Total	71	100.0

Table 1 clearly shows that there is a preponderance of female students in the department of Library and information science. The supporting data for the foregoing assertion had it that of the 71 respondents who participated in this study, 70.4% were females while 29.6% were males. This goes to show that there are more females pursuing a career in librarianship than their male counterparts.

Methods Adopted for Teaching Information Literacy Skills

Table 2: Perceptions on the Methods Adopted for Teaching Information Literacy Skills (n=71)

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lecturers use Computers to deliver lectures/ instructions	1.32	.752
Face to face teaching methods/ traditional methods are used for teaching information literacy skills	3.79	.532
Active students involvement takes place during teaching/ learning	2.94	.908
Students are left to learn on their own/ Independent teaching methods	1.42	.921
Practical teaching methods are used	3.54	.790
Online teaching methods are used for teaching information literacy skills	1.32	.789
Lecturers make use of humour during lectures	2.59	.688
Lecturers Give assignments and project works	3.96	.264
Group learning and teaching methods are used	3.03	.792
Library Educators use WhatsApp for delivery of assignments and instructions	1.48	.908

The methods adopted for the teaching of information literacy skills as indicated by table 2 are Face to face teaching methods/ traditional methods (x=3.79, std deviation-.532), Active students involvement during teaching/ learning (x=2.94, std deviation- .908), Practical teaching methods (x=3.54, std deviation-.790), Lecturers Give assignments and project works (x=3.96, std deviation-.264) and Group learning and teaching methods (x=3.03,std deviation-.792). The question arising is what methods are preferred by male students and by female students?

Table 3: Gender Differences and Students Preferences of Methods for Teaching Information Literacy Skills (n=71)

Methods	Male	Female	Total	F	P-value
Face to Face method	8	40	48	13.834	0.001
	38.10%	80.00%	67.60%		
use of ICTs	17	38	55	0.203	0.654
	81.00%	76.00%	77.50%		
Group learning	20	11	31	22.109	.000
	95.20%	22.00%	43.70%		
Use of Humour	0	26	26	57.419	.000
	0.00%	52.00%	36.60%		

In an opened question, respondents were asked to state what type of method they would prefer for the teaching of information literacy skills. Responses were coded and categorized under four main methods as shown in table 3. The interpretation of the data in table 3 is: Male students (81.0%) prefer the use of computers and ICTs for the teaching of information literacy skills more than female students (76.0%). Female students (80.0%) would rather opt for face to face teaching methods more than their male counterparts (38.1%). Male students (95.2%) are more likely to prefer group learning of information literacy skills more than female students (22.0%). Interestingly, no male student out of the 52.0% of students who prefer the use of humour during the teaching of information literacy skills preferred the said method. This findings contradicts the findings of AbdAli, Ashur, Ghazi and Muslim (2016) as they found that males have more tendencies towards humour than females. They claimed that males have a sense of humour more than females, so they prefer the teacher' use of humour during lessons. Also, from a one way ANOVA test conducted, a statistical significant difference was found between male and female students in their preferences of teaching methods used for information literacy skills.

Table 4: Associations between Gender and Attitudes towards teaching of information Literacy skills

Attitudes	Variable	Mean	X^2	Df	P-value	Phi-Cramer's Value	Decisions
You take teaching of information literacy skills for granted	Gender	1.48	3.069[a]	3	.381	.208	*
You are anxious to learn information literacy skills	Gender	3.28	34.863[a]	3	.000	.701	**
Information literacy skills should be taught at a separate course	Gender	2.56	38.434[a]	3	.000	.736	**
You feel relaxed towards the teaching of information literacy skills	Gender	2.83	10.896[a]	3	.012	.392	**
You are motivated towards the teaching of information literacy skills	Gender	3.42	3.824[a]	3	.281	.232	*
You prefer library educators who teach you information literacy skills more than those that don't	Gender	3.72	3.890[a]	3	.274	.234	*
You get bored when information literacy skills are taught	Gender	1.94	10.055[a]	3	.018	.376	**

*= Not Significant **= Significant

Table 2 shows statistical associations between gender and students attitude towards information literacy skill. Students gender was found to be statistically significantly associated with students attitudes on how anxious they are to learn information literacy skills, perceptions on Information literacy skills been taught as a separate course and students feeling relaxed towards the teaching of information literacy skills and students getting bored when information literacy skills are taught. This means that male and female students react differently in these regards. For instance, males students (90.5) were found to be more anxious to learn information literacy skill more than female students(16.0%). 100% of the 21 male surveyed felt more relaxed during the teaching of information literacy skills as against 62.0% females. Also, more males (52.4%) disagreed that they got bored during the teaching of information literacy skills. It could be implied therefore that male library students have a more positive attitude towards the teaching of information literacy skills than their female counterparts. This stand point is in disagreement with Moore and Yin (2009) position on gender differences in the learning of information literacy skills. They reported that gender did not influence the learning and development information skills of students.

Phi-Cramer's Value helps to measure the strength of associations between variables tested. Any value greater than 0.25 is

considered very strong, thus a very strong association is seen between gender and students been anxious to learn information literacy skills, perceptions on Information literacy skills been taught as a separate course and students feeling relaxed towards the teaching of information literacy skills. A very strong association is found between gender of respondents and if they get bored when information literacy skills are taught (Phi=.376).

Testing Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant difference between male and female students' attitudes towards the teaching of information literacy skills

A one way ANOVA test was used to discover the significant differences between male and female students' attitudes towards the teaching of information literacy skills. Table 5 shows only the significant results.

Table 5: One Way ANOVA test on significant differences between male and female students attitudes towards the teaching of information literacy skills.

Variable		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
You are anxious to learn information literacy skills	Between Groups	11.577	1	11.577	38.423	.000
	Within Groups	20.790	69	.301		
	Total	32.366	70			
Information literacy skills should be taught at a separate course	Between Groups	33.232	1	33.232	43.901	.000
	Within Groups	52.232	69	.757		
	Total	85.465	70			

As determined by one way ANOVA, there is statistical significant attitudinal difference between how male and female students are anxious to learn information literacy skills {F(1,69)= 38.423, p=.000}and perceptions on whether information literacy skills should be taught at a separate course {F(1,69)= 43.901, p=.000}

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has been able to establish that there exist differences between male and female library students attitudes towards the teaching of information literacy skills especially in their preferences of teaching methods adopted as well as how anxious they are to learn information literacy skills, perceptions on Information literacy skills been taught as a separate course and their dispositions towards the teaching of information literacy skills. For instance, male students (90.5) were found to be more anxious to learn information literacy skill more than female students (16.0%). Findings have also revealed that male library students have a more positive attitude towards the teaching of information literacy skills than their female counterparts. Reasons for these differences were not ascertained. However, it can be concluded that since information literacy skills is very imperative for the 21st century library student, modalities need to be put in place to spark female students interest in information literacy skills including creating

healthy competitive learning processes between male and female students.

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