



Assessment of the Perception of Librarians on Gender Stereotype as Correlate of Job Performance in Academic Libraries in Delta State

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Abstract: Gender matters all over the world and in almost all areas of life. Librarianship is no exception. There exists obvious gender stereotypes in libraries all over the world. However, there is no empirical evidence that ascertains whether these gender stereotypes affect the job performances of librarians. This study therefore assesses the perception of librarians on gender stereotype as a correlate of job performance of librarians in academic libraries in Delta State. A structured questionnaire was used to survey 95 librarians in academic libraries in the State. Data were analyzed using percentages, descriptive statistics and Pearson moment correlation. Findings include that gender stereotypes exist to a low extent in these libraries and its influences have some negative sides on the job performances of librarians. However, it was found that there is no significant correlation between gender stereotypes and the job performance of librarians. Hence, recommendations were made.

Keywords: Academic libraries, Gender, Gender stereotype, Job performance, Librarians and Library and Information services.

Introduction

Gender matters all over the world and in almost all areas of life. In rendering library and information services, librarians believe in the free flow of information to library users, equity in

information access, and diversity of information regardless of the gender of any user. Unfortunately, this gender equity in the dissemination of knowledge to library clientele is not same for librarians in the profession.

There have been obvious gender stereotypes existing in academic libraries. These stereotypes may or may not affect job performance. It was in this light that Lawton (2018) wrote that gender stereotype in libraries has become prevalent in the profession especially with several women experiencing sexual harassment and men climbing quickly on the ladder of leadership.

Gender stereotype has existed for a long time in libraries. The librarianship profession has been dominated by female library staff. However, this scenario has not always been so. Dickson (2002) had argued that male dominated the library profession originally, but were regarded as low status, old fashioned, and classless. Centuries later, it has evolved to not just incorporate women, but almost completely associated with females. Ultimately, the trend towards employment of females in the profession continued over the years, which resulted in the misconception that librarianship is a feminine profession. Although in recent times more men have started coming into the profession, there is empirical evidence that men have continued to remain in the minority with females on the majority in all types of libraries and library schools (Record and Green, 2008). Mars (2018) also added that despite the dominance of females in the profession, there exists income inequality between male and female librarians as well as an uneven distribution of men in leadership positions compared to their female counterparts.

Interestingly, despite the dominance of females in the profession, men have continued occupy disproportionately administrative positions in libraries. For instance, Voelck (2003) study showed that male librarians climb more quickly into and advance much more quickly to administrative positions within the library structure despite been the minority in libraries. Nevertheless, lately female librarians have become more successful at achieving leadership positions in a bid to achieve gender equality (OCLC,2017). Besides, librarianship has simply come to favor the "feminine" model. Another aspect of gender stereotypes in libraries, is female librarians are seen as either uptight, unattractive old-fashioned gatekeepers or the objects of sexual fantasy (Lawton, 2018). These appalling gender stereotypes can lead to bad behavior and low job performances.

Evidently, gender stereotypes do exist in libraries not only in library management but in overall performance of library routine jobs. There is, according to Farrelly (2006), a strong agreement that gender stereotypes would be drastically reduced if more male librarians are placed in the various sections and divisions in libraries particularly in cataloguing/ classification department, circulation unit, serials unit, and in other non-administrative positions. This becomes paramount especially since Record and Green (2008) have found that male tend to avoid areas in librarianship that are perceived as feminine such reference services as well as children librarianship, and rather sought for titles tagged as 'masculine'.

No doubt, stereotypes can greatly influence modern and emerging trends and job performances in libraries. For instance, with more male librarians in Readers' Service Divisions, young male interest in reading and using the library may increase. This may even motivate younger males to join the librarianship practice. Furthermore, Men are often given fixed roles, expectations, opportunities based on their biological make up and societal expectations in libraries. A man may be more skillful in certain jobs in the library (for an instance, a reference service library), but may be placed in a more masculine position because of societal expectations. This in one way or the other may affect job performances in libraries. Therefore, this study assesses the perception of librarians on perceived gender stereotypes as a correlate of job performance of librarians in academic libraries in Delta state.

Statement of the problem

Gender has been an issue in all spheres of human endeavors, librarianship inclusive. Gender stereotype has been observed in libraries and has been recorded in terms of library management, male dominance in administrative positions, gender oppression in workplaces, sexual harassment, etc. However, few or no studies have addressed how gender stereotypes affect the job performance of librarians in academic libraries. Hence, this study becomes imperative. However, Ugwu and Ugwu (2018) have noted that one difficulty encountered by researchers of gender stereotypes and job performance among staff in corporate organizations is the

complexity involved in making comparison between male and female workers, job performance owing to gender segregation in the allocation of work or tasks. Bearing this in mind, the researchers are posed with a challenge of assessing the extent to which gender stereotypes affect job performance of librarians. Hence, this study seeks to assess gender stereotypes as a correlate of job performance in academic libraries in Delta state by focusing on librarians.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. Find out librarians' perception on the extent to which gender stereotype exists in academic libraries in Delta state.
2. Determine the level of job performance of librarians in academic libraries in Delta state.
3. Assess librarians' perception on the ways gender stereotype influences the job performance of librarians in academic libraries in Delta state.
4. To establish the correlation between gender stereotype and job performance in academic libraries in Delta state.

Research Questions

The following research questions are posed for this study;

1. What are librarians' perception of the extent to which gender stereotype exists in academic libraries in Delta state?
2. What is the level of job performance of librarians in academic libraries in Delta state?
3. What are librarians' perceptions on the way gender stereotype influences the job performances of librarians in academic libraries in Delta state?

Research Hypotheses

Ho1- There is no significant correlation between gender stereotypes in academic libraries and the job performances of librarians.

Literature review

Gender, according to Moser (2011), refers to a socially constructed relation between men and women. Pereira (2007) added that gender applies to social and historical attachments given to male and females because of their physical and biological differences. Gender is dynamic in nature and is subject to change. There are cultural, political, social, religious and economic issues that act as determinants of the decisions and actions of male and female in all societies. Stereotypes are generalizations made about individuals simply because they belong to a particular group. Gender stereotypes, therefore are generalizations about the attributes given to men or women just because they are men or women (Heilman, 2012).

Job performance, on the other hand has been defined by Ojo (2009) as an extent to which the day-to-day work is being carried out. Hose (2012) simply defined it as the way employees perform their work. Also, job performance has been defined as the total expected value to the organization of the discrete behavioural episodes that an individual performs over a stipulated period of time. Job performance can also be described as the accomplishment of assigned duties in accordance with organizational guidelines subject to the normal constraints of reasonable utilization of available resources (Ogunleye & Osekita, 2016). There are certain

indicators of job performance which may include effectiveness and efficiency of the staff, level of creativity, the level of work or cordial relationship with other staff, how well the personnel communicates etc.

In libraries, gender stereotypes have been noticed (Dickinson, 2002; Voelck, 2003; Reed, 2006; Folorunsho & Oshinaike, 2008; Lawton, 2018). Studies have proven that there are more females in the profession than their male counterparts. However, The American Library Association (ALA) (1999) found that in academic libraries, men held more leadership positions and titles than their female counterparts. Additionally, according to ALA (2011), male library directors made more than their female counterparts in both academic settings. In 2010, the ALA released another demographic analysis that proved these trends continued into the second decade of the twenty-first century. In 2010, it was found that most masters in library and information science students were women and most of the librarians working in the states were also women. (ALA, 2011). The proportion of male librarians decreased by 17.2% in 2010. These notwithstanding 40% of library managers were men (ALA, 2011). Unsurprisingly, the wage gap continues in the library field as well. More worrisome, is that women librarians had more years of experience than men earned more than their female counterparts (ALA, 2011).

Interestingly, Hassan and Ogunkoya (2014) believed that women and men have equal abilities as long as they are given the same exposure. It seems

librarianship is a feminine profession with the few men in the profession occupying administrative or leadership roles. This could be because Hartman as cited by Hassan and Ogunkoya (2014) stated that males are perceived as more influential than females while good performance is associated with masculine traits. It could also be because of the 'glass ceiling' effect' whereby women are prevented from occupying certain high ranking positions. Or maybe women are selective when choosing career. Confirming this, Onwuchekwa in Ugwu and Ugwu (2018) concluded that women in most cases engaged in some form of work which require mainly social and interpersonal skills such as librarianship. Besides, Ugwu and Ugwu (2018) maintained that men in academic libraries tend to be found on job which have wider opportunities for adventures and promotion. Consequently, the gender difference in opportunity structure explains the observed difference in the career behavior of men and women in academic libraries. If women are provided with the same opportunities as men, their behavior should be more similar. Today, female librarians have unprecedented opportunities and role models as a female is the Librarian in the Library of Congress for the first time. Also, in Nigeria, a number of academic libraries of great standing have been headed by women not to mention the Association of Women Librarians in Nigeria (AWLIN) programmes.

Nevertheless, there are still some obvious gender stereotypes in academic libraries which may affect the job

performance of librarians. The library profession has over the years become a feminine profession, thereby reducing the prestige of the profession. With the feminization of the library field, Mars (2018) stated that not only would salaries and career mobility be affected but also the reputation and job performances of librarians themselves. Notably, librarians perform various tasks in the library. These tasks include from answering users' queries, selective dissemination of information, cataloguing and classifying library materials, library user education, information brokering, etc. These jobs are very significant for the overall satisfaction of the information and research needs of library users. However, have there been any gender differences in the extent these library jobs are performed in academic libraries? For instance, Cabonero and Dolendo (2013) while assessing the cataloguing and classification skills of librarians in workplaces discovered that the five librarians studied, two male and three females, had outstanding skills in cataloguing. However, from the breakdown given the female librarians studied had higher grade points in the assessment of the cataloguing and classification skills. However, there were no notable gender differences in heading the cataloguing and classification unit as one man and one woman have headed the unit which contradicts Mars (2018) claims that female librarians weren't frequently given leadership or administrative roles in libraries. Nevertheless, the social cognitive theory, has stipulated that stereotypes exist as people link men and

women to certain behaviors and characteristics (Bauer & Baltes, 2002). This study, therefore anchors its theoretical framework on the social-cognitive theory. The social-cognitive theory stipulates that gender roles are products of a wide array of social factors which comes up in a society. Men and women are more likely to be linked to a certain role based on given social factors in a society and vice versa.

Methodology

This study employed the descriptive survey research design using a structured questionnaire. The descriptive survey design was used because it helps in the collection of detailed and factual

information which is needed to describe an existing phenomenon. The target population of the study is 95 librarians in all academic libraries in Delta State, Nigeria. Total enumeration technique was used. Hence, all the 95 librarians in all the academic libraries in Delta state, Nigeria constitute the sample for this study. 94 copies of the questionnaires distributed were retrieved. Data collected were analyzed using percentages, descriptive statistics, and Pearson moment correlations. The criterion mean of this study is 2.00. All analysis was done with the aid of SPSS version 20.

Results and Discussion

Respondents Bio-data

Table 1: Gender of respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
male	37	39.4	39.4	39.4
female	57	60.6	60.6	100.0
Total	94	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 showed that there are more female librarians than their male counterparts (that is 57 female librarians making 60.6% of the respondents) in academic libraries in Delta state. It could be implied therefore that Folorunsho and Oshinaike (2008) and

Lawton (2018) assertions that there are more females in the library profession is true.

Research Question 1: What are librarians' perception of the extent to which gender stereotypes exist in academic libraries in Delta state?

Table 2: Extent gender stereotypes exist in academic libraries

Extent gender stereotypes exist	Test Value = 2			
	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Remark
Women librarians are given routine jobs that requires love and care	94	2.06	.730	High extent
Men librarians are given tasks in the library that requires strength	94	1.55	.728	Low extent
Male librarians that get involved in library routine task are disregarded	94	1.76	.864	Low extent
Male librarians occupy administrative positions more than their female counterparts	94	2.19	.871	High extent
Male librarians take permission to be absent or late from work for family related reason	94	2.10	.917	High extent
Female librarians take permission to be absent or late from work for family related reasons such as school runs and attending to children	94	2.19	.723	High extent
Females are better librarians than males	94	1.87	.751	Low extent
Male librarians are better in their performance when compared to their female counterparts	94	1.86	.850	Low extent

* Aggregate mean= 1.94

Table 2 showed the extent gender stereotypes exist in academic libraries. Evidently gender stereotypes exist in academic libraries as an aggregate mean of 1.94 was achieved. However, this mean score falls within the range of low extent. Hence, it can be said that gender

stereotypes exist in academic libraries to a low extent.

Research Question 2: What is the level of job performance of librarians in academic libraries in Delta state?

Table 3: Level of job performances of librarians in academic Libraries

Job performances	High level	Low level	No level	Mean	Std. Deviation
I classify library books	16(17%)	26(27.7%)	52(55.3%)	1.62	.764
I catalogue library materials	33(35.1%)	37(39.4%)	24(25.5%)	2.13	.779
I answer library users reference queries	65(69.1%)	29(30.9%)	—	2.69	.464
I shelf books	21(22.3%)	34(36.2%)	39(41.5%)	1.36	.483

URL: <http://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cjlis/>

I supervise library work done by subordinates	49(52.1%)	21(22.1%)	24(25.5%)	2.33	.822
I index newspapers	28(29.8%)	35(37.2%)	31(33.0)	2.10	.791
I render library users education services to users	62(66.0)	32(34.0%)	–	2.66	.476
I manage electronic resources	14(14.9%)	19(20.2%)	61(64.9%)	1.59	.795
I charge and discharge library materials	28(29.8%)	13(13.8%)	53(56.4%)	1.73	.894
I perform collection development activities like selections, acquisition, stock revision, etc.	11(11.7%)	15(16.0%)	68(72.3%)	1.39	.691
I have attended a number of Training Session	49(52.1%)	39(41.5%)	6(6.4%)	2.46	.616
I have additional degrees since my first appointment	54(57.4%)	26(27.7%)	14(14.9%)	2.43	.740
I have given suggestions to improve library jobs	39(41.5%)	37(39.4%)	18(19.0%)	2.22	.750
I have experienced work related accidents	24(25.5%)	30(31.9%)	40(42.6%)	1.83	.812
I have been absent from work in 2018	31(33.0%)	57(60.6%)	6(6.4%)	2.27	.571
I am polite with colleagues and clients	81(86.2%)	13(13.8%)	–	2.86	.347
I pay attention to my duty	85(90.4%)	9(9.6%)	–	2.90	.296

As shown in table 3, only 16(17%) of 94 respondents (librarians) claim to classify library materials to a high level. Hence with a mean score of 1.62, it can be said that librarians in academic libraries classify library materials in a low level. Similarly, with few number of respondents claiming to manage electronic resources (14 respondents 14.9%), charge and discharge library materials 28(29.8%) respondents, perform collection development activities like selection, acquisition, stock revision, etc. 11(11.7%) respondents, to a high level, the said items had mean scores below the 2.00 criterion mean of this study. Hence, it can be inferred that librarians manage

electronic resources, charge and discharge library materials, perform collection development activities like selections, acquisition, stock revision etc. to a low extent. This could mean that librarians in the region lack the skills to perform this task or they have not been posted to the sections that perform these jobs. However, other jobs in table 3 were found to be performed to a high level. Furthermore, the item “I have been absent from work in 2018” had a mean score of 2.27. This means that majority of the librarians have been absent from work in 2018 either on a high level or low level.

Research Question 3: What are librarians’ perceptions on the ways

gender stereotypes influence the job performances of librarians in academic libraries in Delta state?

Table 4: Librarians perception of Gender stereotypes influence on job performances

Gender stereotypes influence on job performances	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perceived gender stereotypes makes you work harder	22(23.4%)	35(37.2%)	37(39.4%)	1.62	.764
Perceived gender stereotypes makes you lose interest in library work	17(18.1%)	53(56.4%)	24(25.5%)	2.13	.779
Perceived gender stereotype decreases your confidence	27(28.7%)	16(17.0%)	51(54.3%)	2.69	.464
Perceived gender stereotype increases your confidence	16(17.0%)	35(37.2%)	43(45.7%)	1.36	.483
Perceived gender stereotype affects your leadership aspirations	18(19.1%)	35(37.2%)	41(43.6%)	2.33	.822
Perceived gender stereotypes make you feel dissatisfied with your job	60(63.8%)	33(35.1%)	1(1.1%)	2.10	.791
Perceived gender stereotypes leads to healthy competition between male and female librarians	44(46.8%)	33(35.1%)	17(19.1%)	2.66	.476
Perceived gender stereotypes increases your interest in library work	17(18.1%)	35(37.2%)	42(44.7%)	1.59	.795
Perceived gender stereotypes makes you lazy	59(62.8)	12(12.8%)	23(24.5%)	1.73	.894

Table 4 showed the various ways gender stereotypes influence job performance of librarians. Librarians agree that perceived gender stereotypes make librarians lose interest in library work (x = 2.13), decreases librarians confidence (x = 2.69), affects librarians leadership aspirations (x = 2.33), make them feel dissatisfied with their job (x =2.10), and leads to healthy competition between male and female librarians (x = 2.66). It can therefore be said that perceived

gender stereotypes has a number of negative influence on the job performance of Librarians. Unfortunately, Ilan and Dafna (1999) had earlier stipulated that gender stereotypes influence are not easily eliminated.

Hypothesis Ho1- There is no significant correlation between gender stereotypes in academic libraries and the job performances of librarians.

Table 5: Correlations between gender stereotypes and job performances of librarians

		Gender stereotypes	Job performances
gender stereotypes	Pearson Correlation	1	.053
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.610
	N	94	94
job performances	Pearson Correlation	.053	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.610	
	N	94	94

In table 5, Pearson correlation coefficient r is .053. Since the significant value (Sig.2-tailed) is .610 (which is greater than 0.05), it can be concluded that there is no significant correlation between gender stereotypes in academic libraries and the job performances of librarians. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. No wonder, Tulsa (2016) found that gender has little or no significant effect on job performance ratings. Results of Tulsa’s study indicate that "there are no meaningful differences in ratings of men and women regardless of job type".

Conclusion and Recommendations

It has been established that gender stereotypes exist in academic libraries in Delta state to a low extent and librarians perform their jobs such as cataloguing materials, library user education services etc. to a high level. Nevertheless, it was found that librarians manage electronic resources,

charge and discharge library materials, perform collection development activities like selection, acquisition, stock revision etc. to a low extent perhaps because few librarians are posted to the sections that handle these jobs. Perceived gender stereotypes have some negative influences on the job performances of librarians. No significant correlation was found between gender stereotypes and librarians job performances in academic libraries. Thus, it may be easier for library management to avoid the negative influences associated with gender stereotypes. Library routine tasks should be assigned to librarians regardless of their gender and both male and female librarians should be given equal opportunities to administrative positions. It is also recommended that male or female librarians should ensure that perceived gender stereotypes are not self-imposed.

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