INSTITUTIONS' EXPECTATIONS AND GENDER GAP AMONG FIRST-YEAR TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT STUDENTS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Educational setting in higher institutions of learning is a carefully controlled and structured environment that is quite different from what is in operation is secondary schools or in other lower educational system. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Higher institution may not offer the same process to students; to which first-year students enter with unrealistic expectations towards the academic, infrastructures and social life in higher education system. This quantitative study thus explored the institutions' expectations and gender gap among 209 first-year tourism and hospitality students in Kwara State, Nigeria. An adapted standardised instrument from Garcia-Aracil (2009) on three dimensions of school satisfaction with 0.862 reliability index was used to determine the respondents' expectations of higher education. From the questionnaire administration, 197 responses were obtained; while 186 copies were fit for the analyses. The Principal Components Analysis and independent t-test results revealed that the institutions' expectations of the respondents are higher across the two domains of social and academic factors but less in the aspect of infrastructures irrespective of their gender difference. Therefore, first-year tourism and hospitality management students should be educated on the three major domains of higher education so that they can have realistic expectations of these elements, particularly, the institution infrastructures and the connection they have to their overall educational success.

Key Words: *Institutions' expectations, gender gap, first-year tourism and hospitality management.*

Introduction

Higher education is important for a sustainable economic development and globalization. Any country that pays a leap service to education would suffer from intellectual deterioration and economic downside. Hence, stakeholders and students' expectations have obliged management of tertiary institutions to focus on provision of quality education (Thapa, 2011). Institutions should focus on such areas where students expects more and which in turn becomes the basis of their motivation to transit to higher institution of learning (Markovic, Horvat, & Raspor, 2005).

Transition from high school to college or higher institution of learning has

been a difficult task for many admission seekers. Majority of them had less or no experience as regards the new level of study, which is completely different from where they are coming from; their relationship with teachers, students, staff, teaching methods, identification of some strategic places, where to go and not ought to, among other things. They need to know many things and get acquainted with university environment for them to successfully navigate the hurdles of tertiary education. Lowe and Cook (2003) stated that transition has been a major cause of anxiety among first-year students of university.

One of the major problems encountered by the transiting students is their unrealistic expectations of things they are looking forward to experience having being admitted in tertiary education; which however, might not be in consonant with the reality of tertiary education system. Kandiko and Mawer (2013) had reported that many students come to the higher institution of learning with unrealistic expectations. According to Lowe and Cook (2003), new students often they also have unrealistic beliefs about staff availability, work-load and class sizes that are conflicting with reality. Students wanted opportunities to meet and interact with other students, engage with their course and participate in extra-curricular activities, both social and academic-related.

In tertiary institution of learning, students are responsible for their own learning without depending on teacher's authority or control and this, many first-year students find difficult to cope with. Also, students may often find the teaching methods of higher education system contrast to their prior experience from secondary school or other educational experience they have had, so they are unprepared for relaxed and informal style teaching-learning in higher institution of learning. Murtagh (2010) supported this by stating that students arrive at tertiary institutions without a clear understanding of how they are going to be assessed. Some students expect that they will combine paid job with their studies due to experience of financial difficulty, they expect that higher education will enhance their academic and vocational prospects, but also provide opportunities to become independent and to enjoy themselves (Kandiko & Mawer, 2013).

Today's students often look towards institutions that will provide them with unique and memorable experience in three major distinct areas: facilities/infrastructures (computers and physical spaces, library, security and safety); educational (timetabling, course structure, staff support and engagement with staff); and social life (students' organization, sense of belong to school and community, leisure activities). Facilities and resources are important; if the institution fails in its mandate to provide conducive learning environment for students to learn, they may become insecure and mar their academic success. Students increasingly reflect negatively on failures to meet their expectations. Among the institution expectations among first-year students is to have a sense of belonging by being part of the school community and they highlighted the importance of leisure activities to their quality of life in the institutions (Ravindran & Kalpana, 2012).

Demographic factors such as gender and age have explained variations in the firs-year students' expectations of higher institutions of learning. Wells, Seifert and Saunders (2013) study indicated that students' perceptions were differed by gender, which has been a key explanatory factor for differences between men and women in realizing their expectations. Wang and Degol (2017) established greater aspirations in women than in men regarding social interaction and involvement in aid actions to others, while men seem to show higher levels of leadership, with higher aspirations to participate in student committees, politics and association activities. In the result of Diniz, Alfonso, Araujo, Deano, Costa, Conde, et. al., (2018) study, men, more than women, showed expectations in achieving some academic domain of expectations such as stable and prestigious future employment, develop autonomy and self-confidence, study abroad, among others. Alfonso, Diniz, Deano, Tellado, Garcia-Senoran, Conde, et. al. (2020) found in their model that gender directly predicted only academic expectations, but with the mediation of planning, gender predicted all seven academic expectations. Women showed higher levels of academic expectations than did men.

Statement of the Problem
Presently, higher institutions of learning are fiercely on a competitive edge. They are under pressure to be ranked highly among others in all respects, but at the same time students are more discriminating than ever concerning their expectations of their choosing higher institutions of learning. The first-year students thus become intense and frustrating if their experience of the institutions is far below their expectations and this usually makes the institution difficult for them to cope with. Perhaps, their unrealistic expectations might have resulted from their ignorance of what tertiary institutions entail and the likely experience they will encounter which quite different from secondary school experience or from other institutions they might have been coming from. As Yorke and Longden (2004) stated that, failure to successfully manage such transition may result in significant distress, poor academic performance and increased drop-out rates.

Previous empirical studies are also scarce in this respect. Majority of the available studies (such as Ravindran & Kalpana, 2012; Wee & Thinavan, 2013; Borghi, Mainardes & Silva, 2016; Hassel & Ridout, 2018; Shaheen, Aqeel, Samreen & Nausheen, 2018) were foreign based research; very few (such as Adu & Abongida, 2015) are existing in Nigeria, especially, in Kwara State and specifically among students of tourism and hospitality management. Hence, the focus of this current study on the institutions' expectations of first-year tourism and hospitality management students in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study
The following objectives are set to be achieved in this study:
- To investigate the institutions' expectations of first-year tourism and hospitality management students in Kwara State.

- To examine the difference in the institutions' expectations of first-year tourism and hospitality management students in Kwara State based on gender.

Research Question

The research question raised was as follows:

- What are the institutions' expectations of first-year tourism and hospitality management students in Kwara State?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis guided this study:

- There is no significant difference in the institutions' expectations of first-year tourism and hospitality management students in Kwara State based on gender.

Methodology

The research design considered appropriate for this study is a descriptive survey. This is because it helps to determine the number of things, including demographic data, the presence or absence of a particular problem, respondents' opinions about a phenomenon and the way in which people behave in some situations. Since this study aims at collecting data on students' opinions of their expectations of chosen tertiary institutions of learning in order to design a working and quality monitoring educational framework, a quantitative descriptive survey design is therefore adopted. From the population 238 tourism and hospitality management students (KWASU = 78 & Kwara Poly = 160) in Kwara State. The choice of only the two institutions was because they are the major tertiary institutions of learning that offers Tourism and Hospitality Management as a core discipline of study. On this basis, 152 (Krejcie & Morgan, 1978) respondents were purposively selected for this study. However, the high turnout rate of respondents for participation and sincere responses increased the sample size to 209.

The research instrument used to collect data was the standardised adapted or modified Garcia-Aracil (2009) three dimension of school satisfaction with 0.862 reliability index, which is within the "highly acceptance" region. After the general process of questionnaire administration, 197 copies were retrieved and 186 were fit for data analyses. The data collected were subjected to both descriptive and inferential analyses, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 21. The demographic data of the respondents were presented with frequency and percentage, the main research question was answered using Factor Analysis; while the hypotheses formulated were analysed using independent t-test statistics, at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The respondents' demographic variables comprise gender, age and marital status. Its analysis was carried out using percentage; the results indicated that out of the 186 participants, 73 (39.2%) were males; while 113 (60.0%) represents the female folks. This implies that majority of the respondents that took part in the study were females. The respondents' age showed that 38 (20.4%) were between 18-22 years, 128 (68.8%) were between 23-27

years, 17 (9.1%) were between 28-32 years; while 3 (1.6%) were within 33 years and above. This means that majority of the respondents were within the adolescence age.

Research Question: What are the institutions' expectations of first-year tourism and hospitality management students in Kwara State?

The principal component analysis was used to answer the above research question as follows:

Table 1: Principal Component Analysis on Institutions' Expectations of Tourism and Hospitality Management Students in Kwara State

Items		Components			
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
28	Access to adequate student support services	.692			
29	Extracurricular activities	.685			
26	Participation in tourism and hospitality events	.674			
27	Clubs/student organizations	.654			
31	Adequate access to lecturers outside of class	.641			
30	Freedom to participation in social events in/outside the school	.618			
25	Campus security and safety	.614			
20	Guidance and counselling programmes	.609			
17	Student residences	.564			
16	Effective transportation service	.558			
12	Class/laboratory facilities	.558			
18	Food services	.556			
19	Sports and fitness facilities	.553			
24	Cleanliness of the campus	.540			
36	Reporting unethical activities to the appropriate authority	.536			
32	Relationship with students whose interests were different from yours	.532			
9	Fellow students' academic ability	.531			
33	Relationship with students from another state or town	.518			
21	Recreational facilities	.515			
15	Parking lots	.507			
10	Ability to engage in critical thinking	.503			
34	Association with people of different religious beliefs	.502			
14	Computer and Information Technology	.501			
2	Quality of the academic staff		.574		
3	Relevance of courses offered in comparison to other university related discipline		.567		
8	Value of the education for the price		.560		
13	Well equipped Library			.579	
23	Institutions' business ventures				.503
	Eigen values	9.753	2.848	2.196	1.587
	% variance explained	27.091	7.912	6.100	4.408

Notes: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure Sampling Adequacy = 0.848; X = 2841.513; df = 630; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Significance = 0.000; EV = Eigen value; TVE = Total variance explained

The respondents' responses to the 36 items on institutions' expectations were subjected to factor analysis. The principal axis method was used to extract the components and Varimax (orthogonal) rotation factors. Out of the 36 items, items 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 22 and 35 were removed because they have less than 0.5 loaded values. The remaining 28 items have been reduced to four components, with each component loading 31, 3, 1 and 1 items, with Eigen and total variance explained values of 9.753 & 27.091; 2.848 & 7.912; 2.916 & 6.100; and 1.587 & 4.408 respectively. The value in each item of the four components produced exceeds the value 0.5 and they are of high and positive loadings. Based on the loaded items on the four components, all the values showed that the respondents have high institutions'

expectations with the least rotated value of .501 that is above average. Hence, it was deduced specifically that, the first-year tourism and hospitality management students in Kwara State expects that, their institutions should have adequate student support services, been able to participate in extracurricular activities, engaging in tourism and hospitality events, involving in clubs/student organizations, having adequate access to lecturers outside of class, having the freedom to participate in social events in/outside the school, adequate campus security and safety, functioning guidance and counselling programmes, quality academic staff, well equipped library and institutions' business ventures, as indicated by items 28, 29, 26, 27, 31, 30, 25, 20, 2, 13 and 23 respectively.

H_{O1}: There is no significant difference in the institutions' expectations of first-year tourism and hospitality management students in Kwara State based on gender.

Table 2: Independent t-test Result Comparing Respondents' Institutions' Expectations Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t	p-value
Male	73	120.77	22.79			
				184	.925	.356
Female	113	123.65	19.40			

Table 2 shows that, at a degree of freedom (df) of 184, the calculated t-value of .925 is lesser at the set level of significance (p = .356 > .05). This indicates that there is no significant difference in the institutions' expectations of first-year tourism and hospitality management students in Kwara State based on gender; hence, the hypothesis is retained. Thus, male and female students were similar in their

expectations of their institutions of higher learning.

Discussion
The main finding of this study was that the first-year tourism and hospitality management students in Kwara State have high institutions' expectations with the least rotated value of .501 that is above average in the principal component analysis. Specifically, the respondents

expects that, their institutions should have adequate student support services, been able to participate in extracurricular activities, engaging in tourism and hospitality events, involving in clubs/student organizations, having adequate access to lecturers outside of class, having the freedom to participate in social events in/outside the school, adequate campus security and safety, functioning guidance and counselling programmes, quality academic staff, well equipped library and institutions' business ventures. Being new in the institution, it is expected that every first-year student would expect more than what they have experienced in either their previous secondary school system or from other institutions of learning they were coming. The institutions' expectations of the first-year tourism and hospitality management students were more of social and academic activities; improvement in infrastructures was less significant in the respondents' expectations. Perhaps, this is due to the social nature of the tourism and hospitality as a discipline. This could have influenced the responses of the respondents in giving priority to activities related to their field of study. the findings of this current empirical research is similar to the findings of Wee and Thinavan (2013); Shaheen, Aqeel, Samreen and Nausheen (2018); and Soares, Leme, Gomes and Penha (2018) which revealed that, the first-year students of tertiary institutions have higher expectations for their higher education. Some of the areas identified include academic integrity, teaching quality, exposure to new social environment, leisure/extra curricula activities, which are

similar to the domains indicated from this current study.

The results of the hypothesis revealed that there was no significant difference in the institutions' expectations of first-year tourism and hospitality management students in Kwara State based on gender. This implies that the male and female respondents are similar in their expectations of tertiary institutions' of learning as related to their course of study. This outcome is a complete departure from the previous studies (such as Ravindran & Kalpana, 2012; Wells, Seifert & Saunders, 2013; Wang & Degol, 2017; Diniz, Alfonso, Araujo, Deano, Costa, Conde, et. al., 2018; Alfonso, Diniz, Deano, Tellado, Garcia-Senoran, Conde, et. al., 2020) whose finding indicated that students have different institutions' expectations with respect to their gender variation. Perhaps, the difference in the target respondents used in this study and the locale in which it was carried out could have been responsible for not conforming to the previous empirical findings. All the previous empirical findings were foreign and focused on first-year students of tertiary institutions and not specifically, the tourism and hospitality management students.

Conclusion

The outcomes of this study have provided vivid institutions' expectations of the first-year tourism and hospitality management students in Kwara state. The institutions' expectations of the respondents are higher or greater across the two domains of social and academic factors but less in the aspect of infrastructures irrespective of their gender difference. Perhaps, the first-year

students are less experienced as regards major infrastructures that tertiary institutions should possess, particularly, in related to their field of study. Hence, adequate plan must be made by higher institutions of learning in meeting the high expectations of newly admitted tourism and hospitality management students.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, it was recommended that:

1. Authorities of tertiary institutions, where tourism and hospitality management courses are offered in Kwara State, should make adequate provisions for students support services by establishing the unit and ensure its effective functioning, so that the first-year students can be able to access useful information from this unit and which will serve as an office to demand for their needs or complaint on issues they are dissatisfied with; thereby, meeting the expectations of the newly admitted tourism and hospitality management students in the institutions.

2. Authorities of tertiary institutions of learning in Kwara State should ensure that the institutions' extra curricula programmes are functional, particularly, those that relates to tourism adventures (such as games and events experience, excursion, fieldtrip, cultural expedition etc.), so that the expectations of firs-year tourism and hospitality management students can be met with respect to their course of study.

3. The Departments of Tourism and Hospitality Management in institutions that offered the course should expose students to tourism and hospitality management events by including it as part of the students' practicum exercise, so that they can be able to differentiate between theory and practical as related to tourism and hospitality management studies. Such exposure will enable them to be maximally functional and employable for any organization they find themselves after graduation.

4. The higher institutions of learning should establish a functional counselling and human development centre for the students, where the newly admitted students could seek for guidance and where their various educational, vocational and personal-social issues can be resolved for maximum adjustment to the institutions' environment.

5. Generally, newly admitted students should be educated and orientated on the three major domains of institutions' expectations (social, educational and infrastructural factors) so that they can have realistic expectations of these elements, particularly, the institution infrastructures and the connection these factors have to their success in the field of tourism and hospitality management.

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