

## **Gender and Service Satisfaction among Graduate Students in Nigerian Universities**

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### **Abstract**

This study focused on assessing the influence of gender on service satisfaction among graduate students in universities in Cross River State. Specifically, the study evaluated the influence of gender on satisfaction with service delivery in terms of admission, transportation, teaching, library service, and thesis supervision. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Three hundred and thirty (330) graduate students from the two universities were randomly selected as the sample for the study. This was done through a simple random sampling technique. The main instrument that was used for data collection was a close-ended questionnaire titled: Gender and Service Satisfaction among Graduate Students Questionnaire (GSSGSQ). The instrument was validated by three experts each from the administration of higher education and measurement and evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was established through the Cronbach's alpha reliability method, with all variables yielding alpha coefficients ranging from .71-.89. Independent t-test was used to analyze the data collected at a 0.5 level of significance. The results indicated that gender influenced service satisfaction among students in terms of admission service, transportation, and library service as well as thesis supervision. However, it was rejected for lecture delivery. It was therefore recommended that university administrators should improve the quality of service delivery in our universities to meet the standard of universities elsewhere and; and ensure that services provided on campus are student centered or tailored to the peculiar needs of each student to enhance satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Gender, Service delivery, Satisfaction, Graduate students, Nigeria, Universities

### **1. Background to the study**

Gender refers to the state of being male or female. It can also be seen as a range of characteristics about, and differentiating between masculinity and femininity (Wikipedia, 2017). Depending on the context, these characteristics may include biological sex (male, female, or intersex); sociological structures (including gender roles and other social roles); or

gender identity (Omorobi, 2018; Akuegwu, Akeke, Omorobi, & Uchendu, 2024). Studies have shown that gender differences exist as established by several scholars in the Social Sciences (Royo-vela, Aldas-Manzano, Kuster & Vila, 2008). It has been observed that, among demographic variables, gender is a prominent indicator of consumer behavior (Omorobi, Harry, & Kenn-Aklah, 2022; Wilborm in Lin, Lee, Yeh, Lee and Wong, 2014; Eton, Kajang, & Omorobi, 2020).

The perceived difference existing between sexes could be attributed to widely establish cultural assignment of specific gender roles that are mostly distinct from male and female (Omorobi, & Effa, 2018; Omorobi, Ogbeche, & Asu-Okang, 2025). More often than not, these roles align with societal expectations for a given sex group, which is mostly far apart from that of the opposite sex (Eton, & Omorobi, 2020; Etim, & Omorobi, 2020 Omorobi, Mbon, Owan, & Ekpenyong, 2020). Hence, these social roles shape the general perception and disposition towards situations, activities, and services provided for male and female members of a given society (Mbon, Author, Owan, & Ekpenyong, 2019; Owan, Bassey, Omorobi, & Esuong, 2020; Osim, Omorobi, Ogar, & Adie, 2023). Hence, students of different sexes may tend to have different perceptions about services provided on campuses (Omorobi, Eton, & Chuktu, 2021; Omorobi, & Obona, 2018). Several studies have examined gender and student satisfaction with service delivery in educational institutions in other climes and different academic programs or settings other than graduate students in the study area (Omorobi, Eton, & Egbai, 2021). For instance, Kao (2007) carried out an empirical analysis of university students' satisfaction. The study focused on understanding students' overall satisfaction in New Zealand's higher education sector across genders. The study identified key service areas to include physical environment, academic staff services, administration staff services, and library services. Two hundred and twenty-three (223) students studying at Lincoln University were sampled for the study, independent t. The test was used to analyze data obtained from the respondents, and the result revealed among other things that there is a significant difference between male and female students' satisfaction with service delivery.

Consequently, Usman and Mokhtar (2016) showed in their study that, there is a strong positive relationship between service quality and student satisfaction. Therefore, the differences that may exist in perception may be relative to the quality of service delivery provided in an organization or institution at a given point in time. In another study, Palli respondents, and Mamilla (2012) examined the relationship between service quality dimensions and the level of student satisfaction with the quality of service provided in terms

of reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and responsiveness. 120 students were sample for the study, consisting of 62 male and 58 female students. Questionnaires were a sole instrument for data collection. Independent t. test was used for data analysis and the result revealed that there is a significant difference in the overall satisfaction of the respondent in terms of gender. The research revealed that female respondents were more satisfied with the service quality attributes of Venkateswara University than male respondents were.

In the same vein, Motiang, Wallis, and Karodia (2014) evaluated user satisfaction with library service at the University of Limpopo, Medunsa campus, South Africa. The main aim of the study was to evaluate the service and resources, which the library provided to students, and to find out if the users were satisfied with them. Two hundred and thirty-three (233) students and staff were sampled for the study of which 97 representing 41.63% of the sample were male while 136 representing 58.37% of the sample were female. Simple percentages were used for data analysis and results showed that 59% of the respondents were generally satisfied with the library hours. Forty-one percent (41%) are either indifferent or are not happy with the library hours, 77.68% of the respondents were generally satisfied with library staff and 72% were generally happy with the information supplied by staff; 83% were happy with the library registration process and 23.18% were not satisfied. However, no matter how commendable the level of users' satisfaction is, it is noteworthy to state that since summaries were done holistically. The study cannot tie down the source of this satisfaction to any of the groups, whether female or male. Thereby, making the findings to be relatively vague.

Nimako, Bondinuba and Nimako (2013) conducted a study on the empirical evaluation of student accommodation quality in higher education of 466 tertiary students from College of Technology Education, Kumasi (COTEK), University of Education, Winneba and Kumasi Polytechnic (K-Poly) were sample for the study; out of the 466, 231 were from (COTEK, while 235 were from K-Poly, data were collected and analyzed using the Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA method, the results indicated that students at COLTEK seem to be better in terms of SAQ in core facilities, while those at K-poly seem to be better in terms of accommodation cost and support facilities.

Alam, Alam, and Rasul, (2013) carried out a pilot study on postgraduate supervision. The main aim of the study was to survey post-graduate supervision experience to provide better support for improving timely research completion, quality supervision, retention rate, student satisfaction, research environment, and administrative support service in 3 universities in Australia. A set of anonymous questionnaires was used to obtain data from 30 masters and Ph.D students and was analyzed using percentages. The results reveal that 25% of

postgraduate students selected their supervisors through direct contact with their supervisors. 90% of international students have chosen their supervisors long before they formally applied for admission. 37.5% of students meet once or twice a week with their supervisors, and only 12.5% of students meet with their supervisors monthly. It was also found that 95.8% of postgraduate students are happy with their supervisors, the unhappy students were mostly those who met their supervisors monthly. 46% of postgraduate students fall behind against the timeline of research progress due to some difficulties in their year of candidature, and 85% received satisfactory pastoral care from supervisors. Only 20.8% of students received timely advice and guidance from their supervisors to overcome research difficulties. It was also revealed that over 33% of postgraduate students have experienced a temporary breakdown of relationships with their supervisors out of frustration and lack of clear research goals. It was concluded that lack of progress makes students apathetic, anxious, and have poor relations with supervisors; Hence institutions must improve services offered to graduate students to ensure higher student satisfaction.

Oluwumi, Duradol, and Ajaiyi (2015) carried out a comparative analysis of students' satisfaction with classroom facilities in Nigerian private universities; the researchers used three private universities in Ota Local Government Area of Ogun State for the study. 432 students were sampled for the study consisting of 209 males and 220 females. Simple percentages were used to analyze students satisfaction with classroom facilities, results of the study reveal that students were satisfied with the electricity supply, ceiling finishes, windows/doors, and furniture in their classrooms, but were not satisfied with the provision of air conditioning and internet facilities in classrooms. This however did not focused on the students demographic variables hence, it is not known whether the males were more satisfied than the female or they were both equally satisfied.

Ijiekhuamhen, Aghojare and Omesekejimi (2015) carried out a study to assess user satisfaction on academic library performance of Federal University of Petroleum resources (FUPRE). The study focused on determining clients satisfaction with library services, infrastructure, space, and information provided. Survey research design was adopted for the study; stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 381 students of whom (89%) were male while 11% are female. Questionnaire was used for data collection and the data was analyzed using percentages, results of the finding show that (99%) percent of respondents were highly satisfied regarding library services such as space, collections, information and dissemination.

However, the value of libraries to educational organizations cannot be overstressed. In the words of Webb in Omeluzor (2013) academic libraries are helpful to learners and students in the attainment of success in school. Omeluzor further added that libraries are places for knowledge creation and sharing. Libraries exist to select information resources in both print and electronic format, acquire, organize, and disseminate these resources to its clients. Other services performed by library staff include user registration, education, printing/photocopying service, borrowing service, and assist students and other users to locate books on the shelves. This services must be provided timely, decently and courteously to ensure user satisfaction.

Similarly, Suraman (2015) conducted a study on inter-mediatory impact of relationship between lecturer and students toward student satisfaction and lecturers teaching quality, a cross-sectional model was used to determine the relationship between gender and students' satisfaction and their perception on the quality of lectures. Three hundred and fifty (350) students consisting of 177 males and 273 females were sample for the study, questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection, MANOVA analysis was carried out to identify difference in teaching quality and students satisfaction based on gender; result of the study indicated that male students had higher scores on teaching quality than female students. It was also found that, the relationship between lecturers with male and female students did not indicate any significant difference. However female student experienced higher satisfaction than male students. This could be because people generally treat female with care and sympathy.

Manzoor (2013) investigated students' satisfaction in public and private universities in Pakistan, the aim of the study was to find out the specific factors which affect the satisfaction of students in universities in Pakistan, a sample of 300 students drawn from 6 private and public universities were respondent to the questionnaire. Multiple regression analysis and one way analysis of variance were used to analyze data. Results of the study indicated that facilities provided to the students regarding the sports facilities and the transport facilities have significant effect on the satisfaction of the students in universities while the accommodation facilities don't have any significant effect on the satisfaction of the students. This could have informed Dell-Ollo, Ibeas and Cecin (2011) to postulate that having good infrastructure on campus is not enough unless it is complemented by an equally commendable transportation service. However, a transportation outfit should at least ensure comfort, safety, reliability, and neatness to satisfy customers. For instance, Mustapha, Haman, Hussain, and Bassin (2009) reported that at the University of Kebangsaan, Malaysia (UKM), technologies such as GIS and RFID are used to identify and monitor the buses plying

the UKM campus. These technologies serve as hidden cameras capturing images which will later be stored in a database for the university's security department's use in case of unpredicted events. Hoshim, Haron, Mohammed and Hassan (2015) is of the view that the cardinal issue university managers must consider is the safety of students using campus buses.

Farahmandian, Minavand and Arshardost (2013) surveyed perceived service quality and students satisfaction in higher education. The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship of the factor of perceived service quality (advising, curriculum, teaching quality, financial assistance, tuition cost and facilities) with student satisfaction at the international business school, University Technology Malaysia Kuala Lumpur, 225 graduate students were sample of the study consisting of 109 male and 116 female students. Multiple regression was used to analyzed the data collected, based on the correlation table, it was deduced that there are strong relationships among students satisfaction and advising, curriculum, teaching quality, financial assistance, tuition cost and facilities.

The World Bank (1992) carried out a study on students' satisfaction with higher education entry procedures in Ethiopia. The findings of the study revealed that female students were dissatisfied about admission policies. It was therefore, recommended that Ethiopia Commission of Higher Education should reduce barriers to female enrolment and that, preferential admission quotas be provided for women entering into science and technical fields. The World Bank further stated categorically that the causes of difficulty of women admission into tertiary institution in many developing countries is the in equitable access to quality education at an early level.

Herman (2002) reported relative low satisfaction ratings given by PhD students to their overall course experience and that female were more dissatisfied than males. In the same vein Amser (1999) found that the departmental environment during the PhD had been more satisfied overall for man than women. Similarly, Azure (2016) investigated students' perspective of effective supervision of graduate programmes in Ghana. One hundred and twenty-five graduate students were respondent to the two questionnaires that were used as instruments for data collection, these were analyzed through descriptive statistics. The results of the study showed that there were no significant differences between attributes of supervisors and effective supervision based on programme, faculty, course structure, gender and semester. It was recommended that only senior and experienced faculty should be made to supervise graduate students. Also that the quality of applicants should be one of the determining factors for admission to graduate programmes. Senior faculty are very essential

for graduate studies due to their wealth of experience. On the other hand, the quality of applicants must be the yardstick for admission into graduate studies as this could influence students' progress in graduate programmes.

In another study by Hamid and Pihie (2014) to evaluate students' effectiveness of teaching and learning in Paturu University Malaysia. One thousand five hundred and fifty two (1552) students were used for the study, T test and ANOVA were used to analyze the data collected and the results indicated significant differences in students' perception based on gender, ethnic background, level, and CGPA. Therefore gender is an essential factor that must be taken into consideration in postgraduate programme service delivery.

## **2. Statement of the problem**

The provision of effective and efficient service delivery that meets the expectations of students in Nigerian universities remains critical subject of concern to modern University management and staff. This is because students' satisfaction is a cardinal index of institutional excellence and graduate quality the world over. Regrettably, management efforts to provide services to the satisfaction of students has remained a daunting challenge. This situation is palpable in many universities in developing nation like Nigeria, because University management and staff strive to provide these services amidst scarce financial and material resources. This is assuming an alarming proportion due to the massification of university education and the worldwide awareness of the need of human capital development, which has resulted to increased students population without corresponding provision for human, financial, and material resources.

Consequently, the delivery of basic services in universities and graduate programmes in particular has witnessed a dismal decline, leading to dissatisfaction among graduate students. This is evident in the low quality of service delivery in areas such as application process of admission, transportation and teaching, supervision of graduate students and library services. This affects the quality of graduate student' work, and sometimes leads to delay of programme of study.

Consequently, these issues have contributed to the poor quality of graduate students work and production of half-baked graduates. This has generated concerns of critical stakeholder that students are not getting the best. Despite students effort to attract the attention of the management to these issues by means of written Protest letters, peaceful and violent demonstration to no avail. Unfortunately, some students abandon their programme of studies half way, while some have opt for foreign universities. To reverse this ugly trend, government has deregulated university education and launched the service delivery initiative

(SERVICOM) to promote competitiveness and service excellence culture among public and private universities. At institutional levels, capacity-building programmes have been organized to equip staff with modern service delivery skills to students' satisfaction but it seems, these measures are not achieving desired results.

The persistence of this issues might be attributed to the total neglect of scholars and managers to critical examine the possible nexus between gender and service satisfaction. This is because gender could critically explain the individual and peculiar perception of services delivered both in school and in the society. Hence, the problem of the study is thus stated: What is the influence of gender on service satisfaction among graduate students in universities in Cross River State?

### **3. Purpose of the study**

The specific purpose of the study was to investigate:

- a. The influence of gender on satisfaction with admission services among graduate students in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria
- b. The influence of gender on satisfaction with thesis supervision among graduate students in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria
- c. The influence of gender on satisfaction with lecture delivery among graduate students in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria
- d. The influence of gender on satisfaction with transportation services among graduate students in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria
- e. The influence of gender on satisfaction with library services among graduate students in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria

### **4. Research question**

The single research question for the study is:

- a. What is the influence of gender on satisfaction with admission services among graduate students in universities?
- b. What is the influence of gender on satisfaction with thesis supervision among graduate students in universities?
- c. What is the influence of gender on satisfaction with lecture delivery among graduate students in universities?
- d. What is the influence of gender on satisfaction with transportation services among graduate students in universities?
- e. What is the influence of gender on satisfaction with library services among graduate students in universities?



## **5. Hypothesis for the study**

The hypothesis that guided the study was:

- a. Gender does not significantly influence service satisfaction with admission services among graduate students.
- b. Gender does not significantly influence service satisfaction with thesis supervision among graduate students.
- c. Gender does not significantly influence service satisfaction with lecture delivery among graduate students.
- d. Gender does not significantly influence service satisfaction with library services among graduate students.

## **6. Methods**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of three hundred and thirty (330) graduate students from the two universities were randomly selected as sample for the study. This was done through simple random sampling technique. The main instrument that was used for data collection was a close ended questionnaire titled: Gender and Service Satisfaction among Graduate Students Questionnaire (GSSGSQ). The instrument was validated by three experts each from administration of higher education and measurement and evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was established through the Cronbach's alpha reliability method, with all variables yielding alpha coefficients ranging from .71-.89. Independent t-test was used to analyze the data collected at 0.5 level of significance.

## **7. Results**

Hypothesis one stated that, gender does not significantly influence service satisfaction among graduate students in universities in Cross River State. The independent variable in this hypothesis was gender categorized as male and female while the dependent variable was service satisfaction taken from five dimensions, which are admission service, transportation, thesis supervision, lecture delivery and library service delivery. To test this hypothesis, independent t-test was used and the result as presented in Table 10 showed that for gender and admission services ( $t = -1.45, p > .05$ ). For gender and thesis supervision ( $t = -1.70, p > .05$ ). For gender and lecture service delivery ( $t = 3.60, p < .05$ ), for gender and transportation service delivery ( $t = -1.43, p > .05$ ), for gender and library service delivery ( $t = .779, p > .05$ ). Since  $p(.000)$  is greater than  $p(.05)$  for gender and admission services, thesis supervision, transportation services and library service delivery, the null hypothesis was retained.

However, for gender and lecture service delivery,  $p(.000)$  is less  $p(.05)$ , the null hypothesis was rejected for only gender and lecture delivery and retained for other dimensions.

**Table 1: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of gender on service satisfaction among graduate students**

Variables	Gender	n	Mean	Std. Dev.	Df	t-cal	p-val
Admission service	Male	21 2	15.08	5.565			
					328	-1.45	.147
	Female	11 8	16.03	5.920			
Thesis supervision	Male	21 2	12.82	2.072			
					328	-1.706	.089
	Female	11 8	13.29	2.921			
Lecture service delivery	Male	21 2	12.37	2.462			
					328	3.60*	.000
	Female	11 8	11.31	2.747			
Transportation service	Male	21 2	15.08	5.565			
					328	-1.47	.143
	Female	11 8	16.03	5.920			
Library service delivery	Male	21 2	14.53	6.017			
					328	.770	.442
	Female	11 8	14.03	5.209			

## 8. Discussion of findings

Hypothesis one stated that, gender does not significantly influence service satisfaction among graduate students in terms of, admission, transportation, lecture delivery, library service and thesis supervision was retained. Specifically, the results indicated that gender influenced

service satisfaction among students in terms admission service, transportation, and library service as well as thesis supervision. However, it was rejected for lecture delivery. This implies that there is no significant difference between male and female student satisfaction for the four dimensions except that, there is a significant difference between male and female students satisfaction with lecture delivery. However, mean figures on the table revealed that male students were more satisfied than female students were.

The finding of this study agrees with the findings Khantanapha (2000) who found that there is no difference between male and female MBA students in their expectation of service quality. It is also in tandem with the findings of Kamal and Ramzi (2002) which indicated that gender factor place an effect on the satisfaction scale in which male students are satisfied than the female. The comparative higher satisfaction of male students over the female students for lecture delivery stems from the fact that lecture halls which were built in the 80s for 50 students are used today for 100 students. Besides the lecture halls are either ill-equipped or lack modern instructional facilities such as digital white board, projectors, public address system, and where these are available epileptic power supply render them useless thus; frustrating the effort of an adequately prepared lecturer. This is attributed to the poor funding of universities and education in general. This is obvious because, the government has not been able to meet up with UNESCO twenty six percent (26%) funding threshold for developing nations.

In line with this finding, Bassey (2012) earlier noted that many learning facilities depend on power supply. Therefore, poor power supply affects their usefulness for lecture delivery. He further added that poor lecture attendance is related to the dearth of classrooms. Bloated student population without commensurate classroom spaces has put pressure on existing classrooms. In some universities a group of students that first locate an empty classroom can use it irrespective of whether it is officially assigned to them or not; and by implication other students will be forced to forgo their lectures. Therefore, female students by their very nature may not be able to cope with such conditions in the learning environment. Furthermore, many female students are mothers, wives and employed or business women hence are always indisposed to attend lectures due to unfavourable lecture time, arising from the complexity and enormity of their responsibilities.

It was also found that, there is no significant difference between male and female students' satisfaction with admission, transportation, library services and thesis supervision. However, female students were more satisfied than their male counterparts based on the means and t-value. Certainly, there should be no difference on the basis of gender in satisfaction with

service delivery if services are provided with objectivity and without personal considerations or preference for any group. Hence, the finding of the study is in tandem with the findings of Kao (2007) who found that, there is no significance difference between male and female students satisfaction with service delivery in Venkateswara University. However, the relative higher satisfaction of female over male students for these four dimensions is an indication that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century women are more often than not treated better, with preference and consideration than men by service providers in any organization. This could be due to the global demand for gender equality in Africa, which has led to affirmative action for women and female friendly policies to bridge the gap between the male folks. This findings correlates with the findings of Palli and Mamilla (2012) that female students were more satisfied than male students with service quality attributes of Venkateswara University.

## **9. Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it is safe to conclude that gender does not significantly influence service satisfaction among graduate students in universities in Cross River state. This implies that quality of service delivery is key to service satisfaction irrespective of their gender. Therefore, when valuable, effective and efficient services are provided on campus, that meet the needs of all students, they tend to be satisfied regardless of their gender.

## **10. Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made for the study:

1. Administrators should improve the quality of service delivery in our universities to meet the standard of universities elsewhere.
2. Services provided on campus should be student centered and tailored to the peculiar needs of each student to enhance satisfaction.
3. University managers should provide variety of services in line with the capacity of students to subscribe to them at their discretion.

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