

# From Birth to Five: Students' Perceptions toward Library Participation and Patronage of the Academic Library

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## ABSTRACT

*The aim of this study is to examine whether the students' perceptions toward library environment, peers, library services and library staff have an effect in contributing towards decreasing or increasing library participation and patronizing among undergraduate students in their Academic Library. To evaluate the students' perceptions about library participation and patronizing, four (4) scales were adopted and modified from Library Anxiety for the novelty of this study. A self-report questionnaire comprising the four (4) variables as well as demographic information was incorporated into the questionnaire. The findings from Mann Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis test conducted on library environment, peers, library services, and library staff with Gender, Age and Department as independent variables did not show any statistically significant mean rank differences. The results showed a statistically significant mean positive relationship between library environment, library service, peers, and library staff. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. It is hoped that the BASUG main library and other academic libraries would adopt the recommendations revealed by this study as the study discovered a lack of awareness concerning library services and facilities as the major factors toward decreasing library patronage and participation. Fortunately, the library environment attracts the users for a subsequent visit to the library. These factors will help the academic library management to enable them to know their students' perceptions towards library participation and patronage. Again, after changes, the students will be more use of the academic library and be effective in their course of studies.*

**Keywords:** Library participation, Library Environment, Library anxiety, peer, service, staff.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

An academic library is the heart of any institution of learning; where there is no higher institution of learning that can be operating its services adequately and effectively without an academic library. Thus, it can be suitable for the Bauchi State University Gadau, library to keep the eager learners/students abreast with a fact about his/her field of study and inform of other things that might attract his/her individual attention. According to Abusin and Zainab (2010), the role of the University Library is to support both the staff and students' information needs by providing them relevant and up-to-date information resources and services efficiently and effectively.

Furthermore, every library has its stories and unique power as well as challenges in carrying out their duties and services especially on the issues of charging and discharging their clientele. Hence, the library was established in the year 2012 that is five years in existence without conducting any study related to users' or students' perceptions regarding library participation or patronage. As a baby institution that needs to grow to associate itself with others, efforts are being made to see the library growing together with the institution, and this among others necessitates a researcher to re-titled this work from birth to five.

## **2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

It was found out that the BASUG library has relevant information resources that included books, journals, magazines, and other reference collections that are supporting the students' teaching and learning needs. It is disheartening to note that most of the students do not frequently visit the University Library. It was discovered that many students discouraging themselves from not attending the library because of an unknown purpose. It was publicized that a number of students felt that they do not have adequate knowledge, skills, and experiences in patronizing the library resources especially, the ability to search, locate, and use their information needs. This problem and among others caused many students not to visit the library frequently.

Meanwhile, it was observed that the students' perception of the usefulness of the library resources is just like a hospital only to visit when needs arise. They were mostly visiting the library during the examinations period, and mostly to read their lecture notes. This and much more necessitated the researcher's interest which is to investigate the students' perceptions on the usefulness of the BASUG Library resources and services with the following variables: negative perceptions towards (a) library environment (b) library staff (c) peer, and (d) library services whether they may cause to decrease the library participation and patronage from the undergraduate students.

## **3. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To determine whether demographic variables of the respondents such as gender, age and faculty have an effect towards decreasing library participation with regard to negative perceptions towards library environment, library staff, peer and library services.
2. To examine whether there is a relationship among library participation factors: negative perceptions towards the library environment, negative perceptions towards library staff, negative perceptions towards peer, and negative perceptions towards library services.

## **4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Are there statistically significant mean differences in decreasing library participation towards library environment, library staff, peer and library services between male and female respondents?

2. Are there statistically significant mean differences in decreasing library participation towards library environment, library staff, peer and library services between 15 – 20, 21 – 25, and 26 and above years old respondents?
3. Are there statistically significant mean differences in decreasing library participation towards library environment, library staff, peer and library services between Art and Education respondents and Basic Science respondents?
4. Is there a relationship among library participation factors: negative perceptions towards the library environment, negative perceptions towards library staff, negative perceptions towards peer and negative perceptions towards library services?

## **5. METHODOLOGY**

This research is an opening of its kind considering the factors selected to measure the students' perception towards library participation and patronization at BASUG library. The data were collected among undergraduate students who are currently undertaking their degree programme at Bauchi State University Gadau (BASUG). Purposive sampling technique was adopted from five (5) University Faculties and two (2) faculties were chosen to represent the entire faculties; these faculties are: Arts and Education as well as Basic Science. A random sampling technique was also adopted in order to select the respondents from the various population. According to Bauchi State University Gadau (BASUG), Registry Unit, the population of these two faculties is three thousand six hundred and eleven (3,611) at the period of this study. It is difficult to study the entire population; therefore, three hundred and forty-six (346) were selected using (Krejcie and Morgan 1970 cited in Mohammed 2016), population and sampling table.

A survey method with a structured questionnaire was adopted from the study of Noor Rashida (2013) in order to achieve the aforementioned objectives. Since it is a scattered population, self-administered questionnaires were used and it is less time consuming and affordable for a scattered population, (Mohammed and Ahmad 2018). The dependent and independent variables were captured in the questionnaire and the data were analyzed quantitatively, (Mohammed et al. 2019). Awang (2011) states: "Quantitative data is more accurate compared to qualitative data with more statistical methods can be applied in data analysis". The SPSS software was used throughout the analysis. According to (Mayers 2013 cited in Mohammed 2020), "Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) is one of the most powerful and popular statistical programs, and it is widely accepted and used in statistical research because it is easy to learn and manipulate the data.

## **6. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The sample of this study consists of three hundred and forty-six (346) respondents, but two hundred and five (205) responses were received. Table 1 indicates the age distribution of the respondents. It can be seen that those with an age range of 15– 20 representing 93(45.4%) have the highest

frequency. This shows that majority of undergraduate students in the two faculties are within this age range. While those within the age range of 21– 25 accounted for 75(36.6%) are second followed by those with 26-and-above age range representing 37(18%) indicated lowest.

Table 1: Age distributions of the respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
15 – 20	93	45.4
21 – 25	75	36.6
26 and above	37	18.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2, below shows that most of the respondents were male (105 respondents, 51.2%) with slightly different than female represents 100 frequency equivalents to 48.8%. This shows that females can be able to match themselves with male according to their frequency level.

Table 2: Gender distributions of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	105	51.2
Female	100	48.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 3, below indicated that faculty Arts and Education respondents are slightly higher which representing 103(50.8%) than the faculty of Basic Science accounted for 102(49.2%). It was learned that these two selected faculties were scored an excellent result on the Use of Library and Skills (General Studies course).

Table 3: Faculties distributions of the respondents

Faculties	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Art and Education	103	50.2
Basic Sciences	102	49.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Furthermore, this study goes further to determine the construct validity of the four (4) factors adopted in the study. A principal component exploratory factor analysis was employed on the twenty-eight-item instrument (11 items from Library Environment, 3 items from Peer, 7 items from Library Staff and 7 items from Library Services). Varimax rotation and a factor loading coefficient of 0.40 or greater were used as a criterion for deeming a factor loading. The loading practically yielded a 1-factor solution (Eigenvalues more than 1.00) that collectively explains the 88.132% of the variance in all constructs (Library Environment construct, Library Staff construct, Peer construct and Library staff construct). Out of the twenty-eight items submitted to a principal component analysis, all were found to have factor loading coefficients that met the 0.40 criteria.

However, the study applied the Measurement of Central tendency (MCT), Measurement Variability, Skewness and Kurtosis Measures and Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test to measure a distribution and evaluate the normality of the data in order to know what kind of test needs to be used. Assumptions related to frequency statistic: The result shows that the Measurement of Central Tendency (Mean = Mode) was not normally distributed. The results of the library environment variable indicate that the mean is greater than the mode ( $39.2381 > 38.00$ ) therefore the distribution is normal. Whereas the result of the library services variable indicates that the mean is less than the mode ( $25.5714 < 27.00$ ) therefore the distribution is not normal and the result of the library staff variable indicates that the mean is less than the mode ( $21.4702 < 28.00$ ) and this was the same with the result of the peer variable indicated that mean is less than the mode ( $10.8631 < 12.00$ ). Next, the values of Kurtosis and Skewness were considered for the variables because their distributions are not normal.

The descriptive statistic was carried out to test the normality of Skewness and Kurtosis. The assumptions relating to descriptive shows that the entire variables (i.e. library environment, library staff, library services and peer) indicated that their Skewness is less than 1.00 while their Kurtosis is more than 1.00. The results show that the distribution is not normal, thus the values of Skewness and Kurtosis were ignored. Finally, the study considers the result of the normality test of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test. The assumption of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test shows that the entire variables (i.e. library environment, library staff, library services and peer) were significant ( $p < .05$ ) therefore the distribution was not normal. However, the results of this distribution can be trusted because the data population is more than 50.

Three types of nonparametric tests were employed to test the five (5) null hypotheses and to answer the five (5) research questions formulated based on the objectives of the study. The statistical tests are Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal-Wallis test and Spearman's rho correlation test. The rationale for running these non-parametric tests was based on the normality of four (4) dependent variables (i.e. library environment, library staff, peer and library services) on the following independent/antecedent variables: gender, age and faculty of the respondents.

The first section reports the results of running the Mann Whitney U test with the gender on the library participation factors (library environment, library staff, peer and library services). The question is: Are there statistically significant mean rank differences in decreasing library participation towards negative

perception with the library environment, library staff, peer and library services between male and female respondents?

Table 4: Gender and Library Participation

Library Participation Factors	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sig. (2-tailed)	Z
	Library environment	Male	105	94.67	0.39
female		100	111.75		
<b>Total</b>		<b>205</b>			
Library staff	Male	105	102.50	.900	-.125
	female	100	103.53		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>			
Peers	Male	105	102.75	9.51	-.062
	female	100	103.26		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>			
Library services	Male	105	103.52	.897	-.130
	female	100	102.45		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>			

Table 4 above shows that, the results of running the Mann-Whitney U test revealed no statistically significant mean rank differences in decreasing library participation factors ( $Z = -.2.063, -.125, -.062$  and  $-.130, p > .05$ ) between male respondents and female respondents with regard to the negative perceptions towards library staff, library environment, peer and library services. However, the data from this study showed that female respondents reported slightly different in terms of decreasing library participation with regard to these factors (library staff, library environments and peer) while their male counterpart reveals only one factor (library services) significantly differ in decreasing library participation. From the female comments, most of them commented about not comfortable with gender mingling and are not always want to ask library staff about how to locate books on the shelves. While male respondents mostly emphasize on library services related issues such as inadequacy of internet facilities and lack of the availabilities of catalogue cabinets that can be used to locate the items on the shelves. These challenges among others may cause students less participation in the library. Another explanation is that male students are more interested in a frequent visit to the library or maybe they are more hardworking in their respective programme they are studying.

The second section reports the results of running the Kruskal-Wallis test with age on the library participation factors (library environment, library staff, peer and library services). The question is: Are there statistically significant mean rank differences in decreasing library participation towards negative perception with library environment, library staff, peer and library services between Art and Education respondents and Basic Science respondents?

Table 5: Age and Library Participation

Library Participation Factors	Age	N	Mean Rank	Df	Sig.	Chi-Square
Library environment	15-20	93	106.35	2	.714	.675
	21-25	75	98.80			
	26 and above	37	103.09			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>				
Peers	15-20	93	103.91	2	.845	.337
	21-25	75	104.36			
	26 and above	37	97.95			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>				
Library staff	15-20	93	107.72	2	.429	1.694
	21-25	75	96.01			
	26 and above	37	105.30			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>				
Library services	15-20	93	103.25	2	.935	.935
	21-25	75	101.37			
	26 and above	37	105.69			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>				

Table 5 above shows that, the results of running the Kruskal-Wallis test revealed no statistically significant mean rank differences in library participation factors, chi-square (2) = .675, .337, 1.694, and .935,  $p > .05$  between 15 – 20 respondents, 21 – 25 respondents and 26-and-above-years old respondents with regards to these factors: negative perceptions towards the library environment, library staff, peer and library services. However, the entire age range of the respondents' revealed high mean rank scores (see table above), this implies that the decreasing library participation is caused by these factors. The only difference that existed is that, those in the age range of 15 – 20 are highly perceived negativity of these factors followed by 26 and above years old then 21 – 25 years old respondents according to their mean rank.

In terms of decreasing library participation caused by negative perceptions toward the library environment 15 – 20 years old were higher in mean rank followed by 26-and-above then 21 – 25. This corresponds with the findings of decreasing library participation caused by negative perceptions towards library staff but it was inconsistent to the findings of decreasing library participation caused by negative perceptions towards peer which indicated that 15 – 20 are slightly higher followed by 21 – 25 then 26-and-above years old respondents (see table 5).

The third section reports the results of running the Mann Whitney U test with faculties on the library participation factors: library environment, library staff, peer and library services. The question is: Are

there statistically significant mean rank differences in decreasing library participation towards negative perceptions with library environment, library staff, peer and library services between faculty of Art and Education respondents and faculty of Basic Science respondents?

Table 6: Faculty and Library Participation

Library Participation Factors	Faculty	N	Mean Rank	Sig. (2tailed)	Z
Library environment	Basic Sciences	102	108.33	.200	-1.282
	Art and Education	103	97.72		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>			
Peers	Basic Sciences	102	113.55	.010	-2.560
	Art and Education	103	92.55		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>			
Library staff	Basic Sciences	102	108.49	.186	-1.322
	Art and Education	103	97.56		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>			
Library services	Basic Sciences	102	107.72	.256	-1.136
	Art and Education	103	98.33		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>			

Table 6 above shows that, the results of running the Mann-Whitney U test revealed no statistically significant mean rank differences in library participation factors ( $Z = -1.282, -2.560, -1.322$  and  $-1.136, p > .05$ ) between faculty of Basic Sciences respondents and faculty of Art and Education respondents with regard to the negative perceptions towards library environment, library staff, peer and library services. However, the data from this study showed that Basic Sciences undergraduate students significantly differ in decreasing the library participation towards negative perceptions about library staff, library environments library services and peer. This implies that Basic Sciences respondents reported higher mean rank in decreasing library participation and patronage followed by their counterpart in Arts and Education faculty. (See table 6). The results showed that most of the Basic Science undergraduates revealed that, lack of availability of Basic sciences resources on shelves discouraging them not to frequent visits to the library but the little once indicated that the library has relevant resources for reading. On the other hand, the faculty of Arts and Education mostly chosen 'neither agree nor disagree' with the negative perception towards library services and library environment. This shows that they are undecided on these factors and mostly requests the library management to open a departmental library so as to be closer to the information resources.

The Spearman's rho correlation test was employed to evaluate whether a statistically significant mean relationship exists among library participation factors: negative perceptions towards the library staff, library environments library services and peer. The question is: Is there a relationship among library

participation factors: (negative perceptions towards the library environment, negative perceptions towards peers, negative perceptions towards the library services and negative perceptions towards library staff)?

Table 7: Correlations among Library Participation Factors

Library Participation Factors	Library environment	Peer	Library staff	Library services	Sig. (2tailed)
Library environment	1.000	.646**	.697**	.579**	.000
Peer	.646**	1.000	.750**	.698**	.000
Library staff	.697**	.750**	1.000	.852**	.000
Library services	.579**	.698**	.852**	1.000	.000

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 above shows that. the results of running the Spearman's rho test analysis showed a statistically significant mean positive and large correlation between the library environment and peer (n = 205, rho = .65, p< .001), between the library environment and library staff (n = 205, rho = .70, p< .001), between the library environment and library services (n = 205, rho = .58, p< .001), between peer and library staff(n = 205, rho = .71, p< .001), between peer and library services(n = 205, rho = .70, p< .001), between the library staff and library services(n = 205, rho = .85, p< .001). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. (See table 7). The data of this study revealed that library staff and library services were considered the major factor affecting undergraduates which led to decreasing library participation followed by peer and library staff, then peer and library services.

However, this study discovered that lack of library participation among Bauchi State University Gadau (BASUG) undergraduate students is caused by negative perceptions towards the library environment, library staff, peers and library services. It is also revealed that the entire respondents considered these factors as the major barriers that deter their library participation at Bauchi State University Gadau, (BASUG) Library.

## 7. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was concluded with the intention to discover whether these factors: negative perceptions towards library staff, library environments library services and peer have an effect on decreasing library participation among BASUG undergraduate students. The study discovered that the aforementioned factors have an influence on decreasing library participation at Bauchi State University Gadau. Thus,

these factors can provide a starting point for more studies to gain a deeper understanding about users' perceptions towards library participation at Bauchi State University Gadau Library as well as other University Libraries with additional demographic variables so as to find out more and new findings.

However, about nineteen (19) respondents commented on the aforementioned factors most of them commented on locating the items related issue, most of them face some difficulties in locating the books especially in the circulation unit, this occurs as a result of the inadequacy of cataloguing cabinets and inappropriate Library Instructions of the users on how to locate a book on a shelf easily. The management and the authority need to provide a way that enhances the user education programme may be to make it in the first and second semester if possible.

The research hypothesis offered a partial support to carry out an investigation on students' perceptions towards decreasing library participation. Thus, more research on this area needs to be carried out with large sampling and different methodology; maybe it will change the hypothesis to reject the null hypothesis. This study recommends the Bauchi State University Gadau to increase their library resources and manpower of their staff. This is because the study revealed the negative perceptions towards library staff and library services as the major barriers that cause decrease participation in BASUG Library, followed by the other factors. These studies found out that there is incompetency among library staff, a poor arrangement of library resources, poor classifications and mix-shelving of library materials on the shelves. Apart from that, the library does not have a manual cataloguing cabinet that allows the user to search and locate book easily on the shelves, it was observed that the library did not allow users to borrow books, only allows them to read and photocopy within the library. Therefore, this study suggests that:

Moreover, the University Management needs to provide an Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and available computer terminals that allow users to locate books easily. The University and Library Management need to start organizing in-house conferences, seminars, and workshops for the benefit of their staff. For instance, the senior/academic staff can train the junior staff with the support and sponsor of the University Management. This can help improve their skill in providing maximum assistance to the library users. The professional classifiers/catalogers need to be employed so as to classify Arabic and Law collections because many Arabic books on the shelves are not properly classified. On the other hand, more junior staff also needs to be employed in order to increase the manpower of the library that can help the library to increase its service hours. Finally, free internet access and recreational facilities need to be provided; this can increase the usage and patronage as well as frequent access to the library resources.

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