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A survey on the correlation between student librarians' empathic behavior and academic achievement

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Abstract

It is a survey that investigated the correlation between student librarians' empathic behaviour and their academic achievement. The study employed correlation design with area of study covering ten universities' library schools in Nigeria. The sampled population for this study was 200 student librarians with each library school providing 20 male and female students who were randomly selected. The data for the study were collected through the administration of two instructions empathy assessment which are Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) develop by Davis in 1980 and Empathy Assessment Instrument by Eisenberg and Lennon (1983) as well as Academic Test Reports of the student librarians from the selected library schools. The reliability of the instrument was conducted using a test-retest method. The test scores were compared using Cronbach Alpha and a reliability coefficient 0.86 was realized. The data collected for the study were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The outcome of the study shows that there is significant correlation between student librarians' empathic behaviour and their academic achievement. In the area of gender, it was established that there is no statistical significant correlation between male empathy scores with that of their female counterparts. It is based on the findings that recommendations were made which include that student librarians should be equipped with useful knowledge and skills that would enhance their empathic behaviours with a view to promoting interpersonal relationship among them and that collaborative instructional approaches should be applied in the teaching of the students.

Keywords: Empathy, Empathic behaviour, student-librarian, Academic achievement, Interpersonal relationship

1.0. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Knowledge acquisition through education is globally accepted as a critical and all important tool for national development. Imperatively, the essence of one sending his ward to school is to acquire this knowledge for both his personal, immediate community and national development. This personal and national development can only be achieved, if our students are equipped with the desired knowledge and skills as well as instilling in them the spirit of patriotism. This is built on the fact that every student is a product of the society thus cannot offer what he/she does not have as the means justifies the end. Since human and national development in today's world can only be justified by the standard of the nation's education system, as no nation can grow above the standard of her education it becomes imperative that students' educational training and skills acquisition be tailored towards this goal.

As posited by Jones (1990), in all that is taught in our schools, one skill that is of interest and great importance to educators and to the society at large is the psychological quality of empathy. He explains that without empathy, the pro-social or altruistic behaviour that is needed for individual and national growth would be lacking. The implication is that when one has the ability to empathize, it could help him/her to meet the needs of other people no matter the form. In other words, empathy in the case of a student will help him see a fellow student's academic challenge as his which will in turn facilitate assistance. Spencer (1855) proposed that sympathy served an adaptive function and aided in the survival of the species. Empathy leads to helping behavior, which benefits social relationships. Humans are naturally social creatures. Things that aid in our relationships with other people benefit us as well. He noted that when people experience empathy, they are more likely to engage in pro-social behaviors that benefit other people. Things such as altruism and heroism are also connected to feeling empathy for others. Caselman (2007) agrees with the above assertion as he describes empathy as the ability to understand another's feelings and to express that understanding in a caring way.

Eisenberg, Fabes, and Spinrad (2007), view empathy as an important motivator of actions that benefits another person without any expected reward for the self. This implies that in the academics, a student can help another student with his/her academic difficulties or challenges without any attachment of reward. In the same vein, it can move one into being patriotic with little or no reward. No wonder, Caselman (2007), concludes that empathy is an important life skill which improves engagement and motivation in people.

It is based on the above assertions that this study is deemed imperative as to establishing the relationship between student librarians' empathic behaviour and their academic achievement as well as establishing whether gender has any relationship with empathic behaviour.

1.2. Statement of problem.

In our institutions of higher learning, one thing is obvious and that is you are on your own and your academic success or achievement is in your hand. To this end, the battle becomes that of the survival of the fittest which left the dull, the slow learners and those students with laissez affaire attitude at the mercy of academic failure. In Nigeria, the story is one of sympathy as the students are mostly taught in an environment divulge of adequate infrastructure with lecturers exhibiting high level of truancy and low commitment to their responsibilities. Apart from lecturers' attitude, there is also this challenge of some students not paying attention in the course of lectures or even expressing an understanding of the key component orally or in writing. The fact is that most of the students do not know that they have a major role to play in the teaching/learning process or even care how others learn. The resultant effect is that these students do not perform optimally in their class works, assignment and terminal examinations which generally cumulate to low academic achievement. As expressed by Nwachukwu and Agulanna (2003), learning can only take place if the learners pay attention in what is happening around them and in the contrary, such students are left at the mercy of their fellow students who actually understood what was taught. Let us imagine a situation whereby the students who were able to grasp all that were taught in the classroom but refusing to help those who could not grasp all that was taught, the end result no doubt will be failure or poor academic performance of the later.

Furtherance, it has been noticed in our library schools, that many students portray lack of empathy so much in dealing with issues and academic works as they assume, that they are in a competitive world and only the fittest shall survive thus your academic survival is in your hand. Antisocial behaviours are on the increase in our higher institutions a factor that is detrimental to academic activities of student librarians in particular and students generally. Antisocial behaviours we know are generally frowned at because of their damaging effects such misunderstanding and poor academic performance. It is against this backdrop that Cotton (2001), posits that mutual understanding, mutual attraction and empathy are linked. A declaration that shows that empathic behaviour has much to do with greater achievement. Disappointedly, several classroom strategies

and programs design which tend to foster increases in empathy and pro-social behaviours such as teamwork/cooperative learning, modeling and cognitive apprenticeship are not properly utilized in our library schools which negates Cotton (2001) assertion that helping students develop socially and emotionally, can help their academic ability.

On the other hand, the prevalent poor academic performance of student librarians in our library schools has been attributed to a number of factors which include; the lack of empathy among the students; as most students do not like to cooperate with other students on campus a situation that has serious negative academic implication, despite all efforts exerted to make students engage in cooperative learning approach, many are yet to come to terms with it as most intelligent students keep away from the low intelligent ones. A very common one in our library schools is the issue of students hoarding books and other academic materials from fellow students, an act that depicts lack of empathy for other students' predicament.

It is against this backdrop, that the researcher felt the need to carry out a study as to establishing the correlation between student librarians' empathic behaviour and their academic achievement and to establish whether gender has any influence on empathy. This study has also become necessary as no such study to the best of my knowledge has been carried out in this part of the globe.

1.2. Objectives

The main objective of this study is to investigate and establish if there is any correlation between student librarians' empathic behaviour and their academic achievement and to

1. Find out whether there is any relationship between student librarians' gender and their empathic behaviours.

1.3. Research questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between student librarians' empathic behaviour and their academic achievement?

2. Is there any correlation between empathy scores of female students and that of their male counterparts?

1.4. Hypotheses

To properly investigate the relationship existing between the variables, two hypotheses were formulated as a follow-up to the research questions:

1. There is no statistical significant correlation between student librarians' empathic behaviours and their academic achievement
2. There is no significant relationship between empathy scores of female student librarians and that of their male counterparts,

2.0. Literature review

2.1. Conceptual overview

According to Allport (1937), the terms "sympathy" and "empathy" have presented a semantic confusion for the behavioral scientist wholly out of proportion to the frequency with which they have been used. The principal contentions Allport, (1954) reveals revolve around whether sympathy and empathy are voluntary or involuntary capacities, are emotionally neutral or negative, and involve only affective or affective-cognitive elements. He explains that sympathy means "with suffering or passion," and, as the concept has been used both in theory and in empirical research, the connotations of negative affect predominate. Marked deviations from the etymological structure of the word and from general usage seem contraindicated. The following definition of sympathy, therefore, is offered. Sympathy is the capacity to apprehend the pain, suffering, or signs of negative emotions in man or animals and to respond to these with appropriate negative feelings. Sympathy is often an immediate, predominantly emotional awareness, but it is no less sympathetic when it is delayed and involves cognitive or reflective elements. The communication of sympathy is not required by the definition. Sympathy may involve "shared" feelings, but not all shared feelings can be communicated (Cline & Richards

1960). Finally, the concept of sympathy, as used, has implied a fundamental capacity in man to respond to suffering, albeit by no specific neuro-psychic structures.

On the other hand, the term *empathy* was first introduced in 1909 by psychologist Edward. Titchener as a translation of the German term *einfühlung* which means "feeling into". Empathy explains Lipps (1903) literally means "in suffering or passion," but in this instance the etymology of the word and its use in aesthetics and in psychology differ. The concept of empathy has also been utilized by personality theorists, perhaps because, as Allport (1957) suggests, the understanding of personality is similar to aesthetic understanding. The connotations of empathy are emotionally neutral, lying between sympathy and antipathy but including the joyous emotions. Empathy, or empathetic understanding, states Rogers (1959) is the term currently preferred by psychotherapists to designate the process and technique whereby the therapist consciously adopts the "internal frame of reference" of the patient without losing his own identity In this vein, empathy is defined as the self-conscious effort to share and accurately comprehend the presumed consciousness of another person, including his thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and muscular tensions, as well as their causes. Empathy may more briefly be defined as the self-conscious awareness of the consciousness of others. Empathy as used in psychology requires the empathizer to maintain an awareness of the imaginative nature of the transportation of oneself into another (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 2020). In aesthetics, by contrast, the empathizer is supposed to "lose himself in contemplation." Empathy, unlike sympathy, denotes an active referent. In empathy one attends to the feelings of another; in sympathy one attends to the suffering of another, but the feelings are one's own. In empathy I try to feel your pain. In sympathy I know you are in pain, and I sympathize with you, but I feel my sympathy and my pain, not your anguish and your pain. Empathy as an act and "empathetic understanding" as a therapeutic process are not necessarily coterminous. To this end, Cherry (2020) therefore defines empathy as the ability to emotionally understand what other people feel, see things from their point of view, and imagine yourself in their place. Essentially, it is putting oneself in someone else's position and feeling what they must be feeling. Cherry (2020) went further to categorize empathy in three types thus: affective empathy, which involves the ability to understand another person's emotions and respond appropriately. Such emotional understanding may lead to someone feeling concerned for another person's well-being, or it may lead to feelings of personal distress,

somatic empathy involves having a sort of physical reaction in response to what someone else is experiencing. People sometimes physically experience what another person is feeling. When you see someone else feeling embarrassed, for example, you might start to blush or have an upset stomach and cognitive empathy involves being able to understand another person's mental state and what they might be thinking in response to the situation. This is related to what psychologists refer to as theory of mind, or thinking about what other people are thinking. She further explains that sympathy and compassion are related to empathy, there are important differences. Compassion and sympathy are often thought to involve more of a passive connection, while empathy generally involves a much more active attempt to understand another person.

While Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2010) defines it as the ability to understand one's feelings, experience… The emphasis is that when one sees another person suffering, he/she might be able to instantly envision him/herself in the other person's place and feel sympathy for what they are going through. According to Berk (2006), empathy involves a complex interaction of cognition and effect which he explains as the ability to detect different emotions, take another person's emotional perspectives and to feel with that person or respond emotionally in a similar way. The above description entails that the act of empathizing is not just a physical thing rather, it is mentally induced. In other words, it is not entirely learn from the environment. Imperatively, one can say that the ability to feel empathy allows people to "walk a mile in another's shoes," so to speak. It permits people to understand the emotions that others are feeling. Whereas Bellet, and Michael (1991) described empathy is the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within their frame of reference, that is, the capacity to place oneself in another's position. Definitions of empathy as indicated by Rothschild and Rand (2006) and Read (2019) encompass a broad range of emotional states. Types of empathy include cognitive empathy, emotional (or affective) empathy, and somatic empathy.

2.2. Empirical and theoretical overview

As revealed by Eisenberg (1986); Hornblow (1980), Omdahl (1995) and; Wispé (1986).much of the empathy literature focuses on whether empathy is an emotional or cognitive process and distinguishes empathy from emotional contagion, sympathy, and perspective taking These distinctions state Batson et al. (1987); Doherty (1997); Eisenberg et al. (1998) and Eisenberg and Okun (1996) ;are empirically based and help to categorize behaviour. Whereas, some early

theories on empathy reveal Brothers (1990); Hatfield et al. (1993); Hume (1990); Levenson (1996) and Levenson and Reuf (1992); focused on the direct perception aspect, and on the basis of empathy in emotional contagion or imitation. In his study, McDougall (1923) observes that the behavior of one animal, upon the excitement of an instinct, Other theories wrote Allport (1961) and Deutsch & Maddle (1975); make use of Lipps (1903) projection, imitation, and imagination, without the direct perception. This makes empathy a high-level, cognitive phenomenon, reserved for humans for instance, even in comparative frameworks, empathy can be synonymous with "perspective taking." In one cooperation paradigm noted (Povinelli et al. (1992,), animals are considered to have empathy if they can perform the task of their human partner after only having observed it during training. The transfer task is successfully done by apes but not monkeys and is interpreted as evidence that only the former have empathy

Developmental research on the other hand, reveal Eisenberg et al. (1983); Ungerer (1990) and Hoffman (2000) has incorporated different levels of empathy by tracking changes in the life span such as outlines a variety of emotional and cognitive processes that are involved in empathy, noting that a great deal of work needs to be done to clarify why these transitions take place, and how these levels interact.

In the words of Allport, (1954) what has passed for empathy in empirical research may be only one dimension of it. Empathy and empathetic understanding have been operationalized in two ways: in terms of the summed discrepancies between the subject's and a close associates or group's, trait ratings of a person, and in terms of the summed discrepancies of a person's actual ratings of himself and the subject's presumption of how the person would rate himself. According to Cline and Richards (1960), a wide variety of psychological variables have been studied and manipulated such as self-confidence and humor, values, anxiety, and group atmosphere. Some objections to these procedures are inherent in the conception of empathy itself, especially the confounding of projection and empathy and of empathy and identification. Freud's (1921) statement that a path leads from identification by way of imitation to empathy is well known. Clearly, where identification occurs, empathy is lost. The confounding of empathy and projection, however, has been amenable to some empirical investigation. If the amount of projection involved in empathy is inversely related to accurate perception of individual

differences, then a number of critical reviews suggest that studies of empathy have been methodologically inadequate added Cronbach (1955). Some studies have tried experimentally to separate projection from empathy, while some have tried to demonstrate the influence of personal preferences and frustration on ratings of others. Less frequently investigated but possibly important in empathetic ability may be general intelligence and stereotypy. Nevertheless, significant, if low-order, correlations are usually found across instruments (Cline & Richards 1961) and across individuals (Cline & Richards 1960), suggesting that a factor like empathy may exist.

Berk (2006) observes that empathy has its root early in development hence one can see a baby crying in response to the cry of another baby. He further observes that babies connect emotionally with their care givers an experience that is believed to be the foundation for empathy and care for others. A study by Decety, Michalska and Akitsuki (2008) at the University of Chicago affirm to the above assertions in which using Magnetic Resonance Images (MRI) scan to evaluate children's empathic responses found that empathy is an innate tendency that develops in the brain of normal children. They also ascertained that the brain plays more of a role in empathy than influence of parents. Like every other innate, trait or tendency and environmental factors help in sharpening it.   Suffice it to say, that an individual nurtured in an aggressive or violent environment is bound to be hardened and aggressive and would not be empathic just as declared by Cotton (2001), that empathy is innate and children continue to develop their empathic skills by observing the environment around them.

Furthermore, Agulanna and Nwachukwu (2001) who describe empathy as the ability to recognize and understand another's motives and emotions as if the one is in the other person's shoes, believe that empathy is the cornerstone of successful interpersonal interaction. This implies that that an empathic person is sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. The obvious is that being empathic requires an ability to read and interpret non-verbal behaviours such as facial expression, tones of voice and gestures. In the same vein, Safosky (2009), discloses that empathy is a base for moral judgment and action noting that many people's altruistic actions when helping a distressed person are strongly tied to their empathic feelings with the realization that it is ethically right to help someone who is in need.   Empathy so to speak, is one aspect of social and emotional

learning that involves understanding and sensitivity to feelings, thought and experiences which often times are communicated non-verbally or through body language

Inasmuch as human beings are certainly capable of selfish, even cruel and bad behavior, a quick scan of any daily newspaper quickly reveals numerous unkind, selfish, and heinous actions which by all assumption are as a result of lack of empathy. All the same, writing on benefits of being able to experience empathy Cherry (2020), posits that empathy allows people to build social connections with others. By understanding what people are thinking and feeling, people are able to respond appropriately in social situations. Research has shown that having social connections is important for both physical and psychological well-being. Empathizing with others helps you learn to regulate your own emotions. Emotional regulation is important in that it allows you to manage what you are feeling, even in times of great stress, without becoming overwhelmed and empathy promotes helping behaviours. Not only are you more likely to engage in helpful behaviours when you feel empathy for other people, but other people are also more likely to help you when they experience empathy.

Society for Research in Child's Development (2015), in her study concludes that there is impressive correlation between students' training and skill in empathic understanding and their academic performance. The above opinion was further corroborated by Whole child Education (2013) who declares that emotional readiness is key to school success which by every standard underscores the fact that empathy is important in a student's education therefore, taking time to help students develop socially and emotionally can improve their academic outcomes

Yet empathy do not only come in handy when listening to your best friend explain his woes. It's actually very important for work, both for leaders and team members alike. The Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations (1996) reports a correlation between empathy and increased sales, high performing managers of product development teams, and increased performance in highly diverse teams. Studies have also shown that empathy improves leadership ability and facilitates effective communication (Krznaric, 2012)

Cherry (2020) disclosed that Research has found that there are gender differences in the experience and expression of empathy, although these findings are somewhat mixed. Women

score higher on empathy tests, and studies suggest that women tend to feel more cognitive empathy than men. In the same tone, Sternberg and Williams (2002), infer that men and women have different conception of morality. According to them, men tend to focus on abstract, rational principles such as justice and respect for the rights of others while women tend to view morality more in terms of caring and compassion. As posited by Sternberg and Williams (2002), women empathy stem from the fact that they are sensitive to the obligations of close relationship thus more empathic than men. The above may not far from the opinion of Cherry (2020) who disclosed that research has found that there are gender differences in the experience and expression of empathy, although these findings are somewhat mixed. Women score higher on empathy tests, and studies suggest that women tend to feel more cognitive empathy than men

Adding that at the most basic level, there appear to be two main factors that contribute to the ability to experience empathy: genetics and socialization. Essentially, it boils down the age-old relative contributions of nature and nurture. Very Well Mind (2020) infer that Parents pass down genes that contribute to overall personality, including the propensity toward sympathy, empathy, and compassion. On the other hand, people are also socialized by their parents, peers, communities, and society. How people treat others as well as how they feel about others is often a reflection of the beliefs and values that were instilled at a very young age.

3.0. Research methodology

3.1. Research design

The study applied a correlation survey design which according to Nworgu (2015) is a type of study which seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variables and it usually indicates the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables.. This design was found suitable because the study involves ascertaining the extent of relationship between two variables-empathy and academic achievement. Furtherance, 10 universities in Nigeria offering library and information science courses were selected through a non-probability sampling technique from where the sampled population was chosen.

On the other hand, a non-probability sampling technique was applied in selecting the respondents among practicing librarians in Nigerian federal universities. The librarians numbering 120 were

invited to participate in the research. The aim and objectives of the study were thoroughly explained to the librarians. Those who agreed to participate signed the written informed consent forms and the questionnaire sent through e-mail. Participation was therefore completely voluntary, anonymous and confidentiality of the information generated was ensured

3.2 Sampled Population

With the assistance of some contacted lecturers from the Department of Library and Information Science of the universities, a sampled population of 200 was through purposive random sampling method selected among 300 level students made up of 100 female and 100 male. According to Nworgu (2015), this method ensures that specific elements which satisfy some predetermined criteria are selected. (in this study, the determining criteria for selection are that the respondents are that they are student librarians from accredited library schools in Nigeria and have been in the system for at least two years) The sampled population shows that each of the ten universities provided 20 respondents. It is pertinent to state, that inasmuch as the 200 respondents returned the instruments with support of the lecturers, it took over five months to achieve the feat (August, 2019-February, 2020)

3.3 Instrument for data collection

In this study, two major instruments were used for data collection. They are; Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) developed by Davis (1980) and Empathy Assessment Instrument (EAI) by Eisenberg and Lennon (1983). The Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) has four scales with each measuring a distinct component of empathy. These four scales are: 1-empathic concern (feeling emotional concern for others); 2-Prospective (Cognitively taking the perspective of another), 3-Fantasy, emotional identification with characters in books, films etc and 4-Personal distress (Negative feeling in response to the distress of others). As a standard instrument, Interpersonal reactivity has been in use for over twenty years in assessing level of empathy and shares same structure with empathy assessment instrument. Another instrument used was the first semester 2018/19 academic session examinations results. The essence was to correlate the empathy score and that of the academic achievement as to establish if any relationship exists.

Prior to administration of the instruments proper, a reliability test was conducted in which a test-retest method was applied in which case, the instrument were first administered to 50 students from 2 polytechnics in Southeastern Nigeria offering Library and Information Sciences courses

and after a month, the same test was re-administered to the same group. It is after which, the first and the second scores were compared using Cronbach Alpha computation and a reliability coefficient of 0.68 was realized.

3.4. Administration of instrument

A total of 20 lecturers from 10 participating Library and information department of the universities guided and assisted in the administration of the instruments from the pre-test which was administered at the commencement of the programme with a view to establishing the participants' level of empathy to retesting the test after participants were exposed to empathy skills for a period of 2 months after which a post-test was administered to them as to determining the effect of the exposure on the participants. With the support of the lecturers, the instruments were returned 100% after over 5 months.

3.5 Method for Data Analysis

Data generated from the study were entered into Excel spreadsheet, cleaned and coded. It was then exported into SPSS-IBM version 21 and analyzed using Pearson's product moment correlation method simply referred to as the Pearson r at 0.05 level of significance as well as in testing the hypotheses. This is on the basis of the fact that the study is an investigation on the relationship between empathy and academic performance of student librarians.

4.0 Presentation of data

Demographic data

Table 1: Demographic representation of the respondents

S/No	Institution	No	Gender		%
			Male	Female	
1	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	20	10	10	10
2	Bayero University, Kano	20	10	10	10
3	Abia State university, Uturu	20	10	10	10
4	Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka	20	10	10	10

5	Delta State University Abraka	20	10	10	10
6	Imo State University, Owerri	20	10	10	10
7	University of Ibadan	20	10	10	10
8	University of Uyo	20	10	10	10
9	Madonna University, Okija	20	10	10	10
10	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	20	10	10	10
	Total	200	100	100	100

Table 1, is a demographic data of the respondents. A total of 200 student librarians were selected from the ten participating universities with each university providing 20 respondents. The data shows that both gender shares equal representation of 100 each or 50%.

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Coefficient Correlation Analysis of Correlation between student-librarians' Empathy and Academic scores

Variables	N	X	SD	LS	Corr	Sig	Remark	Decision
Empathy Score	200	55.83	10.78					
Academic Achievement Score	200	54.77	11.19	0.01	0.79	0.00	Sig	Rejected

Table 2 shows the result of the analysis of the two sets of data-the empathy scores and academic achievement scores. The outcome shows that they positively correlate. As shown in the table, the calculated value stands at 0.79 which implies that the two sets of data, that is the computed significance value-0.00 is less than the level of significant value of 0.01. This means, that the null hypothesis is rejected an indication that there is significant correlation between student librarians empathic behaviour and their academic achievement

Table 3: Summary of correlation analysis between male and female empathy scores

Variables	N	X	SD	LS	Corr	Sig	Remark	Decision
Male Empathy	100	54.08	10.92					
Female				0,01	0,10	0,30	Accepted	Not sig

Empathy	100	57.58	10.42					

The result of the analysis as presented in table 3 above, shows that for the empathy scores, there is a positive correlation in the female and male empathy scores of 0.10 that is not significant as seen in the value of computed significant value of 0.30, which is less than the values of he level of significance P>0.05 . The result therefore reveals that there is no significant relationship between the student librarians' empathy scores with their gender thus the upholding of null hypothesis two of this study.

5.0. Discussion of result

All the literature consulted pointed at one fact and that is that empathy is needed in almost in every aspect of our lives as an effective skill for functional inter-personal relationship and human co-existence, The outcome of this study further buttress this fact as shown in hypothesis 1 as tested as displayed in table 2. The result shows that there is statistical significant correlation between empathy of student-librarians and their academic scores or achievement. It is on this ground that the first null hypothesis which states that there is no statistical significant correlation between student librarians' empathic behaviours and their academic achievement was rejected. The outcome of this study therefore corroborate that of Freshbach and Freshbach reported in Society for Research in Child's Development (2015) on achievement; empathy; depressive affectivity and self-concept and that of Okwara-Kalu and Okonkwo (2015), Bonner and Aspy (1994) and Cotton (2001) that there is significant correlation between student scores on measures of empathic understanding and their grade point average (GPA). Furthermore, three other studies by Cotton (2001), identified correlations between empathy and other traits such as students' training and skills in empathetic understanding and their academic achievement. Likewise, Society for Research in Child's Development (2015), in her study concludes that there is impressive correlation between students' training and skill in empathic understanding and their academic performance. The above opinion was further affirmed by Whole child Education (2013) who declares that emotional readiness is key to school success which by every standard underscores the fact that empathy is important in a student's education therefore, taking time to help students develop socially and emotionally can improve their academic outcomes

On hypothesis 2 which is there is no significant relationship between empathy scores of female student librarians and that of their male counterparts, the finding of this study as shown in table 3, upheld the said proposition as there was not relationship established existing between the student-librarians' empathy scores and their gender. The implication is both male and female student-librarians' empathy is almost the same. The above finding could be as a result of the lecturers' disposition and instructional approaches in use in these departments. This result also conforms to

that of Cotton (2001) who posits that empathy is innate and that children continue to develop their empathic skills by observing the environment around them. This is to say, that these student-librarians must have improved on their empathic skills through interaction with significant people around them and from the empathic skills they were exposed to. In the contrary, the result is an opposite of that of Sternberg and Williams (2002) who in their study inferred that men and women have different conception of morality therefore women empathy stem from the fact that they are sensitive to the obligations of close relationship than men who are competitive oriented thus more empathic than men. The above assertion is also in conformity with that of Cherry (2020) who posits that there are gender differences in the experience and expression of empathy, although these findings are somewhat mixed. Women score higher on empathy tests, and studies suggest that women tend to feel more cognitive empathy than men she concludes

In a nutshell and stating the obvious, there is bound to be inconsistency in the findings of most studies on gender and empathy considering the fact that heritability and environment have a lot influence on empathy. In addition reveals cherry (2020), at the most basic level, there appear to be two main factors that contribute to the ability to experience empathy: genetics and socialization. Essentially, it boils down the age-old relative contributions of nature and nurture. Very Well Mind (2020) infer that Parents pass down genes that contribute to overall personality, including the propensity toward sympathy, empathy, and compassion.

5.1. Conclusion and recommendation

The outcome of this study has shown that there is a significant correlation between empathy of student-librarians and their academic achievement and that gender has no relationship with the students' empathic behaviour. A careful look at the outcome of this study therefore brings to focus the implications of empathy to teaching and learning. It is expected that the outcome of this study would encourage student-librarians into being empathic towards one another having come to the knowledge that empathy correlates positively with academic achievement as well as enhances interpersonal relationship. It is on this note that the following recommendations are made:

- ❖ In the first instance, there is the urgent need to equip student-librarians with useful knowledge and skills especially those that enhance empathic behavior of students.

❖ Lecturers and Library and Information Science Schools should encourage learning patterns that can enhance empathic behaviour among student-librarians in the form of collective assignments, projects and group learning. Through these activities, interpersonal relations are encouraged and enhanced. In other words, collaborative instructional approaches should regularly be used during lectures. The old roll and column method of arranging lecture halls should be discouraged as it does not promote interpersonal relationship and corroborative learning among students.

❖ As a student-librarian, understanding the importance of working as a team cannot be overemphasized. As a team which allows you to share ones feelings and experiences enables you to see yourselves as one and bears each others' burden-which is what empathy is all about. By so doing, everyone achieves much with little effort. If we may apply Pareto's principle of 20/80 in this context, when you work as a team, 20% of your efforts will likely produce 80% result while as an individual, your 80% effort can only give you 20% result which imperatively means that when you work as an individual carrying your burden alone, you need 320% effort to produce 80% result. These are efforts that have been tailored towards other purposeful activities in a situation there is empathy and you work as a team.
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❖ Generally, extracurricular activities or recreational activities and equipment that enhance interpersonal relationship should be provided in the department with common rooms created where student-librarians can gather at their leisure and discuss both social and academic matters

❖ Since studies have shown that empathy is innate, lecturers should as a matter of importance try and identify those students with high level of empathy and use them as models and peer mentors

While empathy might fail sometimes, most people are able to empathize with others in a variety of situations. This ability to see things from another person's perspective and sympathize with another's emotions plays an important role in our social lives. Empathy allows us to understand

others and, quite often, compels us to take action to relieve another person's suffering and in the context of this study enhances academic achievement therefore its development in our students must be encouraged by all and sundry.

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