

Gender Differentials on the Usability of E-Resource Provisions to Enhance Academic Achievement among Economics Education Students' In South East, Nigeria

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Abstract- This study focused on the differentials among gender on the usability of e-resources provisions to enhance academic achievement among Economics Education students' in South East Nigeria. The study adopted an expos-factor research design. Four hundred and ninety seven (492) Economics Education students were selected using purposive sampling technique from the study area. Data was collected using Economics Education achievement test (EEAT) and an observational schedule on student's usability of e-resource materials (OSSUEM) Kuder Richardson 20 (KR-20) was used to establish the reliability coefficient and a reliability index of 0.83 was ascertained. Two research questions and two research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions, while independent sample t-test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed that, gender have an influence in the extent of Economics Education student's usability of electronic resource materials and that electronic resources usability factor have an influence on Economics Education students' academic achievement. Based on the findings the study recommended that universities should regularly organize sensitization and training programmes with a theme to capture the female gender on how to effectively utilize electronic library resources and that lecturers should occasionally make referral to the use of electronic materials for conducting assignments and seminar presentations among students' to strengthen student's familiarity with the use of e-resources.

Indexed Terms- Gender, Usability, E-resources, Economics Education Students, Academic Achievement, South East Nigeria

I. INTRODUCTION

Electronic resources and library information database are essential resources and tools for carrying out study, learning and researching. The ever increasing importance of the Internet has expedited the persistent provision and utilization of information resources in an electronic form in universities across the world. The accustomed approach where a teacher or tutor is the knower of all knowledge is swiftly becoming obsolete and the new phase of learning where knowledge is gained almost everywhere is now the order of the day. In this new era of knowledge explosion, Students are more empowered and capacitated to access global information not only to learn, but also, to access and study at their own pace using electronic information resources anytime and from any location around the world, in order to improve their academic achievement.

With the emergence of different e-resources, it has provided students with the much needed comfort, ease and timely information for the purpose of learning, carrying out academic assignments as well as conducting research. (Talent & Kundai 2017). E-resources play a prominent role in promoting students' research activities and academic performance, as it provides students with relevant and up to date information materials to improve their learning ability and enhance their academic achievement, also to put up a qualitative research report writing and findings which is a prerequisite for attaining a university degree. Owolabi, Ajiboye, Lawal and Okpeh (2012) who observed that since the inception of electronic method of accessing

information. the e-resources has profoundly proofed to have increasingly become an invaluable resources in the education system to enhance research, teaching and learning, they also noted that e-resources have transformed the conduct of student academic activities, research and teaching process in universities by giving students the prospect for having access to different e-resource materials for accurate and timely information on various subject areas of specialization at any time.

Because of the versatility and manner it is used through multimedia tools, electronic resources to a large extent have become the source of information to a large number of users across the globe. Electronic resources are viewed as the hub of information that are preserved via contemporary information communication technology devices, redefined and reformed and in most cases stored in the cloud in the most solid and compacted form which can be retrieved instantaneously from any location by a large number of users around the world (Rao, 2011). With advancement in time, electronic resources usually undergo series of modification and amendments to suit the current needs and challenges of both male and female users of these information.

Gender is a broad and general investigative concept which differentiates women's ability in relation to those of men in every society. It is a variable that plays a sensitive and important role in learning and skill acquisition process. It is important to know that gender and sex are not the same and should not be used interchangeably. Sex is an inborn physiological condition that makes individual to be either males or females, while gender is a learned, socially and culturally constructed characteristics assigned to males and females (Uwalaka, 2013). Difference in skill acquisition and academic achievement due to gender has caused a lot of concern to educationists. Schrum and Geisler (2013) are of the opinion that girls have high tendencies of behaving in a more positive manner when compared to boys in the western world, while boys are characterized by being more active and curious, and even to a point of getting into trouble and is being considered normal because of the his trait. In other words male behaviour is seen to be assertive, competitive and aggressive while female behaviour is described as

collaborative and supportive. This preferences have implications in the way and manner both gender perceive and approach new technologies which subsequently affects their academic achievement in their subject area (Economics Education). Work on gender difference in students' achievement by Onuka and Durowoju (2011) shows that gender seen not to be a relevant factor to be associated with school achievements. Although it is expected that boys and girls will perceive technology differently because the African culture provides differential experiences to the two sexes. According to Obaje (2012) women were once at the center of the world of learning, where they were seen as the epitome of knowledge and the cause of disparity in academics and research. Obaje further argued that because of the time required for children upbringing and lack of research collaboration are the two major factors that accounts for gender difference in scientific publishing. Women with young babies' and women who do not collaborate with other male counterparts in research are likely to perform less productive.

Gender as a potential factor that could influence the utilization of library e-resources have been widely acknowledged in literatures but yet, Steinerova and Susol (2017) noted that study on gender differentials is a variable that is still open for research as there is no clear distinction on utilization of electronic resources between male and female students' in various institutions and that literatures are abundant with studies on human information and thier behaviour towards information technology which shows tendencies of men and women to manifest differences in the characteristics when using electronic resources, but despite this distinctions, research on gender based differences among Nigeria information professionals pertaining to use of electronic Information resources appear to be few (Utulu, 2010). The perceived ease of use can could be associated with the exposure and level of experience a student has in the university system, as it is believed that the longer a student stay in the university environment the more likely the students will be exposed to the use of electronic materials.

Gender differences as a factor for influencing a phenomena have been explored in different areas as sociology, psychology, marketing, education and

what have you, haven been an indicator of how it have influenced productivity and social menace, managers, educators, government can better leverage such differences to meet their needs. However, despite these premises, research to this study might not have been established in line with usability factor for effective utilization of library resources to enhance academic achievement. The importance that effective utilization of e-resources pose cannot be overemphasized. Thus, this is an important issue to explore because half of the user population may not be adequately provided with the necessary technological apparatus that is need for effective utilization of e-resources.

According to Venkatesh and Karahanna, (2014) there is a high tendency of female library users have much lower proficiency n use of computer self-efficacy (CSE) and thus utilize technology at a lower rate than their male counterparts. If male users are found to utilize electronic resources more than female students' and as a result, perform better, it is indeed an unexpected outcome which will require immediate oriental attention. Similarly, Sanchez and Willett (2016) concluded that males are more likely to be published in top journals. Although this is unclear without a proper and systematic findings with regards to this this issue.

Utulu (2010) concluded that the question of gender gap in the use of digitalized system of learning is divided and the impact of new technologies on gender in particular is very vital. This is because gender influences factors such as literacy and education as it influences their job opportunities and children's attitude and interest in the use of modern technology. Waldman (2003) stated that one of the factor that influences students' use of electronic resources is the use of a computer system. He opined that student who are not familiar with the use of computer system have a high tendency of finding it difficult to use the electronic material provisions at their disposal.

Students' of Economics Education form part of the users of electronic resources in the university community. During the course of undergoing professional training on how to become a professional teacher in teaching the concepts of

Economics at secondary and tertiary level of education, they come in contact with and make use of information resources known as "electronic resources" through the library facilities. Thus, their ability to surf around the library information database is highly dependent on the usability skills and the techniques they possess for effective utilization of the resources. These skills could include word processing skills, combining two terms to find information, formulating search queries, use of truncation search techniques like \$, * and +, among other techniques. Although, the significance and use of electronic resources have improved eventually since students', especially those in higher institution usually rely on their abilities to identify distinct information rudiments. With regards to the final Report that was published by American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy (2011), which revealed that the ability for an individual to showcase information literate skills, the individual must have the ability to recognize and identify when information is needed and also have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use information resources without any challenge. Tyagi (2011) highlighted that for an individual to effectively make use of electronic resource materials, the individual must adequately be equipped with basic computer skills, knowledge of what is available and how to use it, and also the ability to outline a research problem. How students attain the above skills and knowledge depends on many dynamics, such as their disciplines, academic workshop and training, user experiences, age among other factors

These skills are relevant for easy accessibility and utilization of the e-resources that are provided, as such, students' of Economics education have to react to the ever changing system in library technology, with respect to provision and use of electronic information resources and also, ought to be aware and have the functionality skills and techniques for accessing such resources to aid them in their academic pursuit and research output. The sources which these information could presents itself could take the following format which include: e-publishing, online public access catalogue (OPAC), Emerald, Science Direct, Academic Search Premier, Hinari, Virtual Library (NUC), CD-ROMs, electronic journals, electronic books collections, which covers a

variety of subjects, and major bibliographic databases like MEDLARS and AGORA among others. Since digital online resources are practices in which information is saved digitally and made accessible through digital platform and computer networks, it is paramount for student to equip themselves with the necessary skills that that will enhance easy access and use of these relevant resources.

Because of the changes that occur usually in the use of electronic materials, it have implications in the manner and way it is been accessed and used. Popoola (2010) made it clear that information availability, accessibility, and usability are indispensable to the teaching, learning and research, it is important for students to keep abreast with the constant changes and recent development in the use of electronic resources to enhance their academic pursuit. Okiki (2012) stated that the accessibility of information remain the hinge in which any society depends on for continual existence and survival. According to Okiki information remains the bases for taking decisions to reduce uncertainty to a large degree. Consequently, students are expected to be up to date with the transformation of the library system to a modernized way of accessing information to enhance their academic achievement.

Students' academic achievement is the degree or level of success attained at the end of an academic endeavour (Omebe, 2015). It is what someone has done successfully, especially using his own effort and skills (Ishiwu, 2014). In the same vain, Igbo (2014) defined achievement as the capability to operate efficiently, react quickly or perfectly to a given task in other to bring about a quantitative increase in a student's grade level. In the words of Igbo (2014), he stated that to achieve is to accomplish, acquire or gain by effort or do something successfully with an effort or skill. While Iwundu, in Ernest-Ehibudu and Oporum (2013) defined academic achievement as the degree or level of success attained at the end of an endeavour. Consequently, the yardstick for measuring ones level of academic achievement is by assessing the academic achievement of an individual through test, examination or observations. Students' achievement tests are used to describe student's strength and difficulties as at the time the test was given. It is mostly used in determining the relative

position or rank of students with respect to their performance in various fields of learning. Operationally, Student academic achievement can be defined as how well a learner can utilize various electronic resources having possess the relevant skills in relation with his/her academic achievement through an achievement test. The potentials that the use of electronic resources exhibit is numerous, but yet, to a greater extent, student hardly utilize these materials to enhance their academic pursuit. Agaba, Kigongo-Bukenya and Nyumba (2015) concluded that e-resources usage at Makerere University by student and outcomes of their academic achievement and research clearly indicates low use of e-resources factors because of insufficient abilities on use of the Internet and computer programs.

The trend of students' academic achievement in Economics education over the years has been generally poor, statistics gotten from exams and record unit, University of Nigeria, Nsukka (2018) shows that in the past 4 years (2013 – 2017), students' of Economics education department have performed poorly. The data revealed that during this period, only a staggering 0.71% of the 141 students admitted into the department (representing 1 student) graduated with a first class, 15.60% graduated with a second-class upper degree, whereas 46.10% graduated with a second class lower degree. A further 30.50% and 7.80% graduated with third class and pass degrees respectively. Beside the benchmark of second class upper and first class degrees, a staggering 83.69% of students admitted into Economics/Education department performed poorly.

Numerous problems must have accounted for their low performance, but to a larger degree, haven known the potentials and opportunities the use of electronic resources provides, inability of student to utilize the library and e-resources materials provisions may have accounted for a larger percent of the problem. Ocheibi (2013) argues that information is a key resource that can bring about change and improvement in students' academic achievement. Some of the observation made by researchers on the importance of use of electronic resources shows that electronic resources are invaluable research tools and when fully utilized, it enhances students' performance.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted an expos-factor research design to find out the variation in gender on usability of e-resources to enhance Economics Education students in South East, Nigeria. Nworgu (2015), this design deals with non-manipulative independent variables e.g sex, socio-economic status etc. in which the researcher only attempts to link some already existing effects or observations to some variables as causative agents. Thus, the researcher deemed it appropriate to use this design to determine how such independent variable as students' gender usability, among other factors that influences students' academic achievement. Five (5) public university was purposefully selected on the bases that they offer Economics Education as a course of study and four hundred and ninety two (492) Economics Education students were used as the respondents for the study. During the course of data collection there was a mortality of 74 respondents. Hence amounting the total respondents to be 418.

Economics Education Achievement test (EEAT) and observational schedule on student's usability of e-resource material (OSSUEM) was used for data collection. The contents of the achievement test covered concepts from microeconomics, macroeconomics and research methods. It is a 30 item multiple choice objective test. The instrument has option A-E in section A and B while section C has options from A-D for each of the test item. The observational schedule on Student's usability of e-resource material provision (OSSUEMP) has only one cluster eliciting information on extent of student usability of e-resource material.

The instruments were validated by three experts. One in Social Science Education, one in library and information science and one from science education department, all in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, to ascertain the content coverage of the items in respect of the research questions. All the corrections made by the validators where effected. The instrument was trial tested and a reliability of 0.83 was established using Kuder Richardson 20 (KR-20). The instruments was administered by the researchers and two research assistant. The data collected was

analyzed using Mean and standard deviations while the null hypothesis was tested using one sample t test at 0.05 level of significance. The criteria for analyzing the research question was based on average comparison, in such that a score of 49 and below is considered poor performance, while an average score of 50 and above is considered as good performance.

III. REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Tremendous effort has been made by different scholars and academic researchers to determine the disparity between male and female gender in the utilization of academic library e-resources in different situations and conditions and also for the purpose for which it was used.

Bassi (2011) conducted a study on gender variation in utilization of electronic resources in Adamawa State university libraries, Nigeria. The study implemented a descriptive survey design with a sample size of 182 students using a simple random sampling technique. The study made use of questionnaire for the purpose of data collection after which mean responses was used to analyze the data and t-test was used to answer the research hypothesis. The result of the study revealed that the use of internet has accounted for the most used electronic resources which serve as sources of accessing other electronic resources. The use of internet was represented by 392 (41.5%), while e-journals and e-books were represented with 125(13.09%) and 165(17.23%) respectively. The resources with minimum number of usage was e-theses and dissertations which had a frequency of 18(1.88%), this might be attributed to small number of postgraduate students' in this study and the hypothesis signifies that there was no significance difference in the mean response of male and female students. ($p>0.05$).

Both study are related in terms of assessing the disparity in gender on use e-resources. However, the current study assessed gender usability skills in relation to their academic achievement using an expos-factor research design. With the adoption of an expo-factor design, it revealed the true performance of students in relation to their usability skills. Thus, it helped in revealing the extent to which usability

skills can determine the use of e-resources for enhanced academic achievement.

Another study that was conducted by Manda and Mukangara (2011) on gender investigation on effective utilization of electronic resources by postgraduate students, 74 sampled postgraduate students' was drawn with the help of a proportionate random. The study used questionnaires for data collection and the data were analyzed using cross-tabulation and qualitative descriptions. The result of the study revealed that gender has a role to play in the use of electronic resources and that male postgraduates' students' were more likely to use electronic information resources than the female counterpart. The conclusions further revealed that there is difference in their attitude towards the use of electronic resources, the relationship between gender and electronic resources use was maintained.

Both study are related in terms of assessing the disparity in gender on use e-resources among students'. However, the current study assessed the usability skills possessed by male and female undergraduate students in relation to their academic achievement using an expos-factor research design. It helped in revealing the extent to which usability skills can determine the use of e-resources for enhanced academic achievement.

In the area of internet access and utilization, Obaje, Sani and Lawal (2012) investigated the access to internet and how it is been used among male and female staff and students' in the university of Jos, Nigeria. Online survey monkey was used to collect data and it was analyzed using frequency count and percentage response. The result of the study exposed the activity of both staff and students' in the area of internet usage within male and female counterpart. The statistics examining a total of 7405 users of the internet showed that there is a significant difference in the usage of internet between January-December, 2011, were males representing 6520 users, with a percentage of 88% who make use of the internet regularly and the females with a total number of 885 internet user having a 12% percent level were females only. Boja, Samuel and Lawal's study is related to this study because gender on utilization of e-resources was a major variable in both study.

However, the current study investigated the extent of usability skill possessed by male and female undergraduate students as a determinant of their academic achievement.

Equally, Paraware (2014) conducted a similar study on gender and age differentials in the attitude and use of computer among students' of University of Maiduguri. The study used a descriptive survey to get responses from both male and female students using random sampling technique. The study sampled a total of 250 students' in 500 level from five different faculties using a purposive sampling technique and the null hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance. The result revealed that there was significant difference at ($p < 0.02$) between male and female students' responses in their attitude toward computer applications which has implications in their job acquisition and educational pursue. Both studies share similarity by investigating disparities among gender on use of e-resource materials. However, a larger sample size was used for this study which gave a true representation of the population under study, covering over 5 states in the South East, Nigeria.

Regardless of gender, students' make use of electronic resources for different purposes. Obaje and Camble (2012) testified that students' in Obafemi Awolowo University through a study he conducted on gender and use of electronic resources using a sample size of 217 drawn through a simple random sampling technique. The study employed a descriptive survey analysis and questionnaires was used to get the responses of both male and female students in the University. The data was analyzed using students mean responses and the result showed that students make use of electronic resources for the purpose of writing thesis, dissertation or projects by both postgraduate and undergraduate students' in their final year. Both studies share similarities with the variable under investigation, however the current study analyzed how students' usability skills enhanced their purpose of use of e-resources in terms of academic achievement which was concluded by the study.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Q-1. To what extent gender could influence Economics education students' usability of e-resource materials universities in university libraries?

Table 1: Extent of influence of gender on students' usability of e-resource materials.

Gender	Number	Level of Usability			Total Percentage
		Strong	Medium	Weak	
Male	157	22(14%)	112(71.3%)	23(14.6%)	44.5%
Female	196	12(6.1%)	117(59.7%)	67(34.2%)	55.5%

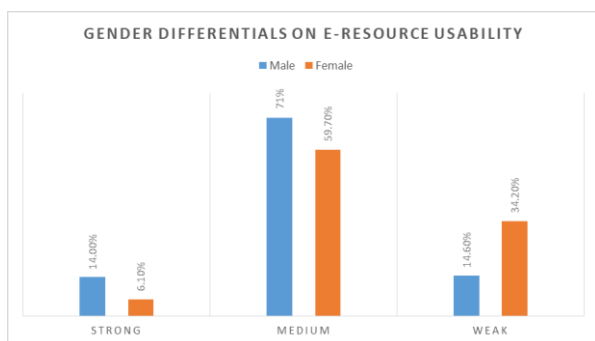


Chart Showing Differentials in gender on usability of e-resources

Table 1 shows that 157 out of the 353 Economics education students' representing 44.5% of the total students' used for the study were male students' while 196 representing 55.5% of the total students' used were female students'. 22 representing 14% of the male students' have a strong e-resource usability skills, 112 representing 71.3% of the male students' have a medium e-resource usability skill while 23 representing 14.6% of the male students' have a weak usability skills. While, 12 representing 6.1% of the female students' have a strong e-resource usability skills, 117 representing 59.7% of the female students' have a medium e-resource usability skill while 67 representing 34.2% of the female students' have a weak usability skills. The results as presented on the table above shows that male student are more proficient in the use of e-resource materials. This finding was further verified by hypothesis one.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant difference in the e-resource usability skills possesses by male and female students of Economics education

Table 2: There is no significant difference in the e-resource usability skills possessed by male and female students of Economics education.

	U Value	Z Value	Sig. (2 tailed)	Decision
Gender	12093.00	-3.550	0.00	Significant

Table 2 indicates that the probability level of 0.00 is less than the set alpha level of 0.05 with a Z value of 12093. Accordingly, the Null hypothesis of no significant difference on the e-resource usability skills possessed by male and female students of Economics education is therefore rejected. This imply that there is a significant difference in the e-resources usability skills possessed by male and female Economics education students'.

Q-2. What is the Influence of e-resource usability skills on Economics education students' academic achievement in South East, Nigeria?

Table 3: Influence of e-resource usability skill on Economics education students' academic achievement

Student E-Resource Usability Skill	Number	Mean Score of Students	Standard Deviation
Proficient in E-Resource Usability	224	54.14	8.06
Non-Proficient in E-resource Usability	140	42.62	5.73

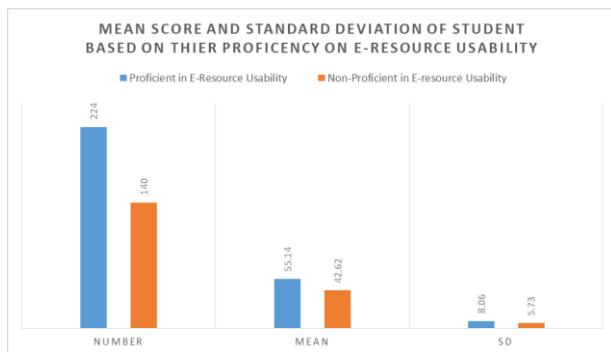


Chart showing Mean Score and standard deviation of students' usability of e-resources

Table 3 shows that 224 out of the 364 Economics education students' have proficiency in the use of e-resources while 140 Economics education students are none proficient in the use of e-resources. The results as presented on the table above show that the students' who have proficiency in the use of e-resources had a mean score of 54.14 and an standard deviation of 8.06 while those who do not have proficiency in the use of e-resources had a mean score of 42.62 and standard deviation of 5.73. This implies that e-resources usability have influence on students' academic achievement. This finding was further verified by hypothesis two.

Hypothesis two: There is no significant difference in the influence of e-resource usability by males and female students' of Economics education on their academic achievement.

Table 4: Independent t-test analysis of students' scores based on the influence of e-resource usability by males and female students' of Economics education on their academic achievement.

	T	Df	Sig. (2 tailed)	Decision
Students' Gender	19.888	318	0.000	Significant

Table 4 indicates that the probability level of 0.00 is less than the set alpha level of 0.05 at 318 degree of freedom. Accordingly, the Null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean score of male and female Economics Education students' on usability of e-resource is therefore rejected. This imply that the mean score of male and females

Economics education students on the influence of usability differs.

- The extent gender could influence Economics Education students' use of e-resource materials universities in university libraries

Data on Table 1 indicating the extent of influence of gender on students' usability of e-resource materials, which revealed that gender has an influence on students' usability of e-resource. Accordingly, the result revealed that male students are better user of e-resources when compared to female students'. The findings was further tested by hypothesis one in table 2 which revealed that there is a significant difference in the usability skills possessed by male and female Economics education students'. It is usually a tradition in the African context that male students are better users of new technology when compared to their female counterpart, as such, the findings of this study is no different from what was expected. The male students showed more flexibility and confidence during the use of a computer system to access various electronic resources while a larger percentage of the female students were more reluctant and showed some level of apathy at some point in time, which affected their overall extent of electronic resource utilization ability.

The study was in agreement with the findings of Obaje, Sani and Lawal (2012) who found out that male students are more engaged with the use of internet when compared with their female counterpart. Similarly the findings also confirmed the findings of Obaje and Camble (2012) who testified that male students utilizes e-resources materials better and more often when compared to their female counterpart in Obafemi Awolowo University. In the same vain the findings also complimented Manda and Mukangara (2011) who also found out that gender has a role to play in the use of electronic resources and that male postgraduates' students' were more likely to use electronic information resources than the female counterpart. The conclusions further revealed that there is difference in their attitude towards the use of electronic resources, the relationship between gender and electronic resources use was maintained.

- Influence of e-resource usability skills on Economics education students' academic achievement

As regards the influence of e-resource usability skills on Economics education students' academic achievement, results presented in table 3 shows that students who are proficient in use of e-resource materials as measured with OSSUEMP and EEAT, the findings revealed that Economics Education students' with e-resource usability proficiency scored significantly higher than those who are not proficient in use of e-resource material. Accordingly, the result concluded that students with proficiency in use of e-resource materials performed better than students' without good usability skills. This was further tested by hypothesis 2 in table 4 using one sample t-test and the result showed that there was a significant different between students' who are proficient in use of e-resources and those without proficiency skills. During the course of carrying out usability proficiency in the use of e-resources, it was observed that students who were having computer system right from the start of their study programme tends to do better accessing these resources because they seem to have the basic use of computer system and it aided their use of these various resources.

This result is in agreement with the findings of Ali (2015) who conducted a research on the perceived influence of electronic resources in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and found out that 83% of students' that made use of various e-resource materials helped them to perform better academically. The findings further confirmed the study of Ekundayo and Alonge, (2012) who found out that use of material resources have a positive relationship with students' academic achievement. In a similar vein it also validated the findings of Sivathaasan and Velnampy (2013) who investigated how utilization of electronic resources provisions can steer students' academic achievement and found out that the use of electronic resources is positively associated with students' academic achievement at ($r = 0.623, p < 0.01$). The result of the multiple regression analysis revealed that the use of electronic resource provisions has a positive influence on students' academic achievement at the rate of 38.8 % ($R^2 = 0.388$), which is showing a statistical significance at the level of 0.01 ($p < 0.01$)

V. CONCLUSIONS

- 1) Gender have an influence in the extent of Economics education student's usability of electronic resource materials
- 2) Electronic resources usability factor have influence on Economics education students' academic achievement

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Universities should regularly organize sensitization and training programme with a theme to capture the female gender on how to effectively utilize electronic library resources.
- Lecturers should occasionally make referral to the use of electronic materials for conducting assignments and seminar presentations among students' to strengthen student's familiarity with the use of e-resources.

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