



## Short Communication

# Impact of environment on gender behavior

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Abstract

**This paper investigated the effect of genders on the ecological integrity of Ibadan metropolis with the view to unravel which gender has more impact on the society than the other. Questionnaire and opinionnaire surveys were used to collect information on the topic from 1100 people in the sampled 550 housing units of the 110 enumerated areas (EAs). Finding revealed that differences exist between male and female genders with the latter being more environmental friendly than the former.**

**Keywords:** Gender, Behavior, Ecological integrity.

## INTRODUCTION

Humans think and behave differently on all issues. That of the environment cannot be different. Due to variations in economic characteristics and different roles humans play in the world, perceptions of what is right or wrong about the environment are inevitable. This situation had generated conflicting answer to crucial environmental problems. Naturally, all humans value life. They are biocentric in thinking. Often times they are regarded as the planet's most important species. Other species only have mere instrumental values for human's livelihood. Thus, humans are in charge of nature and they have innate awareness to manage it the way they like.

According to Simon (1989), the serious crisis in the area of human intervention exists on the environment. Humans show greater regards for: self-care than "earth-care". For this reason, they deplete resources and degrade the ecosystem for survival. They over-do this by trying to satisfy their greed rather than their needs. Human species adopts the use of technology to improve their socio-economic well beings which eventually do greater harm to the ecosystems. Their free market economy in the competitive world had been detrimental to the ecological foundations.

In spite of all these problems, variation in human gender was found to be instrumental to variations in the management of the earth support systems for human benefits. The two gender type doesn't impact on the environment in the same way. For a reason like this, Sangodapo, (2010) hypothesizes that "there is a significant difference between the environmental behavior of males and females. Humans' intervention on the environment notwithstanding, the assumption was that,

gender sensitivity might not be ruled out. There could be variations on the level at which each gender tampers with the environment. That is, the effect of one gender on the ecological integrity of the planet earth would be more than the other. This was the investigation this study carried out.

In social ecology, the holistic environmental thinking is that ecological crisis is a product of the power from authoritarian social, economic, cultural and political structure and from various technologies used to dominate humans and nature. In this wise, both the industrial, agricultural and technological revolution were found responsible for ecological crisis. It was in recognition of this, that made Armstrong (1993) to assert that "humans are creating a technologically wonder-world to generate ecologically waste-world" In environmental issues, use of words like "humans", mankind", "people", humanity", populace", masses; "man" "everyone" and "everybody" had been found to be too general. It was the theory of ecofeminism" which attempts to draw a demarcation between male and female when it comes to generalizations of who caused what on environmental management. The theory is of the view that most environmental faults should be laid at the doorstep of the male gender. Consequently, the use of generalized terminology in the cause of environmental woes should stop.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Using a questionnaire and opinionnaire surveys, this

**Table 1.** t-test of People's Perception on Gender Environmental Friendly

Serial Number	Peoples Perception on the Gender that does Better on the variable	The Gender	Percentage in support of the gender
1	Gender that was more environmentally friendly	Female	74.6
2	Generation of Less Waste	Male	91.4
3	More Compassionate to Animals	Female	90.1
4	Doing more Environmental; Sanitation	Female	72.9
5	Lesser Destroyer of trees	Female	69.7
6	More Compliant to Environmental Laws	Female	77.5
7	Lesser Consumers of Material things	Male	62.5
8	Lesser Destroyer of the Ecosystems	Female	62.5

work was carried out in Metropolitan Ibadan. This is region made up of eleven Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Oyo State of Nigerian. The Enumeration Area (EA) Maps used for the country's Population Census of 2006 was used as frame to capture the necessary data from people. The units of questionnaire administration were the sampled housing units in each EA map. Also, a focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used as the opinionnaire instrument. On the whole, one hundred and ten EAs, five hundred and fifty housing units and one thousand and one hundred people constituted the sample sizes. These spread spatially and equally on all the eleven EGAs. A systematic random technique was used to select the samples from each component (EAs, housing units and respondents).

### The Data

Interviewers went round the sampled housing units to elicit information from the respondents: Two respondents with no gender bias were interviewed in each sampled housing unit. The questionnaire which was an open-ended one focused on respondents' opinions on eight environmental issues. The technique therefore utilized opinionnaire instrument for both males and females.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Each of these eight questions was in line with environmentally friendly-issues. Percentages in support of either the males or the female were computed for each of the gender as shown in Table 1.

From this study, females were found to be more "environmentally-friendly by scoring 74.6%. In the area of "Compassion to animals" "lesser destruction of trees" environmental sanitation; "compliance to environmental laws" and "lesser destruction of the ecosystems, female gender was found to record relatively higher proportion of 90.10, 69.70, 92.90, 77.50 and 62.50% respectively when compared with the male gender. However, male gender

was found to generate "less wastes" and consume less material things" with 91.4% and 62.5% support respectively.

### Hypothesis Testing

Student's t test was the statistical tool used to test the hypothesis. Due to large data which was above 30 in this study, a z-test distribution was resorted to. The result of the analysis as revealed by Table 2 is that a difference existed between genders level of environmental sensitivity ( $t= 4.00$ ,  $df= 1098$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

From the result, male gender had 16.14 on environmental sensitivity while the female gender had

16.54. A mean difference of 0.400 and a t-value of 4.00 existed between the two samples. It could therefore be inferred that there is a difference between the environmental behaviors of males and females with the latter more environmentally friendly than the former.

It is expected of human life styles to be compatible with some basic environmental principles to include appreciation of all forms of life, protection of local ecosystems, using simple means, consuming little, satisfying vital needs rather than desires, live in nature, appreciation of ethnic and cultural differences, elimination of injustices towards fellow humans and other species, promotion of communities well being and non-violent behavior (Bookching, 1990). The theory of ecofeminism takes after these maxims. Bullard (1991) summarizes all these to include environmental justice, fairness, friendliness, equity, promotion, protection and appreciation.

The rise of male dominated societies since the advent of agricultural revolution according to Rodda, (1991) is primarily responsible for male's violence against nature.

In the philosophy of ecofeminism coined by a French writer Francois d'Eaubonne in 1974, the main cause of environmental problems is not human centeredness but male-centeredness. Males have treated environment as a "foe to be conquered" rather than a "nurturing mother of

**Table 2.** t-test of People's Perception on Gender Environmental Sensitivity Signs

Dependable Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std Dev.	Df	t-value	Signs
Perception on Environmental Issues	Male	630	16.4	1.573	1098	4.00	<0.01
	Female	470	16.54	1.712			

humans" to appreciate. Rodda, (1991) describes "the ecosphere" as the mother that gives life to humans but humans in return give acid rain, air pollution, nuclear waste, ozone depletion, depleted tropical forests, endangered wildlife, greenhouse gases, climate change, polluted oceans, contaminated waters and disappearing streams. In the same way, males are accused of oppressing the females who gave them life. This oppression has driven the females to nature. Female gender, by this philosophy is more compassionate and nurturing just as ecosystems do to humans. As oppressed members of the society, females are assumed to have relatively higher environmental experiences, knowledge, attitudes and practices than the males. Women are relatively non-violent, gentle, care-giving and co-operative. However, just like the 'environment; they are victims of injustice, pains and sufferings.

UNEP, (2009) identifies deforestation as a gender and health issue in Africa. Males spend increasing hours each day clearing wood for farming, and fuel. Also, female are disproportionately exposed to indoor smoke from fuel wood cooking. In this wise, ecofeminists hypothesizes that male gender is ecologically destructive (Rodda, 1991) Since male gender has been accused of being less-concerned about environmental management the study probes further through a field investigation and opinionnaire survey.

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