

The IGERD Brief



Volume 1 Issue 2

Sharing Minds, Changing Lives

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BASELINE SURVEY: STUDENTS SPEAK

PREAMBLE

IGERD embarked on a study with the aim of finding out the gender issues at Moi University from students and staff. Two different questionnaires were developed for students and staff. This was a baseline survey which was carried out in November 2007 in 5 campuses around Eldoret Town. The student questionnaire had 7 sections. Section A sought demographic information. Additional information included the year of study and department one is registered; whether one lives in the halls of residence on campus or outside campus, and one's gender. Section B to G was divided into 8 sub-sections and the areas covered included: physical and social learning environment, living environment, health services, student governance, entertainment and recreation; and other issues that including gender based violence.

The survey revealed many issues and expectations. However, this brief is only going to highlight 6. Generally the survey has pointed at many issues that IGERD and the University needs to follow up through in-depth research and interventions.

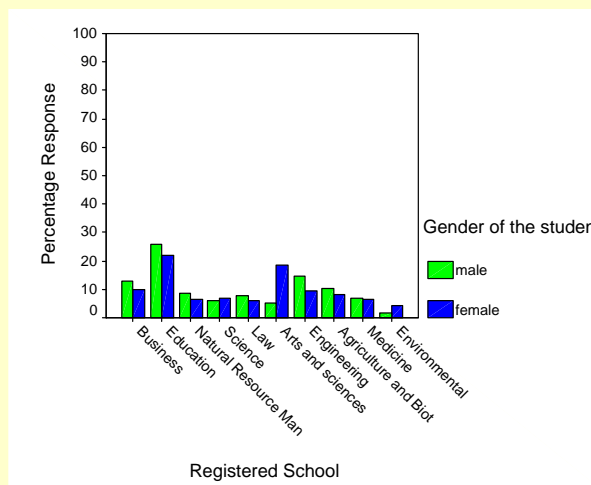
FINDINGS

Respondents: Moi University has a student population of about 17,000 that is spread across 10 campuses. Out of 450 questionnaires administered among the student groups, 305 were returned; 116 were from male students and 188 from females. Most of the respondents were undergraduates and were in first year, followed by second, fourth, third, fifth and sixth years respectively. The respondents came from ten schools. More than 60% of the respondents indicated that they reside in the University halls of residence.

PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

There were 28 items addressing factors that contribute to students' good performance, retention and timely completion of a degree program. Fifteen of the items were designed to find out students' opinion about the physical

Fig. 1: Respondents by School



learning facilities provided by the University and 13 were on social learning environment. The question items demanded response on a Likert Scale of 1-5 where 5 is STRONGLY AGREE and 1 is UNDECIDED. Later the items were merged into three categories- AGREE, DIS-AGREE AND UNDECIDED.

Safety, course of study and workload

Majority of the respondents agreed that their *study area is safe* (64% males, 54% females). However, 41% of the female and 22% of the male respondents disagreed (Fig.2). Sixty five percent indicated that they *love their program of study* (Fig. 3); but only 54% specified that they have a *reasonable workload*. Out of the 65% who agreed that they *love their academic program*, most were men (80%). Majority disagreed (94%) with the statement- '*I have taken a course on gender in Moi University*' (86% male, 90% women). Out of the 305 respondents, only 21 (7%) reported having taken a course on gender in MU. This is a reflection of the fact that the few courses offered on gender are electives (Fig. 4).

Fig. 2: My study area is safe

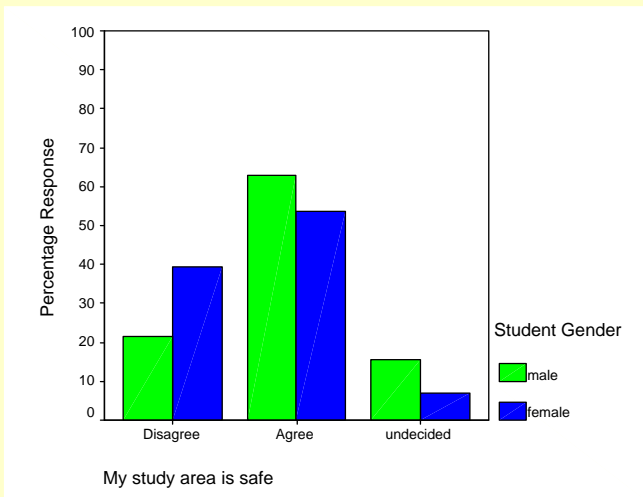


Fig. 3: I Love my Course of Study

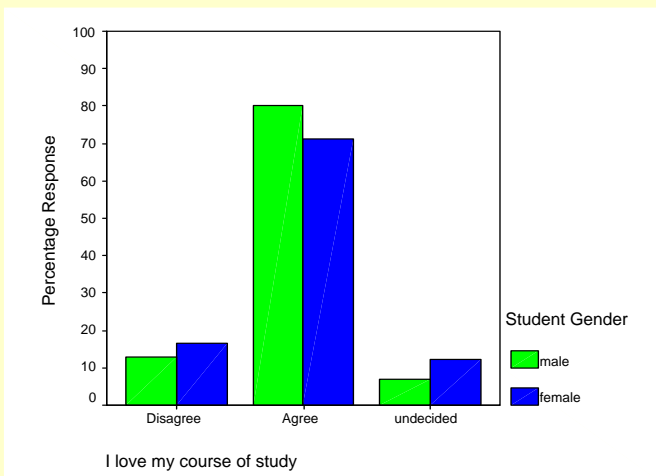
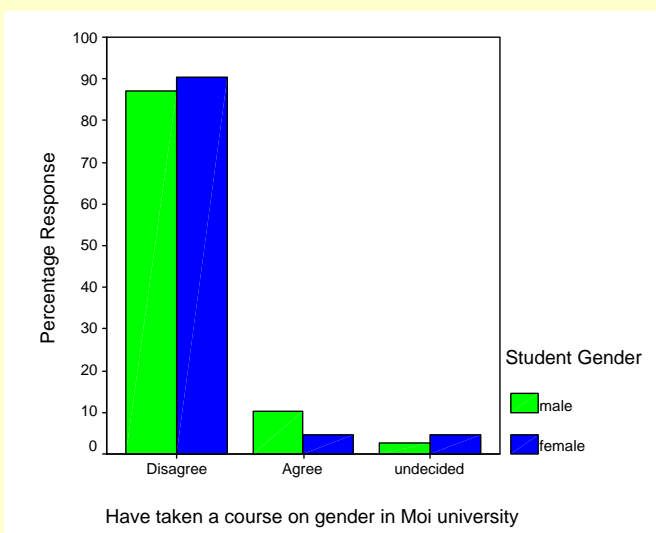


Fig. 4: Have taken a course on gender in MU



Equality and Gender Preference

It was important to explore students' level of awareness given that university life is unique and the social environment is dynamic. Figures 5- 7 speak to issues such as equal treatment of both genders in the academic departments and student-student relations along academic line. Out of 305 respondents, 47% disagreed with the statement that *there is equal treatment between male and female students in the teaching departments*. Furthermore, the respondents were asked which gender they prefer to work with. *Male students prefer to work with female students* statement evoked mixed reactions. Majority of the women agreed with the statement and only 40% of the men agreed. Sixty percent of the women respondents and 40% of the men agreed with the statement - *female students prefer to work with male students*.

Student-lecturer-academic-relations (SLAR) were examined. Fifty percent (50%) of the women respondents agreed with the statement *female lecturers are supportive*; but 49% of the men disagreed (Fig. 8). Only less than 30% of both men and women agreed with the statement, *men lecturers are supportive* (Fig. 9).

Fig. 5: Equal treatment of male and female students

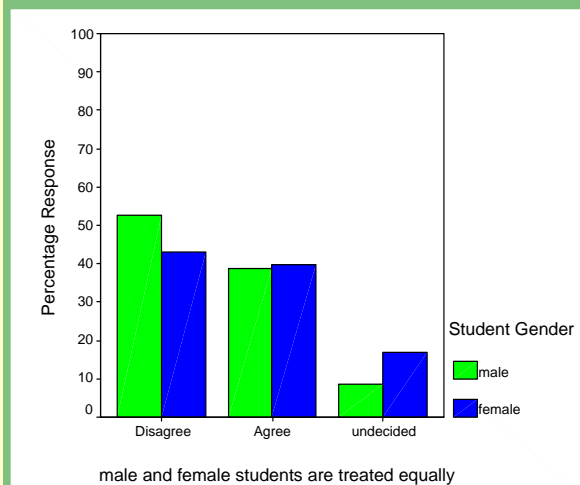


Fig. 6: Male students prefer to work with female students

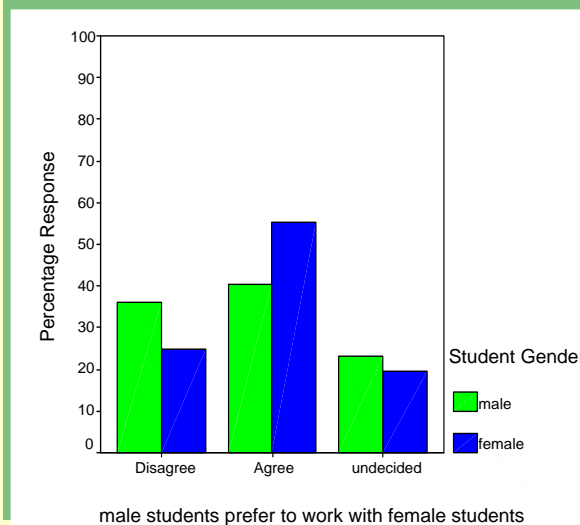


Fig. 7: Female students prefer to work with male students

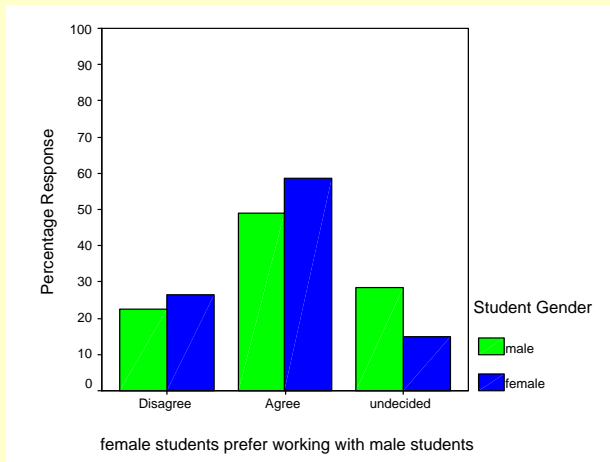


Fig. 8: Female lecturers are supportive

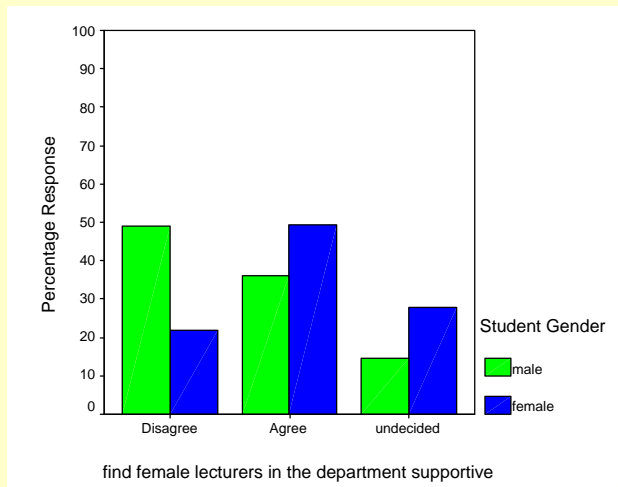
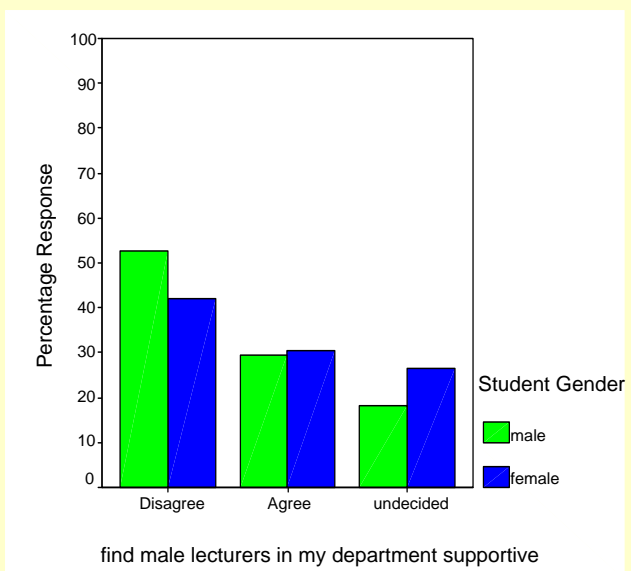


Fig. 9: Male lecturers are supportive



LIVING ENVIRONMENT

The University has institutionalized structures designed to make student life on campus bearable and enjoyable for example the provision of janitors and wardens who are assigned to halls of residence. The study used two statements to inquire whether students know their janitors and wardens (Fig. 10 & 11). In both cases, majority indicated that they do not know their janitors and wardens by name.

Fig. 10: I know my janitor by name

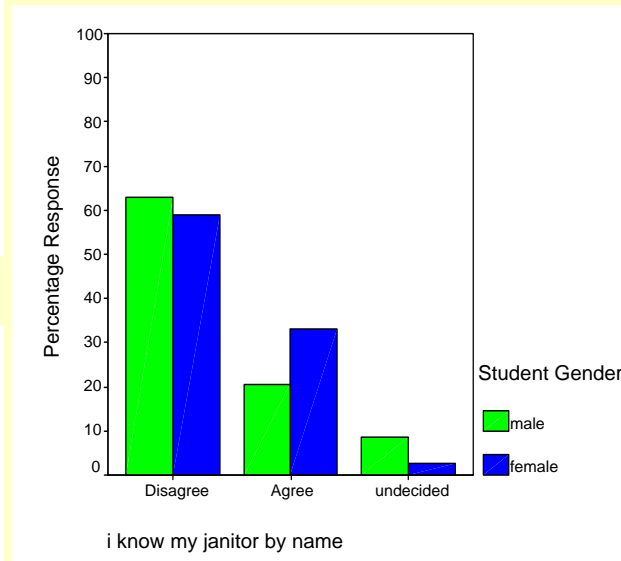
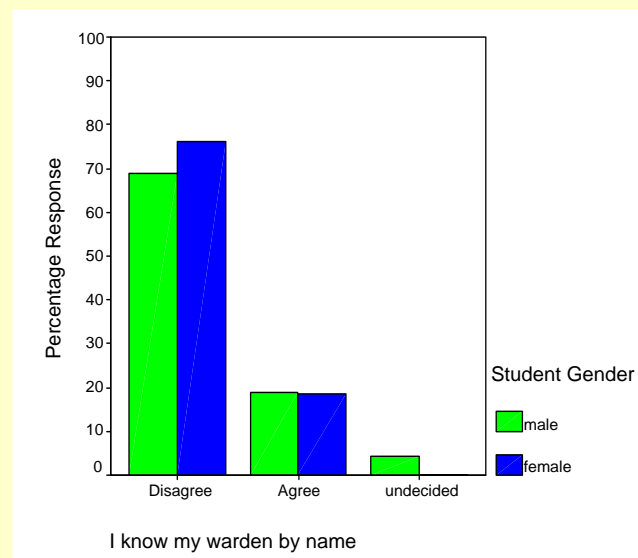


Fig. 11: I know my warden by name



HEALTH SERVICES

The University provides basic health care services to staff and students on campuses in Eldoret. Key to the provision of the services is access and client satisfaction. About 52% of the respondents agreed with the statement- *I can access health services at all times* (Fig. 12). However, 38% of men and similar number of women disagreed. Majority (51%) of the male respondents said they find *the staff at the University clinic friendly* as opposed to 50% of the females who indicated the contrary (Fig. 13).

Gender friendly health services are linked to one's level of satisfaction. In this regard, 49% of the women and 35% of men respondents agreed with the statement - *I can choose the staff I want to serve me by gender*. Out of 302 respondents, 34% disagreed and 23% were undecided (Fig. 14). This is an issue that needs follow up.

Fig. 12: I can access health services at all times

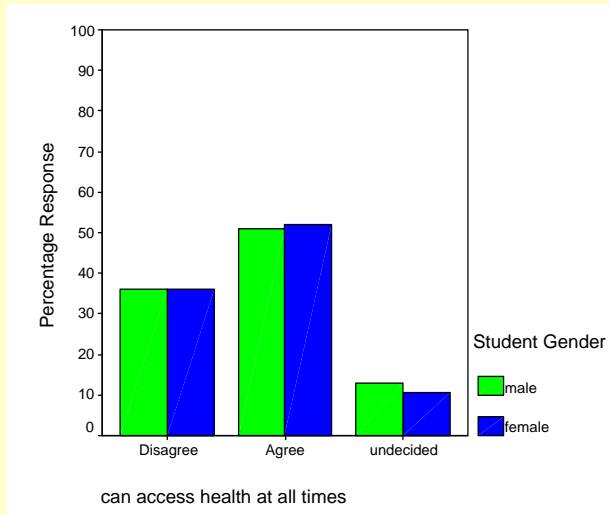
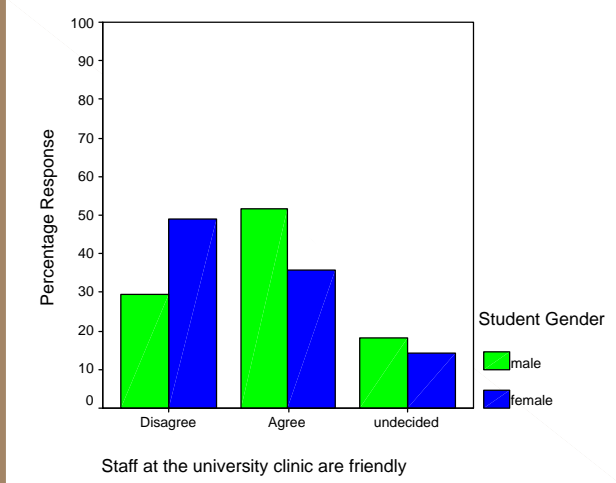


Fig. 13: Staff at the University clinics are friendly



SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT MU

Eleven items were designed to solicit information on sexual harassment. The statement, *sexual harassment among students is rampant on campus* elicited responses from 297 individuals. Majority agreed that sexual harassment (49%) is rampant whereas 37% disagreed. Out of the 145 who agreed, 60% were men and 40% were women. In addition, 40% of the women and 30% of the men disagreed; and 20% women and 10% men were non-committal (see Fig. 15).

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Fig. 14: I can choose the staff I want to serve me by gender

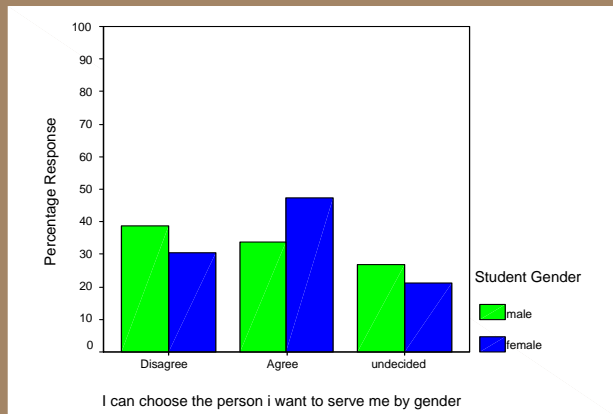
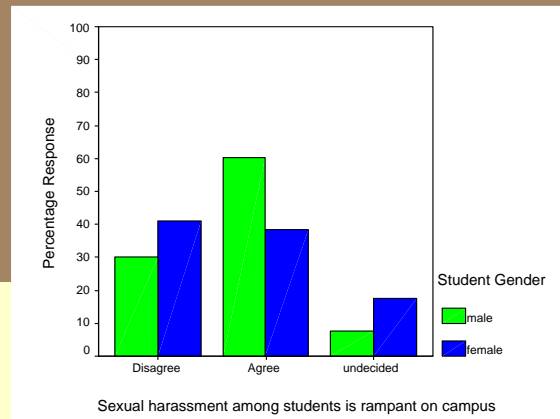


Fig. 15: Sexual harassment among students



General Observations and Conclusions

The information highlighted in this document should be viewed as indicators of some positive aspects and a number of challenges in MU. The positive and negative revelations need exploring further through research and intervention. The highlighted aspects, include safety of the study area, equal treatment at the department level, student-lecturer-academic-relations-SLAR; services provided by janitors and wardens, health services and gender based violence. Issues that need attention:

- 1. Safety at the study areas.** Need to find out what made the 41% of the women and 22% of men students say their study areas are not safe.
- 2. Equal treatment of men and women.** There is need for in-depth study because equal treatment of men and women in MU or lack of it largely defines the university culture and subcultures among students and students.
- 3. Student-Lecturer-Academic-Relations (SLAR).** There is need to establish the characteristics of the relationships.
- 4. Janitorial and warden services.** Janitors and wardens are meant to interact with students regularly. It is therefore alarming to note that more than 60% of the respondents do not know their janitors and wardens by name. There is need for wardens for example to establish a regular routine where they hold dialogues with students.
- 5. Health services.** The Health Units were rated highly but, there is need to transform them into gender friendly facilities.
- 6. Sexual harassment.** MU will be launching sexual harassment policy in 2008. There is need to explore and document the different forms of sexual harassment as experienced by students and staff.