



Gender Equity in Appointment of Principal Officers in University Administration: Implications for Implementation of Gender Policy in North-Central, Nigeria

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Abstract: The objective of this study is to find out gender equity in appointment of principal officers in university administration: implications for implementation of gender policy in North-Central, Nigeria. The study adopted both secondary and primary methods of data collection; hence it is both qualitative and quantitative. The secondary data were drawn from national universities commission (2019) statistic data. On the other hand, the primary data were drawn from the authors' observations and questionnaire administered to respondents. The population of this study comprises of all public universities in North-Central, Nigeria. Survey design method was employed. A simple size of 200 academic staff was selected from the population through simple sampling techniques. The Gender distribution questionnaire which was tagged (Gender Distribution of Principal Officers of Universities Questionnaire) was designed by the researchers and used for data collection. The questionnaire (GDPOUQ) was presented to experts in the area of Educational Research in the University of Abuja for face validation. Reliability of instrument was established by test retest reliability method with an index of 0.86. This procedure measured the degree of consistency overtime. A total of 200 copies of the questionnaire (GDPOUQ) were distributed out to the Academic staff in all the sampled public universities. Descriptive Statistics such as percentage distribution and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected. The result revealed that there are low female in the leadership (principal officers) positions of public universities of public universities in North-Central Nigeria. The study also identified poor women education, poor implementation of gender policy in term of employment in the universities, cultural factors, religion factor, political factors and patriarchal practice across the country's societies as factors responsible for low women leadership (principal officers) in public universities in North-Central Nigeria.

Keywords: Gender, Principal Officers, Public Universities.

Introduction

The University is the zenith of an educational system where high level manpower is trained for socio-economic and political growth of the nation. The training of teachers, civil servants, engineers, humanists, entrepreneurs, scientists and myriads of other personnel for every market economy is ensured by tertiary education (World Bank, 2002; Ofoegbu, & Hezekiah 2017; Ogunode, Ezema, & Olugbenga, 2022). The University is an educational system where high level manpower is trained for socio-economic and political growth of any nation. The leadership of a University plays invaluable roles in achieving academic excellence in dissemination and acquisition of universal knowledge,

values; functional, technical and scientific skills and competencies critical to global growth and development (Ofoegbu, &. Hezekiah 2017).

The objective of tertiary education (University education especially) according to National Policy on Education; Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN,2013) include: contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society; develop the intellectual capacity of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment; acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society; promote and encourage scholarship and community service; forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction (Ogunode 2020).

The realization of the objectives of the universities depends on availability of qualified leaders. The principal officers of university education system in Nigeria are referred to as academic and non-academic leaders appointed to head different section of the universities. The principal officers within the universities include vice chancellor, Registrar, Bursar and librarian. They are appointed to provide quality leadership in the university system. Schein (Chike-Okoli, 2009) defines leadership as a function of the relationship between the leader, the follower and the task situational characteristic. It is therefore the exercise of interpersonal influence between the leader and the followers with the purpose of utilizing meaningfully the available resources in an institution towards the realization of the goals of the organization. The overall goal of a University is the training and production of human capital who are the key drivers of contemporary global economy. The process of achieving this is efficient and effective teaching, research, community service and relationship.

A leader could be assessed by its substance, process, purpose and intent. Nwankwo (2014) added that leadership implies influencing, motivating and relating (communicating with people towards specific group goals). In University leadership, academic and non-academic staff could be motivated through guaranteed job security, academic freedom, regular payment of enhanced salaries, regular promotion of staff, and provision of modern pedagogical facilities and equipment, environment, conducive learning, scholarship opportunities and equal opportunities for male and female in leadership positions.

The gender distribution in the appointment of principal officers in the Nigerian public universities is an tissue of concern. Gender equity in recruitment and appointment in the various leadership positions is a catalyst for a balance development. Therefore, any form of discrimination in every public institution in Nigeria especially in the universities is contrary to the provision of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The 1999 constitution, Section 17 provides that the state social order is founded on the ideals of freedom, equality and justice. Section 15:2 expressly prohibits discrimination on the grounds of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties. Also, the Nigerian National Gender Policy was adopted officially in 2006, by the Federal Executive Council. This course of action was taken with the intent and purpose of solving the problem of women disempowerment, feminine poverty, gender inequality, and underdevelopment in the country. The goal of the National Gender Policy (NGP), is to eradicate poverty, achieve equality of the gender, and encourage inclusiveness in the process of governance and development.

The National Gender Policy's objectives for the implementation of gender equality policies embraces the promotion of "political leadership structure that is inclusive of women and men". The policy strategies includes; "advocate for the application of the 50-50 affirmative quota of the African Union at all levels. Promote greater involvement of women in political and executive appointments. Advocate for a comprehensive review of the Constitution to make it gender-sensitive"(p.57).Amadi (2017) observed that Affirmative Actions are positive steps adopted to include the excluded groups, in order to achieve equality in elective and appointive positions in government. Such groups includes women, certain categories of men, and youths, by increasing the number of female representatives at the political sphere. Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)'s Affirmative Action, advocates 35 per cent or at least one third of elective positions, to be kept for women. Japo (2013) submitted that it is most appropriate for the appointment of principal

officers in universities to be equitable among gender groups and not skewed in favour of any particular group of persons. Both male and female should have equal representation in the area of leadership position. This is because the male and female groups constitutes about equal percentage of the population of any nation. The female should be given the equal opportunity to be appointed in the various leadership positions of the universities.

There are many studies that have shown that women in school leaders perform better than men school leaders. For instance, the midline evaluation of the Tusome programme in Kenya finds students in female-led schools have higher scores in oral reading fluency for both English and Kiswahili than students in male-led schools (Freudenberger & Davis, 2017). Study in Lao People's Democratic Republic, discovered that women school leaders create positive teaching and learning environments where teachers and students report being more actively engaged. Compared to students attending male-led schools, students in female-led schools indicate their teachers are significantly more likely to assign homework, check their work, and teach concepts until all students achieve mastery (UNICEF Innocenti & Ministry of Education, Lao People's Democratic Republic, 2020 in Bergmann, Alban Conto and Brossard, 2022). Also, a study by Global School Leaders, (2021a) showed that Women in school leadership may also have a positive association with student well-being. Female school leaders have higher ability to support the well-being of their school community during the COVID-19 pandemic (Global School Leaders, 2021a).

The Nigerian female academic are also faced with challenges of been appointed as principal officers of the public universities despite the convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs),New Partnership for African Development(NEPAD), African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality and Copenhagen Declaration of the World Summit on Social Development (WSSD), among others. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) endorses affirmative action for promoting gender equality and the representation of women in elective offices on the basis of equality (National Gender Policy, 2006:13) and the National policy on gender equity. Jape (2013) did a study and discovered that there are more male teachers in the employment of the Bayelsa State government teaching in the secondary schools. Study by PASEC-CONFEMEN4, (2020) established in low- and middle-income countries established that there a positive association between women school leaders and student performance. On average across 14 Francophone African countries, learning outcomes³ for the sample of students in female-led primary schools are higher than those in male-led ones, for both mathematics and reading.

Women's representation in Nigeria's parliament showed that only 7.3 per cent (8 of 109) of Nigeria's senators are women while only 3.6 per cent (13 of 360) of the members of the House of Representatives are women (Premium time (2022). The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) released the final list of candidates for the 2023 polls. The list has only 374 women among the 4,223 candidates running for the 469 seats in the National Assembly: 109 in the Senate and 360 in the House of Representatives. Also, recent report by the Gender Strategy Advancement International (GSAI). Study revealed that women's political participation in Nigeria falls below the world and African continental standards. The data showed that Nigeria ranked 181 of 193 countries on the Gender Equality Index, for countries with low women representation in governance. This poor performance of woman in leadership position may be due to poor implementation of the various conversions and policies regarding gender equity in Nigeria especially in the universities. It is against this background that this study aimed to find out gender equity in appointment of principal officers in university administration: implications for implementation of gender policy in North-Central, Nigeria.

The objectives of this study are on gender equity in appointment of principal officers in university administration: implications for implementation of gender policy in North-Central, Nigeria. The sub-objective includes:

1. To find out the gender distribution of principal officers of public universities in North-Central, Nigeria;

2. To find out factors responsible for low women leadership in public universities in North-Central, Nigeria.

Based on this research objectives, the researchers formulated the following research questions to address the objectives:

1. What is the gender distribution of principal officers of public universities in North-Central, Nigeria?
2. What are the factors responsible for Gender appointment of principal officers in public universities in North-Central, Nigeria?

Method

The study adopted both secondary and primary methods of data collection; hence it is both qualitative and quantitative. The secondary data were drawn from national universities commission (2019) statistic data on gender distribution. On the other hand, the primary data were drawn from the authors' observations and questionnaire administered to respondents. The population of this study comprises of all 15 public universities in North-Central, Nigeria. Survey design method was employed. A simple size of 200 academic staff was selected from the population through simple sampling techniques. The Questionnaire had two section. Section (A) and Section (B). Section A collected information on bio-data while section B collected information on the subject matter. The Gender distribution Questionnaire which was tagged Gender Distribution of Principal Officers of Universities Questionnaire (GDPOUQ) was designed by the researchers and used for data collection. The GDPOUQ was presented to experts in the area of Educational Research in the University of Abuja for face validation. Reliability of instrument was established by test retest reliability method with an index of 0.86. This procedure measured the degree of consistency overtime. A total of 200 copies of the GDPOUQ was distributed out to the Academic staff in all the sampled public universities. Descriptive Statistics such as percentage distribution and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected.

Data Analysis

Research Question One: What is the gender distribution of principal officers of public universities in North-Central, Nigeria?

Table One: Gender Distribution of Principal Officers of Public Universities in North-Central, Nigeria
N=200

Position	No. Male	Percentage	No. of Female	Percentage
Pro. Chancellor	15	100	0	0
Vice Chancellor	15	100	0	0
Registrar	9	60	6	40
Bursar	13	86	2	14
Liberian	11	74	4	26
Mean	13	84	2	16

The analysis on table one reveal that in the north Central 84% of the appointments of principal officers in the university is in favour of the male, while female occupy only 16 %. Also, the table indicated that 100 % of male are occupying the position of Pro-Chancellors of public universities in North-central Nigeria. This means that 100% position of Vice Chancellors in the public universities in North-central Nigeria are occupied by male only.

The result obtained from the table one also disclosed that 100 % of male are occupying the position of Vice Chancellors of public universities in North-central Nigeria. This result implies that 100% of male are occupying the position of Vice Chancellors in the public universities in North central Nigeria.

In addition, the result revealed that 60% male are occupying the position of Registrar of public universities in North-central Nigeria while only 40% of female are occupying the positions of Registrar in the zone. The result obtained showed that the majorities of gender occupying the position of Registrar are male in the public universities in North-central Nigeria.

Result collected from the table one disclosed that 80% of male are occupying the position of Bursar while 20% of female are currently occupying the position of Bursar in public universities in North-central Nigeria. This result showed that the majorities of people occupying the position of Bursar in the public universities in North-central Nigeria are male.

From the table one, 74% of male are occupying the position of Librarian while 26% of female are also occupying the positions of Librarian in public universities in North-central Nigeria. This result showed that the majorities of people occupying the position of Librarian in the public universities in North central Nigeria are male.

Research Question Two: What are the factors responsible for Gender appointment of principal officers in public universities in North-Central, Nigeria?

Table Two: factors responsible for Gender distribution in the Appointment of Principal Officers in Public Universities in North-central, Nigeria

<p>Factors</p> <p>X Decision</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poor women education 3.4 Agreed 2. Poor implementation of gender policy in term of employment 3.1 Agreed 3. Cultural Factors 2.9 Agreed 4. Religion Factor 3.3 Agreed 5. Political factor 3.1 Agreed 6. Patriarchal practice across the country's societies 3.5 Agreed <p>Total Grant Mean</p>

Result from table two shown that the respondents agreed with 3.4, 3.1, 2.9, 3.3, 3.1 and 3.5 mean scores which is greater than the cut-off point of 2.5. This means that poor women education, poor implementation of gender policy in term of employment in the universities, cultural factors, religious factor, political and patriarchal practice across the country's societies factors are the factors responsible for low number of female in leadership position (Principal Officers) of Public Universities in North-central, Nigeria.

Discussion

The result collected revealed low women in the leadership positions (principal officers) of public universities in North-central, Nigeria. The result also disclosed that poor women education, poor implementation of gender policy in term of employment in the universities, cultural factors, religious factor, political and patriarchal practice across the country's societies factors are the factors responsible for low number of female in leadership position (Principal Officers) of Public Universities in North-central, Nigeria.

The result shows low women in the leadership positions of public universities. This result is in agreement with the findings of Jude (2019) that concluded that male dominated the leadership positions of most public universities in Nigeria. Amadi (2017) concluded that Nigeria has recorded low female participation in leadership, and rulership, as well as in politics or governance, in her journey towards attaining the democratic tenets of equality in participation.

Also, the result disclosed that poor women education, poor implementation of gender policy in term of employment in the universities, cultural factors, religion factor and political factors are the factors responsible for low number of female in leadership position (Principal Officers) of Public Universities collaborates with the discovered of Jude (2019) identified patriarchal practice across the country's societies, inherent culture, poor implementation of gender policies as factors that has hindered women leadership position in Nigeria. Japo (2013; Nakpodia & James, Undated; Ogunode, 2020; Ogunode Lawan & Yusuf, 2021; Ogunode, Ahmed, Yahaya 2021; Ogunode & Ahmed, 2021) identified factors that could contribute to this gender inequality in the educational institutions to include poor funding, poor implementation of gender policies, cultural factors, religious factor and early marriage.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The objective of this study is to find out gender equity in appointment of principal officers in university administration: implications for implementation of gender policy in North-Central, Nigeria.

1) The result revealed that there is low women appointment in the principal officers of public universities in North central Nigeria and this is limiting women participation in university administration in the zone. The result showed that the implementation of gender policy in the public universities in North central Nigeria is poorly implemented.

2) The result also concluded that the factors responsible for low women leadership (principal officers) include poor women education, poor implementation of gender policy in term of employment in the universities, cultural factors, religious factor, political factor, and patriarchal practice across the country's societies. These factors are responsible for low number of female in leadership position (Principal Officers) of Public Universities in North-central, Nigeria.

Based on this finding, the following are recommended:

1. The federal, state government and university management should ensure gender policy in term of employment in the universities are implemented fully;
2. The government should develop policies to address all barriers preventing women in academia from becoming principal officers in the universities. The only solution was for the government to make adequate provision for the training of the girl-child to colleges of education and universities where they can be trained to become female teachers in tertiary institutions.

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