

From exclusion to discrimination: Gender inequality in the senior management of Nigerian universities

Christiana O. Eboiyehi, Ike Fayomi and Friday A. Eboiyehi

Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria

The study examined factors encouraging gender inequality in university management in three selected universities in Southwestern Nigeria. This was with a view to assessing women's participation in the senior management positions in the region. Data were obtained from primary and secondary sources. A questionnaire was administered to senior academic and non academic staff in Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; and Redeemer's University, Mowe. Out of the 222 copies of the questionnaire administered, 192 copies (86.5%) were retrieved. Interviews were also conducted with the most senior staff in the selected universities to elicit information on senior management positions held by women compared to men. The data were analysed using inferential statistics and content analysis. The results showed that there was low representation of women (29.2%) compared to men (70.8%) in senior management positions in the selected universities. This was attributed to inadequate numbers of qualified women (42.6%), patriarchy (14.9%), domestic and family demands (10.6%), socio-cultural beliefs that leadership is the prerogative of men (9.6%), lack of encouragement and support (8.5%), lack of leadership skills (7.5%) and poor mentorship (2.1%), among other factors. Policy implications of the study are discussed.

Introduction

Across Africa, women and men often experience different opportunities, conditions and privileges; they earn different wages, do not have the same access to education and are not always equal before the law (Africa Gender Equality Index, 2015).

Over the past decades, the presence and status of women in paid employment has improved significantly. However, the progression of professional women into positions of management has been slow (Ogbogu & Bisiriyu, 2012). The exclusion and discrimination of women from participation in major decision making processes has been documented (Adegun, 2012; Aina, Ogunlade, Ilesanmi & Afolabi, (2015). These studies have shown that globally, there are relatively few women in senior management positions in work places including the universities (Abiodun-Oyebanji & Olaleye, 2011). Recent data from the Commonwealth Universities have also indicated that women comprised only 24% of full time academic staff (Olaogun, Adebayo & Oluyemo, 2015). Egunjobi (2008) attributed this gender equity gap to the fact that, like most occupations, academic profession at the beginning of modern times was a single sex profession.

While the under-representation of women in university senior management positions remains a challenge across the globe, the situation in many African universities appears to be particularly challenging, with patriarchal practices having serious manifestations in institutions of higher learning (Olaogun et al, 2015). Available evidence has shown that in African universities, women constitute only 29 percent of academic staff, compared to the global figure of 41 percent (Boakye, 2011). The smallest percentages were found in Ghana

9.5%, Nigeria 13.6%, Tanzania 11.0%, Zambia 10.9% and Zimbabwe 9.8% (Olaogun et al, 2015). Historically, senior management and leadership positions in Africa have always carried the notion of masculinity and the belief that men make better managers and leaders than women (Kiamba, 2006). Thus, traditional African societies have always recognised men as leaders and managers and their leadership roles and behaviours in war, hunting, business and government (Panigrahi, 2013; Gobena, 2014). It is therefore not surprising that the traditional societal conventions regarding gender and management have always excluded women (Madsen, 2012; Oti, 2013; Maürtin-Cairncross, 2014). Culturally, in many African societies, it is believed that men lead and women follow (Kiamba, 2006). It is therefore, culturally acceptable to find in rural African villages, men literally walk ahead of the women. Thus, gender equity gaps in the university management in Africa are linked to pre-colonial patriarchal arrangements whereby occupational skills within the family are transmitted mostly to boys, while skills relating to reproductive functions are transmitted to girls (Aina et al., 2015).

In Nigeria, most people are still reluctant to accept women for senior management positions, despite the fact that there are qualified women for such positions. In this economy, a wide range of customs, traditions and cultural stereotypes are used to justify exclusion of women from negotiating tables (Porter, 2007). Thus, female participation in policy-making bodies in the Nigerian university system is very limited. According to Ogbogu (2011), women in Nigerian universities hold less than 35% of academic posts, and are mainly represented in the lower and middle level academic and administrative positions. She affirmed that their participation relative to men decreases at higher levels. Data from University of Ilorin showed male/female ratio of 88.4 % to 11.6% (Olaogun et al, 2015). At the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, it was 73% to 27%; at Federal University Technology, Owerri 83% to 17%; at Enugu State University of Technology 66% to 34%; at Imo State University 87% to 13%; at University of Ibadan 82% to 18%; at University of Calabar 82% to 18%; and at University of Port Harcourt 88% to 12% (Nwajiuba, 2011; Adebayo & Akanle, 2014), while in Obafemi Awolowo University, it was 82% to 18% (Odeyinka, Eboiyehi and Okorie, 2015, ongoing).

Aina et al (2015) attributed the poor representation of female professors and female chief lecturers at professorial level to poor representation in the management cadre. This assertion is supported by the observation that since the establishment of the first university in Nigeria in 1948, only 12 women have so far occupied the position of university vice-chancellor in over 138 federal, state and private universities (*The Punch News*, 2015). They include Grace Alele-Williams (University of Benin); Jadesola Akande (Lagos State University); Aize Imoukhome Obayan (Covenant University); Comfort Memfin Ekpo (University of Uyo); Oluyemisi Oluremi Obilade (Tai Solarin University of Education); Ekanem Ikpi Braide (Federal University of Lafia); Rosemund Dienne Green-Osahogulu (Ignatius Ajuru University of Education); Margee M. Ensign (American University of Nigeria); Charity Angya (Benue State University); Cordelia Ainenehi Agbebaku (Ambrose Alli University); Juliet Elu (Gregory University); and Sidi Osho (Afe Babalola University). Except for a few universities, other management positions like provosts of colleges, deans, heads of departments, directors, registrars, bursars and librarians have also been dominated by men (Abiodun-Oyebanji & Olaleye, 2011).

Over the years, the issues relating to exclusion and discrimination of women from major decision making processes and the persistent inequalities in dominant organisations of knowledge production have been central points of discussion in many national, regional and international forums (Olaogun et al, 2015). These forums sought opportunities for women to contribute meaningfully to development and be part of policy-making bodies (Olaogun et al, 2015). These concerns have also received much attention by the United Nations and its specialised agencies. The principle of equality of men and women was recognised in 1945 in the United Nations Charter, and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. However, many global conferences, such as the Cairo Conference on Population and Development (1994), the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) and World Summit for Social Development (1995), have observed that despite the progress made globally in improving the status of women, gender disparities still exist, especially in regard to participation in executive positions in most African countries.

A program to examine the problem of the small numbers of women in policy making positions and top executive posts was initiated at a meeting in Toronto in 1985 by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). As a follow up, the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and CIDA held local workshops in Bombay, India, in 1986 and 1988, for the training of potential women leaders in the skills of university management. The Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the Millennium Development Goals (2000) and the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (2004) and recently, the National Universities Commission (NUC) have also made attempts to integrate human rights and equity issues into its structural reforms of Nigeria's higher education system, so as to correct structural imbalances and ensure gender equality in the University system (Okebukola, 2002; Gberevbie et al., 2014; Olaogun et al., 2015). All these were devised to help eliminate gender inequality in human society.

Although Nigeria is a signatory to many of these international declarations, in establishing the legal rights and equality of men and women, available literature suggests that the level of women participating in university senior management positions is still dismally low, as most of the senior management positions are occupied by men (Abiodun-Oyebanji & Olaleye, 2011). While there is a general impression that women's participation in senior management positions is low, little research has been conducted specifically to address the issue. The goal of this study therefore, was to investigate factors responsible for gender inequality and women's under-representation in senior management in the selected universities, and what could be done to address the issue in Nigerian universities. The specific objectives were to:

- i. compare male and female in senior management in the selected universities;
- ii. examine the factors responsible for women's low participation in senior management positions in the selected universities; and
- iii. make some recommendations on how to correct the gender imbalance in senior management in the selected universities.

Literature review

Universities are established essentially to attain the objectives of provision of quality services to enhance the living standard of the people in any society. To achieve these objectives, competent employees whether males or females, are needed as universities are believed to be liberal and open-minded to support social movements that encourage the principles of democracy and social justice particularly, as it relates to governance (Ogbogu & Bisiriyu, 2012). According to Gberevbie et al. (2014), availability of quality management in terms of skills, education and experience that avoids gender discrimination of any kind determines organisational effectiveness. However, there is a natural gender role distinction all over the world, which has created gaps in opportunities between men and women (Nwajiuba, 2011; Gobena, 2014). Olaogun et al. (2015) argued that though gender discrimination in universities is a worldwide phenomenon, it is more common in Africa with its patriarchal traditions that have serious repercussions in higher institutions.

A number of other studies have revealed that in the early part of twentieth century, male dominance in senior management positions was apparent in virtually all universities including those in Europe and America. For example, a study titled *Status of Women at Iowa State University* (Task Force on Data Analysis of University Committee on Women, 2002) reported that women were under-represented at the centres of management power in that university. The study found that there were no women in Iowa State University's leadership positions (i.e. President, Provost, Vice Provost for Research and Advanced Studies/ Dean of the Graduate College, Vice Provost for Extension, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs, Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice President for Business and Finance). Of eight Academic Deans at Iowa State University, only 2 were women (Agriculture, and Family and Consumer Sciences), and only eight of 56 departments (14%) were chaired by women.

A similar study conducted by UNESCO (2006) on African universities also indicated that majority of senior management positions were held by men in 90 percent of African universities covered by the study. Same results were also established in institutions where 50 percent of the staff was women, such as in the case of Lesotho (UNESCO, 2006). Likewise, Egunjobi (2008) found that out of 17 Commonwealth African countries sampled in 2002, only seven had over 20 percent women academic staff at senior lecturer level and above in their universities. Morley et al. (2005:41) reported that in four Commonwealth universities (Cape Town, Dar es Salaam, Ibadan and Makerere), the percentage of women at professor, associate professor and senior lecturer levels was decidedly lower than the percentage of men. Given the low number of women in policy decision making bodies in African universities, the capacity of women academics and administrators to influence change in a less-than friendly environment is absent or weak (Assié-Lumumba, 2006).

The situation analysis report on gender issues at the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) also showed that female participation in decision making is very limited (*OAU Gender Policy*, 2009). Of the 19 statutory committees, male representation is approximately 10 times that of female on 6 committees, and 5 times on 5 committees. The gender gap is

widest in Senate where the ratio is 19 males to 1 female (Soetan, Eboiyehi, Ilesanmi & Taiwo, 2015). Of the 206 professors at OAU in 2002, only 4.3% were females. Up to 2002, there was no female Dean of Faculty and only one Vice Dean was a female. Of the 68 Heads of academic departments, 15.0% were female, the majority as Acting Heads. Recent data from the same institution in 2015 indicated that there was no significant improvement in the proportion of female academic staff during 2012/2013 academic sessions (Odeyinka, Eboiyehi & Okorie, 2015, ongoing). The results showed that of the 8,530 academic staff in the university between 2003/2004 and 2012/2013 academic sessions, only 1,921 were females with a ratio of 82% males to 18% females. The data also revealed a reduction of the percentage of female professors from 10% in 2001/2002 academic session to 8% in 2012/2013 academic year. There was no female professor in the Faculties of Administration, Environmental Designs and Management (EDM), Basic Medical Sciences, and Sciences (Odeyinka et al., ongoing). Olaogun (2015) attributed this gender equity gap in the Nigerian tertiary education system to a natural gender role distinction across traditional cultural groups that limit women's ability to "to go up the ladder".

The structural or institutional factors model holds that it is the disadvantageous position of women in the workplace which shapes and defines the behaviour and positions of women. Such disadvantages include: low numbers, little power and limited access to resources (Madsen, 2012; Maürtin-Cairncross, 2014). The fundamental argument here is that men and women are equally capable of and committed to assuming positions of senior management. Among the identified structural issues that impinge on women negatively are discriminatory appointment and promotion practices; male resistance to women in management positions; absence of policies and legislations to ensure participation of women, and limited opportunities for management training (Madsen, 2012; Maürtin-Cairncross, 2014). Rice (2012) argued that elements associated with masculinity are valued over elements associated with femininity; men are placed in "advantageous" jobs that advantage them in access to resources and authority. She believed argued that to advance in managerial careers, men utilised these privileges and support to get ahead because they are much better in making these attributes their own innate capabilities with power and resources in hand, and that this arrangement has enabled men in their advantageous roles to progress up the corporate ladder. She therefore suggested that the structural factors such as the presence of organisational guidance, good mentoring systems, proper staff development programs for women, transparent appointment and promotion procedures, support services for women, access to information technology, and flexible work schedules will affect women's participation positively.

Smulders (1998), Bassey, Ojua, Archibong and Bassey (2012) and *Africa Gender Equality Index* (African Development Bank Group, 2015) have explored the cultural factors which link gender factors and organisational structure factors. Their analyses were concerned with the social construction of gender and the assignment of specific roles, responsibilities and expectations to women and men. Smulders (1998) affirmed that "the gender-based roles, irrelevant to the work place, are carried into the work place and kept in place because the actors involved, both dominant and subordinate, subscribe to social and

organization reality” (p.50). She is of the view that cultural factors lead to stereotypical views about women’s abilities within the cultural context, and the belief that senior management positions are exclusively for men and relegates women to secondary roles as mothers, caregivers and nurturers of children (Ogbogu, 2012; Aina, et al., 2015).

Recently, the Millennium declaration overtly recognised the equal rights and opportunities for men and women (Adebayo & Akanle, 2014). In Nigeria, issues bordering on inequality and inequity as well as all forms of discrimination against women also received the attention of the government. For instance, one of the major foci of the 1975 UN Nigeria Assembly Conference was a critical examination of the problems and challenges that impede active participation of women in education, socio-political and economic development, where intellectuals and policy makers brainstormed on the problems militating against active participation of women in the global development agenda (Adegun, 2012). In recognition of the ills of gender discrimination, the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides for non-discrimination and equality between the two sexes as basis for societal development (Adegun, 2012; Gbadamosi, 2014). The National Gender Policy (2007), which replaced and reinforced the previous 1999 constitution also makes provision for equality of women, guarantees the rights and protects the interest of women, considering the religious, traditional and cultural norms that govern the society. All these protocols recognise gender discrimination as a phenomenon that has negative implications on development of organisations and people. It deprives the rights of the individual that could have contributed positively to the development of the organisation and society at large (Olaogun, 2015).

While there is a global trend towards more women academics in universities, women are still under-represented at higher levels and in positions of power in Nigerian universities, as most women are employed in the lowest positions in the academy (Ogbogu, 2011; Olaogun, 2015). Thus, despite these anti-discrimination protocols in Nigeria, women still remain under-represented in many occupations, most noticeably in high level positions. This phenomenon is seen at its most extreme when composition of management boards is considered. This is because the history of development policies in Nigeria has a lackadaisical attitude towards the gender variable. For instance, the first two decades of development planning in Nigeria from 1963 when it became a republic, was largely characterised by gender-blind and gender-insensitive development policies (Ejumudo, 2013). In the same vein, since the 1980s, Nigeria has embraced gender-based economic policies where women’s interests were subsumed within the national interest and gender sensitivity was almost insignificant and a non-issue.

Methodology

The study was conducted in southwestern Nigeria, which is one of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. Currently it has the highest number of universities in Nigeria with 34 universities (6 federal, 9 state and 19 private). The zone is made up six states comprising Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti and Ondo. Ogun, Osun and Ondo States were randomly selected for the study. Three universities in the selected states were randomly chosen using stratified random sampling procedures. From each stratum, Obafemi Awolowo

University (OAU), Ile-Ife (federal university), Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko (AAUA) (state university), and Redeemer's University (RUN), Mowe (private university) were chosen. These universities were chosen based on the fact that they are among the well-established universities in the zone. The study population comprised males and females in the ranks of senior lecturership and above, and senior non academic staff who had occupied or were occupying senior management positions in the selected universities at the time of data collection. The purpose was to determine the proportion of women in senior management positions compared to their male counterparts. A stratified random sampling technique was used for selecting 116 staff out of 1,153 in OAU, 62 out of 620 in AAUA, and 44 out of 440 in RUN, using senior academic and non academic staff for stratification with a sample fraction of 10%. Visits were made to the three selected universities on a number of occasions, namely January 16-19, 2013; January 25-28, 2013 and February 6-9, 2013 during which familiarisation with the study environment was made. The questionnaire and interview guide for the study were designed in March, 2013 after which pretests were conducted as follows: OAU, Ile-Ife (4-6 April 2013); AAUA (11-13 April 2013) and RUN, Mowe (25-27 April 2013). After the pre-tests, both the questionnaire and interview guides were revised and corrected based on comments from respondents and interviewees before the commencement of fieldwork (Appendix B and Appendix C). Copies of the questionnaires were administered to academic and non-academic staff while interviews were conducted with Principal Officials; Provost of Colleges, Deans of Faculties; Heads of Department and Directors of Centres (Appendix A).

Methods

Both primary and secondary data were used to realise the objectives of the study. Primary data were sourced through questionnaire administration and interviews, while the secondary data were obtained from relevant books, journals and Internet sourced materials.

The questionnaire comprising 48 open-ended and Likert scale questions (Appendix B) was administered to 222 senior academic and senior non academic staff, who were currently or had previously occupied senior management positions in the selected universities. Data relating to socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, gender composition of Principal Officers, senior management position ever held or currently being held by gender, gender composition of senior management and factors responsible for low representation of women in senior management among others were collected. Out of a total of 222 copies of the questionnaires administered, 192 copies (86.5%) were retrieved (94 from OAU, 58 from AAUA and 40 from RUN). With the aid of SPSS software, the data generated were analysed using simple percentages and frequency counts and presented in tables.

Nineteen (19) interviews (Appendix C) were conducted with 5 Principal Officers (3 males and 2 females); 2 Provosts (male only); 9 Deans/HoDs (6 males and 3 females) and 4 Directors of Centres (3 males and 1 female) to further understand gender inequality in the senior management in the selected universities. Questions concerning factors responsible

for women's under-representation in senior management positions in the selected universities were asked. Where an interviewee's permission was obtained, the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Findings

Table 1: Frequency distribution of respondents by institutions and gender

Ownership of institution	Questionnaires administered	Questionnaires retrieved	Academic staff		Administrative staff		
			Male	Female	Male	Female	
Federal	OAU	116	94 (49.0%)	33 (17.2%)	19 (9.9%)	20 (10.4%)	22 (11.5%)
State	AAUA	62	58 (30.2%)	23 (12.0%)	18 (9.4%)	9 (4.7%)	8 (4.2%)
Private	RUN	44	40 (20.8%)	20 (10.4%)	8 (4.2%)	3 (1.6%)	9 (4.7%)
Total		222 (100.0%)	192 (86.5%)	76 (39.6%)	45 (23.4%)	32 (16.7)	39 (20.3%)

Source: Fieldwork, October 2013.

Table 1 shows respondents' institutions by gender. Almost half of the questionnaires (49.0%) were retrieved from OAU with 17.2% from male academic staff, 9.9% female academic staff, 10.4% male non academic staff and 11.5% female non academic staff. This was followed by AAUA with (30.2%) comprising 12.0%, 9.4%, 4.7% and 4.2% of questionnaires retrieved from male academic staff, female academic staff, male non academic staff and female academic staff respectively. Only 20.8% of the questionnaires were retrieved from RUN. Out of this, 10.4% was from male academic staff, 4.2% from female academic staff 1.6% from male non academic staff and female non academic staff (4.7%). These results are not surprising as OAU has the highest total number of academic and non academic staff, 1153 compared to 620 in AAUA and 440 in RUN.

Table 2: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristics		OAU		AAUA		RUN	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Gender	Male	50	53.2	49	84.5	23	57.5
	Female	44	46.8	9	15.5	16	40.0
	No response	-	-	-	-	1	2.5
	Total	94	100.0	58	100.0	40	100.0
Religion	Christianity	64	68.1	47	81.1	38	95.0
	Islam	29	30.8	10	17.2	1	2.5
	Others	1	1.1	1	1.7	1	2.5
	Total	94	100.0	58	100.0	40	100.0
Qualification by gender		Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Higher National Dipl.		-	-	2 (3.4%)	-	-	2 (5.0%)
First degree		4 (4.3%)	6 (6.4%)	2 (3.4%)	7 (12.1%)	9 (22.5%)	5 (12.5%)
Masters		6 (6.4%)	2 (2.1%)	8 (13.8%)	3 (5.2%)	1 (2.5%)	-
MPhil		10 (10.6%)	2 (2.1%)	14 (24.1%)	3 (5.2%)	3 (7.5%)	-
PhD		54 (57.4%)	10 (10.6%)	15 (25.9%)	4 (6.9%)	15 (37.5%)	5 (12.5%)
Total		74 (78.7%)	20 (21.2%)	41 (70.7%)	17 (29.3%)	28 (70.0%)	12 (30.0%)

Source: Fieldwork, October 2013.

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in the selected universities indicate that in OAU, 53.2% of the respondents are males while 46.8% are females (Table 2). Of the 58 respondents in AAUA, 84.5% are males while 15.5% are females and in RUN, 57.5% are males while 40.0% are females. RUN has the highest percentage of Christians with 95.0%, followed by AAUA (81.1%) and OAU (68.1%). RUN has the least percentage of Muslims (2.5%), followed by AAUA (17.2%) and OAU (30.8%). Other religions such as the African traditional religion are not strong factors in the selected universities and those who subscribed to them are few (1.1% in OAU, 1.7% in AAUA and 2.5% in RUN). Highest academic qualification obtained by respondents by gender revealed that males constituted the highest proportions of those with MPhil, PhD and Masters degrees. In OAU 78.7% of males had a first degree and above while only 21.2% of the female respondents obtained such degree. Similar results were obtained in AAUA where majority of male respondents (70.7%) compared to 29.3% of female respondents had such qualifications. In RUN, male respondents (70.0%) had first degree and above, while only 30.0% females had first degree and above. Table 2 also shows that only a small proportion of females in the selected universities held higher degrees, 10.6% in OAU, 6.9% in AAUA and 12.5% in RUN.

Table 3: Gender composition of principal officers in the selected universities by gender

Principal officers	OAU				AAUA				RUN				Total	%
	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%		
	4	66.7	2	33.3	5	100	-	0.0	2	50.0	2	50.0	14	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, October 2013.

Table 3 shows that the proportion of female Principal Officers (POs) in the selected universities was low. The female gender occupies the back bench among the POs, whose functions are policy formulation, implementation and decision-making processes in the university. All the principal officers in AAUA (100%) were males, in OAU 66.7% of POs were males, while in RUN both male and female POs were equal, 50.0%.

Table 4: Responses as to whether respondents have ever held or are currently holding senior management positions

Question	Response	OAU				AAUA					RUN					
		Freq	M	%	F	%	Freq	M	%	F	%	Freq	M	%	F	%
Ever held senior management position?	Yes	68	39	57.4	29	42.6	52	48	92.3	4	7.7	23	18	78.3	5	21.7
	No	25	11	44	14	56	5	1	20	4	80	17	6	35.3	11	64.7
	No resp.	1	-	-	1	100	1	-	-	1	100	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	94	50		44		58	49		9		40	24		16	
Currently hold senior management position?	Yes	66	40	60.6	26	39.4	52	51	98.1	1	1.9	18	12	66.7	6	33.3
	No	28	12	42.9	16	57.1	6	1	16.7	5	83.3	22	10	45.5	12	54.5
	Total	94	52		42		58	52		6		40	22		16	

Source: Fieldwork, October 2013.

Table 4 shows that the proportion of the female respondents who were at some time or currently in a senior management was low. In AAUA, 93.3% of males compared to 7.7% females ever held management positions. This is similar to 78.3% males in RUN compared to 21.7% females, and 57.4% males in OAU compared to 42.6% females ever held such positions. Overwhelmingly, 98.1% of males compared to 1.9% of females in AAUA; 66.7% males to 33.3% females in RUN and 60.6% males to 39.4% females in OAU were currently occupying senior management positions.

Table 5: Gender composition of senior management

Management cadre	OAU					AAUA					RUN				
	Freq	M	%	F	%	Freq	M	%	F	%	Freq	M	%	F	%
VC	-	1	100	-	-	1	1	100	-	-	1	1	100	-	-
DVCs	-	2	100	-	-	1	1	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deans	12	8	66.7	4	33.3	5	5	100	-	-	4	4	100	-	-
Directors	13	8	61.5	5	38.5	9	9	100	-	-	1	-	-	1	100
HoDs	14	12	85.7	2	14.3	5	4	80.0	1	20.0	7	7	100	-	-
Acting HoD	8	3	37.5	5	62.5	23	23	100	-	-	1	1	100	-	-
Others	21	8	38.1	13	61.9	8	5	62.5	3	37.5	9	5	55.6	4	44.4
Total	68	39	57.4	29	42.6	52	48	92.3	4	7.7	23	18	78.3	5	21.7

Source: Fieldwork, October 2013.

The percentage distribution of respondents in senior management positions by gender indicated that in OAU, AAUA and RUN, the positions of Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor were occupied by men (Table 5). All the Deans of Faculties in AAUA and RUN were also males while in OAU, 66.7% of males were Deans of Faculties. Female HoDs in OAU was 14.3%, AAUA (20.0%) while all the HoDs in RUN were males. Apart from OAU with 62.5% of female Acting HoDs, all the Acting HoDs in AAUA and RUN were males. The only area where women were dominant in OAU is the administrative section with 61.9%. Such positions include faculty officers, personnel officers, finance officers and so on.

Table 6: Factors responsible for low representation of women in senior management

Factors	OAU		AAUA		RUN		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Lack of leadership skills	3	10.0	4	8.9	-	-	7	7.5
Lack basic educational qualification	13	43.3	17	37.8	10	52.6	40	42.6
Domestic/family demands	9	30.0	1	2.2	-	-	10	10.6
Male dominance	3	10.0	6	13.3	5	26.3	14	14.9
Lack encouragement and support	-	-	7	15.6	1	5.3	8	8.5
Cultural beliefs	2	6.7	4	8.9	3	15.8	9	9.6
Laziness and lack of ambition	-	-	2	4.4	-	-	2	2.1
Women are too emotional	-	-	2	4.4	-	-	2	2.1
Poor mentorship	-	-	2	4.4	-	-	2	2.1
Total	30	100.0	45	100.0	19	100.0	94	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, October 2013.

Table 6 shows factors identified as responsible for low representation of women in senior management positions in the selected universities. In the three universities, 42.6 % of the respondents (i.e. 43.3% in OAU; 37.8% in AAUA and 52.6% in RUN) identified lack of basic educational qualifications as a major factor. About 14.9% of the total respondents (10.0% in OAU, 13.3% in AAUA and 26.3% in RUN) attributed it to male dominance, while 10.6% of the respondents mentioned family demands. Other factors identified by the respondents in the three universities included socio-cultural/religious beliefs which saw senior management as the prerogative of men (9.6%), lack of encouragement from husbands and society (8.5%) and lack of women's leadership skills (7.5%), laziness/lack of ambition on the part of women (2.1%), women being too emotional to handle senior management jobs (2.1%) and poor mentorship (2.1%).

Interviews

Data from interviews corroborated the questionnaire findings. According to a male Principal Officer in AAUA:

Here, women are under-represented in senior management positions. Out of the four Principal Officers, none is a woman. There is no female provost, no female Dean and no female Director except one female HOD in the Faculty of Education. If women are put in such sensitive positions, they will not perform. Some of them reject such positions because they feel such positions are meant for men. This may be due to the way society socialises male and female children.

A female Principal Officer in RUN affirmed:

We have a few numbers of HODs, Deans, and Directors that are women. The University is very young compared to others. When we started, majority of those who applied for teaching and administrative jobs were men. Since its inception, we have not had a female Vice-chancellor and Librarian except for the posts of the Registrar and Bursar. In this current academic session, there is no female Dean and female HOD. Over 80% of our professors are males.

Yet, another interviewee in AAUA said:

There are so many obstacles working against women's career advancement in this university. The major one is the socio-cultural belief that men are born leaders and women are their subordinates. That is why most women are shying away from leadership positions. Furthermore, no man wants to work under a woman. Lack of educational qualification is responsible for the under-representation of women in these positions.

Supporting this view, a male interviewee in OAU stated:

For a woman to attain the position of senior management in the university, she must have acquired the basic academic and professional qualifications needed for the job. She must work for a certain number of years; pass through the ranks and files and more importantly, she must be willing to present herself for the job. One thing is to qualify but another thing is the willingness to present oneself.

A female Director in OAU said:

Even though OAU is one of the very few universities where women are holding key senior management positions, the total percentage of women in senior management positions is far less than 35%. When you compare this with their male counterparts, you will find that they are under-represented in senior management positions. This may be attributed to the patriarchal nature of our society where men dominate in all decision making processes. Until recently, women were to be seen and not heard. Most men saw working under a woman boss as degrading and tend to flout orders given by their female bosses.

Another interviewee in OAU asserted:

The major reason is the love women have for their children and families. Most women put their families above their careers and this affects their career progression. Sadly, these same women are neither supported by the same family nor the society to reach the peak of their careers. For this reason, they are at disadvantage due to lack of encouragement and mentorship. Unless women are properly mentored and encouraged, they will continue to remain at the lower cadre of their profession.

Discussion

The major finding of this study revealed that women's representation in the senior management positions in the selected universities differed by gender. This suggests that despite the formulation of National Gender Policy and several measures put in place by the federal government and the National Universities Commission (NUC) to address gender discrimination, such measures have not yielded the desirable results as Nigerian universities have continued to be male-dominated particularly in senior management positions.

The study identified several factors hindering women's participation in senior management in the selected universities. Prominent among these factors is a lack of basic educational qualifications, which 42.6% of the respondents recognised. In other words, the higher proportion of men and lesser proportion of women in senior management resulted from men's higher academic qualifications. The study showed that men constituted 88.9% of the MPhil holders, 78.5% of PhD holders and 54.5% of Masters degree holders. For someone aspiring for the positions of Vice-Chancellor, Provost or Dean of Faculty, HoD and Director, in any Nigerian university, a PhD degree is necessary. However, only a small proportion of women compared to men have attained this qualification as needed for the positions listed in Table 2. It is therefore, not surprising that female participation in senior management in the selected universities is limited due to the small number of qualified women (Obafemi Awolowo University Gender Policy, 2009). Little wonder that there was a wide gender gap in Senate (the highest decision-making body in the University) where the ratio is 19 males to 1 female (Obafemi Awolowo University Gender Policy, 2009). This finding also supports Ogbogu's (2011) assertion that women's low representation in senior management in Nigerian universities was a result of low qualifications confining them to lower and middle level academic and administrative positions.

Another major finding identified in the paper was a religious factor. The majority of the respondents in the study were either Christians or Muslims. The influence of these two dominant religions in the selected universities had a strongly negative impact on respondents' participation in senior management positions. It is a well known fact that the Holy Bible and Holy Koran recognise men as the heads and women as subordinates who are to be submissive to their husbands. In Islam, women in purdah are less likely to be employed outside their homes. It could then be argued that discrimination against women in senior management is rooted in religious beliefs and practices that regard the man as superior to his female counterpart. Thus, some of the religious practices make it difficult for women to make career choices. It is therefore not surprising that in some households, women are allocated tasks that slow down their commitment to higher education, which in turn reduces their prospects in formal labour participation. Also, in some households, girls do drop out of school to help their brothers complete their education by hawking wares for their parents. Sometimes, they are put under pressure to marry early because they are thought to require minimal education to become good wives (Olaogun et al., 2015).

Another important factor identified in the study is the patriarchal nature of the university system with a response rate of 14.9%. Patriarchy evokes the principle of male domination, not necessarily by coercion, but through institutional arrangements. A patriarchal society like Nigeria reinforces a norm that views men as leaders and women as followers. In this study, it has been demonstrated that Nigerian universities are highly patriarchal, where men are dominant in virtually all senior management positions. This gender equity gap in Nigerian university management can be attributable to pre-colonial patriarchal traditions, whereby the notion of leadership often carried the idea of masculinity and the belief that men make better leaders and managers than women. Thus, the traditional practices in which men are recognised as the head of the house with total control of decision making in the home are also transmitted to the universities. It is therefore not surprising that all the principal officers in AAUA (100%) and 66.7% in OAU were males. In a similar study, Okebukola (2002) found that females constituted only 13.0% of the entire academic staff and 30.0% of the administrative staff population in Nigerian universities. This study attributed the low representation of women among the principal officers to the patriarchal nature of the Nigerian society which tends to enhance and foster female subordination.

The involvement of women in domestic chores and child caring identified by 10.6% of the respondents was also a contributory factor to women's under-representation. Earlier studies have shown that childcare and domestic work are major factors inhibiting women from career progression in research and scholarly work as evidenced by the quality of publications, contribution to educational innovations, being present at meetings and participation in national and international conferences (Ogbogu, 2011). Lack of encouragement from husbands (8.5%) also contributed in no small measure to the low representation of women in senior management positions. It was found during interviews that some women were required to obtain permission from their husbands before embarking on any career development program. Sometimes, permissions are turned down. Many husbands were found to have stopped their wives from working or seeking employment opportunities while others prevented their wives from aspiring to higher

positions as it is believed that women lack leadership skills (7.5%), are too emotional to handle senior management jobs (2.1%), and are poorly mentored for senior management positions (2.1%).

Conclusion and recommendations

This paper has established the existence of gross gender inequality in senior management in the selected universities. The large margin in the proportion of men to women in senior management in the university calls for urgent attention. Qualified women should be given equal opportunities with their male counterparts to participate in a much better role, particularly in decision making process in the universities. To realise this, the following recommendations are offered:

1. There is the need for Federal government to formulate policies that will address equal participation of qualified men and women in decision making processes.
2. There is the need for cultural re-orientation for both female and male staff in the universities to overcome the belief that senior management positions are the prerogative domains of men only.
3. The universities should put in place structures that will enable female academic and non academic staff to develop themselves alongside their male counterparts.
4. Proper mentorship for female academic and non academic staff should be encouraged for career development.
5. Sensitisation and awareness creation programs and motivational workshops specifically designed for senior university management should be organised regularly. Female academic and non academic staff should be encouraged to partake in these workshops.
6. Efforts should also be geared towards increasing female enrolment and completion of higher education to be able to compete for employment.
7. Finally, it is suggested that affirmative action should be religiously adopted by the universities. In other words, interventions in the form of making laws that would lay down the minimum percentage of women in senior management in the universities as prescribed by the Beijing Platform for Action by should be pursued enthusiastically.

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Appendix A: Conceptual clarification

The following concepts are defined within the context of this paper.

Principal Officers: These are officers in the management cadres whose functions facilitate policy formulation, implementation and decision-making processes to ensure the smooth operation of the university. The Principal Officers in this study include:

- a. **Vice-Chancellor:** The Vice-Chancellor is the chief executive, Academic Officer of the university and Chairman of the Senate. He or she is specifically charged with the smooth running of the university and exercises such functions as may be conferred on, or imposed upon him or her by the University Law, statutes and regulations. He or she exercises general supervision over disciplines in the university, monitoring the efficiency and good order of the university.
- b. **Deputy Vice-Chancellor:** The Deputy Vice-Chancellor assists the Vice-Chancellor in the performance of his or her functions. He or she performs other functions as the Vice-Chancellor or the Council may, from time to time, assign to him or her.
- c. **Registrar:** The Registrar is the chief administrative officer of the university and is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the day to day administrative activities of the university. He/she is the secretary to the Governing Council, Senate, Congregation and Convocation and the custodian of the seal and other legal documents of the university.

- d. **Bursar:** The Bursar is the chief finance officer of the university, and is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the administration and control of the financial affairs of the university.
- e. **University Librarian:** The University Librarian is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the administration of the library services in the university and for any other matters relating to the library.
- f. **Provost of Colleges:** The provost is the chief academic officer of a college. A college usually comprise of three or more faculties. Among the responsibilities of the provost are the oversight of all academic programs, the hiring and evaluation of faculties under his/her college. He or she is also responsible for curricular development. He/she is expected to provide the required academic, administrative and professional leadership for the College in executing the broad policies laid down by the Governing Council for the achievement of the objectives for which the College was established.

Dean: In Nigerian universities, the faculties of the university are supervised by Deans. The Dean of a faculty is a Professor, elected by the Faculty Board. He or she is the Chairperson at all meetings of the Faculty Board.

Head of Department: Each academic department of the university has a Head of Department (HoD) who is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor, through the Dean of the Faculty for coordinating, guiding and supervising, teaching, examinations, research and other activities in the department.

Management: Management refers to unspoken rules and arrangements that govern university structure and gender dynamics. Members of the university management include the Vice Chancellor and other Principal Officers who have the power and responsibility to make decisions and oversee the affairs of the university.

Gender discrimination: This implies the practice of granting or denying rights or privileges to a person based on his or her gender.

Gender inequality: Refers to differential access and unequal participation in senior management.

Appendix B: A study of gender equity and equality in university administration in southwestern Nigeria

Questionnaire for senior academic and non academic staff

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is about the study we are carrying out to examine gender inequality in senior management in the Universities. It is expected that our findings will provide useful suggestions to policy makers in ensuring the existing gaps in university senior management are minimised if not totally closed. Please, be assured that all information provided would be used solely for academic purpose and treated with utmost confidence.

Thank you.

Section A: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Please tick (✓) in the appropriate box provided below.

1. Name of institution: OAU () Adekunle Ajasin University () Redeemers University ()
2. Indicate whether you are academic staff or a non academic staff
3. Faculty:
4. Department
5. Gender: Male () Female ()
6. Age:
7. Marital status: Married () Single () Divorced () Separated () Widowed ()
8. Religion: Christianity () ; Islam () ; African traditional religion (ATR) () ; others (please specify).....
9. Highest academic qualification: First degree () Masters () M.Phil () PhD ()
10. Salary per month: ₦50,000-100,000 () ; ₦101,000-150,000 () ; ₦151,000-200,000 () ; ₦201,000-250,000 () ; ₦251,000-300,000 () ; ₦301,000-350,000 () ; ₦351,000-400,000 () ; ₦401,000-450,000 () ; ₦451,000-500,000 () ; ₦501,000-600,000 () ; ₦601,000 and above () .
11. How long have you been in service in this university? (Please indicate in years)
12. Rank/status of first appointment (Please specify).....
13. Present status: (e.g. Senior Lecturer) (Please indicate).

Section B: Barriers militating against women's participation in senior management in the University

Please mark (1) where a male or female occupies a position and (0) where a male or female does not occupy the position. Please provide honest information.

14. Who is currently occupying the under listed offices in your University?

Position	Obafemi Awolowo Uni.		Adekunle Ajasin Uni. Akungba		Redeemer's University	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
VC						
DVC Academic						
DVC Admin.						
Registrar						
Bursar						
Librarian						
Others (specify)						

15. How many males and how many females are currently occupying the under listed senior management positions in your university? Please give the exact figure.

Position	Obafemi Awolowo Uni.		Adekunle Ajasin Uni. Akungba		Redeemer's University	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Deans of Faculty						
HODs						
Provosts of Colleges						
Provost of Postgrad. College/ School						
Dean of students						
Directors of Institutes/ Centres						
Others (indicate)						

16. Do you think women are under-represented in these positions? Yes () No ()

17. If yes, what do you think is responsible for low participation of women in senior management positions in your university?

18. Have you known women who have ever occupied senior management positions in this University? Yes () No ()
19. If yes, how many of them?
20. What facilitated them to get to such position? Choose at least four of the options below
 a. Through academic qualifications ()
 b. Through promotion ()
 c. Due to sudden events such as crisis ()
 d. Experience ()
 e. Administrative ability ()
 f. Length of service ()
 g. Religious commitment ()
 h. Through advertisement of vacant position ()
 i. Others (please specify) ()
21. What senior management position did they occupy or are they currently occupying? Tick as many as possible.
 a. Acting HOD ()
 b. HODs ()
 c. Deans ()
 d. Provost of Colleges ()
 e. Director of Institutes/Centres ()
 f. VC ()
 g. DVC Academic ()
 h. DVC Administration ()
 i. Director ()
 j. Faculty Officer ()
 k. None of the above ()
 l. Others (specify)
22. What factors are responsible for women under-representation in senior management position in your university? Please, express yourself freely by giving as many reasons as you can

23. The following statements require that you tick (√) from any of the four responses (1) Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly disagree (SD).

No.	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
24.	Unwillingness on the part of women to put themselves forward for appointments				
25.	Unwillingness of top management to appoint women to these positions				

26.	Discrimination against women from aspiring to higher positions				
27.	Lack of adequate qualification				
28.	Patriarchal nature of the society				
29.	Many women at top administrative positions lack strong networks to encourage mentorship and to create a unified voice				
30.	Cultural barriers, beliefs and attitudes towards women impede their career progression				
31.	Cultural perception of women's role and the career opportunities				
32.	Difficulty of women to influence decision making in male dominated work place				
33.	Unfavorable attitudes towards having women as administrators				
34.	Lack of training and promotion for women				
35.	Women are too emotional and lack aggressiveness				
36.	Women tend to direct their career goals towards occupations that are in line with social perceptions of female roles and they do not aspire for challenging jobs.				

For each item in this section, circle the answer below the question which indicates how you perceive what is described, using the following scale:

Strongly agree (SA) (1); Agree (A) (2); Disagree (D) (3); and Strongly disagree (SD) (4).

37. The belief that males are better suited to be top administrators than females has impacted negatively on women's career in senior management.
- Strongly agree (SA) (1)
 Agree (A) (2)
 Disagree (D) (3)
 Strongly disagree (SD) (4)
38. Family responsibilities have impacted negatively on women's career in university management.
- Strongly agree (SA) (1)
 Agree (A) (2)
 Disagree (D) (3)
 Strongly Disagree (SD) (4)
39. I believe that males in senior university management tend to hire other males and this practice has impacted negatively on women career in university administration.
- Strongly agree (SA) (1)
 Agree (A) (2)
 Disagree (D) (3)
 Strongly disagree (SD) (4)
40. The belief that many assume females are too emotional to be effective managers has impacted negatively on women's careers in university administration.
- Strongly agree (SA) (1)
 Agree (A) (2)
 Disagree (D) (3)
 Strongly disagree (SD) (4)

41. The belief that females cannot take the pressure of being senior management has impacted negatively on their careers in university administration.
Strongly agree (SA) (1)
Agree (A) (2)
Disagree (D) (3)
Strongly disagree (SD) (4)
42. The belief that females are not rational or objective enough to be effective in university management has impacted negatively on women's careers in university administration.
Strongly agree (SA) (1)
Agree (A) (2)
Disagree (D) (3)
Strongly disagree (SD) (4)
43. The belief that females are not effective disciplinarians has impacted negatively on their career in senior management.
Strongly agree (SA) (1)
Agree (A) (2)
Disagree (D) (3)
Strongly disagree (SD) (4)
44. The belief that females are perceived to be less interested in senior management positions has impacted negatively on their careers in the university.
Strongly agree (SA) (1)
Agree (A) (2)
Disagree (D) (3)
Strongly disagree (SD) (4)
45. The belief that many female senior managers lack support from others in senior management has impacted negatively on their careers in university administration.
Strongly agree (SA) (1)
Agree (A) (2)
Disagree (D) (3)
Strongly disagree (SD) (4)
46. The belief that members of the university community would not have as much confidence women in senior management as they would have in men in senior management has impacted negatively on women's career in university administration.
Strongly agree (SA) (1)
Agree (A) (2)
Disagree (D) (3)
Strongly disagree (SD) (4)
47. Not having more female role models in senior management has impacted negatively on women's career in university management.
Strongly agree (SA) (1)
Agree (A) (2)
Disagree (D) (3)
Strongly disagree (SD) (4)

Section C: Interventions that have been put in place in your University to address the under-representation of women in University senior management

48. Are there any mechanisms that have been put in place in your university to address female under-representation in senior management in our university? Yes () No ()

If yes, mention such interventions:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.

49. If no, why do you think, the university has not put in place certain measures to address gender inequality senior management in this university?

Please explain:

-
-
-
-

50. What mechanism(s) would you suggest to address gender imbalance in senior managements in your university?

-
-
-
-

Thank you

Appendix C: Interview guide for university management/officers

Greetings,

This interview is about the study we are carrying out to examine *Gender Inequality in Senior Management in selected universities in Southwestern Nigeria*. Your university is one of the three selected for the study. Your responses to these questions will enable us write a report on this topic. We assure you that all information given will be treated with utmost confidence and will be used solely for this academic purpose. The interview will not take much of your time but we need your total cooperation. We will seek your permission to use audio recording so as to make the discussion faster. This will ensure that we do not miss out important issues during the interview.

Thank you.

1. Can you please enlighten us about who occupies senior management positions in your university?
2. Do women have equal opportunities as men in occupying these management positions?
3. If yes, mention such positions occupied by women in the last five years.
4. Among the principal officers, how many are males? (...) and how many are females? (...)
5. If no, why have women not be visible in senior management?

6. Is your university gender sensitive in terms of recruitment and appointment and promotion? Please comment freely.
7. Compared to their male counterparts, how many females are in:
 - a. Statutory committee? How many men? (....). How many women? (....).
 - b. Senate? How many male? (....). How many female? (....).
 - c. How many men are in the professorial cadre? (....). How many female? (....).
 - d. How many women are Deans of Faculty? (....). How many men? (....).
 - e. How many females are Heads of Academic Departments? (....). How many men? (....).
 - f. How many women are Acting Heads of Academic Department? (....). How many men? (....).
 - g. How many women are Provosts of Colleges? (....). How many men? (....)
 - h. How many women are Directors of Centre? (....). How many men? (....).
8. What factors do you think are responsible for women's low participation in senior management in your university?
9. What intervention(s) has/have your university put in place to address the under-representation of women in senior management in your university?
10. Do you think this/ these intervention(s) address gender equity issues in your university?
11. If yes, how do they address gender equality in terms of access to opportunity like senior management positions in your university?
12. If no, what mechanisms do you think can be put in place to enhance women's participation in university top administration in Nigeria?

Thank you

Christiana O. Eboiyehi is an MSc graduate from the Department of Public Administration, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. She is currently undertaking PhD research at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan Nigeria. Her research interest focuses in gender inequality and women's participation in university administration.

Email: faeboiyehi@yahoo.com

Dr Ike Fayomi is an Associate Professor in the Department of Public Administration, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. She is currently the Head of Department of Public Administration. She teaches Public Administration courses in both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

Email: ikefayomi2002@yahoo.com

Dr Friday A. Eboiyehi is a Senior Lecturer/Research Fellow at the Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies, Obafemi Awlowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. His research interests focus on gender issues. He teaches Gender and Ageing; Gender and Social Development; Gender, Culture and Society; and Gender and the Labour Process; African Indigenous Political System; and Women in Politics and Feminist Theory, in both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Email: faeboiyehi@gmail.com

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