INFLUENCE OF REGISTRAR'S GENDER ON JOB PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

With the formulation and global acceptance of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), gender issues have become a category of analysis especially in relation to access and quantitative representation of women in all facets of human activities. One of the MDGs stresses the need to promote gender equality and empowerment. In the past one and half decades, there has been an emergence of female Registrars in Nigerian universities. The complexity of the Registrars' job makes people doubt whether females can effectively perform as Registrars of Universities. This research therefore examined the Influence of gender on job performance of Registrars in Nigerian universities. The researchers adopted a survey research design. Purposive sampling technique (i.e. choosing of sampled universities on the basis of having had both male and female registrars) was used to select 13 universities. The population comprised 1,600 staff. Random sampling technique was adopted in selecting 1,200 staff comprising 700 academic staff and 500 non-academic staff. Researcher-designed instruments were used to collect data for the study. The instrument is titled "Registrars' Job Performance Questionnaire" (RGJPQ).The instrument was validated by six experts in the fields of Educational Management, Statistics and Measurement and Evaluation at the University of Ilorin. The test re-test technique was used to ascertain the reliability of the instruments. The reliability coefficient for RJPQ was found to be 0.65. Student t-test was used to test the hypotheses formulated. The results revealed a significant difference between male and female registrars' job performance in ensuring staff punctuality, promoting staff quality of work, facilitating staff communication skills, ensuring staff relationship with students and interpretation of university statute (t-value = 10.4, 4.6. 7.6, 7.6 and 2.3. i respectively, p. ≤ 0.05). Female registrars were found to be better in promoting quality work, staff relationship with students and interpretation of university statutes than the male registrars while male registrars were found to be better in ensuring staff punctuality and facilitating staff communication skills. Finally the paper recommends that appointment into managerial positions in universities should not be influenced by an applicants' gender.

Keywords: Gender, Management Functions, Women Administrators, Job performance

Introduction

The existence of male and female gender among different societies all over the World is credited to God by various Holy books in different religious practices. 'Gender' is shorthand for the complex but variable system of social differentiation between men and women. Gender refers to the network of socially defined functions and attributes of being a woman or a man in a given society and at a particular time. Gender is the term used to convey the processes of social construction that mediates the relations between women and men. Gender relations are not primarily biological or sexual relations although they may include elements of either. They are social as well as ideological. They connote

cultural relations, diffused with power differentials, which map out a range of processes. They portray behaviour and activities exhibited in different organizations, which are considered appropriate for women and men for a given collectivity over a particular period.

Gender is one of the fundamental organizing principles of our societies. Understanding what gender is helps us understand, men and women better. Gender roles are taught to us virtually from the moment of birth. In many places, the birth of a male child is a cause for celebration while the birth of a female may be greeted with condolences. Many parents treat male and female children differently, encouraging boys to be active and girls to be passive. Codes of behaviour which are given to girls and boys, women and men, which outline how each is expected to dress, speak, act, the work that they are expected to do and how they are permitted to interact with each other are all gender attributes.

Studies of Aghenta (1998) and Olutola (1979) showed that very few women were appointed as heads of educational institutions at all levels and in every nook and cranny of the country. This may be due to some cultural views that some people have about women administrators in a different perspective. These cultural beliefs place women on some erroneous platforms when the unit of analysis is based on effective educational administration. However, it has been argued that in Nigeria today, very few females who are appointed as leaders are up to the task. This modem view seems to contradict traditional beliefs because of the influence of western education, which provides equal educational opportunities for both male and female.

International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2004), reported that women continue to have lower labour market participation rates, higher unemployment rates and significant lower pay differences when compared to men. The ILO report of 2004 showed that women represent over 40% of the global labour force, with approximately 70% of them in developed countries and 60% in developing countries. The ILO report also revealed that there has been little change in their share of professional jobs in the last few years; women occupy about (30-60%) of professional jobs in the sample countries from which these data were obtained. This represents an increase of 0.7% between 1996-99 and 2002-04 (ILO reports, 2004).

The activities involved cover not only interactions between individual women and men in the sphere of personal relationships; they also include all aspects of socially acceptable activities which are involved particularly the exercise of authority and power. The activities may also include division of labour, access to and control of resources for production, control of the proceeds, remuneration, or rewards for work, distribution of income and goods, consumption, participation in political, cultural, and religious activities. The social meanings of all these activities, for women and for men, may vary within the same group over time and they certainly vary between groups at any given time.

The inequalities between women and men as evident in their different positions vis-à-vis the social activities referred to above can be explained in terms of differences in power between men and women. The greater access that men have to social, economic and political power underlies their dominance as a social group. Most categories of women are relatively less powerful than their men folk who are of the same social standing and are therefore subordinate to them. Relationships of domination and subordination, between diverse groups of women and men differ considerably between societies and are thus constantly undergoing changes and negotiations.

Thinking about gender and talking about gender tend to happen when gender configurations (the systems of social meaning referred to above) undergo changes or shifts.

These shifts can take place in any time period, in relation to all kinds of factors, such as declining economies, changing policies and so on. So, gender is often a major focus of thought and writing in popular culture of any given society. Conceptually, 'gender' is often distinguished from 'sex', in the sense that 'gender' embodies processes of social construction whereas 'sex' refers to the biological differences between men and women. However, the relationship is not clear-cut and does not end there. It is not simply a question of downplaying biology at the expense of social relations, or even portioning one from the other.

The biological literature on human differences often rests on assumptions about the social attributes of gender. There is the question of which biological differences get noticed, and how the biological differences that are noticed, get interpreted.

Gender is unlike any other category of social analysis, such as class, in that it is very visibly connected to biological differences and*'functions - those of 'male' and 'female'. That is why it is both tempting and easy to fall back on biological explanations of gender patterns. This translates into a belief that men are superior to women on the basis of the biological differences between them. In other words, men's social supremacy over women is thought to be the result of being biologically superior to women. This position is known as 'biological determinism'. It is the cherished belief of vast numbers of men despite the lack of evidence for this view and more importantly, evidence to the contrary. Hence, various Views on male superiority over their women-folk are inconclusive because of inadequate research evidence.

Oloyede and Lawal (2008), argued "equality is a political ideal often expressed as egalitarianism. As an ideal, it has very little empirical validity and, in any case, it has even weak theoretical support in psychology, sociology, economics, or theology. The psychological and sociological concepts of individual and group differences (and dynamics) respectively are the very bases of the psychology and sociology of inequality. In Economics, human productive and consumptive capacities are far from being equal at either the individual or societal levels. In theology, if we draw precepts and practices from two of the most trans-continental religions, Christianity and Islam, all human beings are only equal in terms of our common origin and destiny in the Almighty God, the Uncreated Creator of all."However, considerable variations remain between men and women's share in different types of professional jobs. It is these views against women's equal representation/participation in educational management that motivated the researchers to examine the role of a registrar's gender on job performance in Nigerian universities.

Statement of the Problem

The work of a registrar is a complex one and for an individual to effectively perform these functions of management of human resources in the university, such a person must consider;

i. An individual's activities towards achieving institutional objectives, and
ii. it must be in an organized setting,
iii. functions must be carried out through subordinates, i.e. delegating, and
iv. responsibilities must be carried out through certain management techniques.

Studies that have been carried out by scholars, (Sofoluwe 1999, Akanbi 2003 and Gabadeen 2005) in the university system, have been centred on the Vice-Chancellors, their leadership style, managerial philosophy, conflict resolution and managerial effectiveness. Studies on the registrars of universities have been conspicuously absent. Male has dominated registrar's position in the university. Recently, however, female registrars have, started to emerge. This study is therefore designed to investigate the influence of gender on job performance of registrars in Nigerian universities. The function of a registrar in a university is a complex one such that it cuts across all spheres of university activities. The registrar has to respond to council affairs, senate matters, examinations and admissions. Housing and passages is also within the jurisdiction of the registrar. In the establishment unit, the registrar has to attend to issues relating to recruitment, training, discipline and promotion of staff. He/she also attends to students' affairs, students' hostel, students' welfare and sporting activities as well as alumni matters, accurate record keeping, execution of policies and acceptance of innovations and change. These gaps between the perception of the society on who can best perform the functions of a Registrar considering the volume of work and inconclusive theoretical and empirical evidence to verify claims, have motivated the researchers to carry out this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the influence of gender on job performance of Registrars in Nigerian universities. The study was also carried out *to* achieve the following specific objectives, namely:

i. to examine the influence of gender on job performance and managerial abilities of Registrars in Nigerian universities;
ii. to examine who can better perform management functions between male and female Registrars.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated in order to guide this study:

Hoi: There is no significant difference between male and female registrars in ensuring staff punctuality at work in Nigerian universities.

Ho2: There is nosignificant difference between male and female registrars in promoting staff quality of work in Nigerian universities.

Ho3: There is no significant difference between male and female registrars in facilitating staff communication skills in Nigerian universities.

Ho4: There is no significant difference between male and female registrars in ensuring staff relationship with students in Nigerian universities.

Ho5: There is no significant difference between male and female registrars with regard to interpretation of university statutes in Nigerian universities.

Research Methods

The study adopted a survey research technique. The target population consisted of all the universities that have experienced both male and female registrars or still have a male or female Registrar. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 13 Universities. In these universities, 1,200 staff comprising senior academic and non-academic staff were randomly selected out of 1600 staff .In order to collect data for this study, researcher designed instrument titled 'Registrars' Gender and Job Performance Questionnaire, (RGJPQ) was used. The instrument was validated by experts in order to ensure its content and face validity. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a pilot study that was conducted using the instrument in three universities which were not part of the

sample. A time lag of three weeks between the first test and the retest of the instrument on the same respondents were given. The scores obtained during the first and second administrations of the instrument were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics. The correlation obtained was 0.65. The research instrument was therefore adjudged reliable because of the high correlation co-efficient which Zimbardo (1997), considered as indication of reliability. Student t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. This statistical test was adopted because the study compared two means and approximating normal distribution; that is, the sample size was large.

Presentation of Results

Hoi: There is no significant difference between male and female Registrars in ensuring staff punctuality in Nigerian universities.

Table 1: Differences between Registrars' Gender and Staff Punctuality in Nigerian Universities

Variable	N	DF	Mean	SD	tCal.	tTab	Decision
Male	5023		2.27	.912			
		10759			10.57	1.96	Hoi Rejected
Female	5736		2.08	.984			

tcal>ttab; Ho1 Rejected

Ho2: There is no significant difference between male and female registrars in promoting staff quality of work in Nigerian universities.

Table 2: Difference between Registrars' gender and quality of work in Nigerian universities

Variable	N	DF	Mean	SD	tCal.	tTab	Decision
Male	5023		11.21	2.94			
		10759			4.59	1.96	Ho2 Rejected
Female	5736		11.48	3.27			

tcal>uab; Ho2 Rejected

Ho3: There is no significant difference between male and female registrars in facilitating staff communication skills in Nigeria Universities

Table3: Differences Between Registrars' Gender and Staff Communication Skills in Nigerian Universities

Variable	N	DF	Mean	SD	tCal.	tTab	Decision
Male	5023		2.31	89			
		10759			7.57	1.96	Ho3 Rejected
Female	5736		2.20	.98			

tcal>ttab; Ho3 Rejected

Ho4: There is no significant difference between male and female Registrars in ensuring appropriate Staff relationship with students in Nigerian universities

Table 4: Differences between Registrars' Gender and Staff Relationship with Students in Nigerian Universities

Variable	N	DF	Mean	SD	tCal.	tTab	Decision
Male	5023		2.15	.92			
		10759			7.57	1.96	Ho4 Rejected
Female	5736		2.28	.10			

tcal>ttab; Ho4 Rejected

Ho5: There is no significant difference between male and female registrars with regard to interpretation of university statutes in Nigerian universities

Table 5: Differences Between Registrars' Gender and Interpretation of Statutes in Nigerian Universities.

Variable N	DF	Mean	SD	tCal.	tTab	Decision
Male 5023		2.15	.92			
	10759			7.57	1.96	Ho4 Rejected
Female 5736		2.28	.10			

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study suggest that the punctuality of staff in Nigerian universities might be a function of the gender of the registrar. It also shows the mean value for male registrar was 2.27 while that of female registrars was 2.08. It might also be said-that male registrars may ensure punctuality of staff more than female registrars. This means going to work, meetings and duty posts at the agreed or proper time by staff of Nigerian universities will be influenced by a male registrar. However, this finding was in contrary with earlier findings of Harrison (1998)^ who found that female administrators are very strict and domineering and thus make their subordinates very prompt at work. Punctuality is such a simple attribute, but many people miss the value of it. Being punctual means that one is on time. It is as simple as that, but when you think of the many applications of it, punctuality has broad value in all institutional environments. Punctuality shows that one takes his/her job seriously. It projects to clients that they are in good hands. It also shows respect for clients. Punctuality shows that you know that it is important not to inconvenience your clients. Punctuality over time shows dependability. It is important to be consistent about punctuality in order to build a positive reputation. It shows that one has a good work ethic and creates a positive business environment.

People say that time is money where business is concerned; therefore, to waste it is to waste money. Doors should be opened exactly on the hours they are expected to open and students should not have to wait even five or ten minutes longer to get inside and start the day's activities. Appointments are to be on time; as punctuality is a way of life for the more successful people. No wonder then that the more successful people are punctual people.

In cultures, such as the US and UK and some other Northern European countries, that operate accordingly with the time on the clocks it is important to be prompt. Not respecting designated times set for meetings, appointments, conferences and other deadlines is perceived as unprofessional and often incompetence. Registrars are therefore expected to set good examples for their staff to emulate when it comes to punctuality in the Nigerian universities.

The study also showed that the quality of work in the universities might be dependent upon the gender of the registrar. Table 2, also shows that the mean value for male registrars was 11.21 while that of female registrars was 11.48, implying that female registrars may promote high quality output of work among staff than male registrars although the survey findings suggest that small but idéntifiable gender differences exists in promoting staff quality of work. This is in line with the submission of Swain (2006), in the study titled "Gender difference in perceived characteristics of work quality" that women enjoy greater support from their colleagues and claim that their work has a

positive impact on their lives outside the workplace. This support makes it relatively easy for the female registrar to promote quality of work. This therefore shows that the performance of work with very high standard, virtually error-proof, without complaints and meeting deadline for any work scheduled by a university staff may be enhanced by a female registrar. In this regard, Moran (1992) observed that women administrators are better prepared to cope with the challenges of the organization than male administrators. This is because many of the characteristics touted as critical to organizational success, such as concern for people, interpersonal skills, intuitive management and problem solving skills are qualities women as administrators possess and which assist them in ensuring high quality output of work among the staff in their workplace.

In the same vein, Vaskova (2005) contended that because women enjoy greater support from their colleagues and claim that their work has a positive impact on their lives outside the workplace (positive work-life interference), women are more likely to experience job satisfaction in terms of pride and pleasure people-find in work. These factors tend to improve the quality of work output of their staff.

We also found that there are significant differences between male and female registrars in their abilities to facilitate staff communication skills in Nigerian universities. Furthermore, the study also shows that male registrars can promote staff communication skills better than their female counterparts. This is because the mean score for male registrars was 2.31 while that of female registrars was 2.20. The implication of this is that the act of using language when communicating, ensuring timely communication of decision of committees, writing and speaking lucidly and clearly using downward, upward and horizontal system of communication by a university staff can be better facilitated by male registrars. This is so because men are direct and blunt and they tend to make commands and they are more direct when approaching issues than women who tend to be highly sensitive and merely make requests rather than being assertive. This position was corroborated by findings of Graham & Bennet (1999), that men plan their communication, they are more consistent, accurate and specific than female who downplay themselves by telling stories and trying to avoid conflict because it threatens relationship.

It can be inferred from this finding that the ability to ensure appropriate staff relationship with students is dependent upon the gender of a registrar. Table 4 shows a mean score of 2.15 for male registrars while that of female registrars was found to be 2.28, It implies that female registrars are better in ensuring proper staff relationship with students than male registrars. This implies that the act of handling students' records with care, respecting students' right, attending to students' welfare regularly and being approachable and friendly with students by staff of Nigerian universities can be achieved better under female registrars. This also agrees with the findings of Eagly and Johnsons (1990) meta-analysis study which found that women administrators are more democratic. Rosener (1990), attributed the behaviour of these women to their socialization and career paths. He maintained that while men were competitive, tough, decisive and in control, women were allowed to be cooperative, emotional and supportive. This is one of the reasons why wom4 of today are transformational leaders. The other reason, according to Rosener (1990), is that women career experiences differ from those of men who are more likely to have held staff rather than line positions. Lacking formal authority over others, these women had to find ways to accomplish their goals.

This study also showed that Registrar's gender makes a difference in the interpretation of statutes in the universities. Table 5 indicates that the mean value for male registrars was 2.14 while that of female registrars was 2.18. It may therefore be concluded that female registrars are stronger in the ability to interpret university statutes than male registrars. This means that the act of interpreting university rules and regulations in terms of guiding the HODs on the rules and regulations of the university, ensuring that rules and regulation are strictly observed and that equity and fair play guide staff action, can be better performed by female registrars. This findings is in line with that of Moran (1992), who established the idea that women and men had different inherent sex linked characteristics. Thus, the view was, even though there were differences, ! women could learn to succeed in organizations by being more like men. However, there were social scientists who had asserted that there were few differences in male and female style and that when women became leaders they would act in the same way as men. But when women are charged with responsibility, there is again the perception that there are differences in the administrative styles of men and women. Fie therefore contended that these differences will work to the advantage of women because the quality associated with their management style is what is needed to make an organization effective thereby improving the output of their work. Furthermore, Kalnicka (2000) observed that women placed more importance than men on interpreting organizational policies, respectful treatment by the employer and the possibility of reconciling work and family. Also, women placed more value on their work, thereby making them have more output than male administrators.

Conclusion

The field of gender difference in leadership styles is an area that is still full of ambiguity and paradox; despite the number of studies devoted to the topic, there are still unanswered questions. Researchers will undoubtedly continue to work on the topic and perhaps with time, arrive at some definitive answers to the questions of whether there are really any differences in the management styles of male and female administrators. This study has put forth the evidence that there are some differences in the management styles of male and female registrars. These differences according to this study are as a result of the psychological make-up of both male and female registrars as well as their socialization, culture and home factors

According to the findings, there are more male Registrars (83%) than female Registrars (17%) in Nigerian universities. Sociocultural and religious settings of some of the States where the universities are sited may be the reasons for this trend. For example in the whole of the Northern States only one female Registrar was appointed. This finding has confirmed the report of Dafuwa (1982), where he discovered that responsibilities and duties given to women depend on the nature of the society. In the Hausa society for example, women are not expected to compete side by side with men, particularly in their administrative capacities. Odu in Ipaye (1985), also showed that women were forced to take the role, which their society and culture recommended to them. Culture is a traditional way of life and a means of solving problems. Culture and society restricted women's role to the kitchen and housekeeping. This is the reason behind their exclusion from leadership roles, decision making and politics.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that:

1. Any university that appoints a male Registrar should have a female deputy in order to promote staff quality of work and job efficiency since both of them are, efficient in different areas of university administration.

2. Gender should not be a determining factor in the appointment of a Registrar of a university.
3. Appointments into managerial positions in universities should not based on applicants' gender.

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