

Women in Management A Strategy for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

Career interruptions are plateauing and turnover is expensive. The money corporations invest in recruitment, training and development is less likely to produce top executives among women than among men. The invaluable company experience that developing executives acquire at every level as they move up through management ranks are more often lost.

Demographic realities are going to force corporations across the country to analyze the cost of employing women in managerial positions and what they will discover is that women cost more (Schwartz, 2005).

Women in management and bringing women into management have been subjects of increasing significance and concerns for all. The areas where a properly structured program would help companies achieve their goal of increasing number of women executives and maximizing their effectiveness are becoming more significant. With this in mind the Stanford Business School sponsored a conference in April, 1974 on women in management. Business leaders from across United States of America attended. The success of the conference and the presentations were developed into a Book for permanent availability and a wider distribution (Miller, 1975)

It has been observed that women are better bosses than men (Sappenfield and Day, 2001). In an architectural firm of Dimilla Shaffer in Boston, all the members of the team were women and when they met everyone took part. They organized, parceled out responsibilities, and devised ways to check off tasks as the job progressed. While in a firm led by a male, things were different. Sitting at a granite table in a meeting room overlooking Boston, Harbor, the project was a study in frustration. Every one would just sit around the table and watch with their little calendars. There was no receptivity to group planning. It is a telling comparison, and it came at a time when more and more evidence suggested that women made better managers than men (Sappenfield and Day, 2001).

For years companies wanted leaders who took control, people who rumbled through boardrooms like panter tanks, achieving their goal no matter the odds or obstacles. Business was a war game and men were seen as the best commanders. Today two decades after the great wave of layoffs in the United State of America turned many workers into free agents with little corporate loyalty, businesses want team builders and communicators, people who create relationship with employees and instill in them a commitment to the organization. Studies have repeatedly shown that these mean women (Sappenfield and Day, 2001)

Economic growth entails an increase in the national output for a period of one year from a particular year using a previous year as the base year (Iyoha, 2006). It entails also an increase in the national income measured in terms of Gross National Product, Gross Domestic Product, Gross National Income and Gross Personal Income. If economic growth is backed by the distribution of the proceeds of growth in such a way that there is a structural change that leads to an improvement in the economic well being of the masses of the people, economic development sets in. Economic Development is one of the four pillars of sustainable development, the others being social development, environmental development and cultural diversity.

The specific objectives of this study is to a theoretical review of the institutional barriers of what keeps women out of the executive suite to do a theoretical review of Sustainable Development, and o do a theoretical analysis to show how the process of women in management could be a strategy for Sustainable development in Nigeria and to design a system cybernetic model of 8 inputs, transform of the process of women in management and output of the increase in sustainable development in Nigeria. All the objectives were achieved in this study.

INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS OF WHAT KEEPS WOMEN OUT OF THE EXECUTIVE SUITE

Whether women ask for equality with men softly or firmly, the male gatekeepers and some established women as well often hear the only shrill and piercing sounds. Requests are heard as demands. Demands seem to imply violence. This response is by no means universal but predominates. It prolongs the resistance of the women's participation in spheres long dominated by men. It reflects the continued cultural conflict between the norms specifying womanly or ladylike behaviour and the norms specifying component business and professional behaviour (Epstein, 1975)

Both the perceptions of behaviour and the expectations of the people as to proper behaviour shape the present conditions. Women new comers to business still face age-long prejudices and cultural biases that define their role and their potential contributions. These stereotypes intrude on their social and business relations with

men and makes assimilation difficult or herculean (Hackamack and Solid, 2014)

Of primary importance are those informal structures of interaction in the business and the professional world that affects and are affected by women's behaviour. Informal behaviour is institutionalized as thoroughly as the formal modes of interaction depicted on organizational charts. It is probably more important to analyze informal interaction. The closer one gets to the top, the more commonly are decision making judgments and rewards determined by subjective criteria: understandings rather than rules govern behaviour and personal qualifications are judged, against a range of attributes not immediately relevant functionally on the job at hand. These factors have always been important, but they may become even more important as legal strictures forbid the exclusion of women and others once rejected categorically (Hackamack and Solid, 1975).

TRENDS IN THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Before considering the informal modes of institutional exclusion of women, it may be reviewed women's position, cross-culturally over the years, as it bears on these issues. Perhaps the factor that best determines what may be women's work is not the nature of the work performed nor the burden it may create mentally or physically, but rather the symbolic significance of the work and whether or not it is considered important, honorable, and desirable. The greater the social desirability of a type of work, the less likely it is that women are identified with it. All societies seem to prefer men in the jobs most valued. Even where women constitute a majority among personnel of an occupation, such as in school teaching, librarianship, or textile work, men seem to have a disproportionately greater chance to be in the top administration of the field. This is true even in Soviet medicine, where men, although a minority of the profession, hold the top professorships and hospital administration posts. In all cultures, women are at best tolerated in the most desired fields, and the few found there are regarded as having special and idiosyncratic traits that justify the anomaly. This rationalizing impedes women's integration into top jobs even when few formal obstacles exist. (Epstein, 1975).

Although today it is assumed that there are widespread changes in the position of women, there have probably been fewer significant changes than media publicity indicates. The 1970 census showed percentage increases for women in male-dominated professions and occupations not unlike those of the previous two decades. Women lawyers rose from 2.4 percent of the profession in 1940 to 3.5 percent in 1960 and 4.9 percent in 1970, a minimal increase in light of the enormous emphasis on women's liberation during the sixties. In medicine women moved from 6.5 percent of their profession in 1960 to 9.3 percent in 1970, but women were only 8.5 percent of all medical students that same year. Presumably those percentages have increased since the 1970 census. But some of the statistics point the other way. In manufacturing industries the percentage of managers dropped from 7.1 percent women in 1960 to 6.3 percent in 1970. This was below the 6.4 percent listed in 1950, when the status of women was relatively lower than during the previous two decades and when the proportion of women dropped in all career-oriented spheres of life. It was a period of characterized by Jessie Bernard as the time of the motherhood mania. (Epstein, 1975)

There are few reliable statistics about women's opportunities for promotion in publishing, banking, commerce, or the public utilities. When the statistics are at hand, it will then be necessary to look beyond the new titles to the actual roles being filled. Visibility is a central problem for women in business and the other male-dominated professional activities. Certain jobs are less visible than others, and those in the former don't get as much credit as they would otherwise. Women tend to get the jobs that are actually and symbolically less visible-actually, because they do not have contact with clients and with the market, and symbolically, because the jobs they have are not defined as crucial. One further complication is that even where women are given higher-level administrative jobs, these do not lead to top-management posts, but rather are on ancillary routes that may be dead ends. A woman may be called a vice president or special assistant to the president, but be assigned to administrate an affirmative action plan or asked to recruit women personnel. Such activity is rarely viewed as more than peripheral to the goals of the firm and is unlikely to lead to the top. Today the diverging of women to alternative routes may occur at a higher level than before, but the ultimate consequences are the same. (Epstein, 1975)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development refers to a mode of human development in which resources use aims to meet human need while ensuring the sustainability of human system and the environment (Iyoha, 2006). The needs include the eight human need of Maslow. These include physiological needs, esteem needs, safety needs, social needs, self actualization needs, the needs for knowledge and understanding beauty and aesthetics and the needs for transcendence (Nwachukwu, 2010). The term Sustainable development was used by the Brundtland Commission which coined what has been the most quoted definition of sustainable development. It defines sustainable development as the development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs (Jhingan, 2008).

Sustainable development ties together, the concern for the carrying capacity of the natural systems with

the social challenges faced by humanity. As early as the early 1970s, sustainability was employed to describe an economy in equilibrium with basic ecological support systems. Ecologists have pointed to the limits to growth and presented the alternative of a steady state economy so as to address the environmental concerns. The concept of sustainable development has in the past been broken into four constituents parts or pillars; social development, economic development, environmental development and cultural diversity (The Bandavieds, 1974).

More recently, it has been suggested that a more consistent analytical breakdown is to distinguish the four domains of economic, environmental socio-political and cultural sustainability. This is consistent with the move to make culture the fourth domain of sustainability. Other important sources refer to the fourth domain as institutional or as good governance. The definition of sustainable development as the development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Jhingan, 2008) highlights two important concepts namely concept of needs and the idea of the limitations posed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment's ability to meet the present and future needs.

A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS TO SHOW HOW THE PROCESS OF WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT COULD BE USED AS A STRATEGY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Before considering the informal modes of institutional exclusion of women, it is important to review women's position, cross-culturally over the years, as it bears on these issues. Perhaps the factor that best ascertains what may be women's work is not the nature of the work performed, nor the burden it may create mentally or physically, but rather the symbolic significance of the work and whether or not it is considered as important, honourable and desirable. The greater the social desirability of a type of work, the less likely it is that women are identified with it. All societies seem to prefer men in the jobs most valued. Even where women constitute a majority among the personnel of an occupation, such as school teaching, librarianship, or textile work, men seem to have a disproportionately greater chance to be in the top administration of the field.

This is true even in Soviet Medicine where men, although a minority of the profession, hold the top professorships and hospital administration post. In all cultures women are best tolerated in the most defined fields and the few found there are regarded as having special and idiosyncratic traits that justify the anomaly. The rationalizing impedes women's integration into top jobs even when few formal obstacles exist.

Fortunately for women, it has been observed that in many research works they have been found to be better managers than men. That means that they are better than men in providing an environment within groups, so that the groups and the individuals within them can achieve their goals and objectives by utilizing human, material and financial resources. This also means that women could make it possible to increase the productive capacity of a country like Nigeria and this could lead to Economic Growth. If the proceeds of economic growth are properly distributed and there is a spontaneous change that would increase the economic welfare of the people, economic development sets in and if development is ongoing sustainable development sets in.

THE FORMULATION OF THE SYSTEM'S CYBERNETIC MODEL

Figure 1.1 shows the system's cybernetic model of 8 inputs, transform of the process of Women in Management and output of the increase in Sustainable Development in Nigeria.

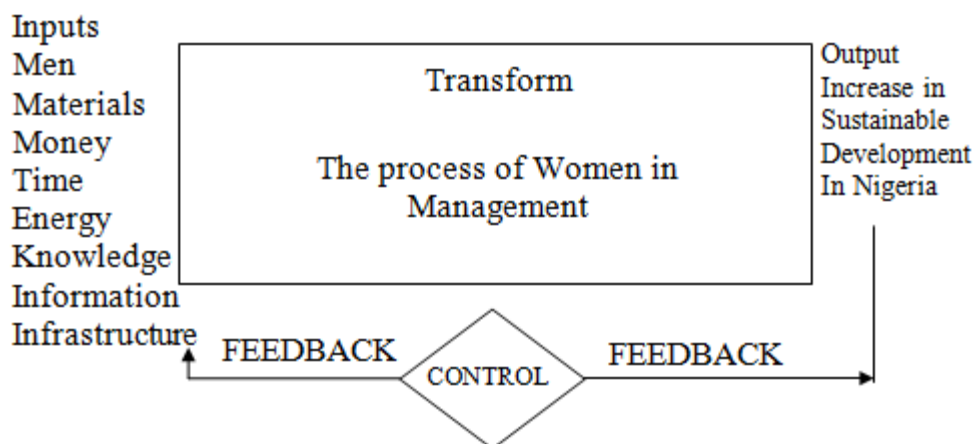


Figure 1.1: The system's cybernetic model of 8 inputs, transform of the process of women in management and output of increase in sustainable development Nigeria.

Source: O'brien, J.A. (2008) Computers in Business Management: An Introduction, Homewood Illinois: Richard D. Irwin incorporated. Page 100

From figure 1.1, it is shown that the inputs are 8 in number, with the transform of women in management and output of increase in sustainable development in Nigeria with feedback and control.

CONCLUSION

Gender was about both men and women. However, the aspect of gender of interest in this paper was about Women in Management as a strategy for Sustainable Development in Nigeria. The cost of employing Women in Management was greater than the cost of employing men. This was jarring statement partly because it was true but mostly because it was something that people were reluctant to talk about. A new study by one multinational corporation showed that the rate of turnover in management positions was $2\frac{1}{2}$ times higher among top performing women that are among men. A large producer of consumer goods reported that one half of the women who take maternity leave return to their jobs or not at all.

The specific objectives of the study were to do theoretical review of the institutional barriers that keep women out of the executive suite, to do a theoretical review of Sustainable Development and to do a theoretical analysis to show that the process of Women in Management could be a strategy for Sustainable Development in Nigeria and also to design a system's cybernetic model of 8 inputs, transform of the process of Women in Management and output of the increase in Sustainable Development in Nigeria. All the objectives were achieved in the paper. Sustainable Development is defined as meeting the needs of the present generation without causing harm to the needs of the future generations.

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