

Gender Inequality in the Hospitality Industry: Issues and Challenges. A case study of selected hotels in Ondo State in Nigeria.

ADEBAYO, IBIDAPO NATHANIEL

Department of Hospitality Management, Federal Polytechnic, Auchi. Edo State. Nigeria.

Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine if gender bias exists in the Nigerian hospitality outlets to determine the extent, causes and solution. The researchers adopted a survey and descriptive techniques approach for the study. A sample of eight hotels all in Ondo State, Nigeria was used for the study. Yaro Yamnen formula was adopted to get the sample size of 229. This sample was used to check if gender inequality exists in the Nigeria hospitality industry. The extent of gender inequality in the Nigeria hospitality industry is high and this is in favour of the male hospitality professionals. Finally, discrimination in employment pressure and nature of work are the major causes of gender inequality in Nigerian hospitality industry.

Keywords: Gender inequality, Hospitality industry, female professional and male professional.

1. Introduction

A considerable body of research exists concerning gender diversity in business, including the hospitality industry. For example, several studies demonstrate a disparate distribution of income between male and female employees in the hospitality industry, with female earning less than their male counterparts (Biswas and Cassell, 1996; Purcell, 1996; Sparrowe and Iverson, 1999). Gender-based income disparity has been confirmed as a sex discrimination within the hospitality industry (Sparrowe and Iverson, 1999; Thrane, 2007). There also have been several examples of research highlighting differences between men and women managers in effective strategy implementation (Schaap, Stedham, and Yarnamura, 2008). Still other research has documented gender differences in promotions to managerial positions (Manwa and Black, 2002; Thrane, 2007), wherein men are over-represented in preferred positions that pay better. Part of the reason for this disparity may be that female employees may interrupt their working lives due to preferences for marriage and caring for children.

Of course, gender might not be the sole cause of disparities in the distribution of income and managerial employment in the hospitality industry. Other variables interact with gender to produce these disparities. Adib and Guerrier (2003) explored the ways in which interacts with such variables as race, ethnicity and the class background of the employees in the context of how they position themselves within organizational power arrangements.

In developing countries, including Nigeria, females usually are quite powerless to compete with their male counterparts due to several visible or invisible barriers and challenges (e.g. forgoing marriage, motherhood, discrimination, stereotyping e.t.c). This problem becomes magnified when the operational aspects of hospitality management require long working hours and high degrees of mobility. As noted above and as a matter of respect (or cultural tradition), Nigeria society does not like to see females working in an environment that requires working long hours, drinking alcohol, etc. as a result the business environment of the hospitality industry is more conducive for males' advancement in their professional careers. Cave and Killie (2010) noted that the industry requires commitment teamwork achievement, desire and risk taking-regardless of gender discrimination.

The Nigerian hospitality industry has also been dominated by the problem of seasonality, which particularly deters women from continuing their professional careers in this field. Perhaps most importantly, some women believe that the hospitality industry can interfere with their private lives and sufficient to meet the expectations of women. The widely shared perspective within Nigeria is that women often view the public sector as an alternative employment solution given its flexibility with regard to management domestic household duties. Contrary to the situation in some Western countries such as the United Kingdom (Purcell, 1996), the factors have led the Nigerian hospitality industry to become male-dominated. Despite this, and from an optimistic point of view, it was observed that despite the increase in the number of female scholars, the numbers of male managers are more.

Still, gender disparity seems to remain in the Nigeria hospitality industry, which in turn brings to the forefront important issues regarding decisions about recruiting, compensating and supervising personnel within this industry. Thus, focus of this paper, however is to determine:

- If gender bias exists in the Nigerian hospitality industry.
- The extent of gender bias in the industry
- Causes of gender bias in the hospitality industry
- The gender type favoured by gender inequality in Nigeria hospitality industry.
- The likely solution to the problem of gender inequality in the hospitality industry in Nigeria.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

As more women joined the force, researchers started investigating whether the gender of the applicant and or recruiter had any impact on the hiring decision. In this regard, several studies have investigated sex bias during the employment interview in attempting to separate the effects of applicant sex and recruiter sex on recruiter's evaluations.' While some of these studies covered general employment interviews (Arvey and Faley, 1988, Gillois, Calian, Palmer, 1992; Graves and Powell; 1988; 1995; Powell (1987) and other studies covered specific fields such as accounting (Hardin, Reding, Stocks, 2002), symphony orchestras (Seltzer, 1989), banking (Fernandez and Weinberg, 1997), academic hiring and tenure (Steinpreis, 1999), and restaurant hiring (Neumark, Bank, and Van Nort 1996). These studies produced mixed results concerning the effect of the similarity of applicant sex and recruiter sex on interview outcomes. For example, personnel managers regarded same sex applicants as more similar to themselves than opposite sex applicants, but sex similarity was not a factor in ratings of likability or suitability for the job (Gallois et al., 1992).

Similarity, a study by graves and Powell (1988) showed no significant effect of applicant gender on the interview outcome, but found that gender similarity and interpersonal attraction were important factors in recruiters' decision processes. In another study Graves and Powell, (1995) found that female recruiters saw male applicants as more similar to themselves and more qualified than female applicants. Also, a study by Hardin et al, (2002) found that the gender of a hypothetical recruit gender. Graves and Powell, (1995) claimed that the effects of sex similarity on recruiting and interview outcomes are inconsistent and complex. However, other researchers have shown that gender and gender-role stereotyping can influence hiring decisions (Gallois et al., 1992) and or can impact hiring recommendations (Zebropwtz, Tenembaun, and Goldstein, 1991).

A study by Gibelarnn, (2002) revealed sustained salary discrepancies on the basis of gender throughout the service professions, where women earned 24% less than men in 2000, which was a reduction from a 37% earnings gap in 1979. The gender pay gap has narrowed in sales pay, but is still very wide. Schellhardt, (1994) stated that in 1992 men in sales earned, on average, &31,346, while women were paid \$17,924. A survey by Marchett, (1996) found that women who were promoted to senior management positions were paid less than men in those same positions. A gender pay gap also seems to be common in other countries. For example, a study by Menguc, (1998) found that while the Nigerian male to female earnings gap has been declining in recent years, it still remains quite substantial in favour of men. Although the reasons for this pay gap are complex and interconnected, the keys factors include human capital differences, part-time work by many women, travel patterns, Occupational segregation, and workplace segregation Anonymous, 2006).

The above studies show that a great deal of attention has been devoted to salary inequality on the basis of gender. These studies, however, did not investigate whether' the gender pay gap is also being impacted by recruiter gender It is possible that recruiter gender could impact salaries a surprising finding that female recruiters offered significantly higher salaries to male recruits than to female recruits. Also, a study by Joy, (2000) found that men earned more than women in their first jobs within a majority of academic majors and occupations, including sales occupations. Since many women seem to start with a lower salary, it would be difficult for them to catch up with men's earnings alter in their careers. This could provide one possible explanation of the gender pay gap.

Some studies (Vikinas and Cartan, 1997; Wajernan, 1996) that examined management behaviour found no significant difference. in the way men and women manage. Billing and Alvesson, (1994) reported that most empirical investigations, show only a few differences in between the genders in their management roles, and those differences tend to be quite small. When it comes to behavior, attitudes, e.t.c, they stated that the similarities between men and women in management positions are more striking than the dissimilarities. Ferrario, (1994) reported no evidence to suggest at male and female managers differed in their managerial styles. Similarly Vikinas and Cartan (1997) indicated that supervisors felt that men and women were equally effective and that there were no differences in the perceptions of male or female managers by their boss, peers, or staff, irrespective for the gender o the perceiver. Their findings support

the assertion that there are no significant differences in the management style and effectiveness of male and female managers.

On the other hand, some research (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1998; Bass, Avolio, and Atwater, 1996; Rosener, 1990, 1996; Vikinas and Cartan, 1997) has argued that the gender of the manager does matter. Male and female managers, for example, perceive themselves differently. Female managers indicated they were more innovative (Bass et al., 1996) and better at getting the job done (and setting priorities) than their male counterparts (Alirno-Metcalfe, (1998; 1996); in addition, there is a perception, that while female managers are stronger team builders and developers of their staff (Aluno Metcalfe, 1998; Bass et al, 1990, 1996) male managers are reported to be more bureaucratic than female managers (Willis and 1993). When employees were asked to identify the roles that male and female managers displayed, Willis and Petzall, (1993) found some differences in the ways that men and women manage. Employees perceived that female managers were more innovative, better able to prioritize and synchronize activities, more readily engaged in mentoring (Vikinas and Cartn, 1997). This is consistent with women managers' self-descriptions.

There are several possible explanations for the mixed results regarding differences in men's and women's managerial styles. First, as Rosenthal, Guest, and Peccei, (1996) reported, many of studies that found significant results were laboratory studies. This type of research is conducted in a short time frame and may not reflect life in an organization over a longer time period. Laboratory studies are also artificial in nature, making generalizations of the findings to other situations difficult. Second, the gender of the employees and their perceptions were not taken into account in the majority of these studies. One study by Ragins (1991), which controlled for the gender of the staff in the statistical analysis, reported that there were no differences in the staff's perceptions of male and female managers. She observed that staff ratings of a manager's effectiveness were influenced more by their perceptions of managerial power than by gender. Thus, an explanation for inconclusive results may reside in the interaction of the gender of employees with that of managers (Vilinknas, 2000).

Collectively, these studies provide much mixed evidence whether men and women differ in how they enact their organizational roles. Are certain decisions and actions, and certain managerial approaches, more likely to be pursued by male managerial personnel than by female managers, or vice versa? In short, is there a gender bias with respect to how managers deal with their employees? This study seeks to shed some additional light on this issue, and hopefully to help clarify the role for gender bias in the Nigerian hospitality industry. Moreover, some of the previous studies suggest that various demographic factors might influence gender bias in various organizational settings. However, here too the evidence from prior studies is mixed. A second aim of the present study is to help clarify the impact of selected demographic variable on potential gender bias in the Nigerian hospitality industry.

2. Research Methodology

Survey research approach was adopted for this study the population of the study comprised of all hotels in Ondo State that have registered with the Nigerian tourism development corporation. Hence about 16 hotels were identified through the department of culture and social services Ondo State. The researchers serially numbered the 16 hotels and picked at an interval of two. Hence about eight hotels which comprised of sunview hotel, Royal birds hotel, Joy land Liliyo hotel, Point one hotel, Owena International Ade super and the chancery hotel were selected for the study as shows in table 1.

I also determined the size of the proportion of the population that will constitute the sample size. Hence Yaro Yamnem formula

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

was adopted to get the sample size of 229. Questionnaire was designed to get relevant data used for the work while simply percentage was used for the analysis.

3. Data Presentation And Analysis

Table 2 shows that about 38% and 31.9% of the respondents agreed and practically agreed respectively that there is gender inequality in the Nigerian hospitality industry. 13.1% and 13.1% the respondents disagreed and partially disagreed respectively with this development. About 3.9% of the respondents were

indifference. The index in the above information shows that about 69.9% of the respondents were of the view that gender unequally exists in the Nigerian hospitality industry about 26% disagreed while about 3.9% were indifference. Hence, gender inequality exists in the Nigeria hospitality industry.

Table 3 shows that about 73.8% of the respondents were of the view that the extent of gender: inequality in the Nigerian hospitality industry is high, while about 26.20% of the respondents were of the view that the extent is low. The index in this information shows that the extent of gender inequality in the Nigerian hospitality industry is high. Hence, employment opportunity in the industry is one gender sided.

Table 4 shows that about 70% of the respondents were of the view that gender inequality in the Nigerian hospitality is in favour of male while about 21.3% of the respondents optioned in favour of female while about 8.7% of the respondents were indifference. The index in this information shows that gender inequality in these Nigerian hospitality industries is in favour of male hospitality professionals.

Table 5 shows that about 30.5% of the respondent were of the view that discrimination is the major cause of gender inequality in the Nigerian hospitality industry. About 22% of the respondents believed that culture and traditions is the major cause, about 37% attributed the cause to pressure of the work.

While about 10.5% of the respondents attributed the information shows that, discrimination in employment (30.5%) and pressure and nature of the work (37%) are the major cause of gender inequality in the Nigerian hospitality industry.

4. Summary Of Findings And Conclusion

1. Gender inequality exists in the Nigerian hospitality industry
2. The extent of gender inequality in the Nigerian hospitality industry is high.
3. Gender inequality in the Nigerian hospitality industry is in favour of the male hospitality professionals.
4. Discrimination in employment, pressure and nature of work are the major cause of gender inequality in Nigerian hospitality industry.

5. Recommendations

Based on the conclusion from the study, the researchers thus recommend as follows:

1. Professionalism should be strongly encouraged in the industry as against gender bias being practiced.
2. Employment in the Nigerian hospitality industry should be based on performance and competency rather than gender bias
3. Equal opportunities should be given to other female and in sic during employment and practice.
4. Hospitality business owners should not hide under culture and tradition to underestimate the competence of female professionals.

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Table 1 Sample unit of the eight selected Hotels in Ondo State

| S/N | NAMES OF HOTELS | NUMBER OF MANAGERS | NUMBER OF SUPERVISOR | NUMBER OF JUNIOR STAFF | TOTAL |
|-----|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Sun view | 05 | 12 | 20 | 37 |
| 2 | Royal Birds | 06 | 10 | 20 | 36 |
| 3 | Joy lands hotels | 05 | 10 | 18 | 33 |
| 4 | Lilijo Hotel | 05 | 08 | 15 | 28 |
| 5 | Point one Hotel | 06 | 10 | 15 | 31 |
| 6 | Owena international | 05 | 08 | 14 | 27 |
| 7 | Ade super Hotel | 02 | 06 | 18 | 26 |
| 8 | The Chancery hotel | 04 | 05 | 20 | 29 |

Description for the above table.

Table 2: Gender inequality in the Nigerian Hospitality Industry

| RESPONSE | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE % |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Agreed | 87 | 38% |
| Partially agreed | 73 | 31.9% |
| Disagreed | 30 | 13.1% |
| Partially disagreed | 30 | 13.1% |
| Indifference | 09 | 3.9% |
| Total | 229 | 100% |

Source: Filed Survey, 2014

Table 2 shows that about 38% and 31.9% of the respondents agreed and practically agreed respectively that there is gender inequality in the Nigerian hospitality industry. 13.1% and 13.1% the respondents disagreed and partially disagreed respectively with this development. About 3.9% of the respondents were indifferent. The index in the above information shows that about 69.9% of the respondents were of the view that gender unequally exists in the Nigerian hospitality industry about 26% disagreed while about 3.9% were indifference. Hence, gender inequality exists in the Nigeria hospitality industry.

Table 3: Extent of Gender Inequality in the Nigerian Hospitality Industry.

| RESPONSE | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE % |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Very high | 90 | 39.3% |
| High | 79 | 34.5% |
| Low | 40 | 17.5% |
| Very low | 20 | 8.7% |
| Indifference | 00 | 00% |
| Total | 229 | 100% |

Source: Filed Survey, 2014

Table 3 shows that about 73.8% of the respondents were of the view that the extent of gender: inequality in the Nigerian hospitality industry is high, while about 26.20% of the respondents were of the view that the extent is low. The index in this information shows that the extent of gender inequality in the Nigerian hospitality industry is high. Hence, employment opportunity in the industry is one gender sided.

Table 4 Gender-Type Favoured by. Gender Inequality in the Nigerian Hospitality Industry

| RESPONSE | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE % |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Male | 160 | 70% |
| Female | 49 | 21.3% |
| Indifference | 20 | 8.7% |
| Total | 229 | 100% |

Table 4 shows that about 70% of the respondents were of the view that gender inequality in the Nigerian hospitality is in favour of male while about 21.3% of the respondents optioned in favour of female while about 8.7% of the respondents were indifferent.

Table 5: Causes of Gender inequality in Favour of Males in Nigerian Hospitality Industry.

| RESPONSE | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE % |
|------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Discrimination in employment | 70 | 30.5% |
| Culture and tradition | 50 | 22% |
| Pressure and nature of work | 85 | 37% |
| Education/Qualification | 24 | 10.5% |
| Total | 229 | 100% |

Source: Filed Survey, 2014

Table 5 shows that about 30.5% of the respondent were of the view that discrimination is the major cause of gender inequality in the Nigerian hospitality industry. About 22% of the respondents believed that culture and traditions is the major cause, about 37% attributed the cause to pressure of the work.

While about 10.5% of the respondents attributed the information shows that, discrimination in employment (30.5%) and pressure and nature of the work (37%) are the major came of gender inequality in the Nigerian hospitality industry.