

An Overview of the Labour Input of Female Administrative Staff in Nigerian Public Universities

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Abstract

Although there is an increase in female participation in the labour force, there remains a significant gender gap in the administrative positions in Nigerian academia. This study therefore assessed the labour input of female administrative staff in terms of their contributions to the various job schedules in Nigerian Public Universities. With the aid of the Gender – Organization-System model, the study explored the complex variables that affect the labour input and career progression of female administrative staff. The study adopted the survey research design and utilized data from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was generated through the administration of questionnaires on 675 purposively selected female administrative staff from three randomly selected Public Universities from Southern western Nigeria. The questionnaires were distributed across the middle and senior administrative staff category in the six universities. The retrieved questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of percentages. The study revealed that majority (55.5%) of the female administrative staff did not chair committees; rather they acted as secretaries (46.6%). Most of them (42.6%) performed routine clerical assignments, while 33.3% attended mainly to files. Also, it was found that a number of societal values and norms combined with some organizational and individual attributes of females provided explanations for the trends in the labour input of female administrative staff in Nigerian Public Universities. The study concluded that concerted effort is required by universities to rid themselves of the vestiges of gender imbalance in the labour force.

Keywords: Labour Input, Female, Administrative Staff, Public Universities, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Universities are institutions of higher learning where knowledge is generated, transmitted and applied to solve societal problems and advance development. At the core of university enterprise are the academic staff who teach, engage in research and carry out community service through knowledge application (Ogunraku, 2012). The university also consists of administrative staff who are responsible for the maintenance and supervision of the institution. They operate in areas other than direct teaching for research, and some of their responsibilities include: maintenance of official records, supervision of academic affairs, registration of students as well as auditing of financial flows and records. Staff in this stream include: directors, registrars, team leaders of students' services and academic administration, alumni affairs and public relations officers, library, staff, as well as information technology and business development officers (Rosser, 2004; Szekeres, 2006).

Despite significant advances in education and an increase in female participation in the labour force, women remain under represented in the university labour force across the globe (Madsen, 2015). Although over the last half century, women have made significant advances in the labour force and political activism across the globe, gender gap stills exists in higher educational institutions. The United States Bureau of Statistics for instance, reported in 2009 that women constituted 51% of all workers in high paying management, professional and related occupations. However improvements in education attainment and professional development have not translated into significant increase of females in administrative and senior management positions in Nigerian universities when compared to their male counterparts (Ogbogu, 2011). Research has shown that most organizations including universities do not fully realize the value of having women in key administrative positions. Since universities are seats of higher learning, critical inquiry and innovation, it is expected that they should be more enlightened when it comes to gender equity issues but this does not appear to be the case (Wallace and Marchant, 2009). Understanding the value of inclusivity in university setting is critical and timely. This is because research has shown that organizations that have more women on their boards ranked higher on various performance measures and that there are positive correlations between gender diversity on boards and improvement in corporate governance and financial performance. Unfortunately, this is not so in the Nigerian university system, as fewer females occupy the top administrative staff positions in the university system. This is attributed to the socialization process whereby women are relegated to the background and made to perform more of domestic roles. Consequently, women are perceived as invisible and are made to perform duties that are termed "women's work" such as secretarial and clerical duties. Men on the other hand, occupy the top administrative staff positions where decisions are made. Thus, the notions of women's work and men's work persist among administrative staff in universities. Most female administrative staff who progressed from the lower grade to the middle and top management positions have always stated that they experienced difficulty in being accepted as anything other than "the secretary" (Allen-Collinson, 2009). Administrative job is therefore

sometimes thought about as a masculinized concept that is associated with being decisive and assertive, hence women struggle to find success in the masculine environment that defines administrative job. Women feel inauthentic when they try to work like men and fit into the organizational culture (Longman and Madsen, 2014).

It should be realized that the extent of the labour input of female administrative staff could result from possible interaction of a well-entrenched and complex set of not just gender and individual attributes which are internal to females, but could also result from certain structural and organizational variables which perpetrate the inferior position of women in the Nigerian university system (Ogbogu, 2006). Also, the subordination of women has been built into the institutional functioning of universities because men have over the years developed and dominated the university system. The extent of the labour input of women in administrative positions is partly as a result of entrenched systems and beliefs that prompt and support men's domination. Female administrative staff are an important source, hence their under utilization should be of concern to the universities. Bringing their strengths together with that of men can result in more effective, productive and innovative institutions. Female academics have been studied extensively but issues that border on gender has not been addressed at length in the administrative stream. Consequently, this paper focuses on female administrated staff in contrast to academic staff which has been well documented (Blackmore and Sachs, 2001; Chesterman, Ross-Smith and Peters, 2003; Wallace and Marchant, 2009; White and Ozkanhi, 2011; Ogbogu, 2011). It evaluates the labour input and contributions of female administrative staff to the vital sectors of the Nigerian university system. Finally, using the gender-organisation-system model, this study identified and explored the complex variables that affect the labour input, career progression and participation of female administrative staff in the Nigerian university system.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Globally, achieving sustainable development and advancement in universities require the inputs of both male and female staff. The vast innovations recorded in most universities worldwide are the products of relentless efforts of great scholars of both sexes (Oyebade, Ajayi and Oyeyipo, 2007). In spite of these advantages, gender inequalities exist among staff in most universities. Although there is a general increase of women in the Nigerian labour force, huge gap still exists in staff recruitments, promotions and appointments of female administrative staff in Nigerian public universities (Ogbogu, 2016). It should be realized that female administrative staff are pivotal and a source of competitive advantage in the university system. They bring beneficial competencies and skills into the system. Also, new pathways to better decision making have been forged through women's diverse perspective and leadership style (Terjesen and Singh, 2008).

Administrative staff are employees of the university responsible for the maintenance and supervision of the institution and who team up with academic staff to provide improved student outcomes (Szekeres, 2006). They operate in areas other than direct academic teaching or research and support the academic units with organizational functions, such as planning, processing of documents and monitoring and reporting same (Rosser, 2004). They provide support in handling administrative and accounting duties and shape the institution's priorities and practices. Furthermore, administrative staff plan, organize and administer the activities of departments and maintain an organizational climate that encourages the development, retention and a high level of morals among personnel. They maintain effective relations with faculty and students and interpret college policies (Ogunraku, 2012). They also serve on committees and councils as directed by board policies and procedures. Conway (2000) reported that their work is both varied and demanding and therefore requires a thorough understanding of operating policies and procedures coupled with dedication, efficiency and ability to work alone or as part of a team. It should be noted that Universities would not function without committed hardworking administrators.

Allen-Collison (2009) observed that women are invisible at the top of university administration where information is gathered and networking is done. Consequently their low input in decision making positions excludes them from the resource allocation process and they miss a lot from what is gained through this process which further compounds their marginalization (Wohlmuther, 2008). Barriers to women's participation, labour input and their clustering in the lower ranks particularly in routine office secretarial schedules in universities is well documented (Luke, 1997; Kan, 2007 and Bailey, 1999). This trend is attributed to universities' conservative traditional cultures as well as other factors such as lack of mentoring, lack of access to informal networks of communication and a small pool of women to recruit from to management positions. Wolfinger, Masun and Goulden (2008) attributed this to direct and indirect discrimination and inflexible work environment based on the standard male career model. In support of this, Ramazanogh (1987) argued that universities are bastions of male power and privilege, and the structural mechanisms reproduce a patriarchal order which subordinates females. In the same vein, Acker (1990) opined that hegemonic masculinity which consists of constructions of competence, forcefulness, toughness and being unemotional provides the basis for organizational processes that render women incapable of competing effectively with their male counterparts in career advancement in the university system. Kuo (2009) affirmed that lack of formal and informal social networks for women and not being a member of the "old boys' club" as men, results in their lack of recognition

that often leads to advancement on the job. Rosser (2004) reiterated the fact that the masculine culture and male power structures in universities promote “hidden decision making” amongst men and excludes women subtly. It encourages men to inhabit positions of power and reproduce social relationships which perpetrate their dominance (Mackenzie, 2008). In view of this, Ramsay (2000) noted that in Australian universities, women had to work harder to be recognized or promoted. He noted that the continuous imperative for women to re-establish credibility drains morale and threatens productivity. Furthermore, Ozkali and White (2009) opined that the male dominated hierarchical and masculine culture of universities is exacerbated by gender unfriendly policies and unsupportive human resource management systems that lack career development for females.

Research has shown that the difficulty of balancing work and care responsibilities account for women’s prominence in the lower administrative career structure in universities (Ogbogu, 2006; Krefting, 2003, Mayer and Tikka, 2008). Women retain responsibility for childcare, housework and care for elderly parents, all of which increase strain on women and lower their job commitment. Consequently, a woman’s career life is characterized by a pattern of initial entry, interruption for bearing and rearing children and a re-entry at a later age. This translates to lower gains and job status when re-entering (Ogbogu, 2006). Also, Ramazanogh (1987) affirmed that women’s marital status and child-care practices impact on their labour input. He affirmed that these factors do not only contribute to their slow growth and input, but also to some of them having to leave their institutions prior to having the opportunity to advance because of lack of institutional and family support.

Langford (2010) observed that the university system is not proactive in promoting work-life balance but encourages a work environment that values masculine characteristics and behaviours. Schmuck (1980) opined that norms of the society with the different socialization patterns for men and women channel them to different areas of work. This according to him accounts for the type of work women perform as administrative staff. This implies that society’s attitude towards appropriate male and female roles identify women as not task-oriented enough and lack independence. In the same vein, Kwesiga (2002) noted that women in Africa are socialized to accept the fact that their roles are that of care givers and home-makers, while men are encouraged to assume positions of authority. Hence, men exhibit personalities that make it easier for them to advance. This explains the diminishing numbers of women available for top administrative positions in African universities.

Cullen and Luna (1993) found that lack of sufficient female mentors is a major obstacle that accounts for the level of participation and job performance of female administrative staff in universities. They affirmed that, in order for women to succeed and progress in the university administrative career, mentoring must occur. This is important, because mentoring meets the needs of women and helps attract and retain them in university administration. Hagevik (1998) emphasized the fact that the advantages of mentoring are felt not only by the mentees and their organizations but also by the mentors themselves. The mentors experience the fulfilment of passing along hard-earned wisdom, influencing the next generation of management and receiving appreciation from younger workers.

Some theories have been put forward to explain the prominence of women in low level administrative positions and in the performance of specific roles and job schedules. Beck-Gernsheim and Ostner’s (1978) theory of social customs posited that the key explanatory variable of discrimination in the labour force is the basic division of labour between housework and market work and the ascription of the roles of women and men respectively. They affirmed that patriarchy is a system where male-dominated structures and social arrangements elaborate the oppression of women. Also, the fact that women became more absorbed in housework, reproduction and multiple roles prevented them from specializing as much as men in production roles. Consequently, women were not able to work the trading networks to the extent that men did (Elise, 1976). This theory suggests three policy conclusions as anti-discriminatory strategies as follows: equal division of tasks in housework between men and women; change in role attitudes of both men and women, and a fundamental change of market work allows a synchronization of family and market roles. Beck-Gernsheim and Ostner (1978) argued that the need for a changed work organization is not only a matter of introducing flexible working arrangements, but also a matter of changing working conditions in favour of female specific abilities, attitudes and behaviour.

Benitez (2003) used the social system theory in explaining the gender disparity in the university labour force. He emphasized the need to examine the environment to detect whether there are conditions or constraints limiting the access of women to a given position. These conditions according to him may not just be cultural or socio-economic in nature, but they may be local and typical of the university system. This implies that barriers to women’s participation and input in universities cannot just be attributed to factors from the individual or society, rather the teaching and research culture of universities should be put into consideration. Universities are yet to identify and examine the differing needs of men and women in order to reflect these in the practices and policies related to employment and conditions of service.

The Gender-organization-system (GOS) model is adopted for this study in explaining the labour input of female administrative staff in Nigeria Public Universities. This model explores male-female differences in basic job attitudes based on individual or personal characteristics associated with gender, structural variables linked to

the organization and situational factors related to culture, societal norms and socialization pattern (Ogbogu, 2006). The central argument of the GOS model is that male-female differences in job attitude and performance are not necessarily gender linked, but situationally and structurally induced (Fagenson, 1990). The theorists posit that employees' actions are determined more by the organizational roles and situations rather than by mere gender attributes. The GOS model moves away from blaming the individual to present an intermeshing relationship between personal characteristics such as gender attributes as well as situational and institutional system in which individuals work (Aina, 1998). This implies that gender, organizational context and the larger social systems are interlocking variables which affect female labour input. Gender attributes such as sex, marital status and familial status are not enough to explain female labour input, rather certain systemic variables such as sex role socialization, religious/cultural beliefs and economic factors combine and act as inducement or constraints which determine their orientation and input at work. The model further argues that in addition to systemic and gender variables, certain existing organizational practices such as recruitment and selection policies, institutional environment, promotion policies etc affect females in universities. These variables intermesh with gender and systemic variables to act as inducement or constraints which determine female work attitude and behaviour as well as their overall input and performance on the job (Ogbogu, 2006).

In view of these, the development and implementation of institutional policies that enable healthy integration of work responsibilities with family is required to enhance women's participation and labour input in the university administrative career structure (Ogbogu, 2006). Furthermore, initiating and implementing sponsorship and training programmes can help women advance up the career ladder. The sponsorship programme according to Roebuck and Smith (2011) is a situation whereby a mentor aids in social, emotional and personal growth development of the mentee. A sponsor in addition to the traditional mentoring duties, has significant influence on decision-making processes and advocates for, protects and fights for the career advancement of the protégée (Roebuck and Smith, 2011). Klook (2004) concluded in their study that women with mentors increase their odds of being promoted to mid-management position by 56 percent over women without a mentor. In view of the benefits, it was recommended that sponsorship can be implemented by making it a component of the annual review for senior administrative staff. Carli (2006) in support of this opined that universities should provide opportunities for training and career development for women, who should on their part, never stop learning. Carli (2006) further advised that woman should acquire skills that would enable them perform and compete effectively on the job. Also, they should display competences on the job that are visible and valued by researching the topic of their job schedules. Women in university administration must therefore seek out resources to help themselves in a paradoxical environment.

Jawahar and Hemmasi (2006) recommended that universities should initiate organization-specific programmes that address breaking down structural and organizational barriers that limit women's advancement in the system. Hence, university should walk their talk by making gender diversity part of their culture.

3. Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design and utilized data from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was generated through the administration of questionnaires on 675 purposively selected female administrative staff from three randomly selected public universities from South-Western Nigeria. The questionnaires were distributed across females in the middle and senior administrative staff category in the three universities.

The questionnaire which was made up of three sections was structured to solicit personal information about the female administrative staff; the extent of their labour input, as well as to determine the variables that affect their input. The retrieved questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of simple percentages.

4. Results and Discussions

The labour input of female administrative staff in terms of their contributions to the various job schedules in the selected universities as well as the factors that impact on their input are reflected and discussed in the tables below:

Table I: Contributions of female staff to administrative job schedules in Nigerian Public Universities (figures in bracket represent percentages)

Job schedules	Frequently	Sometimes	Little	Not at all
Registration of students at faculties and departments	126(18.6)	102(15.1)	153(22.6)	294(43.5)
Report/minutes writing as secretary to various meetings and committees	315(46.6)	186(27.5)	102(15.1)	72(10.6)
Drafting and responding to official letters	291(43.1)	78(11.5)	162(24)	144(21.3)
Attending to files and maintenance of official records	225(33.3)	201(29.7)	186(27.5)	63(9.3)
Routine clerical assignments	288(42.6)	258(38.2)	87(12.8)	42(6.2)
Overseeing subordinates and supervising sectional heads	177(26.2)	78(11.5)	177(26.2)	243(36.0)
Supervising and coordinating routine administrative function of the university	114(16.5)	78(11.5)	156(23.1)	327(48.4)
Chairing of committee meetings	132(19.5)	69(10.2)	99 (14.6)	375(55.5)
Supervision of academic affairs with input from academic staff (e.g. promotion, recruitment, pension issues)	114(16.8)	282(41.7)	159(23.5)	120(17.7)
Administration of research grants	156(23.1)	114(16.8)	78(11.5)	327(48.4)
Administration of public affairs (e.g. relationship with the media, university community etc)	258(38.2)	288(42.6)	69(10.2)	60(8.8)

Table I shows the responses of female administrative staff on their contributions to the various job schedules in the Nigerian public universities. The result shows the uniqueness of their roles in the academic environment and indicates that women feature more in specific duties.

The table shows that majority of the job schedules frequently performed by women included: Report/minutes writing as secretary to various meetings and committees (46.6%), drafting and responding to official letters (43.1%) and routine clerical assignments (42.6%). The performance of these specific jobs confirms the notion that “men’s work” and “women’s work” persist in universities as indicated by Rosser (2004). This situation has been well documented over the years, with numerous studies (Kloot, 2004; Krefting, 2003 and Parry 1996) highlighting men’s resistance to women entering “their” jobs. It is not surprising that women frequently performed these jobs because they are regarded as “women’s work”. Those termed “men’s work” which are managerial in nature and which entails occupying leadership positions such as chairing of committees (55.5%), supervising and coordinating administrative functions (48.4%) and administration of research grants (48.4%) were not frequently performed by female staff. This implies that many female administrative staff tend to remain in middle management roles rather than advance to senior administrative positions. This is because the potential opportunities for advancement for women may be limited due to the demands of the universities’ work environment as well as many other barriers which are discussed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Factors affecting the labour input of female administrative staff in Nigerian Public Universities

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
(Organizational factors)		
Poor working facilities	638	94.5
Poor networking opportunities	573	84.8
Deficit of role models and mentors	420	62.2
Masculinity of university culture	520	77.03
Lack of sponsored training programmes	578	85.9
Overcrowded job schedules	582	86.2
Promotion policies	370	54.8
(Societal factors)		
Cultural constraints that channel women and men into different areas of work.	620	91.8
The association of top administrative positions with masculinity	525	77.7
Gender stereotyping and the belief that women must have low career profile	420	62.2
(Individual factors)		
Childbearing and family responsibilities	632	93.6
Qualifications	275	40.7
Religion	250	37.0
Gender	310	45.9

Female administrative staff encounter impediments to their advancement and labour input in the university system. These barriers have been found to operate at the organizational, societal and individual levels as discussed in Table 2.

Data on the table shows that certain organizational factors impact on the labour input of female administrative staff. The table shows that the major organizational factor that influences the input of the respondents was poor working facilities (94.5%). This may not be unconnected with the problem of underfunding which is a major challenge hindering public universities in Nigeria from performing maximally and from purchasing the requisite facilities required for meaningful work output. The government does not sufficiently fund her universities because of the growing enrolments and economic depression. The result of this study corroborates that of Adeniyi (2008) who noted that the effects of inadequate funding are evident in the drastic reduction of the award of research grants and in the obvious inadequate working facilities which impact on staff performance. Nigerian universities should therefore diversify ventures for increased internally generated revenue necessary for sustainability of staff performance.

The results on the table further show that the second organizational factor that was highly rated (86.2%) by the respondents as a major barrier to their labour input was overcrowded job schedule. This makes them vulnerable to stress, makes it difficult to fulfill all of the responsibilities and results in low productivity.

Furthermore, the table reveals that lack of access to sponsored training programmes (85.6%) was a major organizational factor reported as impeding on the input of the respondents. An absence of this translates to poor performance because motivation through staff training is critical to the effective performance of staff in any organization. This result is an indication that organizational practices may appear neutral on the surface but can function in a way that leads to different outcomes and treatment for men and women in the form of unequal access to institutional resources and privileges.

Poor networking opportunities (84.8%) was reported as prominent in impeding on their growth and input which may be attributed to deficit of role models and mentors (62.2%) which are ingredients for success and performance as reflected on table 2. This finding corroborates that of Cheung and Halpern (2010) who found that females tend to face more obstacles in networking and sustaining mentoring relationships necessary for advancement because there is usually a small pool of women from which mentors can be drawn and networks built.

Data on the table further shows that sizeable number (77.03%) of the respondents reported that the masculine culture and structure of universities affected their input. This result affirms Kloot's (2004), findings that revealed that hegemonic masculinity persists as the ideal for administrators in universities as well as the existence of male dominated structures that exclude women from the decision making process. This result implies that men inhabit positions of power and reproduce social relationships which perpetrate their dominance.

The table further shows that just 54.8 percent of the respondents indicated that promotion policies affected their input on the job. Although promotions are rapid in Nigerian universities within the lowest rung of the administrative career ladder, it is however difficult to earn promotion beyond the Principal Assistant Registrar position. This is because while academic departments can have some multiple professors, only one Registrar with two senior Deputy Registrars are required and can be appointed in the administrative career structure.

Consequently, competent administrators may be left at a particular position marking time for years, if there are no vacancies at the top.

Table 2 also shows the respondents' opinions on the various societal factors that affect their labour input in Nigerian Public Universities. Data on the table shows that among the societal factors, a higher percentage (91.8%) of the respondents indicated that cultural constraint that channel women and men into different areas of work affected their labour input. Cultural and social norms sometimes operate against women and impact on their work choices. This implies that societal norms embrace cultural values that emphasize the subordinate position of women. It also sometimes determines the job choices as well as encourages discriminatory practices in the work place. Consequently, works identified with women are feminine in nature or regarded as 'women's work'. This is evident in the job schedules of administrative staff in table 1 of this paper where women engaged more in secretarial assignments. This implies that the norms and culture of the society with different socialization pattern is reenacted at the work place and channels men and women into different areas of work and status in the university labour force.

Data on table 2 also indicates that a sizeable number of the respondents (77.7%) reported that the association of top administrative positions with masculinity in the university system as well as the belief that women must have low career profile (62.7%), are prominent societal factors that impact on their labour input. This may not be unconnected with the fact that women are socialized to be passive and noncompetitive early in life. This attitude is transferred to the work environment and influences women's work roles. This corroborates Morley's (2003) findings that emphasized the fact that women's labour input are generally affected by entrenched societal systems and beliefs that support men's bid to engage in more complex job assignments and occupy top administrative positions. The hegemonic and masculinist nature of universities makes the management fill positions of authority with persons utilizing men's method of leadership and who best fit this existing norm. Women with leadership aspiration are therefore not selected and their abilities under-utilized. This result corroborates that of Carli (2006) who found that men's higher career aspirations and experiences with increased confidence, gives them advantage over women in assuming management positions. Carli's (2006) study also found that 40 percent of the women in her study reported wanting to assume Chief Executive Positions (CEO) as compared to 70 percent of men, which is an indication that women have lower career aspirations than men. In this regard, Longman and Madsen(2014) noted that culture seldom encourages women to desire high powered career nor to be competitive in productive line. Hence women internalize these stereotypes and are satisfied with engaging in routine administrative assignments without seeking job schedules that are of a high profile and high impact. The implication of this result is that the belief that women are incapable of handling positions of authority streamlines them into specific jobs. This result confirms the fact that the general assumption that women lack self-confidence and do not aspire for top administrative positions place them at a disadvantaged position in the distribution of work schedules in the workplace. This raises concerns in terms of productivity. It should be noted that the belief concerning women's lack of desire for power and the inability to handle such positions of authority may be related to how positions of authority and power is perceived in the university.

Table 2 shows data on the individual factors that affect the labour input of the respondents. Individual factors focus on the personal traits, characteristics, abilities or qualities of women as well as their attitudes in explaining their contributions to the various job schedules in the university system. There is a general assumption that the personal attributes of women remains an obstacle to women's labour input and advancement on the job; results in table 2 tries to justify this. The table shows that majority (93.6%) of the female respondents reported that child bearing and domestic responsibilities impacted on their labour input and contributions to the various administrative job schedules. The result confirms the fact that women assume the principal role of early care giving which extends to aging parents. Care giving extends over women's lifetime and career with little support available for this care giving role. This creates a cumulative disadvantage over time for women in the university system. This impact on their capacity to advance rapidly and increase performance. Sometimes, women have to take time out from their career to fulfil the care giving role and their ability to resume work after child birth depends on an adequate arrangement of child-care. This finding corroborates Mayer and Tikkas (2008) assertion that motherhood and managing child/family demands are very challenging for female administrators and their advancement is limited based on the demands of families and work. In view of this, Longman and Madsen (2014), affirmed the difficulty in combining responsibility for home and children with demanding administrative job, unless one enjoys an egalitarian partnership in the home, has enough to pay for child care and housekeeping and can locate such essential services.

It is interesting to note that few of the respondents (37.0%) indicated that their religion, qualifications (40.7%), and their gender (45.9%) affected their labour input. This is a clear indication that the respondents had adequate qualifications and that their age and gender did not affect their capacity to make meaningful input into the university system. With respect to gender, this result shows that women do not see their gender as an obstacle to their input rather, the differences in evaluation often caused by institutional practices and gender biases impact

on career outcomes and labour input of the females. Hence, Cheung and Halpern (2010) submitted that such gender schemes systematically influence evaluations of competence and performance which cause men to remain consistently overrated in the work environment. In view of this, Nigerian universities should work towards breaking down structural, organizational and cultural barriers that impact on women's job performance

5. Conclusion

Research has shown that most universities do not fully realize the value of having women in key administrative positions and have failed to understand that organizations thrive better when both men and women feature prominently in various administrative roles. Understanding the value of inclusivity in university setting is critical and timely. Hence, this study evaluated the labour input of female administrative staff in Nigerian public universities. The results showed the uniqueness of their roles and labour input in the university environment. Evidences revealed that the female administrative staff mostly performed those jobs regarded as "women's work" and remained more in middle and lower management roles than advancing to senior administrative positions due to workplace culture based on "standard male career model and hegemonic masculine culture". The hegemonic masculinity and various organizational practices as well as a variety of societal and individual factors related to the 'Gender-Society-Organization' model were found to impact on women's labour input and advancement in the administrative career structure of universities. Universities therefore need to initiate organizational changes that establish inclusiveness and encourage women's participation. Such initiatives should emphasize mentoring and equal opportunity for females within the university system. This is imperative because gender is an important consideration in crafting the composition of administrative staff. It facilitates and synergizes the strengths of both men and women in building effective, productive and innovative institutions. Consequently, concerted effort is required by universities to rid themselves of the vestiges of gender imbalance in the labour force.

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PROFILE

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