

Inclusive Leadership and Organisational Commitment: A Focus on the Role of Women

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Abstract: - Diversity is a concept that cannot separate from the workplace setting that involves different people; each individual is diverse in gender, ethnicity, age, education, qualification, race, and personality, to mention a few. Individuals are members of different groups and gender, which highly influences values and self-concepts. This is coupled with the fact that Nigeria is a patriarchal country where males hold dominant power dominate in political leadership roles, authority, privileges and control of the property, thereby creating a glass ceiling for women in the workplace. However, workplace gender inclusion needs to make co-workers of all races, diverse teams, gender, ethnicities, and nationalities optimise various individuals' performance where employees feel included or excluded. This suggests that workplace gender inclusion that carefully includes all stakeholders' contributions in the organisation, which is a two-way relationship rather than one that depends on respect, recognition, responsiveness, responsibility, goal achievement, and interdependency amongst individuals, is needful. Thus, this study examined women's role in promoting inclusive leadership and organisational commitment in Nigeria, where stereotyping of women and men's characteristics and roles exist firmly in society, using relevant literature as the research method. The study found out that inclusive culture, open communication, favouritism and use of gendered language, amongst others, affect the effectiveness of inclusive leadership and organisational commitment. Therefore, the paper recommended that to get everybody included and committed irrespective of gender to optimise performance, women's behaviour and thinking patterns must change. Women should stop seeing managerial positions as "men's", and serve as role models to the younger generation of women by helping them understand themselves and their rapid changing roles in the new technological age and must be resilient & courageous.

Keywords: Diversity, Gender inclusion, Workplace, Demographic variables.

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1 Introduction

Organisations are becoming global with diverse individuals and cultural backgrounds. Global leaders have emerged by nurturing, and Organisations are becoming global with various individuals and cultural backgrounds. Global leaders have emerged by promoting and developing open-mindedness, systemic thinking, and complexity among the diverse workforce. This trend of inclusive diversity is anticipated by leaders in Africa and Nigeria, where the issues of gender sensitivity are still problematic [1]. Extant literature has indicated that inclusive leadership create a platform for facilitating organisational commitment. Organisational commitment is how an employee is involved and identifies with an organisation [2]. In addition to achieving organisational commitment, this study also

includes women's role in promoting gender balance in a country like Nigeria, where stereotyping of men and women's roles strongly exists in society. Nigeria, in many aspects, is debatably the giant of Africa, with a culture where male holds power and dominates parts and leadership position in organisations despite the achievements and education of women in the country [3]. There is high gender discrimination in Nigeria, where women are under-represented in leadership positions in organisations [4].

Women have been empowered through educational and economic empowerment.

Programs that have slowly helped them gain their freedom, confidence, and a say in matters that

directly affect them. However, most women still encounter sex discrimination and hardly break through the "glass ceiling", separating them from top-level managerial positions [5]. Studies have shown some of the factors militating against women getting to managerial positions in Nigeria, such as the cultural patterns, social roles assigned to women and men, male control and dominance, lack of confidence in women, and effects of violence against women [5;6]. The representation of women in various management positions has not been very encouraging at the national and sectoral levels [5]. Additionally, [6;7] presented data only on gender construct and managerial performance of some universities in Ogun State. Further, [4; 7] assessed governance and women vulnerability in the state administration. Most of these studies focused women participation in politics. This suggests elements of a knowledge lacuna in the existing studies on the subject matter of inclusive leadership and organisational commitment. However, the current article as a conceptual paper adopted a narrative method of discussing women's role in promoting gender balance in the organisation, the factors influencing the effectiveness of inclusive leadership in the organisation and the perceived benefits of inclusive leadership to both employees and employers in Nigeria. Significantly, the study focused on already existing literature. Simultaneously, the discussion and analysis relied on opinions in the literature from different authors that

have offered different views on inclusive leadership and organisational commitment. Worthy of note is that this study reviewed not less than thirty (30) extant literature from learned scholars and seasoned authors because of the narrative approach adopted into the subject matter discussed. Hence, it is against this background that this study examines the factors influencing the effectiveness of inclusive leadership, the role of women in promoting gender balance in the organisation and the perceived benefits of inclusive leadership. They are all reviewed extensively in this paper.

2 Problem Formulation

In Nigeria's society, it is assumed that women should perform the feminine role. In contrast, men perform the masculine function, and women achieve the feminine role, affecting gender distribution across all levels in the country [6]. Hence, the table below depicts the gender distribution of workers in the civil servants, parliament, and the judges and judiciary with facts and figures.

2.1 Gender distribution in the State Civil Service

The figure below shows that in the Nigeria civil service, 65.3 per cent of the higher positions were held by men. In comparison, women occupy 34.7 per cent of the senior position for the period 2010-2015. The pattern was similar at junior positions and across the same cadre.

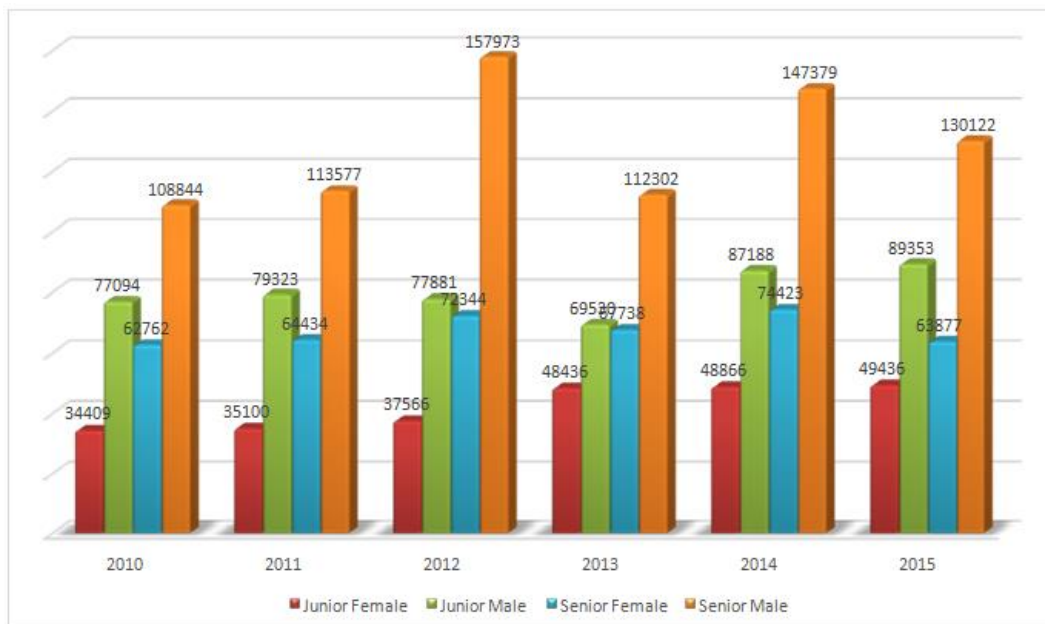


Fig. 1: Summary of State Civil Servants by Type, Year and Sex

2.1.1 Gender Representation in National Parliament

The representation of women in the 2015 last election in Nigeria shows us that out of the honourable houses of the two houses, which are 469

in total, 92.5 per cent of these members are men while only 7.5 per cent are women.

Table 1. The summary of the Seats, Held in the National Assembly

LEGISLATORS	2007		2011		2015	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Senate						
Male	100	91.7	101	92.7	100	91.7
Female	9	8.3	8	7.3	9	8.3
Total	109	100	109	100	109	100
House of Reps.						
Male	334	92.8	338	93.9	337	92.8
Female	26	7.2	22	6.1	23	7.2
Total	360	100	360	100	360	100
Both Houses						
Male	434	92.5	439	93.6	437	92.5
Female	35	7.5	30	6.4	32	7.5
Total	469	100	469	100	469	100

Source: National Bureau of Statistics

Table 2. The Summary of Seats Held in Local Government by Sex, Type, and Year

LEGISLATORS	2007		2011		2015	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
LGA Chairpersons						
Male	510	90.1	738	96.1	740	95.6
Female	56	9.9	30	3.9	34	4.4
Total	566	100.0	768	100.0	774	100.0
Counsellors						
Male	5828	89.8	5175	87.5	6828	90.2
Female	665	10.2	738	12.5	740	9.8
Total	6,493	100.0	5,913	100.0	7,568	100.0

Source: National Bureau of Statistics

2.1.2 Gender Representation in the Judiciary

In the judiciary, the representation across both state and federal levels is mainly male in all the 36 states

in Nigeria, with the FCT included. Male lawyers and judges were far more than the female (Table 3).

Table 3. Judges and Lawyers in Nigeria by Year and Sex

Year	Judges			Lawyers		
	Female	Male	%F	Female	Male	%F
2010	209	603	25.7	439	841	34.3
2011	204	567	26.5	425	799	34.7
2012	214	624	25.5	440	809	35.2
2013	210	589	26.3	506	840	37.6
2014	209	618	25.3	435	838	34.2
2015	212	598	26.2	490	820	37.4

Source: National Bureau of Statistics

Although the total numbers of women lawyers and judges in 2010 increased from 25.7 per cent to 34.3. The table also shows that in 2015, it increased from 26.2 per cent to 37.4 per cent, respectively. This is an increment that can still improve.

2.1.3 Glass Ceiling

The glass ceiling was introduced by Marilyn Loden in 1978 and later used at the Women's Institute for Freedom conference held in July 1979 by Lawrence Katherine [7]. This means barriers encountered by women who desire to reach senior positions and higher salary ranks in non-profit organisations, government entity, and corporate organisations, among others [8].

One of the early authority [9] defined the glass ceiling as the transparent barrier and did not allow women to rise above a particular level in corporations. According to [10], a glass ceiling is an apparent setback that stops women from moving beyond certain ranks purely because they are women. Women encounter these invisible barriers as a group associated with the senior positions and minorities (such as the disabled, people of a different race, ethnic, colour) and middle-level management [7].

2.1.4 Gender and Leadership Trends in Nigeria

Gender connote different things to various persons, but it focuses majorly on identity and roles. The physical description of gender and the expected roles a particular gender plays in society is crucial in conceptualizing gender. Gender role consists of social expectations that hinged on gender stereotypes of how people should think and how they should act. In the society, it is believed that men perform the masculine role in society while women perform the feminine function [6]. This difference between the male and the female counterparts arose from a

culture's expectations of how individuals should behave.

Nigeria's culture had been that of a "patriarchy". Patriarchy is a culture that value men a lot, and women are valued less- put differently. Men's prestige is always up, and that of women is down. Thus men will have power control over women. In a matriarchy society (women take leadership roles in families), men still control power and the myth system [8]. Based on the above statement, it is clear that the culture of tribes in Nigeria is a patriarchal system. This means male domination, which makes women constantly fight for their rights and privileges but not with men because men have been performing these roles for a long time of which they believe women may not be able to serve as men. In Nigerian culture, male dominate prominent positions in organisations. Simultaneously, the women encounter great difficulties moving to senior-level positions, thereby leading to the country's glass ceiling and gender imbalance [11].

3 Problem Solution

3.1 Benefits of Inclusive leadership to Employers

Inclusive leadership have positive outcomes for both individuals and the organisation as a whole, leading to the following benefits to employers:

(a) *Employee Engagement*: Employee engagement means the energy and commitment that employees bring to the work, showing their dedication and involvement in the organisation. Employee engagement has three different part – absorption, vigor and dedication [12]. The vigor is the positive energy that is used by employee to comport their

daily work. Dedication is the intense involvement that results in great feelings like and enthusiasm, significance and inspiration. Lastly, absorption shows that employees are fully immersed and concentrated and in one's work in a way, and it is difficult for them to detach from the job [12].

(b) Organisational commitment: Organisational commitment is the extent to which an employee identifies and involves the organisation [2]. Highly inclusive leadership that considers decision-making and unbiased with demographic variables, such as education, length of service, age, and gender, leads to employee commitment to the organisation.

(c) Diverse talent attraction and retention: Any organisation with a reputation for inclusiveness gradually turns into a magnet attracting top, diverse talent in the market [13]. There is greater diversity in Nigeria today by ethnicity, race and gender than five or ten years ago. However, organisations that put in place inclusive leadership tends to attract great talent and keep them [14].

3.1.2 Benefits of Inclusive Leadership to the Employees

One of the fundamental reasons organisations shift from other forms of leadership to inclusive leadership is the creativity and innovation that comes with diverse people in the organisation [15;11].

(a) Job satisfaction and fulfilment: Job satisfaction is how the employee feels about the organisation. The appearance of job satisfaction shows how much an employee experiences pleasures in the organisational context. It is the reflection of good and inclusive leadership in the organization [16].

(b) Innovation: This is the promotion, development and implementation of the new idea. The vital role of leadership in innovation cannot be overemphasized [17] when leaders recognize the efforts of the employee's in risky and uncertain and situations and provide the essential work-related resources that will significantly lead to employees' innovation.

3.2 Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Inclusive Leadership in the Organisation

Extant literature has often reiterated the significant factors affecting the effectiveness of inclusive leadership. One of these studies' most identified point is open communication between employers and employees in organisations in Nigeria [14; 5].

(a) Inclusive Culture: This is socialised through social group shared values that, in turn, plays an

essential role in an employee's cognitive, emotional and social functioning [18]. Consequently, inclusive culture is a fundamental cause of individual perceptions towards others and themselves. For organisations in Nigeria to change their culture, they must ensure inclusion is part of the organisation's overall strategic plan [5].

(b) Open Communication: Leaders usually have more information than a normal average employee [19]. Non-inclusive leaders selectively share information with only certain members of the team, which leads to dissension. Transparent communication is essential to having a highly effective team. The more leaders in organisations share, the better aligned the team will be, and the more effective inclusive leadership will be in organisations [6].

(c) Avoid Playing Favoritism: Nearly everyone has the beloved go-to person they share information with, asks advice from, and leads projects. An inclusive leader must keep a watch on this behaviour. Favoritism can act as a de-motivator to inclusive leadership, decrease morale, increase attrition and dampen performance, especially in a country like Nigeria organisations, where favoritism is high [1].

3.3 Gender Balance

Organisations are increasingly recognising the essence of remedying the imbalances in gender by ensuring that many women are promoted and retained in leadership positions. Despite these widespread commitments to women's promotion and attainment in a leadership position, it is clear that much progress needs to be made as men still dominate leadership positions in the corporate world. Women must always demand their rights and sometimes struggle to survive without men's threatening them with domination [24]. Research has proven that behaviours more frequently used by women who get to managerial positions significantly impact organisational commitment [25: 19].

3.3.1 Role of Women in Promoting Gender Balance

Biologically men and women differ from each other, even though society and culture strengthen and sharpen gender roles. Men's traditional role is to support their family, while women's role is to keep their home and family. Men are naturally considered more aggressive and women more nurturing than men. Although different stereotypes of men's and

women's roles exist strongly in society [20]. According to [5], women should be allowed to combine their God's given strengths and expertise in a globalised world to achieve the following in the organisation;

(a) *Ethical Behaviour*: According to [21], women exhibit more ethical behaviour than their male colleagues. This might explain why women are more whistleblowers. Women contribute to ethical behaviours, which are suitable for business continuity thereby discouraging unethical business behaviours.

(b) *Women demonstrate more contingent reward behaviours*: Women care more about developing people by setting expectations and giving out rewards. These leadership skills possessed by women are essential to strengthen the work environment, instil accountability, reinforce values and drive results.

(c) *Innovation*: Women bring diverse perspectives, strengths and innovation to the exercise of leadership. This new creativity and ideas are different from traditional ones presently in use in the organisation. Therefore, in the context of innovation, women need the support of leaders to get to the senior management level in the organisation so that creativity and innovation can be felt adequately [22].

(d) *Organisations strategic advantage*: Women now have a high educational level in different parts today, especially in Nigeria. In Nigeria, women are overtaking the men. They have the know-how or competence to promote the organisational strategic advantage [23].

4 Conclusion

Gender issues help to understand prospects, constraints, and the effects of change, affecting both women and men. Inclusive leadership and organisational commitment require the full and equal participation of women and men at all levels in various sectors of the economy. The cooperativeness, recognition, respect, and equality between men and women are based on strong family ties and sustainable societies in a rapidly changing and highly volatile world. Yet women have faced discrimination and been excluded from leadership positions. Gender equality will help build respect and commitment of every member of the organisation to goal achievement.

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